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Canadian International Development Education Programs in Fragile, Crisis, and Conflict Settings

Charlevoix Education Initiative Funding

Education Report
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In partnership with

Canada





An adolescent group in Uganda, supported by Canada. **CREDIT:** Rich Townsend / Aga Khan Foundation

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Cover photos (top to bottom; left to right)

A young woman outside a Canada-supported vocational training and education centre in Syria.

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A primary student in Obongi, Uganda. **CREDIT:** Rich Townsend / Aga Khan Foundation Canada

Students in a Canada-supported primary school in Moyo, Uganda.

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Executive Summary

The Charlevoix Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls, and Women in Developing Countries, introduced by the Government of Canada at the 2018 G7 Summit, pledged a \$400-million commitment to advancing women's and girls' education in fragile, conflict, and crisis situations.

In response, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) announced support for 26 projects across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, with funding allocated between March 2019 and 2024.

This report presents findings from a comprehensive assessment of 21 of these projects, launched through a consultation process led by consultants contracted through the Aga Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC) in collaboration with the Canadian International Education Policy Working Group – Technical Working Group (CIEPWG – TWG). The consultation aimed to assess the effectiveness of the Charlevoix Education Initiative in bridging the gap between humanitarian efforts and development projects or the triple nexus, particularly in addressing challenges in education within contexts affected by fragility, crisis, and conflict. The research team gathered insights through a systematic review of project documents and facilitated Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) or Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The aim was to understand the impact and lessons learned from these projects and contextualize the findings. The analysis focused on identifying best practices, challenges, and strategies that can be employed to address barriers to education in fragile contexts.

The report identifies four main themes emerging from the consultation: (1) Theoretical Frameworks and Approaches for Improving Education; (2) Interventions, Partnerships, and Contextual Variations; (3) Strategies in Fragile, Crisis, and Conflict Settings; (4) Flexibility in Changing Circumstances. Key findings include:

- **Alignment with Objectives:** The projects demonstrated commitment towards advancing gender equality, promoting inclusive education, and supporting sustainable development, as envisioned in the Charlevoix Declaration. However, the emphasis on peace building as integral to the triple nexus required strengthening.
- **Effective Strategies:** Projects effectively addressed barriers to girls' education, integrated theoretical frameworks with practical solutions, and prioritized partnerships and community engagement for sustainability.
- **Resilience and Innovation:** Despite challenges posed by instability and crisis dynamics, projects demonstrated resilience and innovation in adapting strategies to ensure continued access to education.
- **Need for Flexibility:** Participants emphasized the need for increased flexibility in project funding and implementation to respond effectively to emerging challenges and changing circumstances.
- **Gender-Transformative Approach:** While projects aimed to embrace a gender-transformative approach, it was recognized that sustained engagement and long-term investment are required to challenge deep-rooted socio-cultural norms perpetuating gender disparities in education.

The triple nexus approach represents a paradigm shift in how we conceptualize and address challenges in fragile contexts and recognizes that humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts are not siloed, but are intricately interconnected and mutually reinforcing. However, despite the theoretical appeal and potential of the triple nexus approach, translating its principles into practice poses significant challenges, which also impact the projects. The evidence from our findings indicates persistent obstacles to aligning frameworks, strategies and action plans across the ‘conflict’ aspect of the nexus initiatives. A specific consideration was the need for projects to develop disaster risk management (DRM) and contingency plans to effectively respond to unforeseen crises and mitigate disruptions to program implementation. Future research is needed to better understand the linkages between education programs and the triple nexus of humanitarian aid, development, and peacebuilding.

The projects funded by the Charlevoix Initiative have significantly impacted investment in and access to quality education for girls in fragile, conflict, and crisis situations in alignment with Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy. The outcome of this consultation will provide valuable insights for maintaining and extending the impacts, thereby contributing to Canada’s commitment to promoting gender equality and inclusive education in the international development sector.

Section 1: Introduction

At the 2018 G7 Summit, the Government of Canada introduced the **Charlevoix Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls, and Women in Developing Countries (“Charlevoix Declaration”)**¹, which included a \$400-million commitment to women’s and girls’ education in fragile, conflict, and crisis situations.

¹ See: Charlevoix Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls and Women in Developing Countries: https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/assets/pdfs/international_relations-relations_internationales/g7/2018-06-09-quality-education-qualite-en.pdf



Esther is a primary student in rural Uganda. **CREDIT:** Rich Townsend / Aga Khan Foundation

Section 1: Introduction

In 2019, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) announced 26 projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East that would be supported by this funding, with projects ending between March 2022 and March 2024. While each project monitors and evaluates program implementation, there is an opportunity to deepen this cohort's collective understanding of each other's work and impact.

This report actively assesses whether the Charlevoix Education Initiative, originally designed to bridge the gap between humanitarian efforts and development projects, has successfully achieved its intended objective to facilitate a dialogue surrounding the lessons learned in the design and delivery of overseas education programs with a focus on contexts affected by fragility, crisis, and conflict to encourage the support for the sector.

We (the consultants) designed and led a short-term consultation process contracted through the Aga Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC) and in collaboration with the Canadian International Education Policy Working Group – Technical Working Group (CIEPWG – TWG) through its Charlevoix community of practice and its research sub-committee (research committee and coordination committee). For the purpose of this research project, 21 of the 26 projects were selected in Africa (17), Latin America (1), Asia (1), and the Middle East (2). We systematically reviewed seventy-five (75) project documents (proposals, mid-term evaluations and, where applicable, final reports²) and facilitated 10 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) or Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with 39 participants³ drawn from Managers, Supervisors, Project Managers, Project Officers, Project Team Leads, M&E Specialists, Gender Specialists, Education Specialists, Senior Advisors, and other key project staff. Through this process, we gathered and contextualized insights from the Canadian Charlevoix Education Initiative-funded projects with consideration for the broader G7 funding framework. Our analysis does not evaluate the projects funded through this initiative; GAC is currently completing an end-term evaluation of all Charlevoix projects, thus allowing the consultants to highlight lessons learned in the design and delivery of overseas education programs, focusing on contexts affected by fragility, crisis, and conflicts. We gathered data on the evolution of best practices, a range of implementation activities to address barriers to education, challenges and allocation strategies while identifying any significant gaps related to project outcomes, to comprehensively analyze the projects' financial and programmatic strategies.

As part of this research, we utilized content (descriptive and analytical) and situational analysis methods to examine the qualitative data from the project documents, FGDs and KIIs to extract valuable insights and discern meaningful patterns from the extensive dataset relevant to quality education for women and girls in fragile, conflict, and crisis situations in developing countries, aligning with Canada's commitment to the G7 Charlevoix

2 The research was undertaken based on available data; some projects continue into 2024 and this report and its findings are valid based on the documents provided.

3 Given the ongoing humanitarian crisis and conflict in Palestine, particularly the recent escalation of Israel's war on Gaza since October 7, 2023, we determined it would be ethically responsible to exercise sensitivity and understanding towards potential participants. In light of these considerations, we did not include Palestine and Syria (due to uncertainties at the time about how they would be impacted) in the focus group selection process, respecting the recent tragedies faced by the affected individuals and communities.

Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls, and Women. In collaboration with CIEPWG – TWG, we used all the analyzed data from the 21 project documents, FGDs and KIIs to generate a comprehensive set of deliverables (this final report, executive summary and SlideDeck presentation) to inform future funding strategies and dissemination efforts targeting GAC, Charlevoix funding beneficiaries, and the broader CIEPWG community. This final report will support AKFC and the CIEPWG – TWG community of practice sub-committees to advise Charlevoix funding recipients and other stakeholders within Canada’s international development sector focused on education programs regarding program design, future funding initiatives and planning for education in the triple nexus. Based on our analysis and findings, Canada’s interventions have made a significant impact on girls and education through financial and technical support for the sector that aligns with the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)⁴, Canadian International Assistance Localization Strategy⁵ and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 on quality education⁶ and SDG 5 on gender equality⁷.

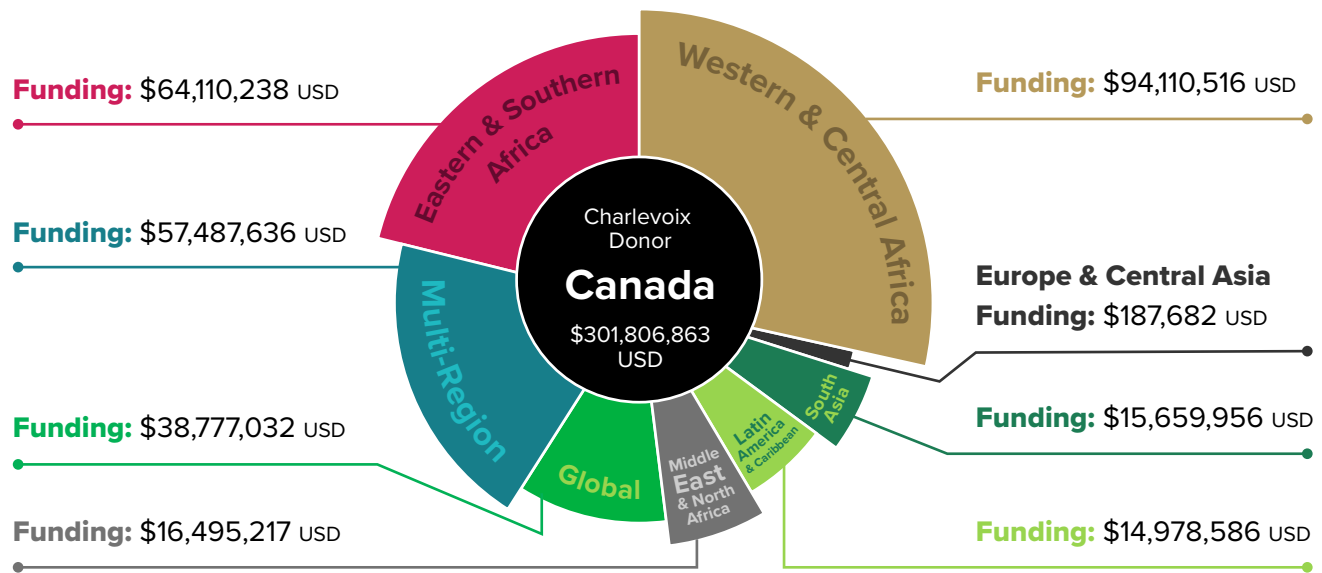


FIGURE 1: Canada’s Contributions to the Charlevoix Declaration (source: authors)

4 See: Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy: https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_developpement-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/policy-politique.aspx?lang=eng

5 Localization: Localization of international assistance (IA) is broadly understood by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) as shifting decision-making, resources, power, capacity, and project management to local partners, including national and subnational governments and/or national and local CSOs and women’s rights organizations <https://canwach.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/EN-Localization-Study-Report-2023.pdf> and https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_developpement-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/civil_policy-politique_civile.aspx?lang=eng

6 See: United Nations (SDG 4): <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

7 See: United Nations (SDG 5): <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>

Section 2: Context

The following literature review summarizes the context of the Charlevoix initiative and is the framework for our analysis of the project documents and transcripts from the FGDs and KIs.



Section 2: Context

Charlevoix Declaration

The Charlevoix Declaration, declared by the G7 Leaders, highlights the **importance of gender equality and quality education for girls, adolescent girls, and women**. As part of the Charlevoix Declaration, **Canada partnered with government, civil society, and multilateral organizations to deliver education projects in developing countries with fragility, crisis, and conflict** (GC, 2021). The Charlevoix Education Initiative was delivered in **Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East**. Recognizing education as a critical driver for empowerment, economic equality, and societal development, the G7 committed to investing in girls' and women's education in developing countries, with specific obligations to close access gaps during conflict and crises and improve coordination between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. The investments support global actions aimed at strengthening efforts to dismantle barriers (GC, 2021):

1. Prepare women for jobs of the future
2. Improve sex- and age-disaggregated data and accountability
3. Encourage governments to ensure continuity of education for all
4. Support innovative education delivery
5. Increase access to at least 12 years of safe and quality education that promotes gender equality
6. Remove barriers to gender equality and to quality primary and secondary education

Nevertheless, significant new international assistance spending is needed post-COVID-19 to address the deep-seated inequalities and the roots of conflicts that make women and gender-diverse people in low-income countries vulnerable in the first place, exacerbated by COVID-19 (Feminist Foreign Policy Working Group, 2020). However, in 2023, there was a decrease in global humanitarian funding, leading to significant repercussions, including the termination of education programs and limited access to sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls, thereby negatively impacting the prospects of children (OCHA, 2023).

Numerous reports, research, programs and initiatives highlight the positive impact of girls having access to quality education on their personal development and broader social and economic outcomes (Aapola et al., 2005; Agapitova & Navarrete Moreno, 2017; Cobbett, 2014; GC, 2021; Karam, 2014; Khoja-Moolji, 2015; Pike et al., 2023; Somani, 2017; United Nations, 2023; UNGEI, 2024; UNICEF, 2021; UN Women, 2023; World Bank, 2023). However, **efforts in this area require ongoing action to address long-standing gender disparities that work toward gender-responsive social protection**. Persistent barriers, such as cultural norms, gender stereotypes, socio-economic factors, domestic responsibilities, child, early and forced marriage, and early pregnancy, continue to impede the full realization of girls' and women's educational rights (UNGEI, 2024; UNICEF, 2021; UN Women, 2023). Beyond gender disparities, students in the Global South encounter substantial barriers, including limited access to quality educational resources, inadequate school infrastructure, insufficient funding for educational programs, lack of qualified teachers, geographic barriers to accessing schools, economic constraints hindering enrollment, health-related challenges impacting attendance, gender disparities in educational opportunities and political instability affecting educational provision (United Nations, 2023). Due to these compounding circumstances, **a staggering number of girls are out of school worldwide: 33 million are of primary school age, and 86 million are of secondary school age** (World Bank, 2023).

These challenges are exacerbated in times of **fragility, crisis, and conflict, where girls are almost 2.5 times more likely than boys to be out of school in conflict-affected areas** (GC, 2021; World Bank, 2023). Simultaneously, interventions that develop and strengthen multisectoral, synergistic policies and programming improve girls' access to lifelong learning, education, training, social protection, and health (UN Women, 2023).

