Type of Review: Annual Review

Project Title: Girls' Education Project Phase 3

Date started: 01.05.2012
Date review undertaken: 01.05.2013-15.07.2013

Instructions to help complete this template:

Before commencing the annual review you should have to hand:

- *the Business Case or earlier project documentation.*
- *the Logframe*
- *the detailed guidance (How to Note)- Reviewing and Scoring Projects*
- *the most recent annual review (where appropriate) and other related monitoring reports*
- *key data from ARIES, including the risk rating*
- *the separate project scoring calculation sheet (pending access to ARIES)*

You should assess and rate the individual outputs using the following rating scale and description. ARIES and the separate project scoring calculation sheet will calculate the overall output score taking account of the weightings and individual outputs scores:

Description	Scale
Outputs substantially exceeded expectation	A++
Outputs moderately exceeded expectation	A+
Outputs met expectation	A
Outputs moderately did not meet expectation	B
Outputs substantially did not meet expectation	C

Introduction and Context

The UK's Department for International Development is providing funding of 103 million GBP for the Girls' Education Project which ends in April 2020. DFID Nigeria provides technical advice and support in the implementation of GEP3. This has included supporting advocacy activities aimed at Government. In March 2013, DFID Nigeria contracted the Education, Data, Research and Evaluation (EDOREN) initiative to provide technical advice on data, research and evidence generation for GEP3 and other DFID education programmes.

What are the expected results? *(based on revised logical framework dated March 2013):*

Impact: Improved social and economic opportunity for girls

Outcome: More girls (additional 1,000,000) in target states in northern Nigeria complete basic education and acquire skills for life and livelihoods (enrolment, completion, learning)

Output One: Increased parental demand for and support to girls' education
Output Two: Increased basic education opportunities for girls
Output Three: Improved teaching and learning opportunities and environment
Output Four: Increased and more effective participation of women in providing education
Output Five: Effective governance in education sector at all levels (school, LGA, State, Federal)
Output Six: Enhanced knowledge management at State and Federal level.

What is the context in which UK support is provided?

The number of children out of school globally is shrinking but by 2015 the number of out of school children in Nigeria will still be huge, with girls suffering most. In the North 25% of young people between the ages 17-22 have fewer than 2 years of education, 97% of those women. In Nigeria girls' enrolment lags well behind boys'. Education performance for northern states is significantly poorer than for the south, and for northern girls poorer than for boys. Child literacy is below international norms, with many more children in the South able to read a whole sentence (56%- 72%) than in the North (11%-31%). Even the Southern achievement level is among the worst in Africa.

Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2011 (MICS) data suggest that some improvements in enrolment and attendance, particularly of girls, had taken place between 2005-2010. This can be attributed to the allocation of over N123 billion (£500 million) by the Federal Government of Nigeria between 2005 and 2010 for infrastructure expansion at the basic education level. The Universal Basic Education Intervention Fund amounts to N124 billion (£500 million), alongside donor assisted projects, including DFID's £85 million for ESSPIN, 2008-2013, and £39.36 million for the first two phases of the Girls' Education Project, GEP1 & GEP 2, 2004- 2011.

There remain significant gaps in enrolment at early childhood, primary, junior and senior secondary. Attendance rates are low and children's learning is questionable. It has proved difficult to make adequate provision for nomadic children (estimated at around 1 million in Nigeria). Various barriers threaten girls' education in the North. These include the traditional view that women are to be subjugated to men and a reluctance to allow girls to be educated, beyond learning to recite the Koran. Some parents wish to keep their daughters at home away from society and prioritise marrying girls early. Many of the poorest send their daughters out to sell merchandise in the streets (hawking) rather than to school. Primary Net Attendance Ratio Gender Parity Index rates range from 0.78 (Zamfara) to 0.96 (Bauchi), according to MCIS 2011. These barriers are compounded by lack of confidence in low quality education provision.

Section A: Detailed Output Scoring

Output 1: *Increased parental demand for and support to girls' education*

Output 1 score and performance description: A
All stakeholders interviewed were very confident about this area of work, which had generated strong support at all levels (both governmental and community) for girls' education and builds on work in GEP2. All milestones had been started by the review, with all completed except the first. However, the quality of execution of three milestones was not ideal for establishing the foundations for future work. This output has the strongest synergy with work under GEP1 and GEP2 and as such there is good momentum.

Progress against expected results:
1.1 CCT PIU established and functional in Niger and Sokoto states: Partly delivered; the PIU is established but not functional, in the sense that consultants have just started design work and Sokoto has not yet made clear commitments around CCTs. In Katsina state, the 4th phase of CCT disbursement to 6,722 girls across 9 LGAs has been done. Niger State government has made a financial commitment of N21m for PIU establishment and support of technical assistance from consultants. A very strong review report of previous CCT work was produced, highlighting major problems with government financial commitments to keep CCT work going among other issues. However, there is no CCT strategy and available documentation on strategy is poor quality, without clear or detailed thinking on sustainability or scale up.

1.2 10% of schools have annual enrolment drive (monitored through SBMC effectiveness monitoring tool): This was met or exceeded in all states, leading to increases in enrolment reported in all State presentations for the annual review and in the GEP3 annual report. Reports of state level enrolment increases could not be verified by the review (see section 1.6). The SBMC monitoring tool is in use, but data was not yet available to back up reports of increased enrolment in project schools, other than in Zamfara, where data showing increased enrolment of children from 2011/12 to 2013/13 in project schools was available. There is no clear focus at present on Year 1 and Age 6 enrolment, which is a critical need and highlighted in the logframe.

1.3 Communities collect mapped data on girls reaching primary school age: Fora held within 360 communities specifically addressing enrolment of girls into primary 1 (72 per state): Delivered. Working with LGEAS and SUBEBs in this has helped staff to capture and reflect on information. Interviews indicated that this information had been fed into reviews of operational plans. However, this had been done using a relatively informal approach and the process and outcomes of analysis of mapping data were weak. This meant missing opportunities to use the mapping to start building better needs-based planning approaches within states.

Recommendations:
- Write CCT strategy document with detailed and strategic plans for design and scaleup of scheme, based on design consultancy and CCT review from GEP2.
- Establish clearer attribution of enrolment increases via analysis of SBMC monitoring tool data.

Impact Weighting (%):15%
Revised since last Annual Review? *N*

Risk: Medium
Revised since last Annual Review? *N*

Output 2 score and performance description: B

A great deal of activity has occurred under Output 2, with strong partner and stakeholder engagement. However, out of ten milestones, two were not delivered, and two were not fully delivered. The review team had concerns about the quality of delivery of two other milestones, particularly around IQTE.

Progress against expected results:

2.1 (i) National working groups established and TORs developed for State TWGs.(Baseline on Transition): Delivered. TWGs (Technical Working Groups on Transition) aim to support the vision of girls completing Primary School, Junior Secondary School and beyond to benefit them, while continuing to contribute to their families and communities. A national advocacy toolkit on transition was developed based on planning and analysis work done by TWGs. Documents linked to the toolkit, including TORs for TWGs and state action plans, were not available to the review team, but the toolkit has some information on the role of TWGs. Situation analysis documents for TWGs also indicated strong analysis and good potential for these groups to have effective impact in future.

2.1 (ii) State/LGA TWGs established: Delivered. TWGs appear from interviews with stakeholders and documentation to be focusing on a range of girls' education issues affecting progress through education, not just a narrow definition of transition. Further thinking on maximising the very great potential of TWGs would be helpful. It emerged, for example, that TWGs in Katsina had been involved in analysis of community mapping: but a chance had been missed to use that process to strengthen LGA and state planning approaches.

2.1 (iii) TWG Work-plans have been activated and monitored in all GEP states: Delivered, based on reports, although workplans were not available to the review team. Stakeholder discussions showed TWGs were active in all states. TWGs have been established at state and LGEA levels, and are active in promoting action to increase increased transition rates for girls in a variety of fora. TWGs have generated information to help the development of LESOPs.

2.2 (i) Fully integrated IQTE models of curricula available: Delivered. Prior to GEP3, UNICEF worked with UBEC (through the National Almajiri Education Committee inaugurated by FME in 2010) to harmonize the different curricula being used for IQTE in different parts of the country to enable the country to have a national fully integrated harmonized curriculum for Almajiri Education. A fully integrated IQTE model of curricula, approved by the government, has now been adopted and is pending printing by UBEC for use across the board. In the interim, UNICEF has been able to get the electronic copy of the approved curricula and photocopies have been made available to the states for reproduction for intervention centres. Each subject area was put together and critiqued by education experts and approved by the government, in a process engaged in by UNICEF. The newly harmonized curricula are more robust as they include Computer Education, Vocational Studies and Physical Education. Targets for numbers of IQTE centres accepting an integrated curriculum were met. (It should be noted that a subset of students in each IQTE will receive the integrated curriculum.)

The revised curriculum materials were made available to the review team after the review period. While the topics and learning aims were impressive, questions were raised about how practicable the curriculum is. There was wide variation between subject areas in terms of clarity of learning objectives and guidance on relevant learning activities (the Maths module was one of the strongest). The English module appeared to be designed for communication in English as the medium of instruction, which would not be appropriate for poor rural children in IQTEs. Because the materials were only shared at the end of the review, it was not possible to translate the Hausa module to identify how well early literacy was covered. It was impossible to understand how the computer module would be implemented, given the extremely poor infrastructure in IQTEs visited.

It is hoped that the gap between the IQTE curriculum being available at national level and actually implemented is also recognised and worked on in Year 2. The review team was very concerned about the quality of curricula and integration approaches actually being used in IQTEs visited, where adoption of the new curriculum provided only for very limited teaching hours of approximately 4 hours per week.

The integration is currently done on two days of the week, namely, on Thursdays and Fridays, since these are the days when Qur'anic teaching does not take place. Visits to IQTE centres showed that the new curricula are clearly not in use to any great extent in IQTE centres. Teaching was of poor quality and was covering very basic topics. UNICEF explained that it was important to move slowly and sensitively in this area to avoid disengagement by IQTEs, which was very much accepted. However, clear plans for moving curriculum work to a better level of delivery over time were not yet articulated, either by staff or on paper.

ii) Strategies for training in place: Not delivered. While approaches for training have been agreed in Katsina and Zamfara and were mentioned to the team, no documentation was available to verify this or review details of the plans. UNICEF reported that it has embarked on the development of a Training Manual for the process. However, the review team's interpretation of the milestone was that this work would have been completed by the end of Year 1. It was explained that it is necessary to proceed slowly with IQTEs to maintain support and that a great deal of time had been spent on sensitisation before acceptance of integration. It may have been more appropriate to rewrite the milestone to capture the different level of ambition which UNICEF has been working to.

2.3 Mapping commenced for 2nd chance education provision in 5 states: Delivered: mapping had commenced in all states and was completed in Zamfara, Katsina and Niger, with relatively clear reports.

2.4 Results of Nomadic Education Baseline fully analysed: Delivered, with state mapping reports meeting basic standards.

2.5 Action plan developed with clear targets for reach: Not delivered. Action plans will be developed based on mapping reports.

2.6 Action plan developed with clear targets for the establishment of mobile schools with multi grade teaching. Not delivered. State recommendations for mobile schools were contained in mapping reports, but without action planning or clear targets.

2.7 ELDS for ECCE identified and strategies for implementation institutionalized in GEP States: Not fully delivered. ELDS documentation was created, outlining a framework for monitoring children's progress, and several early childhood observation tools have been developed. However, strategies for implementation have not yet been produced or institutionalised.

Following the review of the logframe between DFID and UNICEF, it was agreed not to further expand ECCE work under GEP3 because the ECCE activities being prioritised by UNICEF were judged unlikely to have substantial impact on GEP3 outcomes. Thus ECCE work during the year concentrated on completing the development of Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) which were pilot tested to determine their viability. The ELDS were derived from the already existing national curriculum on ECCE which had been tested and accepted nationally. Data collection, analysis and validation to inform the ELDS is on-going and expected to be concluded by mid-August. The document has to be approved by the government before the strategies for implementation/ institutionalizing in GEP States can be done. On reviewing the ELDS documents, the review team noted that thinking in core areas like pre-literacy and linguistic development is not outlined specifically and in detail (though cognitive development is established as a domain), despite English Language acquisition being highlighted as a major issue by many stakeholders.

The review team felt that even though ECCE had dropped in priority, any policy work done on ECCE should bolster the core focus of GEP3 - i.e. entry and retention in primary school. The work done in this area has not yet focused very strongly on these issues, and there may be scope for agreeing with DFID what policy or technical work around ELDS/ECCE would be relevant within GEP3 to support early learning in primary school.

2.8 Action plan on public awareness of ECCD provision developed in the GEP States: Not delivered. During the review meetings with DFID, it was agreed not to expand ECCD; therefore this was removed from the workplan. Stakeholder discussions suggested that support for ECCD provision was high, and that schools are implementing policy on providing early learning classes.

Recommendations:

- Consider whether greater support can be given to TWGs to realise their very strong potential in advocating and securing support for changes in how girls are supported through education. In particular, TWGs could receive greater technical support around creating, analysing and promoting research and evidence around transition and related issues.
- Rewrite Nomadic Education Action Plan and 2nd Chance plans based on state mapping reports with clear targets, including for mobile schools
- In consultation with SUBEBs and other stakeholders, develop a detailed, and phased, delivery and training strategy for the new IQTE curriculum, based on a review of curriculum practicability in the current very constrained resource and capacity situation for IQTEs.
- Revisit ELDS framework and planning to decide in consultation with DFID which policy and capacity work in the area of ELDS and ECCE should be continued, in order to provide evidence based support to girls' access, retention and early learning in primary school.
- Update logframe etc. to remove areas of work (such as the public awareness action plan) which have been deprioritised.

Impact Weighting (%): 20%
Revised since last Annual Review? *N*

Risk: Medium
Revised since last Annual Review? *N*

Output 3: *Improved teaching and learning opportunities and environment*

Output 3 score and performance description: C

While work to improve learning environments through whole school development planning and grants has progressed according to plan, most work to strengthen teaching has been delayed or not delivered as expected. In particular, activity around IQTE, teacher training and early learning appears to need significant further review and strengthening in order to set the foundations for delivering future impact for girls.

Progress against expected results:

3.1 Action plan (from FTTSS study) in place to address bottlenecks to quality delivery of pre-NCE and NCE courses at CoE in GEP states: This milestone appears to have been interpreted as 'action plan in place to address bottlenecks to COE capacity to support FTSS students'. From this perspective, problem analysis and action planning has taken place with COEs in all GEP states, with implementation of plans ongoing and some good practice being shared between states. Nevertheless, supporting FTSS students through their studies will need to continue to receive major focus to ensure impact in this area. Discussions with COE lecturers and students revealed a strong need to focus on the full milestone as originally worded, with major bottlenecks to successful teacher graduation. At the same time, to deliver the expected impact of FTSS with value for money, it is likely to be necessary to take steps aimed at boosting the graduation rate of FTSS students far above that of general COEs (see below).

3.2 (i) New GEP states sensitized on the need to introduce and mainstream SbTD and STUMEC: Delivered. Zamfara appeared fully on board to introduce and mainstream SbTD and STUMEC, although a detailed understanding of what STUMEC and SbTD are was still lacking.