Girls' education is fundamentally situated within human and child rights frameworks, asserting the **inherent right of every girl to access quality education** free from discrimination, violence and other barriers. Several provisions within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) apply to girls' right to education. **Article 28 of the CRC** and **Article 11 of the ACRWC** acknowledge the fundamental right of every child to education, including the imperative of equitably providing access to education for all children. Complementing this, Article 2 of the CRC and Article 3 of the ACRWC outline the overarching principle of non-discrimination, stipulating that all rights articulated in the agreements must be universally safeguarded, including protection against gender-based discrimination—thereby affirming access to quality education for girls. The emphasis on quality education goes beyond having girls in school, but ensuring that girls feel safe while in school, have the opportunity to complete all levels of education, gain the skills to succeed in the labour market, gain socio-emotional and life skills to navigate post-school life, make decisions about their own lives and contribute to their communities and the world (World Bank, 2023). From a socio-economic perspective, investing in girls' education promotes overall economic growth (estimated between 15 to 30 trillion US dollars for lifetime productivity and earnings) and boosts women's participation to improve inequality-based social and health barriers (GC, 2021; Wodon et al., 2018). Comprehensively addressing barriers to girls' education requires implementing targeted policies, promoting community engagement, and facilitating global collaboration to create an environment where girls and women can access and benefit from quality education.

Feminist Foreign Policy and Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)

While foreign policies and international relations have been largely gender-blind, feminist foreign policy advances ethical frameworks that meaningfully recognize the lived experiences of women and other marginalized groups receiving international support (Aggestam et al., 2018; Feminist Foreign Policy Working Group, 2020; Ridge et al., 2019). Visualized in Figure 2, Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) is an initiative to “eradicate poverty and build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world... [by] promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls.” (Global Affairs Canada, 2017 p. 8).

The reference in FIAP to intersectionality indicates the importance of practical programming implementation that acknowledges various groups’ marginalized or advantaged statuses based on factors such as ethnicity, religion, age, and (dis)ability (Cadesky, 2020; Crenshaw, 1989; Morton et al., 2020). However, revisiting the ambiguity, there is a risk that different interpretations of ‘feminist’ may shape funding patterns that overlook intersectional aspects of feminism (Ridge et al., 2019). Adopting an intersectional approach within feminist foreign policy programs recognizes the interconnectedness of power structures and systems of oppression that result in current and historical processes of neglect, marginalization, discrimination, and stigmatization, particularly impacting marginalized groups such as racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, older persons, displaced persons, and migrants, persons with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics, Indigenous peoples, persons living in detention, the urban poor and rural communities (Feminist Foreign Policy Working Group, 2020; OCHA, 2023). Moreover, collaboration with diverse groups is essential to develop specific policies, programs, and strategies that address gender equality (Feminist Foreign Policy Working Group, 2020).



FIGURE 2: Six Action Areas of Canada’s FIAP.

Source: Global Affairs Canada

Gender Dynamics and Localization in Development Initiatives

Understanding the localization of gender roles and responsibilities is needed to critically examine how gender is perceived and operationalized in development frameworks. Rao and Tiessen (2020) investigated perceptions of feminism among Canada's partners in the Global South and found varying attitudes towards feminist development, ranging from complete acceptance to partial acceptance with stipulations and negative perceptions of feminism as potentially disempowering. Despite these perceptions not aligning with the policy text, they reflect the partner country-level interpretations. Rao and Tiessen (2020) reported that 85% of organizations supported a feminist foreign policy, while 15% found the term 'feminist' problematic; respondents highlighted challenges in programming that disproportionately focus on women and girls, neglecting other social, economic, and cultural concerns as well as other community members and boys. Participants suggested the need for further dialogue on defining feminism with Global South partners for acceptance within communities, ultimately increasing the potential effectiveness to counter exclusionary attitudes resulting from misinterpretations of feminism (Rao & Tiessen, 2020).

The historic Northern-driven and top-down framing of development assistance and foreign policy upheld colonial structures where the 'Global North' was positioned as the expert. In contrast, **transnational, intersectional, gender-equitable programming works to challenge this paradigm by deconstructing the economic, socio-cultural, and political systems that perpetuate colonial violence and imperial ideologies** (Feminist Foreign Policy Working Group, 2020). It is important to note that simply recruiting nationally does not ensure proper adherence to the principles of localization (Barakat & Milton, 2020). To attain these ethical and sustainable results, initiatives should actively incorporate input and guidance from local organizations, municipal authorities, other forms of local-level governance, and community members, including children, at all stages. These stakeholders have firsthand awareness of marginalization and lived experiences of gender inequality within the local context, alongside valuable insights and expertise about developing successful initiatives (Barakat & Milton, 2020; Nguya & Siddiqui, 2020; OCHA, 2023; Tiessen, 2019). While low structural costs and geographical or cultural proximity may arise as a result, the primary focus of authentic localization should be on actual empowerment and effectiveness (Barakat & Milton, 2020).

The concept 'empowerment' for women and girls to become 'agents of change' across multiple SDGs is commendable, yet positioning women in the Global South as both barriers to success and victims in international development further exacerbates the victim-blaming paradigm: "By relying on myths of girls' selflessness, rather than framing equal access as an issue of social justice, ideas of irresponsible boys and overburdened girls are perpetuated and legitimized" (Cobbett, 2014, p. 9). Cadesky (2020) similarly indicates that the increased caregiver responsibilities shouldered by women and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic are of concern, while the burden that programs place on women and girls to be "drivers of their own development and that of their communities" is seemingly overlooked (p. 8). Even when projects are operationalized, they may inadvertently contribute to the onus placed on women without challenging the structural barriers and systemic inequalities that impede their ability to thrive.

Similarly, while supporting human rights can mean confronting the national sovereignty of other nations that justify certain violations of women's rights based on their domestic cultural practices (Ridge et al., 2019), multilateralism is an underutilized mechanism for ensuring national accountability in fulfilling rights-based obligations while allowing for a balance between human rights and national sovereignty (Ridge et al., 2019).

Thus, **collaborative, nuanced approaches are necessary for bridging the gap between the conceptualization of gender dynamics in development frameworks and the practical operationalization of initiatives to promote more inclusive and effective strategies.** The mutually reinforcing impact of programming is one of the key strategies of the United Nations in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, recognizing the interrelationship between humanitarian, development and peace efforts (i.e., the “triple nexus”) (Guterres, 2016; United Nations General Assembly, 2022; UNTFHS, 2022).

The Triple Nexus

The ‘Triple Nexus’ (Figure 3) emerged as a concept from the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and refers to the linkages between humanitarian, development, and peace actors. GAC has increasingly applied this framework to projects based in fragile contexts, including education-related projects, training, and evaluation frameworks (GAC, 2023). The concept of the triple nexus has emerged as a strategic approach aimed at facilitating synergies and enhancing the effectiveness of interventions across these interconnected domains. As global displacement and humanitarian needs exacerbate, the international community has shifted towards resilience and conflict prevention to disrupt the cycle of aid dependency and focus on reducing the root causes of fragility and conflict (WeWorld, 2020). The approach aligns with the United Nations’ New Way of Working (NWoW) model, where actors are expected to work towards collective outcomes over multiple years—a critical framework when the average humanitarian crisis lasts more than nine years, with many lasting for decades (WeWorld, 2020). The triple nexus recognizes these compounding and non-linear characteristics experienced by many regions, where concurrent and overlapping crises (climate change, economic growth, insecurity, conflict, health threats, fragmented geopolitical landscapes, etc.) exacerbate the vulnerabilities of individuals affected by structural inequities (OCHA, 2023). In this framework, nexus actions can be characterized

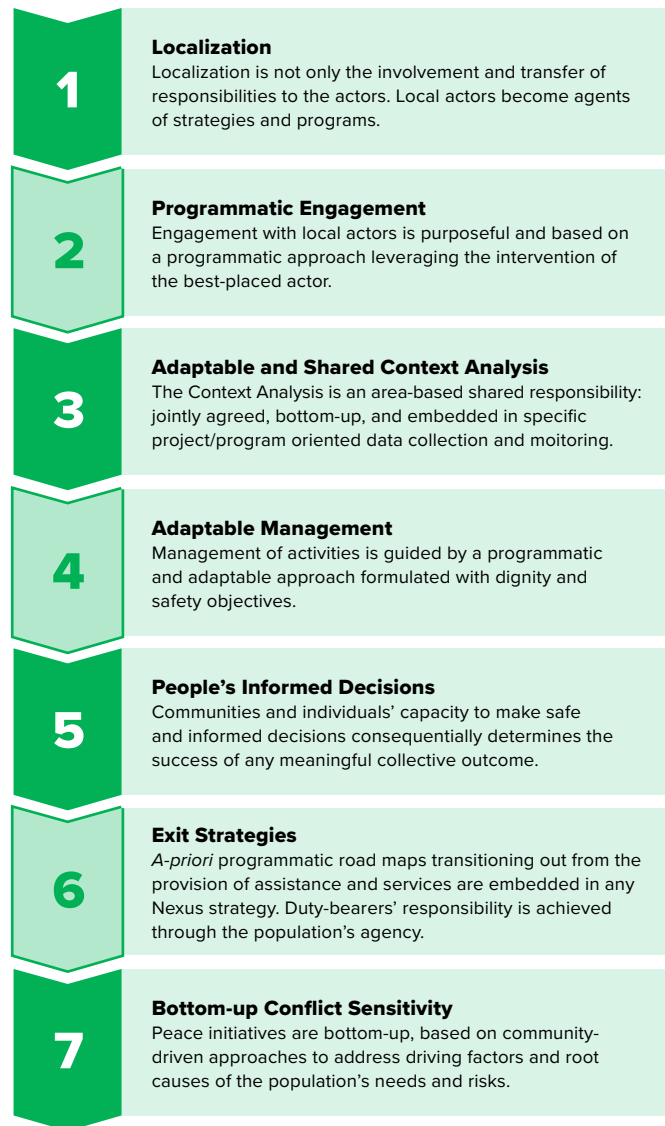


FIGURE 3: Elements of the Triple Nexus.

Source: WeWorld (2020)

as integrated approaches that contribute to achieving outcomes in two or three of the nexus areas and are strengthened when additional conditions are met, suggesting that the action may originate in one domain but also yield measurable outcomes across others. (Howe, 2019; Norman & Mikhael, 2023).

The triple nexus allows actors from different sectors to learn from each other and the local communities, but efforts are still needed to align frameworks and plans. For example, the term 'resilience' has different interpretations in each sector: for peacebuilding actors, it refers to managing risks and increasing resilience to withstand conflict situations and for development actors, it often refers to livelihoods and climate change (ICVA, 2021). Core concepts and principles of 'localization' and 'do no harm' are not cohesively conceptualized across different nexus actors (Barakat & Milton, 2020; Cochrane & Wilson, 2023). Actors expressed concern that integration with 'peace' was a guise for securitized or militarized approaches to collaborate with actors engaged in stabilization and counterterrorism instead of peacebuilding actors (Norman & Mikhael, 2023; Tronc et al., 2019). Garcia (2022) recommends that centring peace on human security can shift the focus of the nexus from militarized security and encourage practitioners to view peacebuilding as an intrinsic element within the triple nexus rather than an appendage to pre-existing aid or development initiatives. All nexus actions should involve a people-centred approach characterized by impartiality, independence, neutrality, and humanity alongside principles of dignity, inclusion, justice, human rights, agency, and social cohesion; proactively supporting and investing in the capacities of national partners can build stable, resilient communities and institutions (Okai, 2023).

Regional Contexts of Fragility, Crisis, and Conflict

The establishment of the **triple nexus brings together the political-social and economic theories that impact development and works towards establishing methodologies that have long-term benefits**. In theory, the application works, considering the bio-psycho-social impact of conflict on communities by noting that economic respite and redress are key components to easing conflict and crises and building resiliency in countries to lessen fragility. The Charlevoix Declaration commits to providing accessible quality education for girls, adolescent girls, and women in developing countries—most of which are fragile given the high incidence of domestic and international crises and conflict. Country projects are in regions that share a history of fragility based predominantly on political and economic instability. Conflicts are increasingly long-lasting, recurring, complex, and interdependent, resulting in overt political instability (Oelke & Scherer, 2022), which is inextricably interlinked with economic instability. There are several major driving factors for fragility, crises, and conflict linked to political and economic instability across project areas:

- **Ethnic and Religious Tensions:** Ethnic and religious tensions often fuel conflict, particularly in nations with diverse demographics. For example, religion has been influential in Latin America since the 1960s, notably during the transition from authoritarian to democratic rule concurrent with the growing prominence of churches as influential social forces. The religious resurgence coincided with increased violence, initially marked by state repression and human rights struggles and later by criminal activities and efforts to enhance citizen security. Competition for resources and political influence exacerbates tensions, as evidenced by Kenya's post-election violence in 2007/8, sectarian clashes in India in 2002 (e.g., Gujrat riots), and subsequent incidents such as the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots and the 2020 Delhi riots.
- **Resource Scarcity:** Competition over scarce resources, such as water, arable land, and minerals, can lead to conflicts within and between communities and across borders. Across Africa, more human-wildlife conflict comes into play, and nomadic/pastoralist communities are forced out of traditional paths. Across Africa, Latin America, and South Asia, the burgeoning population and increased access to affluent lifestyles have seen an alarming increase in demand for land and development, resulting in a widening of cities with increased slum and low-cost and unmonitored low-income housing. Widespread poverty and economic inequality contribute to social unrest and conflict, particularly when marginalized groups feel disenfranchised and excluded from economic opportunities.
- **Climate Change:** Africa is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including droughts, floods, and desertification, notably in the vast Sahel semi-arid region of Africa. These environmental stresses can exacerbate existing tensions and contribute to conflicts over resources. India and other South Asian countries have also been impacted by climate change, with natural water tables showing a dramatic decrease and no mitigation measures.
- **Weak Governance and Rule of Law:** Weak governance, corruption, and lack of rule of law undermine stability and create opportunities for conflict entrepreneurs to exploit grievances and incite violence. Many developing nations struggle with political instability due to authoritarian governance, corruption, weak institutions, and ineffective leadership. In places where political stability is levelling out, the remnants of historical struggle and resulting inequality play a major role in political choices and preferences, leading to more marked tribal/ethnic lines and boundaries that demarcate cities, towns, and settlements.