UNICEF reported that the level of understanding of SBTD and STUMEC by Zamfara varies in comparison to other states, as Zamfara did not participate in GEP 1 nor GEP 2 and therefore does do not have sufficient knowledge on the SbTD and STUMEC. It is recognised that Zamfara is committed and they are going ahead with teacher training preparation.

3.2 (ii) Strategies in place for SbTD and STUMEC scale up: Not delivered. The delayed SbTD/STUMEC impact study was given as the reason for not delivering this milestone. However, the

review team felt that initial strategy development work to outline ideas based on learning from GEP2 could have taken place. The review team had concerns that relying too much on previous SbTD/STUMEC models, which had a strong focus on cascading training, rather than directly providing training and mentoring support at school or cluster levels, would not be appropriate for the major teacher training needs created by increased enrolment of the poorest girls due to GEP.

In response to these concerns, UNICEF reported that teacher training is likely to be organized through a strategy of training master trainers (mainly from the COEs) who in turn train teachers at the school level. These teachers will be organized in clusters (schools that are within one locality for peer support). GEP 3 will not follow the GEP 2 strategy of cascading. Nevertheless, the proposed approach still relies on a cascade model. Experience and research in difficult environments for teaching is increasingly pointing to the conclusion that bringing expert trainers directly to school or cluster level, and following up with local systems for teachers to regularly come together and mentor each other, is essential to establish necessary improvements in practice.

Learning strategies recognised the need to focus teacher training on early literacy and language acquisition, both raised as major issues by stakeholders during the review, but did not provide specific strategies on how to do this and who would be involved. UNICEF reported that it is considering promoting 'language of the environment' instruction for early years, but clear strategies on how this can be delivered at the same time as building skills in English are overdue.

The review team felt that useful ideas from state learning consultants had not been included in the learning strategies due to lack of collaboration between the state consultants and Abuja experts. For example, the Katsina Learning Specialist spoke about supporting teachers in previous SbTD work to find ways to improvise and innovate, e.g. through the use of old slippers/flip flops cut up to make learning tools such as letters and shapes to encourage early years reading and development. This was an excellent example of small innovations that the project should be sharing or building on. No specialised technical support or access to wider evidence on teaching and learning was available at zonal level, which is where state consultants were expected to turn for technical support.

3.2 (iii) Impact study of SbTD and STUMEC completed: Not completed, partly due to delays recruiting staff; the study was ongoing during the review.

3.3 Plans for training facilitators, in integrated QTE: Not fully delivered. No planning documents were seen on this. Strong concerns about the need to develop detailed, intensive and high quality plans for training facilitators were raised when the review visit revealed very poor quality teaching in IQTEs visited.

Prior to GEP3, 40 facilitators drawn from the 4 GEP2 States were trained on the earlier IQTE curriculum. IQTE facilitators in Zamfara were reported by IQTE heads as having received training from government, and had been introduced to IQTEs. UNICEF reported that facilitators were oriented in June 2013 on the integration of the core curriculum. Shortly after the review, the first tranche of training for IQTE teachers was conducted during July 2013 for 100 IQE facilitators per State in July in Niger, Sokoto and Katsina. Other states, Zamfara and Bauchi, will follow in August. UNICEF also reported that it has succeeded in supporting centres to integrate and become model centres to be used as demonstration hubs for study visits.

Reports at state level were unclear about what was happening in this area, suggesting that wider training strategies are not fully agreed or worked out. The review was not able to see documentary evidence of facilitator training, such as training schedules, and therefore could only judge quality through observed classroom practice, which, although using a friendly approach, was very poor, relying solely on 'chalk and talk' and class recitation in extremely crowded classrooms.

3.4 Strategy set for the introduction of standardised testing in IQTE: Not fully delivered. GEP is working towards integrating NFE in the national MLA. Assessment methods were reported as being part of the revised and harmonised national IQTE curriculum. On review it was not at all clear from the curriculum documents how formative or summative assessment was to be conducted within IQTE work. Assessment targets were present in documents, but there was no information on how to conduct assessment or how to create and report on standardised means of grading performance. Discussions

in Katsina with an IQTE head revealed that there was a very basic plan for testing students before moving them to formal schools, as part of ongoing work already planned by the State government. No other work to test learning was planned in Katsina, and GEP staff stated that they wanted to go slowly as testing would not be acceptable to IQTE heads. It seems that urgent work is needed to increase the acceptability of testing and develop standardised systems for it.

3.5 (i) Head teachers' training manual available: Delivered. Review of training materials for head teachers showed a focus on teacher and school effectiveness, but without a foundation in children's rights to education or on head teachers' responsibilities around inclusive access to school (see below).

3.5 (ii) 350 head teachers trained, 40 master trainers trained: Delivered. Concern emerged about the extent to which appropriate education principles are covered in training in discussion with one master trainer who was a Head Teacher in Sokoto, when she revealed she was delaying primary school entry for children until they could read. If GEP master trainers, trained and oriented using UNICEF-designed training processes, are not aware that they are not entitled to exclude children from entering primary school, there has clearly been a significant failure in the quality or delivery of training.

Application of training was not yet clear and plans to monitor and support head teachers to implement the training were not clear: stakeholders at state level and below were not able to describe plans, and no written plans were available.

3.5 (iii) Systems in place for tracking and monitoring head teachers' effectiveness: Partly delivered: more work is planned for the first quarter of Year 2. SBMCs already reported monitoring head teachers' and teachers' effectiveness after their training, and learning specialists are using a head teacher tracking tool to monitor head teacher performance in project schools. UNICEF reported that workshops had been conducted to familiarise head teachers with the use of the tool. No clear information was available on what type of system development is intended in this area, however. It was assumed by the review that this milestone aimed to lay the groundwork for systematic monitoring of head teacher performance by LGEA teams, rather than only providing project monitoring. This aspect has not yet apparently received any attention.

3.5 (iv) Report of the rapid assessment on teachers' attendance available in each of the states: Not delivered. While some SBMCs reported doing assessments of teachers' attendance, formal rapid assessment was not in place across project schools and attendance data is not being collected and analysed in State reports.

UNICEF reported that tools used for tracking teachers and head teachers attendance have been developed, and that Bauchi State had piloted these in 15 schools. The tools will be used in all intervention schools in Year 2. Niger State has also started using the tool during school monitoring but reports are yet to be generated. Periodic assessment of teachers and pupils was done in Zamfara.

3.6 Strategy, programme & materials for supporting early grade reading developed: Not delivered to an effective degree. A very brief and weak strategy document and a broad advocacy paper for early grade reading have been developed, but they lack clear strategies or targets for overcoming the major barriers to early reading (e.g. in grades 1 and 2 of primary school) in GEP states. Programme and materials are not yet in place.

While the challenges involved in English literacy acquisition were highlighted as a key issue by numerous stakeholders, suggested responses were very unclear and not based on any of the range of multilingual teaching and literacy approaches available. There is a great deal of evidence on good practice from low and middle income countries which has not been drawn on within GEP.

3.7 SBMC monitoring tool available: Delivered. The SBMC monitoring tool is in place and government and community leaders have reported using it to inform their understanding of education barriers and needs.

400 schools operationalising WSDP: Delivered. It was clear that SBMCs are now actively addressing

issues such as enrolment drives, scholarship for girls, and transition to JSS. Review of a selection of WSDP documents revealed that many of the written plans are focusing only on tangible issues like lack of buildings or classroom furniture, and have left sections on gender relations blank, or have stated that these things are not an issue. Further work may be needed to focus on the 'software' side of whole school development planning.

3.8 400 IQTE centres have their CBMC trained on WSDP: Delivered.
UNICEF reported that IQTEs were trained on WSDP using Hausa language, and submitted sample WSDPs as supporting evidence. Conversations with two CMBCs agreed that training had been received on school development planning.

3.9 400 IQTE CBMCs trained on fund management: Delivered in 4 out of 5 states. UNICEF reported training for CBMCs on fund management, using SBMC training materials, in every state except Zamfara, which will be delivered in Year 2. Conversations with two CMBCs agreed that training had been received on grant management. No specific information on training content was reviewed, but documentation of plans and grants to CBMCs were seen.

It was reported by UNICEF that unlike the formal public school system, the IQTE centres are privately owned and setting up CBMCs is new. Thus caution is needed so that proprietors do not see CBMCs as a subtle way to take over their school. This points to the need for detailed planning of the pace and focus of CBMC training. It also suggests that specialised training modules for CBMCs helping them negotiate these issues should be developed.

3.10 300 IQTE centres received school grants: Delivered. WCDPs were mentioned as being in place in IQTEs visited, and sample plans were submitted after the end of the review (almost all 400 IQTE centres have received grants: some of those that did not had had trouble correctly setting up bank accounts, but support is ongoing to resolve this). Grants are being used mainly to upgrade the infrastructure in IQTE centres and to provide materials for girls. As with SBMC grants, more strategic uses of grants to address gender inequity in the learning experience would be useful to consider in the longer term.

Recommendations:
- Urgently redevelop in-service teacher training (SbTD/STUMEC) and learning strategies to cover all areas of teaching & learning, including nonformal education, building on SbTD / STUMEC Study. Focus on systems to ensure teachers at school level can receive sufficient regular training & mentoring to dramatically improve performance, ideally in partnership with the Teacher Development Programme.
- Review and redevelop to strengthen early reading strategy and materials to effectively tackle problems of second language literacy, creating literate environments and community and school based literacy support strategies. Deploy advice and evidence from other low and middle income countries in this area, using external experts or research support as necessary. Consider using some funding previously allocated to zonal level for technical support to cover this need. Build direct working links between state consultants and Abuja specialists to rework strategies around learning, literacy and nonformal education together. Include measurement of learning in NFE in this area of work.
- Create detailed plans for UNICEF's engagement around IQTE integration. These plans should establish a sensible timetable for supporting project IQTEs to deliver the integrated curriculum in a quality manner, with means of generating evidence about learning outcomes. This may mean revising milestones to slow the pace of recruiting more integrated IQTE centres, and instead focusing more resources on piloting practicable ways of delivering a basic standard of quality teaching & learning with smaller numbers of IQTE centres.

- Refocus on delivering the full COE milestone within Year 2 if possible, potentially with support from the Teacher Development Programme.
- Review SBMC and CBMC training materials and identify whether future top up training can be provided to support committees to plan ways of improving aspects of the school/centre experience, for example, on focusing on issues other than materials and infrastructure. Ensure that CBMC

training is reworked to ensure that they are not treated automatically like SBMCs, and that their training reflects the nature of the centres and their relationships to communities, which are very different from formal schools.

Impact Weighting (%): 20%
Revised since last Annual Review? N

Risk: High
Revised since last Annual Review? *Y.*
The review recommends that risk is revised upwards for the next year, due to the fundamental importance of getting teacher training and non-formal learning strategies right in the first years of GEP. The review team had concerns that if teaching and learning strategies do not deliver crucial learning outcomes in the early years of newly enrolled girls' education, the whole basis for girls transitioning to higher grades and receiving life benefits is under threat. Furthermore, if communities do not see good results from their increased investment in education (happening under Output 1), the later years of GEP could see withdrawal of community support.

Output 4: *Increased and more effective participation of women in providing education*

Output 4 score and performance description: C

Work under Output 4 has focused on gaining support across GEP partners and stakeholders for FTSS (the Female Teacher Scholarship Scheme) and Mothers' Associations. This aim has been achieved, with strong enthusiasm apparent at all levels. However, delivering on expectations will not be possible unless challenges with FTSS are reviewed and addressed, and unless clearer long-term thinking on the role of Mothers' Associations is developed.

Progress against expected results:
4.1 Action plan on Strategy for advocacy on women's active participation in educational affairs developed: Not delivered (no action plan or strategy was provided to the review team).
Stakeholder discussion and school visits revealed strong enthusiasm for GEP's Mothers' Association model as a means of supporting women's participation in improving schools. Concerns were revealed during field visits that current work with Mothers' Associations had led to them being expected to provide support directly, rather than also mobilising support from others. (For example, members of one Mothers' Association in Niger had taken on additional paid day labour for several weeks to raise a shortfall of funds to provide a roof for new classroom blocks). This type of issue is to be expected at such an early stage of this work, but it is important to flag it up, so that the enthusiasm of Mothers' Associations does not diminish over time. A clear action plan may include elements on how to help Mother's Associations mobilise engagement and support from other stakeholders.

4.2 & 4.3 Contract issued (1 year) for development of women's and girls' spaces in 5 states: Delivered (contract with ActionAid). While the programme agreement with ActionAid laid out clear responsibilities for this work, confusion emerged in interviews with ActionAid about what work will actually be delivered and the extent to which women's spaces will support newly established Mothers' Associations. This may be in part due to only issuing a contract for one year, which may preclude quality design for sustainability. Partners were unable to show any thinking on how monitoring or learning from this work will be developed and used, despite an M&E plan being included in the programme agreement.

4.4 All processes in place for introduction of FTTSS in one new GEP state at state level and in CoE, including workplan, programme and budgets; in 5 states. 288 new GEP supported scholars: Delivered. Substantial work has taken place to get full state commitment to FTTSS, and there is high level enthusiasm for FTTSS in all states. Initial problems with selection are being resolved. However, low graduation and placement rates from COEs persist, threatening the effectiveness of FTTSS. Discussion with stakeholders in indicated major issues with teacher training methods, assessment data and selection and placement processes. Concerns emerged that FTTSS students, where they are being placed, are being used primarily to fill gaps in implementing ECCD policy, rather than to

strategically meet primary education teaching needs as envisaged. This creates further concern that GEP's Theory of Change appears to be relying on FTTSS as the only mechanism supported by the project to increase teacher supply.

It was emphasised that low graduation of students at COEs is a general problem for students in many COEs, linked to recent efforts to increase standards of teacher qualification by raising graduation standards. The severity of the issue varies across states. UNICEF reported that in Bauchi State, out of 200 students that sat for final exams, 117 (58.5%) graduated. In general, initial reports are that FTTSS candidates are scoring better grades in comparison to non FTTSS students. Despite increased support provided to FTTSS students to help them do well, however, graduation rates are not yet high enough to enable impact in this area to be delivered with value for money. It will be important to take urgent action to boost the graduation rate of FTTSS students still further.

Several stakeholders in three states, including teachers, state officials and staff of COEs, told the review team that FTTSS students should and would go into ECD, because that would help fill gaps in implementing recent ECD policy, and because women are naturally suited to caring for young children. These comments displayed a combination of expedient thinking and gendered assumptions about women's abilities and capabilities, which may well limit female teachers' career trajectories or cause frustration and subsequent dropout from teaching, where teachers do not feel they had free choice to choose a specialism.

There was concern that such assumptions had not been explored or challenged in stakeholder orientation. UNICEF has sound institutional expertise on gender relations, and perhaps could have used this to help stakeholders explore their expectations for FTTSS teachers and women teachers in general, based on their views of women's roles. Rethinking opportunities and expectations for women is an important aspect of girls' education work. UNICEF has an opportunity to deploy its gender expertise and distinctive relationship management advantages to help stakeholders open up thinking among stakeholders about new roles that women can take up, through and within education.