While some factors and outcomes may overlap, affecting fragility, crises, and conflict across regions, it is essential to recognize the specific contexts and dynamics shaping each region's challenges. Additionally, the effectiveness of interventions such as women-centred, gender-equitable education may vary depending on local circumstances and needs.

The geographic regions funded by Canada are indicated in Figure 4 and continue to be impacted by ongoing conflict and increased fragility through the project funding cycle. Education has always been seen as a key metric in driving down the adverse impacts of conflict and lessening fragility—it not only provides a more workable population but also plays a necessary role in lowering adverse health, nutrition, and sanitation outcomes.

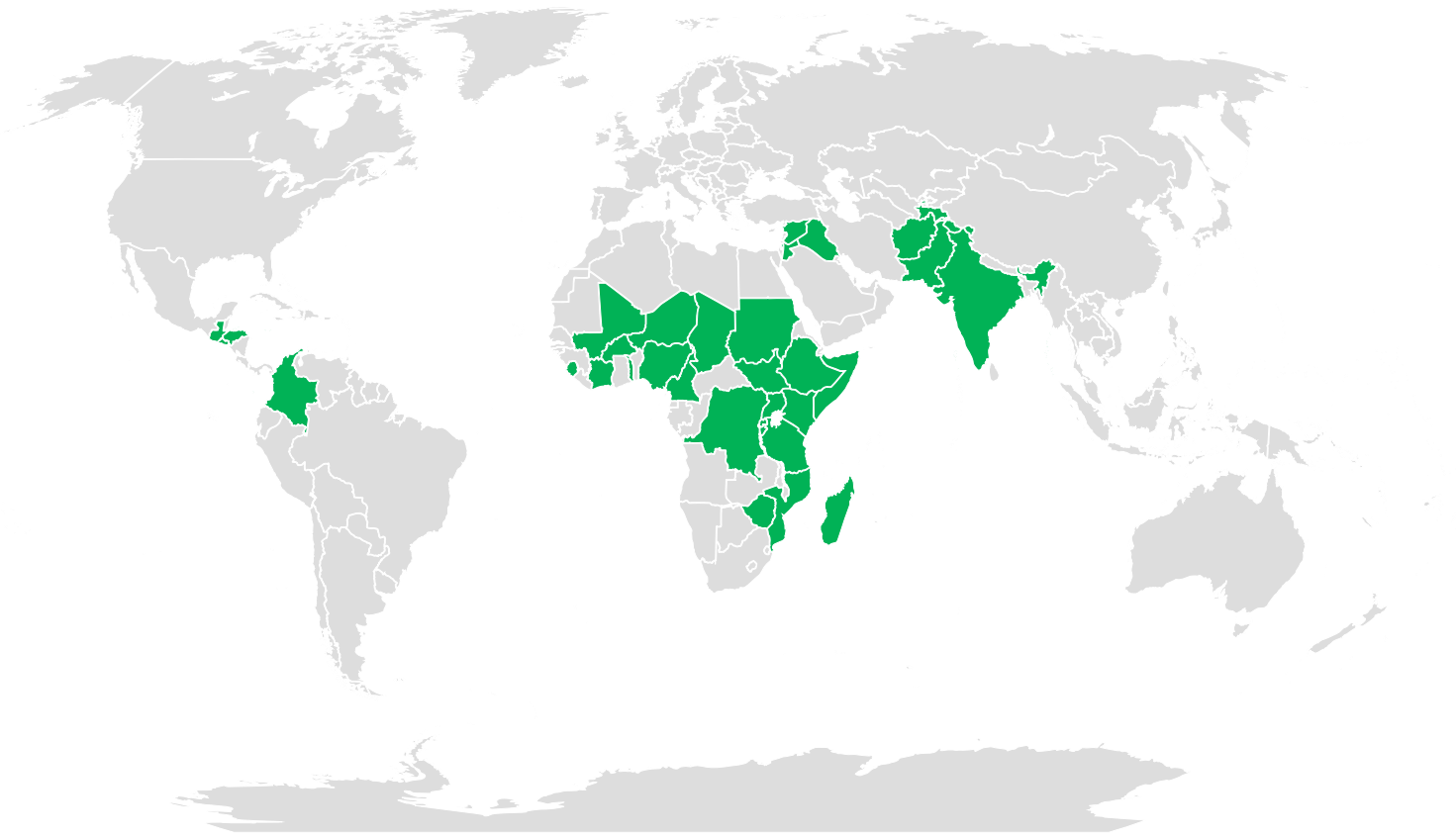


FIGURE 4: Geographic Regions of Charlevoix Education Initiatives (funded by Canada)

Source: INEE (2022). Charlevoix funding dashboard: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/inee/viz/CharlevoixDashboard-English/Dashboard1>

If the triple nexus is to be a successful agent of change, then education must be seen as a viable pathway in a community and population's economic progress, specifically gender transformative approaches to programming. While the argument for targeting adolescent girls is evident in this discussion, it is imperative to note that in countries like South Asia and parts of Africa where patriarchal tendencies are culturally intertwined, adapting access to education needs to be a community-led initiative before programmatic detailing begins as it is more likely than not that a much lower benchmark of expectations will be required. More so, an interventional, stratified approach will be required for each targeted country regardless of regionality—as country-to-country access to education can vastly differ. Political scientists historically emphasize 'grievance' determinants, highlighting how attempts to modernize or effect change can disrupt social order, erode social cohesion, and alter perceptions, leading to the mobilization of disadvantaged groups and reigniting old animosities. Formal political rational theories focus on factors such as political repression, failing institutions, transitions, and informational problems, identifying their role in heightening conflict when grievances remain unaddressed. Economically, greed is recognized as a distinct theory underlying ongoing conflict and fragility. Grossman (1991) conceptualizes rebellion as an industry driven by profit-seeking insurgents exploiting favourable circumstances. Other economic theories, like Hirschleifer's (1995), suggest that conflict arises from misperceived opportunities and grievances due to asymmetrical information. Competition for resources, particularly land, exacerbates intra-country fragility as issues of ownership validation and resource appropriation persist without effective legal mechanisms. In turn, fragile states suffer from weakened socio-legal structures and a lack of enforcement capacity, often leading to community-based policing and justice systems, sometimes dominated by gang-led styled justice.

Socially Just Pedagogies and Education in the Global South

The global collective effort to uphold the right to education will continue—ideally and optimistically—within the aid frameworks of ‘Education for All’, as a key driver of protecting human rights and moving towards sustainable development. As educational landscapes in ‘Global South’ regions continue to evolve amidst socio-political, economic, environmental and cultural factors, there is a growing recognition of the need for approaches to prioritize inclusivity, equity, and social justice. Socially just pedagogies aim to challenge and dismantle systems of oppression and discrimination while promoting social justice principles such as equality, diversity, and empowerment. In the context of triple nexus education projects in fragility, crisis, and conflict, these pedagogies recognize the intersectionality of identities and experiences, address historical and systemic inequalities in education systems, and prioritize the inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences (ex., refugees, internally displaced persons, individuals with disabilities, etc.).