4.5 Tracking mechanism in place to assess FTTSS learning quality and graduate deployment: Not fully delivered. The disconcerting lack of a tracking mechanism for FTTSS under previous GEP phases has been filled in GEP3 and state consultants have been entering some data on the scholars. However, the information that was supplied does not answer the vital VfM questions raised. Namely: how many *of each cohort* have graduated / been employed / deployed? What stage have those still in the system reached? At what stage did scholars who dropped out leave? This is a bare minimum on this important and costly investment, as graduation rates cannot be estimated satisfactorily without them. Ideally it should be the CoE's tracking system – not the project's – and could usefully be the main administrative system with financial and other data on it, as the college in Zamfara aims to do.

Recommendations:
- Resolve Women's Spaces issue with ActionAid and clarify in an agreed written document, ensuring work has relevant, sustainable focus and strengthens Mothers' Associations approach and supports girls' learning and retention in education.
- Strengthen FTTSS tracking system to provide data on cohorts, enabling estimates of graduation employment and deployment rates.
- Use EDOREN support to conduct longitudinal research on FTTSS student trajectories and community impact, as well as investigation of key factors in low COE graduation rates.
- Work to keep FTTSS new intake numbers at 2013 levels until data has been received which will allow a redesign of FTTSS to more effectively meet the most severe support and teaching capacity gaps affecting girls, and boost graduation rates to fit within Value for Money parameters. (This may be Year 3 or 4).
- Some initial suggestions for potential improvements to FTTSS design that could be considered include:
  - Revamp FTTSS selection procedures to select only rural girls with very high levels of academic competency. This may mean that it is no longer possible to only select girls from a particular school to go back and teach at that particular school, but it should be possible to

find good candidates from schools near to the schools lacking female teachers.
- o Create more e-learning opportunities for FTTSS students.
- o Map how FTTSS students spend their time and develop ways in which more time could be spent on study. Investigating childcare concerns may be a priority here. Again, if childcare is too demanding of time to enable FTTSS students to pass exams, it may be appropriate to revise admission criteria so that fewer women with children are accepted.
- o Develop and fund specific additional classes for FTTSS students, tailored to each group's needs.
- o Review COE examination procedures and ensure FTTSS students are given clear information on exam standards and priorities.
- Work with EDOREN to consider alternative strategies or models for increasing numbers of female teachers in rural areas. A comprehensive review of other strategies, such as distance learning, school/cluster based training to gradually attain teacher qualifications, land parcels for urban teaching couples to encourage migration to rural areas, and so on, would be useful.

Impact Weighting (%): 10%
Revised since last Annual Review? N

Risk: High
Revised since last Annual Review? *Y This review recommends that the risk rating for this output be revised from Medium to High. FTTSS requires substantial review, evidence collection and reworking to be the solution to low female teacher supply in rural areas that is hoped for. Work on women's participation requires significant further thinking to genuinely create empowering participation for women in education and to contribute meaningfully to girls' learning and retention. Not enough evidence of clear thinking and longer term planning in this area was found; hence this output will need significantly increased focus if impact is to be delivered.*

Output 5: *Effective governance in education sector at all levels (school, LGA, State, Federal)*

Output 5 score and performance description: B

A great deal of work has been successfully delivered under this output, meeting most initial milestones apart from that involving collaboration with civil society. Governance work, which has involved zonal level teams as well as Abuja staff and state consultants, appeared to have focused primarily on short term blocks to progress, such as delays to delivery of FTTSS financing. Future work in this area will need to look further ahead.

Effective governance has to add up to an education sector able to meet basic needs. Teacher supply does not appear to be considered sufficiently within GEP, although it could be expected to fit under Output 5 as a governance issue. There is a concern here that the Theory of Change does not 'add up' to the required impact. If enrolment is increasing due to SBMC and Mothers' Association sensitisation as claimed, and as seemed evident in community visits, there will shortly be a major demand for extra teachers.

UNICEF reported that they have been making greater efforts to establish collaboration with UBEC since October 2012. UNICEF reported that strong collaborations exist between UNICEF and some departments of UBEC such as the Academic Service Department on ECCE, and Qur'anic Education programmes. However, there remains an urgent need to work with UBEC and state partners to develop more coherent teacher placement and financing guidelines and strategies in GEP states.

At this point SBMCs describe being directed by LGEA officials and head teachers to find funds for casual teachers, but this is not a sustainable solution. Unlike the ESSPIN/UBEC SBMC development package, SBMCs are not being given clear messages in GEP3 training materials that government is responsible for financing basic education provision, and the review found that they are tending to prioritise funding for school improvements from communities. Some SBMCs pursued government for

improved funding, but this trend was not widespread. The federal SBMC guidance package rolled out recently by UBEC, which is a detailed package for implementing federal SBMC policy, balances community and government responsibilities in meeting resource needs more clearly.

Progress against expected results:

5.1 (i) National girls' steering committee meets twice per year & reviews progress & shares good practice & challenges: Delivered. The review team was not clear how actively engaged the steering committee is in delivering responses to challenges highlighted, although steering committee engagement has been important in resolving delays to FTSS financing. Although UBEC is a part of the National Girls' Steering Committee, UBEC's lack of active involvement in the steering committee appears to be a key challenge.

5.2 (ii) FME direct outreach to high level state leadership on girl's education in two states: Delivered, with support and engagement from zonal and Abuja GEP teams and with engagement from DFID.
Synergy and strong collaboration between UNICEF and the FME is helping to generate buy-in at state level.

5.1 (iii) State & LGA consultants in place: Delivered, after lengthy delays due to difficulties finding appropriately qualified people; although many consultants were previously employed in GEP2. LGA consultants are clearly playing a crucial role in providing information and guidance at LGA level. Many reported not being involved in sufficient stakeholder trainings to enable them to fulfil their quality assurance responsibilities. Consultant work planning, which is used as the basis on which consultants are assessed and paid by their third party managing agency, was reported as not accurately reflecting actual work delivered. UNICEF reported that in Bauchi State, consultants were not deployed until March 2013 after consultant trainings had taken place. Consultants therefore missed out on this training. Arrangements were made to ensure that consultants receive regular briefs during monthly meetings to catch up.

5.2 Share monitoring tools with CSACEFA and identify role in supporting the validation of GEP3: Not fully delivered. UNICEF has engaged with CSACEFA representatives in a number of GEP 3 planning meetings. At the national level, CSACEFA has been working with GEP in the development and review of the monitoring tools, in readiness to undertake the 6 monthly review and use the data to track progress within GEP, for advocacy with government. However, CSACEFA representatives stated that they had not been invited to GEP 3 activities and did not feel they had a clear role. Documentation on CSACEFA's role gave clear outlines of the areas in which CSACEFA should engage, but not specifically how and with what outcomes in view. There was no sense that CSACEFA was expected to hold GEP to account, as was suggested in the ICAI report. At state level, for example in Bauchi and Sokoto, SCACEFA relationships with GEP appeared better and representatives were actively engaged in working with SBMC groups and traditional leaders to bring key issues to government.

5.3 SESP/SESOP reviewed and ready for use. Plans to develop, finalise or redevelop SESP/SESOP are under way in each state, depending on the timing of each SESP (some previous SESPs have not yet finished). SESOPs reviewed were of variable quality, often without clear strategies for addressing identified issues such as teacher shortage or supply of materials. The SESP for Katsina was of very good quality, and should be used as a best practice example for other states.

5.4 LESOPs drafted in 12 LGAs: Delivered, resulting in 20 LESOPs (12 directly by the project, and 8 through State intervention). It was not possible to review LESOPs.

5.5 WSDP developed in 400 of schools in 5 states and summary locally publicized. Delivered. The review team was not able to see WSDP summaries until after the review period, but discussions with Education Secretaries in several states revealed that they had been using both individual and summary WSDPs to inform their understanding of school support needs. It was not clear how WSDPs are envisaged to link to EMIS, although there is a clear opportunity to link WSDPs, community mapping and EMIS.

One area of linkage with EMIS is the premium WSDP work has placed on building capacity at the school level on records keeping and simple definitions of indicators and how to calculate same. This has strong potential to make data gathering easier and improve data quality, if efforts are made to support LGEAs to systematise the data upwards.

5.6 Performance indicators of SBMCs developed and 5% of SBMCs in 5 GEP3 states monitored: Delivered. The review team was not able to see monitoring information on SBMCs.

5.7 750 schools received grants in 5 states (project funded only): Delivered (target exceeded). Many grants have already been implemented, and have brought substantial community contributions according to documentation and stakeholders at all levels. Few appear to have leveraged substantial government matching contributions, even when new teachers were priorities in WSDPs, and it appears that this was not a significant intention behind SBMC training. As one of the major challenges in girls' education in the North is drawing down government funds, this appears to be a missed opportunity.

5.8 & 5.9 433 SBMCs trained: 30% of trainees female: Delivered. It was not possible to fully verify levels of female trainees, although several community and government stakeholders interviewed reported that female participation in the training was high, and UNICEF reported that gender targets were met.

5.10 Simplify FME FIS instrument: Not fully delivered. Quality Assurance stakeholders were engaged in discussions on the strategies for best use of the FIS FME instrument. UNICEF reported at the end of the review that there was a strategic shift in this activity. Following several consultations with the FME, and the States, the instrument was deemed of good quality, and did not need to be watered down. The FIS instrument is a new document that was produced in 2010 and is in use nationally. Simplifying this would require a national process. It was thus agreed that the FIS instrument would not be simplified as such. It was therefore resolved that the FIS instrument would be stepped down, through training and retraining, and application in the LGEAs and schools. A work plan was developed by the FME to kick-start the process during Year Two. Initial talks were held with FIS (FME) and a summary version of the FIS instrument has been adapted for head teacher training.

Recommendations:
- Develop teacher supply advocacy strategy as an urgent priority, looking at potential to collaborate with other agencies and programmes and identifying GEP's specific contribution. This work should create updated projections of increased teacher numbers needed due to increased enrolment in GEP states; engage key players at State level in linking FTSS to full state level teacher placement approach; and use community mapping, SBMC data and other evidence to generate coherent strategies for creating new teaching jobs where demand is clear.
- Prioritise developing an active partnership with UBEC to tackle teacher supply difficulties (for example through use of UBEC intervention funds, or development of new guidelines on teacher placement and recruitment).
- Review UBEC Federal SBMC guidelines and state SBMC policy implementation booklets, and establish how these can be harmonised with GEP SBMC training; particularly in the area of leveraging government funds for WSDPs.
- Bring together consultants, staff and partners working on all sector plans (SESP/SESOPs and LESOPs) and encourage greater focus on practical strategies for overcoming barriers to improving education (such as financing, permission to recruit teachers, coordination of teacher training with teacher placement, and so on).
- Develop a written agreement with CSACEFA on how it can hold GEP to account, as well as how it can support achievement of GEP's objectives.
- Ask EDOREN to review data produced at school level such as community mappings, and to recommend how such data could be systematised and linked into EMIS.
- Ask EDOREN to undertake operational/political economy research to investigate how UNICEF could be more effective at taking opportunities for influence and leverage in government, to inform more strategic thinking about what changes governance work should achieve by the end of GEP.

Impact Weighting (%): 25%
Revised since last Annual Review? N

Risk: High
Revised since last Annual Review? N While much work has taken place under this output, and strong relationships have been built to improve governance, more strategic thinking about what changes governance work should achieve by the end of GEP is required.

Output 6: *Enhanced knowledge management at State and Federal level.*

Output 6 score and performance description: C

Activity in this area has been significantly delayed, although increased efforts have been made to share some information with other IDPs and other agencies. A major gap is the lack of linkages made with UBEC on GEP3. The utilisation of good practice from within and outside GEP has been undertaken primarily through meetings and personal contacts, rather than through comprehensive review of documentary evidence. Opportunities to use learning and approaches from ESSPIN, which offers very relevant experience in some key areas, do not appear to have been taken.

The review team felt that a great deal more could and should be done around knowledge management, both to boost government capacity and to ensure that GEP uses evidence and learning effectively to strengthen project approaches. The review team felt that the generalist, summarising approach evident in the work of UNICEF zonal teams to filtering and processing project information and reports was not good value for money in getting good practice and evidence for influencing, and was missing opportunities to use the large amount of project data for improving project models and improving political support for project approaches.

Project reporting and documentation in general was unclear and inconsistent, with dates not appended to documents, unclear titles, and formats which did not lend themselves to displaying information clearly. A large number of report statements were not backed up with examples or other evidence. Although many project documents are generated by state partners in GEP, and as such can be expected to have weaknesses and inconsistencies, the review team expected to see clearer intentions from GEP staff and consultants to strengthen partners' documentation approaches. Instead, documents produced by GEP staff and consultants were not at the standard the review team expected to find from such a high profile project. The difficulty that UNICEF had in making all relevant documents available to the review team, several arriving after the end of the review, indicated problems with organising and utilising documentation.

Progress against expected results:

6.1 (i) Study on support to SBMC and school grants status and needs: At the end of the review it was explained that a detailed baseline study on SBMC work and school grant status had been produced and that therefore the milestone had been delivered. Progress in delivering school grants to SBMCs has been good. At the point of the review, it was not clear what the strategy is for using school grants to demonstrate the value of 'school based funding'.

(ii) SbTD & STUMEC study: Not delivered. Study began during the review period. New GEP 3 states had however been sensitized on the need to introduce and mainstream SbTD and STUMEC.

(iii) FTSS tracking initiated: Delivered, although the review team found significant concerns about the quality and usefulness of the tracking system as currently implemented (see comments on Output 4).

(iv) CCT process evaluation study started: Delivered. (See details in Output 1.1)

(v) Needs assessment / mappings of Nomadic education/IQTE/2nd chance education: Delivered except for 2nd chance education mapping, which is still being conducted. Needs assessments have not been translated into clear strategies for action.

6.2 Teacher Development Needs Assessment (TDNA) data collection in 5 GEP3 States. Not fully delivered. This study began just before the review period, and tools were reviewed. The initial TDNA findings are expected in September 2013. The review team felt design was strong. A consultant on the study reported some delays in obtaining data, and some organisational and logistical challenges in co-operating with UNICEF. EDOREN provided some limited technical support, and reported concerns about the consistency and inadequacy of English in the TDNA instruments. Use of active learning in classrooms where teachers have been trained under GEP2 was observed to be poor on school visits, indicating that previous models of cascading training via head teachers may not have been ideal. Further discussions are envisaged with TDP to harmonise interventions on teacher education and development.

6.3 Best practice compiled, media strategy developed (and collaboration to share knowledge with other agencies in place): Not delivered. There was no media strategy or evidence of compilation of best practice, although good practice had been shared across states during quarterly review meetings. Several agencies have been invited to review and sharing meetings, and UNICEF is part of the new Reading Task Force. Inconsistent approaches to sharing and collaboration appeared to be in place. For example, GEP has worked with the Northern Education Initiative to develop a Hausa version of the GEP SBMC training manuals, but has not coordinated on SBMC training with ESSPIN, whose SBMC training manual and process has now been taken on by UBEC to be rolled out to all SBMCs nationwide.