Criticism has been directed toward international development and education for perpetuating colonial, capitalist, and Eurocentric ideologies and methodologies (Brissett, 2020; MacCallum et al., 2022; Takayama et al., 2017), therefore promoting initiatives that deviate from colonial foundations in knowledge construction and pedagogy. Socially just pedagogical practices involve learning through real-life problem-solving, enquiry, critical thinking, and virtual environments (MacCallum et al., 2022; Okolie et al., 2021). Similarly, focusing on structural reform and supporting the development of teachers’ and students’ attitudes, behaviours, and competencies can help learners face and resolve local and global challenges (MacCallum et al., 2022). Sakata (2022) calls for more learner-centred pedagogy in international policy discourse regarding education while emphasizing the challenge of importing and adopting standardized teaching methods in low-income countries due to diverse socio-cultural and environmental contexts: “pedagogical policies ignoring historical, cultural, and epistemological contingencies are unlikely to realize their ambitions” (p. 174). Therefore, there needs to be flexibility for local actors to adjust and refine internationalized policies for their educational context, where inclusive education is integrated into education systems adapted to local contexts (Faruqui, 2024).

Section 3: Methodology

Our method offers a structured means of extracting valuable insights and discerning meaningful patterns from the extensive dataset relevant to the Charlevoix funding for Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls, and Women.



Students playing soccer in Moyo, Uganda. **CREDIT:** Rich Townsend / Aga Khan Foundation

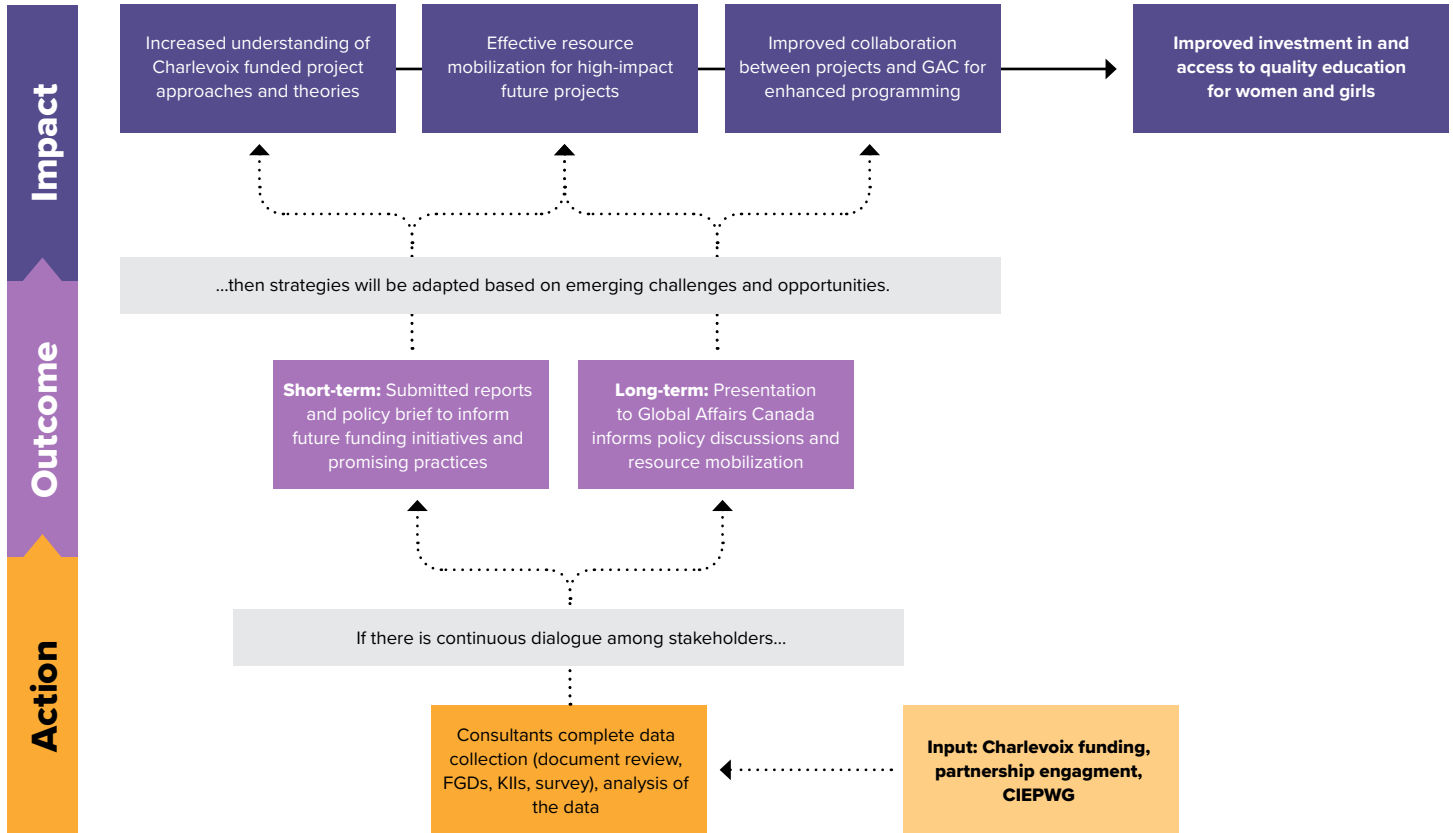
Section 3: Methodology

Our method offers a structured means of extracting valuable insights and discerning meaningful patterns from the extensive dataset relevant to the Charlevoix funding for Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls, and Women. **Our research, developed in collaboration with the CIEPWG – TWG, answers the following questions:**

- 1. What approaches, and theoretical assumptions guided Canadian development organizations in response to the Charlevoix Declaration?**
- 2. What were the similarities and differences across organizations?**
- 3. How do interventions, partnerships, and contextual variations impact education in contexts of fragility, crisis, and conflict within the triple nexus?**
- 4. How do organizations define and measure learning and effective pedagogical practices?**
- 5. What methods, tools, and collaborative approaches influence the monitoring and evaluation of interventions funded by Charlevoix?**
- 6. How does the dynamic or emerging context shape these methods, tools, etc.?**

See [Appendix 1](#) for details regarding the proposed areas of focus provided to the consultants.

Our analysis of Charlevoix Education Initiative projects is informed by the **Theory of Change** (Figure 5). An integral part of the Theory of Change was to engage with and consider the efficacy of adapting the Charlevoix Education Initiative to the local contexts where actors operate. The Theory of Change posits that if there is a continuous dialogue amongst stakeholders based on evidence generated from Charlevoix Education Initiative-funded projects, then evidence-based strategies for education provision will be adapted through increased resource mobilization for high-impact projects and collaboration between GAC and implementing organizations.



See: Brown, M. & Wadson, A. (2019). Evaluation of the G7CSO Coalition’s Policy Influence Campaign Influence on the 2018 G7 Charlevoix Declaration on Quality of Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls and Women in Developing Countries, p. 11.