6.4 Results of MLA 2011 analysed and available: Not delivered. Major delays in leveraging government funding were resolved towards the end of Year 1 following advocacy and commitment of additional funding from UNICEF. Analysis of the MLA data is now under way. FME released N45m as its contribution to funds from UNICEF to complete the 2011 MLA to establish a new baseline on Learning Achievement in Nigeria. Data collected are now being analysed and it is expected that the final report on MLA will be ready by early October 2013.

6.5 Advocacy for MLA instruments and processes to be extended to include Non Formal Education: Partly delivered. No documentary information on this area was seen by the review team. However, UNICEF reported that the MLA has integrated questions of NFE, due to UNICEF's continuous advocacy and engagement with government. The initial steps in crafting out modalities and frame work for the integration of NFE and IQE into the National MLA framework began with a national workshop in November 2012. The workshop output was a draft Concept Note that would guide further work when finalised.

6.6 Baseline GEP learning assessment designed and conducted. The GEPLA design has been developed and tools are in place. The review team felt that design was strong although the assessment has been conducted with students in later years of primary (P4, 5, 6) which means it will not provide a baseline for early grade interventions. The assessment is being carried out alongside the TDNA study (see above).

6.7 (i) 4 GEP states have computerized EMIS with complete state education 2011/12 data available: Delivered. The review team felt it was important to note that simply having data on the school year previous to GEP3 implementation is not a relevant milestone for judging impact attribution. UNICEF recognizes the persistent data gaps that have impacted on effective educational policy planning, implementation and evaluation. Through a computerized State EMIS, GEP will generate and make access to reliable data possible, with basic indicators captured in the GEP logframe. Niger State MOE has moved a step further by collaborating with ESSPIN on EMIS management. The State is currently using ESSPIN Access software to process the 2012/2013 annual school census data. This collaboration will be strengthened in GEP3 Year 2.

6.7 (ii) State EMIS personnel trained on data management: Delivered. Basic training has been delivered to State EMIS personnel. However, EDOREN's Desk Review of the EMIS work finds that 'GEP states suffer from resource and capacity constraints which limit the reliability of the data, and leads to slow publication of the results which limit their usefulness in the planning process' and recommends a full EMIS data quality review. The evaluation of GEP2 was critical of the technical cooperation with states to deliver their EMIS capacity, and the discussion of the approach set down in the GEP3 'Governance Strategy' paper does not provide encouragement that GEP3 has started more promisingly. There was also an apparent lack of awareness of possible data quality problems. The difficulty reported by the TDNA Study consultant in obtaining EMIS data may also be symptomatic. EMIS capacity appears to have increased in some GEP states more through their collaboration with USAID's NEI than UNICEF, while the desire of two GEP states to receive training on software delivered under ESSPIN and the greater progress achieved on EMIS in ESSPIN states suggest other agencies have provided more effective support.

Recommendations:
- At present most technical support to state and LGA consultants comes from UNICEF's Bauchi and Kaduna zonal offices, which, the review found, tend to filter information and pass summarised versions to Abuja level rather than highlighting best practice. It would be more relevant to link state consultants more directly with Abuja thematic experts, as thematic experts will be better able to seek out relevant best practice happening at state level, use it for solving design and evidence problems, and share it across GEP's internal and external partners.
- Develop more thorough and practicable measures of effectiveness of female teachers (especially FTSS teachers) in contributing to girls' education, with support from EDOREN. (For example, if enumerators' and teachers' English is too poor to conduct tests, develop alternative protocols for testing genuine knowledge). Promote institutionalisation of these methods as part of support to GEP states.
- UBEC requested 'a genuine partnership' with UNICEF to explore ways of supporting and scaling up Mothers' Associations and teacher development and placement systems. It will be important to respond rapidly to this opportunity, conducting joint discussion of major challenges with women's participation in education and teaching, and working out how each agency can support the other. UBEC recommended ESSPIN's approach to partnership, which involved getting to know how UBEC worked, openly discussing areas of synergy, moving to more formal plans to inform and support UBEC guidelines, and occasionally providing small amounts of funding to remove blockages to wider action.
- Ask EDOREN to conduct a full EMIS data quality review to assess the current situation and make recommendations as to how GEP3 can effectively assist states to collect timely and reliable data and to disseminate and apply them well.
- Bring in a specialist in using evidence from programme work for influencing and sharing good practice. Ask this person to develop specific nodes across GEP for capturing, analysing and deploying information to achieve advocacy and programme strengthening goals. Consider diverting funds from zonal office support to do this.
- Develop a reporting strategy, with EDOREN support if appropriate, that will enable all stakeholders in the process of implementation to record their findings in similar manner, so that it is easy to look up information across the project. Clarity on dating, titling and structuring documents, as well as how to evidence claims made, is needed. An intensive training on this should be given to all relevant staff, consultants, government partners and civil society.
- Allocate responsibility in one person's job role to increase strategic collaboration and sharing of evidence with other agencies (such as UBEC, SPARC, SAVI, ESSPIN, TDP, VfM Group). Offer support to this person from EDOREN around how research and evidence generation can be used strategically within GEP and its collaborations.

Impact Weighting (%): 10%
Revised since last Annual Review? N

Risk: Medium
Revised since last Annual Review? *Y* It is recommended that the risk rating of this output be moved from Low to Medium for Year 2, as creating an effective knowledge management culture

within and around GEP's work will be essential for delivering well designed inputs and demonstrating their value for scaleup. The review found that knowledge management was extremely weak within GEP, and few efforts to promote knowledge management as an output of GEP had been prioritised. The review team felt that with better understanding and promotion of knowledge management, many of the technical weaknesses identified in other outputs could be addressed within the next year. However, this may require a shift in attitude towards the value of information design, analysis and sharing, and will require some new ways of working to be put in place.

Section B: Results and Value for Money

1. Progress and results

1.1 Has the logframe been updated since last review? Y

The logframe was revised with support from Ruth Naylor and agreement from DFID in February/March 2013. Key changes following this revision include limiting GEP to five states in order to ensure that GEP3's investment achieved significant increases in education access and quality over and above expected non-intervention rates. Other changes are laid out below.

Access
The increases in girls' enrolment in primary, JSS and IQTE were changed to 860,000, 140,000 and 150,000, based on a model with the existing five states experiencing an annual increase of 6%, 6% and 10% respectively.
Changes in Gross Attendance Ratio were modelled based on the rate of increase in girls' enrolment (6% per annum) plus anticipated improvements in attendance of enrolled girls (2% per annum), minus the increase in population (3% per annum). This model gave a much lower, but more realistic target than in the operational plan (54% rather than 85%). The target in the operational plan did not take population growth into account.

Completion
The targeted number of girls completing JSS3 was estimated based on the 6% annual rate of enrolment increase. The survival rate at primary was targeted at 90%.

Learning
The indicative baseline on learning is very low indeed. The target anticipates a 20% increase above this by 2020, but this will need to be reviewed once the baseline learning assessment has been conducted.

Output targets

Output 1: Increased parental demand for and support to girls' education
The girls' enrolment in grade 1 milestones and target were set based on the 6% annual increase model.
The Gender Parity Index target was adjusted according to a model with 6% annual increase in girls' enrolment and 4% annual increase in boys' enrolment.
Girls' attendance rates targets were set at 90% based on the current baseline data.
The cash transfer target was maintained at 72,000 girls receiving transfers (a headline result).

Output 2: Increased basic education opportunities for girls
The target for increased number of IQTE centres was reduced from the original 5000 to 3750 to reflect the challenges of concentrating this expansion within five states rather than ten, but to accommodate for a 10% annual increase in girls' enrolment in these centres.
Increases in girls' enrolment in other non-formal education were set at around 5% increase per year based on the level of political will to expand these sectors, the available resources under GEP3 and the need to ensure that they keep ahead of population growth.
The first two milestones for girls' transition rate from primary to JSS were maintained at the same level as the baseline. This was because during the first few years of GEP3, the enlarged cohorts of girls from GEP2 will be progressing through the system and graduating from P6. The model anticipates a time lag before JSS will have increased in capacity enough to accommodate this growing population of primary graduates. However, it is anticipated that this bottle neck will have been opened up by 2016 sufficiently for transition rates to increase.

Output 3: Improved teaching and learning processes and environment
The teacher attendance target was set at 90%, based on an anticipated improvement over the 80%

baseline and as the inputs in school management (through head teacher and SBMC training) should improve teacher attendance to a reasonable level in all schools. Given that long term absenteeism rates for teachers, often for legitimate reasons, are around 10% (as measured in the 2010/11 school census for Niger state), it was felt to be unrealistic to aim above 90%. Targets for the indicator on teacher professionalism were set based on a proxy baseline from the Teacher Development Needs Assessment (TDNA) in Kano conducted by ESSPIN. The target of 25% improvement was set in consultation with a member of the TDNA team from the University of Oxford. However this may need to be reviewed once the results from the GEP3 baseline TDNA are known.

The target for the percentage of schools operationalising Whole School Development Plans (WSDPs) was set at 90% since GEP3 funds, together with leveraged funds from the state, should be sufficient to ensure that all public primary and JSS in the five states will have received at least one round of SBMC training and one round of school grants.

Output 4: Increased and more effective participation of women in providing education

The target for the percentage of female teachers was revised down in the light of analysis of the number of additional female teachers required to increase this percentage further.

The target for the number of women's spaces was aligned to the target for the number of girls' spaces as the women's spaces are being developed to support and ensure sustainability of the girls' spaces in schools.

The target for the number of FTSS graduates will be tracked at the level of the number awarded (by the project) and at the number of graduates, sponsored by the project, who join the teacher payroll in their own communities/ in communities of need. These were both set at 10,000 in line with the headline result of : "10,000 more female teachers present in rural Primary, Junior and Senior Secondary Schools (JSS and SSS)" (see GEP3 operational plan p19). The number of FTSS scholarships awarded and paid by the states will be monitored as part of the Value for Money strategy to monitor leverage ratios.

Output 5: Effective governance in education sector at all levels (school, LGA, State, Federal)

The main change to the targets under this output was an increase/ clarification of the target for the number of grants disbursed. For grants disbursed by the project the target was set at 10,000, as per the headline result. For the states the target was set at 5,000. This is well below the 70%:30% leverage ratio that participating states agreed to on joining GEP3, but significantly higher that the state provision of school grants under GEP2 (only 10% of the number provided by the project). The target for the number of Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) with Local Education Sector Operational Plans (LESOPs) was set to match the number of LGEAs in the five GEP3 states.

Output 6: Enhanced knowledge management at state and federal level

The only changes to milestones and targets under this output were to align the milestones to the new dates and the number of states. More detailed milestones were included in the activities matrix, laying out which studies were to be conducted, and providing further development targets for the dissemination of state EMIS.

Activity descriptions and milestones

These were reviewed to align the milestones with the new milestone dates and to reflect changes made to the targets. In addition, some activities were made more specific or revised. The review team felt that the logframe had been significantly strengthened, with clearer intervention logic and more realistic targets. However, significant weaknesses remained around managing risks and responding to assumptions (see 4.2)

1.2 Overall Output Score and Description:

The overall output score is B.

1.3 Direct feedback from beneficiaries

As this was only the first annual review of GEP3, feedback from stakeholders involved in delivering project activities was prioritised. However, feedback from groups of approximately 10 primary beneficiaries – girls in school - was also achieved during two school visits, one in Niger State and one in Katsina. These schools had been involved in GEP2 and so the feedback provided reflected GEP2

impact as well as GEP3. Girls interviewed described the importance of having support from the SBMC and Mothers' Association for girls to stay in school, and valuing advice from their teachers on menstruation as well as on academic matters.

Other beneficiaries which the review team spoke to included women teachers, parents, and other community members from each state, as well as stakeholders such as SBMC chairs and traditional leaders from each state: overall, over 180 people. Many more community members came to school visits to show their support for GEP and for girls' education. It was clear that traditional leaders and SBMC chairs were working closely with LGAs and communities to promote girls' access to primary and secondary school. None of the women teachers spoken to had received direct training under GEP2 or GEP3, but had found step down training under GEP2 useful.

4-5 FTTSS students were interviewed from each state and were able to share how the scheme had positively affected them and their communities. Wasila Abdullahi Gazali, a year 3 FTTSS beneficiary expressed gratitude for the programme as she was rescued from early marriage arranged by her parents. Maimunatu Abdulrazak's parents could not afford her transition to any tertiary institution though she was qualified for direct admission into any tertiary programme. She described the scholarship is a dream come true for her, and said she will comply with the bond as she is seeing the effect of her participation on girls and women in her community already. Four girls in her community enrolled in CoE this academic year because of her encouragement.

Zainab Dauda Ahmad, a 41 year old FTTSS beneficiary from Niger State, lost her father and could not transit to any tertiary institution due to lack of funds and support, got married. She heard of FTTSS, applied and was one of the successful candidates. Her husband allowed her to pursue her dream, now she spends most of her time mentoring girls in her community. She is happy teaching, she says she is fulfilled and grateful to UNICEF and DFID.

FTTSS students identified several challenges they had experienced, mainly due to funding delays and lack of accommodation, particularly in Niger. A student from Bauchi state revealed that her 12 year old sister had had to care for her baby for most of the year, because funds had not come through enabling her to pay for childcare. It will be important for GEP to share stories like this where structural problems with releasing government funds result in GEP inadvertently damaging the education of some young women in order to support others. Several colleges of education had developed solutions to these challenges. For example, in Zamfara, young women started 3 weeks after the term started but the college accommodated by shifting their exams by 3 weeks as well.

Key education officials at State levels can also be considered beneficiaries of GEP capacity building. At the initial presentation of findings which completed the review visit, several state officials stated that they had differing priorities based on their different situations, and that they needed help from GEP to tackle these issues rather than pressure to deliver a set series of activities.

Parents, male and female, consistently reported poverty as being the major barrier for them to keep their daughters in school, rather than beliefs or traditional thinking. This suggests that work on CCTs will need major attention to establish the potential for expanding its scale.

1.4 Summary of overall progress

GEP3 has improved substantially in basic planning, management and delivery since the ICAI Report (June 2012). Presentations and conversations with stakeholders in all states showed that GEP has built an impressive foundation of trust and enthusiasm with FME, across SUBEBs and SMOEs at state level, and at school, community and LGEA levels. Delivery of activities against most Year 1 milestones has either taken place or been started. The review found that quality of delivery did not meet expectations in many cases, when considering Year 1 milestones as laying the foundations for future impact. The biggest concerns lay with the Learning and Women's Participation outputs (Outputs 3 and 4), both of which appear significantly off track in terms of their ability to generate expected future impact.

1.5 Key challenges

UNICEF reported delays in recruiting key project staff and consultants for GEP3, as well as the far-reaching impact of the August 2011 bombing of UNICEF headquarters in Abuja on project facilities and UNICEF's overall functioning. The Federal Ministry of Education's presentation to the review also cited UNICEF's change of financial systems in Autumn 2012 as causing significant delays and frustration between partners.

Several milestones (often strategies or plans) have not been delivered during Year 1. It emerged from discussion with GEP staff that some milestones were not considered relevant at this stage, and others had been delayed, often due to the above issues. Opportunities to update the logframe did not appear to have been fully taken by UNICEF during the logframe revision process in March 2013.

Challenges reported in the 2012 ICAI Report have been addressed by DFID and UNICEF, and the majority of key actions listed in DFID's response to the ICAI report have been taken. However, the extent to which these actions have addressed all of ICAI's concerns about value for money, collaboration and project design may be more limited. A more effective action in response to ICAI may have resulted from a more far-reaching attempt by UNICEF to address the concerns behind the ICAI report rather than the specific delivery of tasks against it.

All GEP documentation reviewed was markedly poorer in quality than that produced under ESSPIN, suggesting to the review team that using documentary evidence as a core driver of project learning and delivery is not embedded within GEP. (See 4.2 for further detail).

While extensive work has been done on monitoring & reporting tools and plans, this does not appear to have filtered down to all stakeholders. Stakeholder statements and project reports are not yet splitting GEP2 and GEP3 impact attribution, and information is not yet being harvested from M&R tools to strengthen impact. A key position on M&E has been unfilled for a year, although short term consultancy inputs have been provided during Year 1. Mapping data presentation and analysis was very varied and often weak, across all areas. All monitoring processes appear to be 'standalone': there is scope to further embed project monitoring in state systems'.

Planning and communication were limited in scope, although frequent. Indicative priorities and action plans for Year 2 were not on paper or communicated with any stakeholders interviewed, apart from some State Project Coordinators.

Clear leadership and coordination is not yet in place on technical issues across the project. Although there is very good communication across state teams, communication from Abuja, where technical experts sit, to state level GEP teams appears to have been very limited. Technical thinking has taken place on issues like literacy, EMIS and nonformal education at several levels, but the people involved have not been working together coherently. An example is the way in which planning in response to the nomadic education mapping in Sokoto was done. The NFE consultant worked closely with the Nomadic Education Commission to generate an initial strategy, which involved deploying FTSS graduates to fill gaps in nomadic teaching vacancies. However, on asking the Sokoto Learning consultant whether this was feasible, she had not heard of the plans and quickly pointed out that they would not be appropriate. The nomadic strategy had progressed to draft form despite this obvious check not taking place.

Variable engagement of different partners was reported, and the perception of collaboration with external agencies within UNICEF was far more positive than that reported by those agencies.

1.6 Annual Outcome Assessment

The baseline year for GEP3 is 2010/11 because Annual School Census 2010/11 was available at the point of revising the logframe (March 2013). The review team felt it is important to note that data from 2011/12 offers little of value for the purposes of programme measurement and attribution of GEP3, because no interventions with beneficiaries began before late May 2012 (at the end of the 2011/12 school year) and few took place before January 2013 (mid-way through 2012/13). A more useful

baseline point would be 2012/13, if that data were sufficiently robust. In general, the review found that comparison across years is likely to be problematic, as timings of annual school censuses vary and data validation had not apparently been conducted on them, as far as the review was able to determine, not all data outcome level data in the GEP3 logframe is being published by states, or was not available to the review team.

Sub outcome: Access (Enrolment)

Girls' enrolment in public schools
Milestone: increase of 210,000. Reported: 233,000 (with significant questions about data).

UNICEF reported that between 2010/11 and 2011/12 girls' primary school enrolment increased by 176,968 (against a target of 180,000), while that of JSS went up by 32,710 (against a target of 30,000). At the time of the review, 2012/2013 ASC data was available for Zamfara and Sokoto, but not available for Bauchi, Katsina and Niger. A decrease of over 25,000 in enrolment in primary and 2,000 for JSS, was reported in Sokoto state. State officials felt this may have been due to clean up of data.

Statistical tables on primary school enrolment were also provided to the review. Zamfara's reported increase in girls' primary enrolment looks large at approximately 53,000. However, it is difficult to draw clear comparisons on primary enrolment with 2011/12, as the data source cited for primary enrolment in 2011/12 and 2010/11 was not the annual school census, while the 2012/13 data are from the school census. The run of figures cited from 2004 to 2011 quotes various sources and is very erratic. It would therefore be unwise to take any year-on-year differences for Zamfara at face value without detailed investigation.

Similarly, enrolment data for project schools in Zamfara showed an average increase in girls' enrolment of 60% (4800 in total). Although, many of the school level GEP3 interventions had not got off the ground at the point when 12/13 data was collected, Zamfara state had run girls' enrolment media campaigns across the state. In interviews, state officials attributed enrolment increases to this campaign. However, again it is not possible to state that the level of enrolment increase reported is valid, given that the data sources are not the same.

Preliminary 2012/13 data was supplied to the review by Sokoto SMOE, but had not yet been included in UNICEF reporting. This data indicated 225,000 primary school girls in 2012/13, which was 44,000, or 24%, higher than the figure reported for 2011/12. Boys saw no increase, rounding to the nearest percent. However, the statistical tables document provided to the review team does not present this comparison; neither does UNICEF's fourth quarterly report nor its Annual Report. Therefore caution might be in order, especially as the figures are striking. No 2012/13 data was available for JSS in Sokoto.

Girls' enrolment in IQTE
Absolute: milestone 150,000
Increase: milestone 26,000. Reported: 21,000

Figures were drawn from the UNICEF annual report. Sources were not available to verify data. The four states with data reported an average increase of 4,000 girls in IQTE in 2012/13, a little below the target of approximately 5,000 per state.

Reported increased enrolment of girls in IQTE added up to 23,400. Niger was the only state to see a large increase in IQTE enrolment: 12,000 compared to a target of 3,000. Katsina saw an increase of 2,000 against a 6,000 target. Sokoto saw an increase of 3,000 and Zamfara a fall of 1,400. The increase targets quoted for them (+9,000 & +1,000 respectively) are labelled in the annual report as being for 2013/14 instead of 2012/13. Bauchi's target of an increase of 3,000 is also labelled as for 2013/14 in the quarterly report. No data were reported for 2012/13 in the state.

Reduced enrolment in Sokoto and Zamfara in Nomadic and IQTE centres was attributed to the period within which the data was collected; during the harvesting seasons and migration seasons, when children move away from schools.

Sub outcome: Access (Attendance)

Attendance data for monitoring under this outcome is not expected to be available until 2015 because it is dependent on the conduct of the next national household survey (NEDS 2015). Attendance data is being collected at present through ongoing local monitoring. Data quality is not likely to be suitable for the purposes of project monitoring, however, unless attendance is monitored independently and unannounced.

Sub outcome: Completion

Number of girls completing JSS3 as measured by registration for external examination
Milestone: 76,000
Source: SMoE

Girls' survival rate Grade 1 to Grade 6
Milestone: 75% increase on baseline

It was not possible to determine whether these milestones had been met. None of the statistical EMIS data provided to the review (Zamfara 2012/13; Sokoto 2012/13; and Bauchi, Katsina, and Niger up to 2011/12) included any data on completion or survival rates. The expected calculation is the reconstituted cohort method that compares grade enrolment and repetition data from two consecutive years' State EMIS data. The method can produce unreliable results unless data quality is reasonably high and consistent across both years. Conversations with state EMIS experts and GEP EMIS consultants, raised doubts as to whether EMIS data of sufficient quality would be available. These doubts were supported by EDOREN's recent report on EMIS for GEP3. Substantial work to improve the quality and reliability of the EMIS will be needed next year.

Notes and recommendations on capturing outcome level data on access

The review team did not see evidence that EMIS in GEP states is currently able to provide valid outcome level monitoring & evaluation data for GEP3, particularly around access and completion. Verification and validation of reported figures and year-on-year comparisons was mostly impossible during the review period. It was difficult to find data, or clear information on how data had been produced and validated. EDOREN, which has conducted a desk review of GEP3's EMIS work, has raised similar concerns:

> *49. It is vital that these shortfalls [discussed in the document] are addressed quickly as it takes time to improve the ASC process so every effort is needed to make a significant improvement to the 13/14 cycle in all GEP partner states. In addition this should also include a full validation in the 13/14 annual school census cycle for GEP partner states so as not to only provide quality timely data and reporting but to also prove it.*

> *50. Until this is achieved it will not be possible to use the ASC data in the GEP M&E process unless there are critical reviews of each states data which is very difficult given the lack of supporting evidence, meta data, school lists etc. available.'*

Although the review found that UNICEF had been providing advice to state government on strengthening EMIS, the resulting data were not in a condition which allowed verification or confidence in the reliability of information. To meet an appropriate level of rigour for GEP3 outcome data, state data systems will need to produce data which can be investigated and verified by outsiders. If validation of GEP activities is to be possible using outcome data, it will be important to strengthen state collection systems over the next one to two years so that they can provide stronger comparison data.

ESSPIN's experience in this area is relevant. ESSPIN pursued agreement with state partners that annual school census data would be collected by October/November every year, at the beginning of the school year (which meant that budgets would have to be released for the census on time). This means the data can be used for planning and budgeting. At present, school censuses in GEP States are often not completed until May/June, meaning that responsive planning and resource allocation cannot be undertaken. Having census data from the same time every year will also mean that year-on-year comparisons for GEP3 monitoring can reliably be made.

Having helped state partners establish regular census timings, ESSPIN then supported them to improve data quality by a range of means, including clarifying the school lists, and to conduct sample audits of data. Without such sample audits it is not possible to tell whether enrolment data are valid. GEP3 should prioritise the setting up of this type of systematic approach. Experience from NEI in Bauchi and Sokoto is also likely to be relevant in this area. Instituting improvement in EMIS data should mean that information on completion and transition rates should become reliable.

It should be possible in the short term to use support from EDOREN to analyse existing SBMC data and community mapping data more rigorously, and to compare it with school census information and cohort tracking data for validation and greater richness of analysis. A great deal of data at this level has been produced in Year 1 of GEP, but the review found that formats and analysis from LGEA levels upwards are not yet fit for producing useful evidence of project impact or data that can easily be used for effective planning and financing (see Output 1, 1.3, for more detail). Discussions with stakeholders during the review revealed that there is enthusiasm among some education secretaries for using information such as community mappings and SBMC monitoring tools more systematically to aid monitoring and planning. Putting more systematic focus onto LGEA level information collection and analysis systems would help create valid GEP3 monitoring and evaluation data as well as strengthening education planning and resourcing.

At present GEP3 outcome data does not enable attribution of project interventions such as SBMC mobilisation, FTSS, or enrolment campaigns. In addition to improvements in the overall quality of EMIS data, that would require the ability to match data from various sources at school-level, which usually depends on improved school coding. A common school level database in each state, with clear coding protocols, would allow evaluators to look at impact school by school and LGEA. If this were established, it would then be possible to compare data from GEP3 UNICEF-supported schools, replication schools, and nearby unsupported schools. Clear understandings of how to identify and report 'attendance', 'repetition', 'dropout', 'transition' and 'completion' would need to be established.

To summarise, in order to provide data of sufficient quality to validate this project, GEP3 is likely to need to support state governments to establish clear timings, quality and validation checks within its EMIS. It is recommended that UNICEF bring in a higher level of expertise on EMIS to strengthen its capacity to do this. Strong expertise already exists within EDOREN in this area.

As a first step, a review by EDOREN in the next six months of recently produced school census data would be useful to establish the current strength of outcome data in more depth, and highlight areas of weakness.A strong system with the above characteristics would then need to be established through technical assistance by UNICEF to states. In the process a good quality dataset for one year would be created. Pulling together and reviewing all data for that year across different sources would then need to take place. Validation and checking of a sample of data school by school will then need to be carried out. Articulating the data limitations and using them for reassurance or to direct improvements would be the next step. Delivering this is likely to take at least two years, and will need to be followed by steps to replicate the process for future years. UNICEF will need to prioritise the recruitment of an M&E expert that has very strong experience in order to be able to support this process effectively.

Sub outcome: Learning
% of enrolled girls with min. learning competence1 according to national MLA
National MLA 2011 analysis delayed and is ongoing (see Output 6)

% of girls in P3 able to read a sentence in Hausa/English and demonstrate comprehension
The baseline learning assessment (GEPLA) had been designed but not yet completed at the time of the review. GEP learning assessment (GEPLA) has been designed for the assessment of students in later years of primary (P4, 5, 6). As such, it does not provide baseline data for this outcome indicator. The indicator will either need to be revised, or a new baseline study conducted as soon as possible.

It should be noted that being able to read and understand a sentence in Hausa or English is likely to involve very different levels of linguistic skill and knowledge, particularly for rural girls. This indicator as currently written suggests they are equal alternatives, which is likely to create inaccuracy in judging the literacy levels of girls. Revisiting this indicator at some point to decide what is intended - is the aim for girls to be able to read and understand a sentence in *both* Hausa (and other state languages) and

English - may be helpful.

2. Costs and timescale

2.1 Is the project on-track against financial forecasts: No (But yes, as per the agreed revised financial forecasts for year one with DFID)

No. Budgets for year 1 were revised downwards during the year during 6 monthly budget negotiations with DFID. All budget revisions were discussed in detail and have been carried out with the full agreement of DFID. Expenditure was less (86%) than the latest version of the budget available during the year, although funds are considered to be 'committed' in UNICEF's financial management system (see below). Project expenditure for the first year reported by UNICEF in its fourth quarterly report and in the budget revision agreed between UNICEF and DFID on 20 May 2013 (after the end of the first year) was £6.4m. (Audited accounts are not yet available.) This constitutes 86% of the £7.5m in the revised budget reported against, 66% of the £9.7m in UNICEF's Operational Plan (OP) and 56% of the £11.5m in Business Case.

The forecast in the GEP3 Business Case was based on GEP3 staff being in post from the beginning (May 2012) which was only fully achieved 9 months later (January 2013). Delays in spending were experienced mainly during the first half of the year. This was mainly due to the time it took to recruit new staff for the programme. UNICEF has reported that it was not possible to advertise for new staff and consultant positions until the first tranche of GEP3 funds was received (June 2012). This meant that GEP3 started with a skeleton staff left over from GEP 2. UNICEF also reported that the 'ICAI team' conducting a review of GEP2 (June-July 2012) required substantial support in terms of information, data and manpower, which further contributed to the delay in GEP3 start-up.

In response to challenges with staffing the programme, DFID and UNICEF agreed to revise the initial budget plan in October 2012. A lower sum was requested in the second tranche to compensate for unspent staff costs in the first 2 quarters. UNICEF recommended that a national M&E position in the staffing structure be changed to a higher level position to secure the level of expertise required, however, this position was still unfilled at the end of year 1. In November 2012, with the agreement of DFID, UNICEF hired 3 short term consultants to support the design and start-up of some GEP3 activities where there were staffing gaps (e.g. Head teacher training, reading interventions, contracting of 3rd party consultants). UNICEF also used the 'capacity building' budget line to support a large scale interviewing process to recruit 45 new GEP3 state and LGEA positions, conducting approximately 150 interviews and written exams in Kaduna, Bauchi and Abuja.