FIGURE 5: Theory of Change Related to Research

This research will complement (not replace) the GAC evaluation currently in process (January 2025) and seeks different research inquiries than those in the scope of the GAC evaluation⁸. In this research, we explore learnings important to the community of practice and which may be used to inform the next funding cycle. As stakeholders gain a deeper understanding of effective strategies and priorities through dialogue and evidence, there is an expectation that this knowledge will translate into greater investment in education initiatives, particularly for women and girls. There is a greater likelihood of maximizing the impact of investments and ensuring alignment with broader development objectives by fostering partnerships and synergies between GAC and their funded projects.

8 Please contact the Charlevoix Canadian International Education Policy Technical Working Group for more details on the GAC evaluation.

Data Collection and Analysis

This study utilized a purposeful sampling approach to select Charlevoix funding organizations headquartered in Canada and their respective representatives for the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). There are **21 projects in focus** for this research project in Africa (17), Latin America (1), Asia (1) and the Middle East (2). Out of the 26 projects that were eligible for participation, 21 projects both expressed interest in participating in the research and provided their relevant documentation. Participants were eligible if they had a headquarters based in Canada and received funding through the Charlevoix Education Initiative. The research occurred from November 2023 to March 2024, with data collection spanning December 2023 to January 2024. Due to the contractual requirement to anonymize the data and respect for the participants, any specific identifying information (i.e., names, communities and identifying actors) are removed.

We implemented a three-phase sequential explanatory qualitative approach for our research methodology. The first phase involved an in-depth analysis of the available qualitative data from Charlevoix-funded projects to analyze critical themes, patterns, and insights within the existing dataset. **For this first phase**, our primary data collection tools consisted of document reviews (qualitative). The data sources were project-based documents from the 21 Charlevoix-funded projects and relevant public GAC or CIPWEG documents (see Table 1 for details regarding the types of documents reviewed). We systematically reviewed 75 documents for key themes related to the consultancy research questions. **Approximately, half of the projects studied had concluded, with the remaining reports sharing a range of project documents.** The analysis while triangulated with literature review is limited by research question scope, document availability, selection/availability of interviewees and limited days allocated for this research.

Type of Document	Number reviewed
Global Affairs Canada Proposal	9
Final Revised Proposal	4
Gender Assessment	1
COVID-19 Response Plans	4
Baseline Report or Study	12
Performance Measurement Framework	2
Project Implementation Plans or Strategy Report	8
Midterm Review or Evaluation and Annual Reports	2
Endline Survey Report or Outcome Sheet (Logic Model)	8
Final Project Report	10
Project Supporting Documents (question guides, reference lists, research team details)	10
Global Affairs Canada and Canadian International Education Policy Working Group (CIEPWG) public documents	5
Total	75

In the second phase, we refined our research guide and facilitated ten semi-structured FGDs and KIs based on the regions with the 21 Charlevoix-funded projects from phase one. Based on our selection criteria, the FGDs and KIs involved 39 participants (see details of participants in Table 2) from the funded projects, key Charlevoix implementers, and GAC. In this phase, we obtained institutional knowledge focusing on critical lessons learned, best practices, gaps for strengthened programming and the processes leading to the commitments and projects. The ten FGDs and KIs were conducted virtually via Zoom, lasting between 60 and 90 minutes, and audio-recorded for documentation purposes. See

[Appendix 3](#) for the research guide and questions asked during the FGDs and KIs. **In the third phase**, we held recurring meetings with the CIEPWG — TWG community of practice sub-committees (research committee and coordination committee) to member-check our data and strengthen the insights about the findings. Based on the information provided, sex disaggregation is not available for all quantitative data; however, the authors recognize the importance of integrating gender into all concepts to build informed outcomes.

We utilized content (descriptive and analytical) and situational analysis methods to examine the qualitative data and understand quality education for women and girls in fragile, conflict, and crisis situations in developing countries, aligning with Canada’s commitment to the G7 Charlevoix Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls, and Women. Our content analysis systematically categorizes and quantifies key themes, patterns, and trends, see Appendix 4 for details regarding the Codebook and categories of the analysis. Situational analysis refers to our process of examining and understanding the context, circumstances, and conditions surrounding a particular situation or phenomenon to gain insights and make sense of the data. Qualitative audio recordings were transcribed for thematic analysis using NVivo 12 software. Deductive data analysis was completed to determine interview themes relevant to the research questions. Preliminary codes were developed into categories and then refined, expanded, and condensed into themes. The consultants engaged in the ongoing discussion around emerging themes and interpretations.

Our analysis contextualized the projects and their implications for education initiatives. In the analysis, we systematically reviewed the project documents, FGDs and KIs across four major categories: Approaches and Theoretical Assumptions; Interventions, Partnerships, and Contextual Variations (Triple Nexus); Learning and Effective Pedagogical Practices; and Monitoring and Evaluation of Charlevoix-Funded Interventions. Based on this framework, key emerging themes are outlined in the following discussion section.

Table 2: Participants in 10 FGDs and KIs

Category	Number reviewed
Senior Management	5
Program Managers or Team Leads	11
Specialists (M&E, Gender, Education)	8
In-country Project Officers	15
Total	39

The following Mind Map (Figure 6) shows the integration of the FGD/KII interviews (Appendix 5) with the Project Document Analysis (Appendix 6) as the final stage of the data analysis, which resulted in our thematic analysis.