Another issue which has impacted spending is the fact that GEP3 has not expanded into new States at the rate expected in the original DFID Business Case. The Business Case proposed that 2 new States would be identified within 6 months of implementation (by November 2012). A first new State – Zamfara – was identified and agreed quickly in the first 3 months of the programme. UNICEF then conducted scoping missions to Kebbi and Yobe in September 2012 to gather information and analysis for a possible sixth GEP3 State. UNICEF's assessment indicated that the worsening security situation in Yobe would make the expansion of GEP3 difficult, but that Kebbi could be considered more viable for GEP3 expansion. At January PMC, DFID decided to postpone the decision to expand GEP3 into a sixth state until after the First Annual Review due to growing concerns with UNICEF's capacity to manage and implement the project.

With regard to under-spending, UNICEF has responded that the 86% 'utilisation rate' for GEP3 at the end of the first year does not mean that remaining funds are not 'committed'. An example is the contract signed with Actionaid for women's and girls' spaces (Output 3). While the first quarter payment has been made to ActionAid, three quarters of the payments have not been disbursed as there was delay in signing the original contract. This will now be done every quarter as per the Project Co-operation agreement with ActionAid.

The degree to which spend is less than budget varies by category. Reported spending on activities

generally forms a lower proportion of the budgets than spending on staff and other overheads. Just over half (51%) of the budget on all activities had been spent, compared to 84% of all UNICEF (education and cross-sectoral staff plus management fee). It should be noted that some reductions in budget may reflect a more economical delivery of activities than was envisaged in the early business case and operational plan budgets. However, in many cases the lower spend indicates activities not having taken place owing to delayed project start-up. The budget reporting presented by UNICEF does not make it easy to attribute the shortfall in spending to these two factors alone. Spending on capacity building was higher in areas where the key/remaining consultants (from GEP2) were already engaged in rolling out activities.

UNICEF has reported delays and higher costs for initial training of facilitators, such as with head teachers training and the revision and use of the 'Federal Inspection Service' (FIS) instrument. To ensure that government was fully on board to support sustainability and ensure adequate capacity, interactive and participatory training of facilitators were held which also pushed up the cost of activities. These are reported as 'one-off' costs which had to be met to ensure subsequent publications of manuals and modules and trained facilitators in each of the states to take forward decentralised training.

Does the underspend in Year 1 suggest that the recently (20 May 2013) agreed budget for Year 2 will also be underspent?

There are two ways in which it might:
- The delays in start-up evidenced by the reduced spend and reporting against plans and milestones in Year 1 may make some activities difficult to implement as envisaged. Expenditure on activities in Year 2 is now budgeted at a higher level than envisaged in the Business Case, following the significant underspend on them in Year 1. Some large items, notably £1.8m on CCTs, may prove hard to spend due to knock-on effects from delays in Year 1. Others, such as £1.6m on Head teacher training, might be easier. Now that most staff positions are filled, expenditure on staff and consultants should be predictable.
- Financial reporting to date on GEP3 has been far from clear. A contributory factor is the revision of the logframe from five outputs to six outputs, and the movement of activities from one output to another. (This is not a criticism of the revised logframe: the logic is much more coherent in the revised version.) However, it should be possible to present summary financial and narrative information in a consistent and much more useful form. The large and progressive revisions to the budget, followed by the underspend, and combined with the absence of detailed financial reporting, cast some doubt on UNICEF's financial management capacity of a project of GEP3's scale and complexity. Further in-year budget revisions and underspends could occur because of the challenging operating environment, but it would not be a surprise for them to happen for other reasons.

2.2 Key cost drivers

For overheads, the main cost drivers are the salary rates (UNICEF staff costs $21m & state and LGEA consultants $15m) and the fee rate (UNICEF's management fee $11m). For activities, the main cost drivers are grant / transfer size (school grants $20m, FTSS $15m; CCTs $10m, IQTE grants $5m), participant & trainer subsistence (SBMC training $11m, CBMC training $4m) and the number and cost of textbooks (improving reading skills $9m). These figures update those presented in the VfM Strategy with figures from the May 2013 budget: the relative size of the budgets has changed, but the cost driver on 'reading materials' is the only new cost driver.

In general, UNICEF's salary costs cannot be influenced by DFID through GEP3, and the management fees have been agreed at 7 per cent. The VfM Strategy notes the importance of setting the right salary levels for state and LGEA consultants. It will be important to monitor their performance and staff turnover in these positions as a guide, although salaries may not be the sole issue. They have only recently been appointed so no assessment is possible at this stage.

The VfM Strategy noted that there were no plans to increase grants and transfers (except FTTSS) and said that they would '*be kept static . . . unless there is strong evidence to suggest that the amounts are no longer sufficient'*. Pilots should provide information on CCT grant levels. Zamfara CoE reported

that the FTSS scholarship of $500 per year exceed the standard State grants of $225 per year and that this, combined with the support provided to FTTSS scholars will make the scheme attractive to potential students outside GEP3's target population. The rationale for increasing the FTTSS scholarship in relation to standard grants was that women students would need more financial support, particularly if they had children. However, the discrepancy will need attention in order to genuinely create new teacher training posts, rather than drawing students who would have studied teacher training anyway into FTTSS.

UNICEF uses fixed subsistence rates in each location: it can reduce costs only by altering the training location (as in the cluster training model for SBMCs) or by sub-contracting to other organisations not governed by its rules (as in Action Aid's girls/women's' spaces). The adoption of 'cluster training' to reduce the cost of SBMC training was agreed and accepted by UNICEF in order to secure better value for money for this component. The new GEP3 budget proposes that $2,000 will be spent on reading materials per school ($1,500 in the first year), but there are currently no details on the number and cost of supplementary readers or books to be provided.

2.3 Is the project on-track against original timescale: N

State & LGEA consultants not generally appointed before February 2013, 9 months after project start. Delays of 7 months in filling other posts in Abuja – 1 (M&E) still unfilled. Activities in all outputs are to some extent delayed as a result of staffing delays. As described above, UNICEF staff also reported the impact of the August 2011 bombing of UNICEF headquarters in Abuja as having an effect on delays. The Federal Ministry of Education's presentation to the review also cited UNICEF's change of financial systems in Autumn 2012 as causing significant delays and frustration between partners. Budgets have been rescheduled in agreement with DFID to reflect timing changes. Overall, the project is delayed by approximately three months on average.

3. Evidence and Evaluation

3.1 Assess any changes in evidence and implications for the project

Since the project was designed, evidence about the importance of strengthening teacher training on basic literacy and numeracy has become more widely accepted in relation to education. (See for example the Brookings Global Compact on Learning, launched in 2011). Evidence about the importance of a literate environment at home and school has been foregrounded in relation to girls' education. Hence review recommendations are particularly focused on Output 4, which has not yet adopted sufficient interventions to lay the foundations for learning in the early years of schooling. The logic of GEP3 depends on girls' learning key skills in the early years of school, in order for transition through later stages of education to meaningfully translate into increased life chances and economic opportunities, the intended impact of the project.

UNICEF has rightly responded and placed extra emphasis on reading interventions and literacy education in year 2 of the project (revised from the Operational Plan). However, the review team felt that this emphasis has not yet gone far enough and is not yet defined with enough detail or rigour to assure a good chance of success. As an example, UNICEF noted efforts to explore the production of local language readers to support reading intervention strategy. This has involved discussions with local publishers and writers groups, as there are insufficient quantities of children's literature at all grade levels, in local languages and in English. This was felt to be a good start, but the various GEP3 strategies on reading and literacy need to outline a clearer and more comprehensive approach for how local language literacy will be supported or promoted in the context of a challenging language of instruction situation.

3.2 Where an evaluation is planned what progress has been made?

A separate service provider, EDOREN was competitively contracted by DFID to support M&E and

Research across DFID's education portfolio. EDOREN is now helping UNICEF to finalise the GEP3 monitoring, evaluation and research strategy. UNICEF felt that having EDOREN available from the outset of GEP3 would have been optimal. However, DFID prioritised a competitive tendering process (OJEU) for the EDOREN contract to ensure high quality of delivery. During year 1, DFID directly contracted Dr Ruth Naylor through the HEART PEAKS to provide interim support to initiate a review of the GEP3 logframe, draft GEP3 monitoring and reporting plans, and to provide capacity building and draft strategy on Value for Money for GEP3. This DFID consultancy support to the GEP3 team contributed to some improvements in project design during year 1.

4. Risk

4.1 Output Risk Rating: High

4.2 Assessment of the risk level

The review recommends that risk ratings be increased in three out of six outputs, due primarily to weaknesses in GEP3 strategic thinking and design. If agreed actions are taken by the end of Year 2, then it should be possible to adjust risk ratings downwards. Many of the risks within specific outputs were linked to weaknesses in the structure and operation of GEP3, particularly a failure to embed research, evidence and knowledge sharing as key to delivering impact. Across the project, the key risks that affect delivery were identified as follows:

1. <u>Low utilisation by project staff/consultants of national and international technical expertise</u>, in order to create cutting edge models of practice which address major barriers to girls' education. While the areas of work outlined in GEP3 have technical merit, the specific design of models appear to have received little updating since GEP2, and are not sufficiently focused on the challenges recognised by all stakeholders interviewed, particularly around learning outcomes. GEP3 should be using the latest studies and experience from Nigeria and around the world to shape model design, and to inform strategies for promoting institutionalisation and scale-up of programme models. There was no evidence from project documents or reviews that this has taken place, particularly when compared with ESSPIN's approach to bringing in and using global experience to shape design, capacity building and advocacy.

While the review team understands that GEP3 is designed to be led by government partners, GEP3 has not yet been providing up to date technical advice in response to issues facing these partners. An illustrative example is the issue of poor pupil and teacher English language acquisition raised by government and community stakeholders at all levels during the review. College of Education and FME staff had not heard of the Southern-based multilingual/second language teaching strategies which have become increasingly well evidenced over the last ten years. The only reference to language-focused teaching models, that contained in the 'reading to write' programme document, was extremely limited and inappropriate to the context, based as it was in English native speaker settings. State consultants should be supported by Abuja specialists, and other experts where relevant, to review global evidence and develop solutions to technical challenges such as the need for effective second-language learning and literacy approaches. The question of literacy needs to be critically examined in view of the national policy which focuses on the teaching of the 'language of the environment' in lower primary grades (1-3).

While enthusiasm from partners such as State governments and FME is undoubtedly a distinctive and positive outcome of UNICEF's approach, it makes no sense to scale up if there are significant concerns about design and value for money. While pressure to deliver on logframe activities may be strong, particularly in the context of delays this year, it would be more effective in some areas to focus on building the right foundations for future impact. GEP planning and management process needs to balance both imperatives, so that the theory of change and the logframe can be updated and strengthened as required to deliver impact. Placing zonal teams in the role of providing technical support, when these teams contain no specialised expertise, and not linking Abuja specialists directly to state teams, appears to be blocking exchange of the expertise that exists within GEP. It is possible

that in the short term EDOREN or DFID's HEART PEAKS could be used to source expertise to fill gaps in awareness of key evidence, but changes in how evidence is shared and applied within GEP3 will still be needed.

Accountability channels do not have to be the same as technical assistance and technical development channels. Resourcing of high quality technical expertise from outside the current GEP staffing set-up is urgently needed in EMIS and M&E. In the opinion of the review team, existing experts in Abuja need to work directly with state specialists in order to develop technical strategies and models, such as around teacher training, literacy, standards for information system strengthening, This does not have to interfere with on-going project coordination, management or reporting. At the same time, the quality of reporting needs to improve significantly.

2. <u>Limited risk management and partner collaboration approaches leading to short term thinking and action.</u> While regular review and planning meetings are in place within and outside GEP3, these have focused mainly on immediate roadblocks rather than longer term strategies. The on-going challenge of teaching strikes is an example of the low levels of risk management in place for GEP3. Strikes during the review period had closed schools in Sokoto and in Zamfara for three weeks with no end in sight. No contingency response appeared to have been planned within GEP for these types of challenges. It was noted by UNICEF that the teacher unions and the government have modalities to address the bottleneck of delays caused by strikes. For instance, state government have ways to cover lost time by arranging teaching during holidays, weekends and extended hours so as to cover time in the curriculum whenever the strike is called off, and this is an opportunity that GEP will tap into. It is risky for SBMCs to organize classes when strikes are in effect, as this can be dangerous to the children as well as teachers, especially during the strike period. However, very little evidence that these strategies were being actively considered during the Zamfara strike was found during the review, despite questioning stakeholders on these issues.

Collaborations with other education partners, requested by the ICAI report, have increased slightly during the last year. However, the nature of collaboration appeared from the perspective of collaborating agencies to be limited to exchanging plans and sharing technical approaches, rather than jointly working out how major systemic barriers to girls' education can be tackled. What are the one or two big issues that GEP can make a major change to? Where is it possible for GEP to benefit from the 'system change' work of ESSPIN, for example, and where can ESSPIN benefit from GEP's contributions on Girls education? The tenor of collaborations between agencies working on education in the North should be set by these questions. Discussions with ESSPIN, UBEC, CSACEFA, USAID and ActionAid suggested that this is not currently the case.

3. <u>Failure to embed a 'theory of change'</u> At present the theory of change as written does not appear to be driving project work, in the sense that stakeholders are not fully conversant with it, and it is not clear how all the elements 'add up' to the impact of the project. Conversations with a wide range of stakeholders revealed that reliance on the logic of GEP2 is strong in all states, even Zamfara, where strong orientation about GEP2 approaches had taken place. The logic appears to be that overcoming community resistance to girls' education, boosting community contributions to school improvement, and supplying more female teachers as role models through FTTSS, will be enough to transform education outcomes for girls. While design work is taking place in other areas, these themes are the main ones appearing to shape stakeholders' understandings of how GEP3 will work.

Using GEP2 as the core of GEP3 is positive, but on-going problem solving to generate the scale and complexity of impact promised by GEP3 is still required. The current theory of change and logframe need to be further developed to clarify how 'structural problems' at the root of poor teaching and literacy, insufficient school funding and economic barriers to opportunity for girls will be addressed. The 'operating' theory of change, emerging from stakeholder discussions and project documents, appears to be that offering useful project models, strengthening the capacity of government to plan, and advocating for better funding flows, will be enough to address these barriers. While GEP cannot 'fix' structural problems on its own, the theory of change, and related strategy documents, should identify how GEP will work to address the key structural and systemic barriers which block girls' education, within the context of other state and non-state work to strengthen education. Stakeholders should be aware of what strategies will be used to do this.

Several assumptions are laid out in the logframe which are critical to GEP3 success. Actions related to

addressing some of these critical issues should be included in the project work plan, to ensure that the outcomes are delivered. Examples include the following assumptions: '*States match funding and support CCTs with timely release of funding', 'Teachers use newly acquired skills and attend school regularly', 'WSDPs include aspects that improve the teaching and learning process and environment for girls', 'Assume primary school supply increases in line with demand', 'Scholars are able to complete the course and pass exams', 'States implement their plans and utilise funds appropriately'*. It was clear from stakeholder discussions that major structural problems in education are at the root of these areas, and that without concerted action it is very unlikely that the assumptions will be realised.

<u>The overall risk level of GEP would be significantly reduced if these assumptions were moved into the logframe as results, and if action were clearly planned against them.</u> In many cases this would be simple, as action is already being delivered against these issues but is not captured in the logframe. (For example, SBMC work is reported in documentation and by stakeholders to be leading to increased teacher attendance, as this is being monitored by many SBMCs). If it is not possible to deliver action against some of these key areas, mitigation strategies will be needed. For example, if FTTSS scholars cannot pass their exams, would it be better to support distance learning for rural teachers, instead of continuing to invest in FTTSS? No mitigating actions appear to be in place at present to address these risk issues. The recommendations contained in this document should help to reduce the risk concerns outlined above.

4. UNICEF's management of security risks in Northern Nigeria

An on-going area of risk is the increased focus on education in terrorist attacks in Northern Nigeria. UNICEF staff felt that working through consultants at local level reduced the likelihood of delays or increased expense where security risks rise, because consultants are known locally and do not attract the risk that UNICEF staff would in the field. However, some LGEA consultants mentioned that as they do not have official identity cards, they experience problems with being stopped by security personnel on their visits to schools and communities. Greater critical focus on contingency planning is needed to establish whether and how consultants are able to work in situations of heightened security risk, and what detailed strategies should be in place where normal working is not possible. UNICEF reported that their 3rd party contractor (AWD) provides identity cards to all consultants, and that therefore this observation needs to be investigated, and corrective actions taken.

UNICEF also reported that managers make risk management decisions at the level of delegated authority. UNDSS provides overall security for UN and UNICEF regularly checks and updates various risks for UNICEF work, as well as the Basic Education programme where the GEP programme is domiciled. Discussions with DFID's Risk Management officer underlined the importance of UNICEF regularly checking and updating various risks to the programme, including those arising from the changing security situation in the North. The review team did not see a clear risk matrix for the programme. It is recommended that such a risk matrix is regularly reviewed and reported on at Programme Management Meetings. DFID had earlier provided to UNICEF a simple checklist (the conflict sensitivity screening tool) for all its programmes, which UNICEF might use or modify for their purposes.

4.3 Risk of funds not being used as intended

UNICEF Finance staff described the framework for assessing States' financial systems and procedures, and then adopting appropriate methods to spend project funds through their systems and to work with states to develop their fiscal capacity. Following the Annual Review, UNICEF has shared with DFID further documentation on the 'UNDG Framework for cash transfers' which sets out how UNICEF manages fiduciary risks. This is a common framework for a number of UN agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and WFP) working with a range of implementing partners. Agencies adopt a 'risk management approach' and select specific procedures for transferring cash on the basis of joint (macro and micro) assessments of the financial management capacity of the implementing partners. A Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) reduces transaction costs and lessens the burden that a multiplicity of UN procedures and rules creates for partners.

The review team discussed the processes in place with staff in one State (Katsina) – including the committee and reporting procedures that are applied to decision making on each project activity. The

review team were unable to obtain copies of the State level fiduciary assessments during the review period, however, UNICEF has subsequently shared an example assessment for one State.

DFID's State Partnership on Accountability, Responsibility and Capability programme (SPARC) has recently expanded to three of the GEP3 states: Katsina, Niger and Zamfara. Collaboration between UNICEF's GEP3 team and SPARC on revising the State education strategy operational plan (SESOP) in Katsina provides a good basis for further collaboration. It should be mutually beneficial for UNICEF and SPARC to share fiduciary assessments and combine development approaches in those states, as set down in SPARC's negotiated intervention plans. SPARC's December 2012 Working Paper on VfM places Katsina, Niger and Zamfara in the group of states with 'limited experience of undertaking governance reform', but with 'some instances of reform initiatives and opportunities on which to build'.

4.4 Climate and Environment Risk

Floods in 6 LGAs were reported as disrupting children's education in 22 schools, particularly where schools were used as accommodation for people displaced by the floods. Interviewees commented that the floods were linked to changing weather patterns. UNICEF had made links with Save the Children on education in emergencies via the 'Education In Emergencies Cluster' arrangement, but there was no evidence of strategic focus within GEP on how to mitigate disruptions to education due to climatic or environmental issues. One group of SBMCs in Bauchi reported taking action to stop schools being used to house IDPs. This was very positive practice which was not captured in quarterly or annual reporting. Using and sharing relevant strategies developed across GEP to help school systems address environmental issues should be added into Knowledge Management activities under Output 6.

5. Value for Money

5.1 Performance on VfM measures

During year 1, VfM measures set out in the Appraisal Case of the Business Case have been further developed into a GEP3 VfM Strategy paper that refines the measures, adds trigger points and sets out plans to monitor them. The Business Case calls for *'all indicators to be compiled separately for each state'*, for project providers '*to complete the VfM framework annually'* and for them *'to be responsible for timely data collection and presentation'*. UNICEF did not present information on all indicators by all states to the Annual Review team. UNICEF did provide a paper by the M&E Consultant in Abuja that presents some relevant information on training budgets at Field Office level. As it was not possible to review a comprehensive report from UNICEF, the Review Team member leading on VfM attempted to generate some VfM monitoring information from the raw data in regular reports, budget information and other documents provided.

SBMC training unit costs

The only actual unit cost information available is on the WSDP for SBMCs in Niger, held at Minna CoE on 16-20 April 2013: $2,438 per SBMC and $244 per SBMC member (from the paperwork on the intervention). UNICEF's VfM Report has the following information on budgets: $1,145 per SBMC and $229 per SBMC member in Kaduna Field Office region (including Niger) and $1,560 / $104 in Bauchi. (The ratio of SBMC: member unit costs vary with the number of members trained per school.) The actual unit costs therefore far exceed the budget unit costs in Niger.

The Business Case noted that '*in GEP2 the unit cost per school was £700 [i.e. $1,050] . . . [which] compares to a government unit cost of only £133 [$200] for equivalent training . . . [and] the indicative budget for GEP3 requires this unit cost to be more than halved . . . if this is possible.*'

Even the budget unit costs exceed UNICEF's target cost: $750 per SBMC and $50 per member (which does not allow for the cost reduction sought in the Business Case). They exceed the trigger points established in the GEP3 VfM Strategy of $1,050 per school and $60 per SBMC member, which allow for the financial management as well as WSDP training. <u>This calls for an in-depth review to see if the intervention should be significantly re-designed.</u>

It is noted that delivery modes and hence unit costs may be affected by the security situation in some states (though this is not thought to have affected Niger State). Some of the discrepancies relate to

surprising divergence in the number of days provided and SBMC members covered in training.

The costs quoted exclude GEP3 overheads which are estimated at 67 per cent in the VfM Strategy.

Head teacher training unit costs

The budget in Bauchi is reported in the VfM paper to be $71 per head teacher (including overheads) which is at the Strategy trigger point of $70. No budget unit costs for other states or actual unit costs are available.

FTSS unit costs

Some CoEs mentioned they were considering extending the period of study to 4 years to include a preparatory year. If the grant is extended to 4 years, the increase in cost (economy) could be outweighed by the possible increased rates of retention, graduation and deployment (efficiency & effectiveness), so the change might lead to better VfM overall.

GEP3 Overhead costs

The Business Case highlighted GEP3 overhead costs ('non-disbursement costs as % of unit costs') as an area to monitor closely. Overheads include UNICEF's Education Staff and other staff (including finance, HR, M&E) in Abuja and the Field Offices; state and LGEA consultants contracted through AWD and UNICEF's management fee. The VfM Strategy calculated that 53 per cent should be added to the cost of activities of $105m throughout GEP3 to give total project costs. It also approximately allocated activities to broad bands of overhead cost: low (33%) – CCTs; medium (50%) – FTSS & grants to schools and IQTEs; and high (67%): training SBMCs and head teachers.

The revised version of the budget agreed between UNICEF and DFID on 20 May 2013 allocates slightly more ($113m) to activities and correspondingly less to overheads, as a result of not expanding into new states. This reduces the overall overhead from 53 per cent to 41 per cent.

Overheads in the first year were reported to be higher than this during the first year at 84 per cent, compared to 66 per cent envisaged in the budget reported against in the 4th QR and 48 per cent in Year 1 of UNICEF's Operational Plan budget. This resulted from the delays in getting going affecting activities more than overheads, particularly UNICEF staffing. Overheads should be much lower in proportion to activities in Year 2: this should be monitored and reported in future QRs.

State education budget and release

The annual change in state education budgets and actual releases does not feature in the GEP3 VfM Strategy nor the logframe. It is not clear yet whether such information will provide useful information on the efficacy of advocacy under GEP3: leverage ratios – which *are* covered by the VfM Strategy – should provide more direct, if less comprehensive, information here.

Leverage ratio ($ raised from states per $ spent on GEP3 activities)

The BC calls this 'state buy in' and describes this as '*probably the key value for money indicator as there is the potential for project investments to be effectively quadrupled with state support*'.

The VfM Strategy has a target leverage ratio of 2.3, i.e. 70% state to 30% project expenditure on GEP3 activities, which is a little lower than the ratio of 3 (75%: 25%) implicit in the BC's quadrupling. The Review Team received copies of draft Aide Memoires with States that were soon to be signed with State Governors. The Aide Memoires set out the first year financial commitments, and an overall state commitment to GEP3 activities up to the end of 2017 (in line with UNICEF's country programme framework 2014-17). State commitments are much lower than the target in the VfM Strategy: about one quarter, at 0.56 or 36% state to 64% project. The level of states' financial commitments could be considered worrying on grounds *other* than VfM if it calls into question the degree of states' real commitment to GEP3 aims and the likelihood of sustaining a project of this length. However, it also calls into question the realism of and the evidence for the proposed 'leverage ratio' at the time of writing the Business case (September 2011).

With DFID's support, UNICEF encouraged States to make realistic commitments in the Aide Memoires. This is an appropriate strategy, given the relatively poor track record of States releasing budgeted funds under GEP 1 and 2, and even following repeated advocacy by UNICEF and DFID. UNICEF reported that it has also stepped up high level advocacy with State Governors within the past year and improvements have started appearing. The recent releases of FTTSS grants by states and LGEAs and training of SBMCs in four GEP states are results of this advocacy. It was also clear that there are other

competing priorities within states around education. It makes sense to carefully plan for more focused advocacy in future years of GEP3, so that clearly defined and realistic objectives can be realised. Advocacy may require a significantly greater focus than was originally envisaged in order to secure project leverage goals, and to sustain government commitment to GEP in the face of competing priorities.

The Review Team has considered information presented on State expenditure on GEP3 activities in the first year. The disconnect between the budget and the out-turn - and the nature of some of the large items - call into question whether much of the spend is really *direct* leverage for GEP3 project activities rather than *indirect* leveraging of related activities that may have been influenced by GEP3 project (a distinction that is discussed in the VfM Strategy). At the same time, leverage success for different components has varied across States. The leverage ratio for FTSS is largely determined by the ratio of scholarships provided. The first intake under GEP3 (2012-13) saw something of a reduction from the range 4.5 to 5 in the last three intakes of GEP2 to 3.2. This was partly because there was a 1:1 ratio in Zamfara's first year, but the ratio in other states also declined to 3.6 due to reductions in Niger and Bauchi.

The BC said that in the first year in new states the project would provide 200 school grants without any matching funds from states and would match government grants on a 1:1 basis for up to another 300. In later years the number of unmatched grants would be reduced from 200, while the ratio of matching funds for additional grants would become less favourable to states. Analysis of the budget agreed by UNICEF and DFID in May 2013 and the available state budgets indicate these tapering principles are not yet being adopted. No state funds for school grants are budgeted for in Niger or Sokoto and only a small amount (less than $30k per year) is budgeted in Katsina. It appears that the same approach has been adopted in the former 4 GEP1/2 States and the new state of Zamfara alike, whereas the BC perhaps intended previous recipient states to operate on less advantageous terms. The amounts of money at stake are significant, with school grants accounting for $20m of project funds.

Community leveraging

There is currently no systematic information on GEP3 funds raised by communities and it is likely to prove hard to generate this during the project, unless work on the SBMC monitoring tool and LGA information processes is redesigned with SBMC and EMIS consultants working together. It was, however, evident from discussions with LGA officials that good levels of community-education system engagement developed under GEP1 & GEP2 are continuing, and that it is common for community contributions to match or exceed school grant contributions. An important aspect of community leveraging is also its use in generating increased government funding, on the basis that community has demonstrated its commitment to education and government should play its part. This is a major aspect of ESSPIN's SBMC development model, which is in the process of being rolled out nationally. It was clear from SBMC and LGA discussions that strengthened community engagement with LGAs has not been built on by GEP to focus on leveraging government contributions.

Changes or additions to the VfM measures?

The indicators, trigger points and monitoring plan set out in Annexes 1 to 3 of the VfM Strategy provide a good basis for monitoring the VfM of GEP3 and no changes or additions are recommended in this Annual Review.

5.2 Commercial Improvement and Value for Money
Provisions in the Business Case and the GEP3 MoU

DFID procured UNICEF indirectly to manage GEP3 without seeking any potential alternatives through competitive tender for the reasons set out in the BC. The approach has the drawback, however, of affecting DFID's drive for improved VfM through competition and effective commercial practice. The Business Case makes some relevant provisions. First, it allows for states to be dropped from the project if their leverage is too low.

'The feasibility of achieving the project's targeted increases in enrolment is expected to be contingent on state buy-in to project inputs. If state buy-in is minimal then the enrolment gains will be significantly less and consequently the project as a whole would no longer represent good value for money. (This risk will be mitigated by withdrawing from such states as in GEP1 [which happened in the case on one

state])'. [p48]

As discussed in 5.1 above, the draft 'Aide Memoires' have set a realistic bar for State funding commitments. There is a risk that States may meet them *without* achieving the intended results and hence, good VfM.

Second, DFID makes two statements about the project's management by UNICEF.

'We have not hitherto attempted to directly link results to payment, because multilateral agencies are traditionally paid their management costs in advance. We will not shy from seeking redress if results are not achieved'.[p52]

'The project design does in any case mitigate concerns about transparency and accountability through the use of annual independent project monitoring and evaluation and with two In-Depth Reviews (Years 2 and 6) where funding can stop, should performance be unsatisfactory.' [p55]

The second statement is echoed by the following paragraph in the project's MoU with UNICEF.

'DFID will commission and manage annual reviews of the project, including 'in depth' reviews in year 2 and year 6. The outcome and recommendations from these reviews will have implications on the scale and direction of project activities for the ensuing period.' [3rd page]

The decision taken by DFID and UNICEF during the first year not to continue to expand into new states in addition to the current five States is an example of flexibility in response to early indications of performance and progress.

UNICEF's performance on VfM and commercial aspects

The MoU states:

'UNICEF will endeavour to ensure that best value for money (VfM) is obtained. UNICEF will manage the programme and source and utilise goods and services through strategies and processes that minimise cost, find economies of scale, obtain high productivity, and achieve results. Value for Money (VfM) will be assessed each year as part of the annual review process. An agreed VfM Plan will be produced by UNICEF 6 months after the project commences, containing VfM principles and means of measurement, and indicative savings targets from commercial activity.' [Paragraph 5]

UNICEF's Operational Plan states:
'UNICEF will closely monitor VfM through the lifetime of the project, making decisions about interventions on the basis of evidence, learning from success and failures, and making hard decisions when the expected VfM is not delivered. This means:
   a. *mainstreaming VfM throughout the project;*
   b. *a culture and management style that places the utmost priority on VfM;*
   c. *people constantly questioning whether what they are doing could be done more economically, efficiently and effectively;*
   d. *creating and using a VfM Strategy/action Plan to document and guide the approach;*
   e. *regularly auditing impact;*
   f. *integrating VfM indicators into reports.' [*p45, 'a – f' added for reference]

These statements provide a template for assessing UNICEF's performance on VfM and commercial aspects. While recognizing that this is the first year of the project and DFID's thinking on VfM has developed relatively recently and so will be new to UNICEF, the discussion under 5.1 casts doubt on UNICEF's success on many of these statements, notably b. and c. and e. Staff in Abuja and Kaduna and Bauchi Field Offices has engaged in some training on VfM and it is clear that action has been taken as a result which has led to changes in implementation at State level on FTSS and workshop costs. The recent sub-contracting of girls' / women's spaces to ActionAid has the potential to lower

costs because the NGO can offer lower training allowances.

That is not to say VfM has been 'mainstreamed throughout the project' (a.). It is unrealistic to think VfM could be mainstreamed without someone within the GEP3 team being given a decisive and sustained lead on it. No permanent UNICEF staff member in Abuja or the Field Offices appears to have it as their role to do so. An M&E consultant based in Abuja has taken forward the work initiated by the DFID short-term international consultant (Dr Ruth Naylor) but her contract had only two weeks to run at the time of the Annual Review. VfM thinking appeared - understandably – relatively new to staff and not part of the prevailing culture, although zonal staff had played roles in promoting VfM in input budgeting. It was not clear that senior managers were placing a high priority on communicating understanding of VfM and priority for it (b.). While there are sections on VfM in the quarterly and annual reports, they are brief, and do not address the framework set down the Strategy. One opportunity that UNICEF has missed is to participate in DFID's group on VfM. More broadly the Review Team's perception of UNICEF's weaknesses in reviewing and using evidence to improve the implementation of GEP 3 (see 4.2) undermines its ability to provide VfM.

The Review Team has not considered UNICEF's performance on procurement in depth and do not challenge the judgements in the business case. The lengthy delays in recruiting staff and the failure to recruit an M&E officer may be systemic.

DFID's support and challenge to UNICEF

DFID Nigeria has been very active through the monthly GEP3 project management committee meetings, reminding UNICEF of their VfM and commercial responsibilities and providing additional technical assistance to UNICEF to meet challenges by sourcing a short term international consultant to work with and support them on mainstreaming VFM during year 1.

5.3 Role of project partners
Project and state funding are channelled through SMoE and SUBEB systems and they are managed in project mode for each activity. What pressures have been applied on VfM and commercial issues appear to have come from UNICEF rather than state partners, in keeping with the balance of funds.

There are no specific measures of SMoEs and SUBEB's' VfM in the logframe, and it would be premature to use wider indicators to assess partners' VfM. FME as the principal implementing agency does not appear to play a strong role in achieving VfM.

5.4 Does the project still represent Value for Money: Too early to make a judgement

It is too early to conclude that this project no longer represents good VfM – or to confirm that it still does – but this review provides various warning signs. The data required for the overall project VfM indicators on additional girls enrolled are not yet available (most states) or hard to interpret because of an erratic back series (Zamfara). Furthermore it may be hard to attribute any increases to GEP3, given its delayed start and the work done by states and other development partners. One possible exception is enrolment drives, though subsequent data would be required to ensure any gains are not short-lived. The GEP2 project completion report also found difficulty in establishing a link between GEP interventions and more girls in school. This is acknowledged to be an area of challenge, but the review found no indication that this area was yet being given serious thought.

The BC noted minimal state leverage of project funds limiting enrolment gains, and the lack of improved learning outcomes as two factors that could render the project poor VfM. The draft State Aide Memoires set State funding commitments at one quarter the target set in the BC. This Review's concerns over approaches to support student learning (Output 3) and the absence of recent data on learning outcomes put at risk GEP3's overall VfM going forward. If security risks increase, it is also possible that operating costs will generally rise to achieve similar or reduced results.

5.5 If not, what action will you take?
We do not recommend the project be stopped at this point. The overall focus and momentum of GEP3 offers the potential to have a major impact on challenges to girls' education in the North, if certain ways

of working and design weaknesses can be remedied. We recommend that the project be strengthened by the implementation of the above recommendations (see Annex 1 for a single list of recommendations) within six months (i.e. by March 2013). We recommend that the VfM aspects of GEP3 should be considered again as part of a wider consideration of the project by DFID in six months' time.

6. Conditionality

6.1 Update on specific conditions

N/A

7. Conclusions and actions

In terms of basic project functions, and delivery of agreed tasks, GEP 3 has improved significantly since the ICAI report and since its inception. Specific tasks requested by DFID's ICAI response, and most milestones in the new logframe, have been either delivered or will be completed shortly. However, significant gaps remain around capacity for M&E, EMIS, learning and literacy strategies. The timing of activities is a quarter behind schedule on average. It is likely that delays to Year 1 implementation can be caught up in the next quarter, although some areas of underspend are likely to remain and could be used for implementing agreed recommendations arising from this review.

Pace of implementation has increased after significant initial delays. Responses to the ICAI Report have strengthened project planning tools, and information sharing with DFID and some other agencies working on education has improved. Significant activity has taken place under each output, although there is delay to several areas of work. Very strong enthusiasm, political engagement and momentum was evident at State level from government partners, as a result of UNICEF advocacy and orientation. However, the way in which activities have been delivered has not been optimal to address the major challenges facing girls' education, and the lack of sufficiently active involvement of UBEC will soon throw up barriers to achieving sustainable change in policy implementation unless addressed. At present, delivery of GEP's main Outcome looks achievable, if significant technical weaknesses within the design and implementation of GEP are corrected rapidly. It is likely that with sufficient willingness to change ways of working and adopt a fully evidence-based approach to problem solving, the GEP team can make the necessary changes.

However, several fundamental issues have not yet been addressed. In terms of management and design, the review team found that this project is not yet fit for purpose in delivering the ambitious impact expected of it. However, if some key improvements to ways of working are made within the next six months, the project still has the potential to have major impact on girls' education in the North. It may be more appropriate to focus less on timing of activities at this point, and more on quality of thinking, planning and evidence generation for the rest of the project. Such an approach is more likely to overcome the VfM concerns highlighted by the review.

The crisis in girls' education in the North has very deep rooted and complex causes. It was clear from engagement with many stakeholders that GEP3 is currently based on operating assumptions which are inappropriate to address the major challenges which the project is tackling. In particular, the review team is concerned that there is inadequate focus on children's learning in the first three years of education.

In general, the way in which Year 1 has been delivered was geared more towards completing agreed tasks, than to using the first year experience and data to respond to challenges – for example through comprehensively testing assumptions, and strengthening design. A relatively short term approach to problem solving and planning has been taken, which has led to missed opportunities to tackle deep

rooted issues and to update intervention designs in response to upcoming challenges. The combining of inception activities and project delivery in one year may have been the root cause of this. UNICEF reported that they were unhappy with the lack of an inception phase, despite agreement between DFID and UNICEF at the outset that an inception phase was not necessary because GEP3 was continuing from GEP2. However, key efforts to strengthen intervention approaches are still needed quite urgently.

The review team feels that a problem solving approach is not yet at the heart of project management. There are three key project processes which are not yet supportive of a problem solving approach: leadership, technical input and information flow. These three areas need to be reshaped to ensure that an evidence based approach drives project design and delivery. Changes are most needed in the way UNICEF's zonal level interacts with GEP. The role of the zonal office appears to be one of coordination and information filtering, rather than of taking opportunities to strengthen technical responses to girls' education challenges. Revisiting the roles played by Abuja leadership and specialists to ensure greater leadership across the whole project will also be important.

Summary of major recommended design changes:
- The logframe assumptions listed in section 4.2 need to be re-addressed to ensure that they do not derail project impact, by identifying advocacy and capacity building action to ensure they take place. Activities and milestones should be added to the logframe accordingly.
- Add activities and milestones to the logframe which capture the programme management improvements recommended below.
- Outputs 2 & 3 should be strengthened in the light of global evidence around teacher training, language and literacy strategies, to focus more effectively on early learning. (See detailed recommendations.)
- Output 4 should be strengthened to ensure that women's participation is at the heart of GEP3 in practice (See detailed recommendations.)
- Output 5 should be strengthened to ensure that teacher supply and financing issues do not derail project impact, and to ensure that community engagement and leveraging link to leveraging of government resources. (See detailed recommendations.)
- Review and redevelop state level logframes with emphasis on helping state governments identify and address the major blocks to achieving project impact. This may result in differing paces of delivery and differing levels of focus, but should result in more meaningful action to foreground and successfully address issues such as COE capacity gaps or challenges with recruiting teachers.
- Structure research with support from EDOREN to generate clear impact and tracking information on FTSS within three years, in order to redesign the scheme where necessary to ensure VFM. Limit FTSS expansion until this has been done.

Summary of major recommended programme management changes:
- Redirect resourcing from zonal level coordination work towards bringing in specific technical expertise, particularly on literacy & language, teacher professional development, IQTE and EMIS. (NB: it is recognised that zonal level engagement in advocacy and governance work has been very useful, and funding for this should continue).
- Reshape working relationships within GEP so that Abuja specialists are collaborating directly with state consultants in developing strengthened programme models which draw on evidence and technical advice. Within six months, change should be evident from redeveloped programme strategies in learning, NFE, literacy, 2nd chance education, and teacher training. Revised strategies must include state by state SWOT and use this analysis to show what can be done and how to prioritise activities. Strategy documents must focus on approaches to deliver defined results in different concepts, so that they are action focused rather than just conceptual papers.
- Bring in expertise (for example via EDOREN) on quantitative and qualitative evidence and knowledge management, with the result that all project documents, particularly strategy and reporting documents, are fit for purpose and meet international standards, when compared with ESSPIN. Ensure that reporting formats encourage direct, clear reporting against the logframe. Change should be evident in project reports and strategies in six months' time.
- Prioritise appointment of senior M&E position within the next three to six months to ensure new commitments on evidence generation are delivered.
- Identify underspends that can be used for strengthening use of data, evaluation and knowledge management.

- Ensure that within six months leadership on collaboration with external agencies is placed with one person, reflected in their work plan.
- Refocus planning and collaboration activities (for example with TDP, UBEC and ESSPIN) to address structural challenges with girls' education and security risk mitigation, and to identify strategies for delivering impact right through to the end of the project. Change should be evident from meeting records and reports in six months' time.
- Ensure that within six months leadership on VfM is placed with one person, reflected in their work plan and establishing VfM explicitly in connection with more efficient, evidence-based work leading to VfM through better quality of work. This leadership should include direction of staff and partner capacity building, and review of operational areas at or near VfM trigger points.
- It is recommended that UNICEF and DFID agree revised milestones for Year 2 as an outcome of this review, so that wording of milestones can be made as relevant as possible for UNICEF's expectations of what will be achieved.

It is recommended that accepted recommendations are reviewed by DFID in six months' time. This will be a reasonable amount of time for concerns stemming from the ICAI report to have also been addressed. The main results of the key changes should be:
1) Regularly using project and external research to modify design and scaleup strategies
2) A full VFM approach informs decision making across the project;
3) Evidence sharing and partnership are used to proactively address short, medium and long term challenges.

These changes will require support from DFID. There are useful lessons from ESSPIN which could support these changes, but it will also be incumbent on UNICEF to accept some different ways of working. From the perspective of learning for future DFID work in this area, it is suggested that putting such high profile and complex work out to tender may be a more appropriate strategy in the future. Prioritising consortia work in which the strengths of several different agencies can be used to achieve maximum effectiveness may result in stronger programming. Recruitment delays may be avoidable by requiring implementing partners to advertise for staff before project start up, with appointments subject to funding.

8. Review Process

A four-person review team was brought together by HEART to reflect a range of experience and expertise relevant to girls' education programming in Nigeria. The team developed a set of key issues and principles to shape the review process in an initial approach paper, in response to initial review of key programme documents, and consultation with DFID Nigeria. Research questions can be summarised as follows:
1. Is there a credible theory of change and logical framework?
2. Has the response to the ICAI report been delivered?
3. Have Year 1 milestones been delivered?
4. Is Year 2 delivery and overall impact on track?
5. Is Value for Money in place?

Based on the review team's experience of education programming and change in Nigeria, it was felt that areas of GEP3 relating to securing change in government systems for resourcing and managing education affecting girls should receive priority attention, as being central to sustainable impact for the programme. It was also recognised that GEP is based on a long history of girls' education programming by UNICEF in Nigeria, which has helped transform thinking and expectations for girls' education. The team felt that the review should explicitly recognise this history and consider the extent to GEP3 is drawing on its roots, while growing towards opportunities and challenges that now exist in the environment for girls' education. The original intention for the review was to monitor against the pre-March 2013 logframe. However, during the review process it was realised that monitoring against current plans would be clearer and more useful. Therefore the final, March 2013 logframe has been used as the basis for the review.

Subsequent to the approach paper the review team visited Northern Nigeria and Abuja for two weeks

during June 2013. During travel to three project states, over 250 government and community stakeholders from all five target states took part in interviews and focus group discussions. Security constraints and GEP partners' desire to include stakeholders from all states meant that interviews and discussions were far briefer than originally proposed, but it was possible to explore several issues in depth and to triangulate data across different groups of stakeholders. A small number of school visits were included for three states, and two IQTE centres and one second chance centre were visited, in two states. Meetings and discussions were also held with the Federal Ministry of Education, ActionAid, USAID, UBEC, and ESSPIN. All available project documents were reviewed, along with research and analysis on GEP from EDOREN. It was not possible to interview Nikhat Shameem, one of the GEP3 project managers as she was on leave.

The overall approach to the review was characterised as helping to identify constructive ways forward for improving the efficiency and relevance of GEP3. The review was presented to participants as not an impact review but a chance to strengthen future progress. It was recognised that staffing and institutional management issues would need to form a crucial area of focus in this respect. The team also recognised the need to identify areas of GEP3 implementation which would have important 'knock on' effects for the rest of the programme, both across activities and moving forward in time. Key principles of the methodology included focusing on a relatively small number of stakeholders in each discussion and pushing for as much time as possible with small groups, in order to enable discussions of project context and processes. The review team focused on triangulating issues and claims across stakeholder groups, project documentation and levels of the education system.

Limitations included security constraints limiting time in schools and learning centres. GEP partners from all states wished to be included, which resulted in less time for individual discussions (on average 45 minutes per session). Time constraints and lack of soft copies limited the number of documents at state level which could be reviewed. However, the review team managed to assess a selection of impact and activity documents for each state. Each consultant was allocated a set of activities and milestones from the logical framework related to their focus area to review evidence against, against which they have begun to tabulate evidence. These focus areas shaped consultants' focus during the field review visit, but the whole team frequently shared information and analysis, in an effort to create an iterative picture of the whole programme against which to produce findings and recommendations.