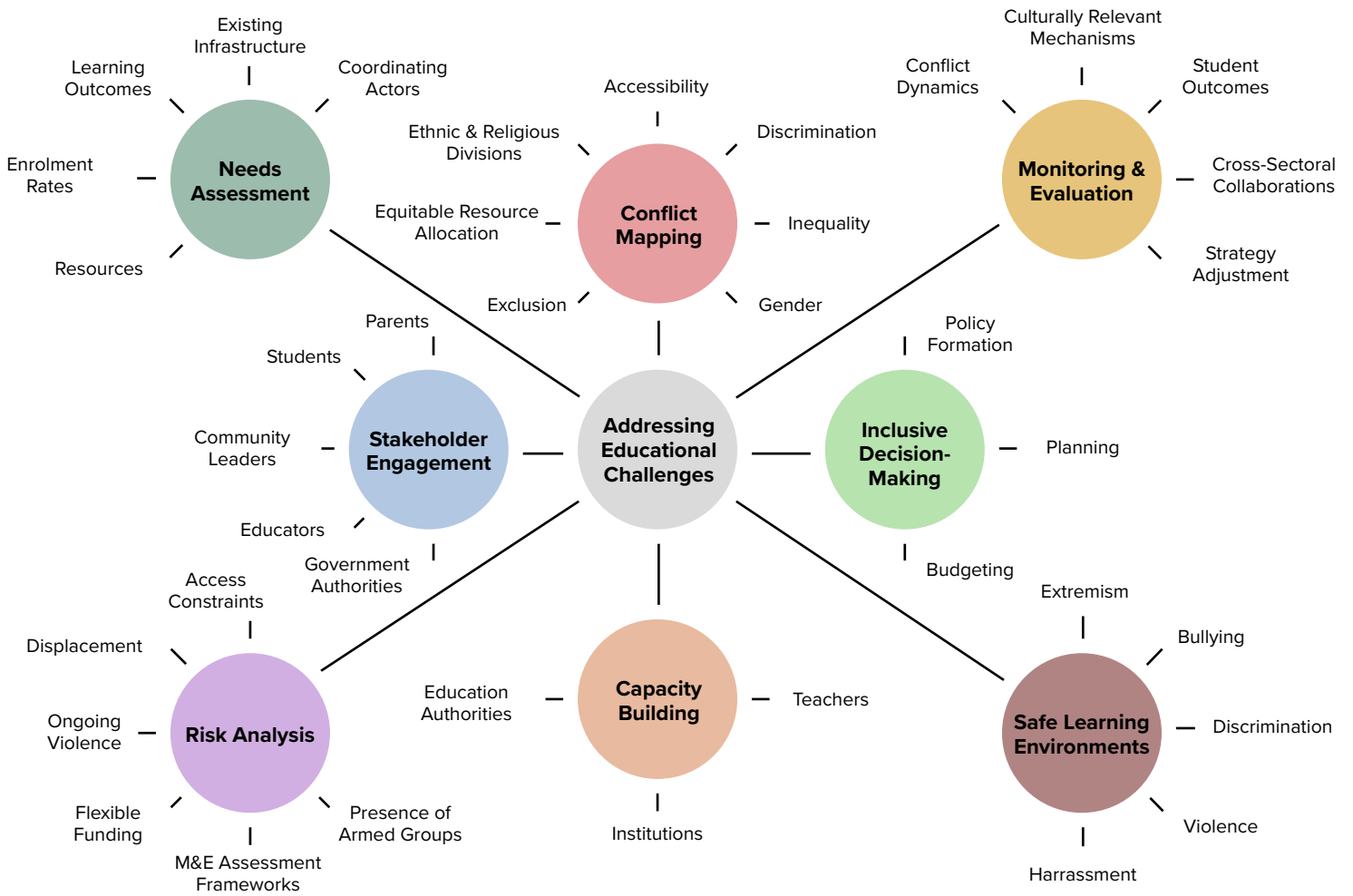


FIGURE 6: Data Coding Mind Map from FGD/KII Interviews and Project Document Analysis (source: authors)

Section 4: Discussion and Findings

The following section is based on our findings and analysis of the data from the project documents, FGDs, and KIIs, highlighting the lessons learned in the design and delivery of overseas education programs through the Charlevoix Education Initiative in contexts affected by fragility, crisis, and conflicts.



Besher is a volunteer at an education centre in Syria.

CREDIT: Christopher Wilton-Steer / Aga Khan Foundation

Section 4: Discussion and Findings

We found that the 21 projects in our focus aimed to reach **1,688,303 beneficiaries⁹**, with a total of **CAD \$79,727,089**. Figures 6 and 7 provide a visual outline of how the funding was distributed among project regions.

Disaggregated data from the projects show that they aimed to reach a total of collectively:

- **627,201 girls**
- **335,008 boys¹⁰**
- **1,454 schools and non-formal education centres**
- **25,591 teachers or staff**
- **4,549 community leaders and organizations**
- **824 government officials**
- **42,914 caregivers**

Total Funding:
\$79,727,089 CAD

Total Beneficiaries:
1,688,303

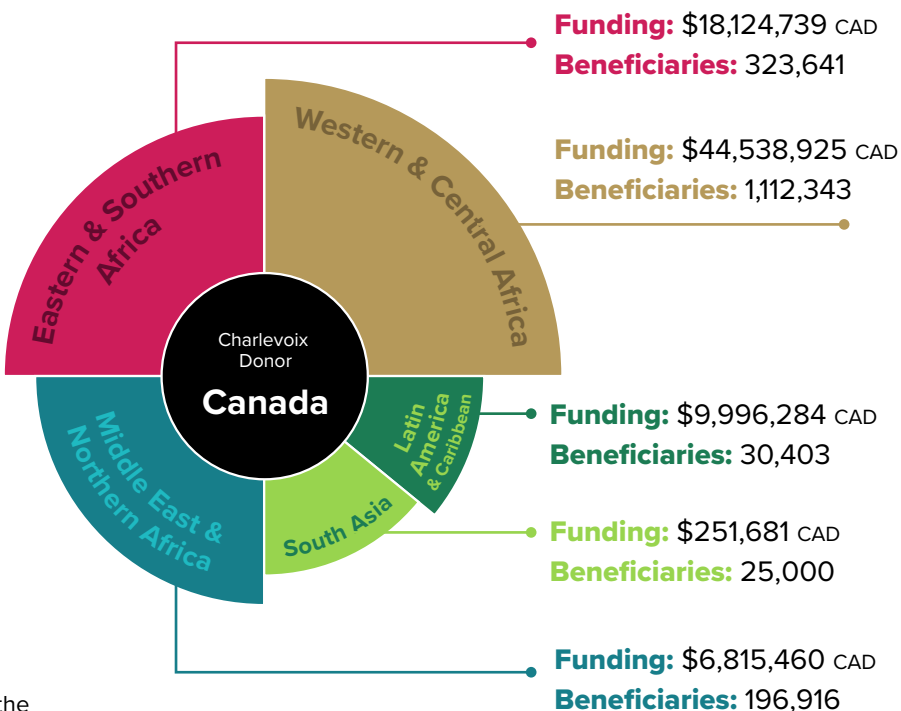


FIGURE 7: Beneficiaries and funding totals of the 21 project countries in focus by region (source: authors)

9 At the time of writing this report, only 10 projects had submitted their final report for data collection; therefore, final numbers on actual beneficiaries reached is not yet available.

10 In the FGDs, KIIs and project documents provided, there was no discourse addressing the non-binary nature of gender.

Based on our analysis, four themes emerged:

- 1. Theoretical Frameworks and Approaches for Improving Education**
- 2. Interventions, Partnerships, and Contextual Variations**
- 3. Strategies in Fragile, Crisis, and Conflict Settings**
- 4. Flexibility in Changing Circumstances**

The following section represents selected findings aligned with these four themes:

Theme 1: Theoretical Frameworks and Approaches for Improving Education

Theme One aligns with the first research question and part of the second question exploring theoretical frameworks in line with barriers to quality education for girls. Various frameworks functioned as guiding principles for project design, implementation, and evaluation that were directly referenced in the project-based documents (Table 3). Among these frameworks, the Logic Model and the Theory of Change documents stand out as a foundational tool used to articulate expected outcomes, pathways of change and key inputs required to achieve project objectives. Eight (20.5%) FGD and KII participants directly referenced their project’s Logic Model or Theory of Change to explain their project. Two participants shared that, despite various changes and adaptations implemented throughout the project’s lifecycle, the Logic Model and Theory of Change remained constant. The consistency of these documents suggests that they provided a clear and stable framework for understanding the project’s objectives, strategies, and expected outcomes.

In practical terms, this stability supports project teams in maintaining alignment and coherence amidst challenges while accurately reflecting the project’s core intentions and strategies.

While theoretical frameworks provide valuable guidance, many **projects drew upon their understanding of existing barriers and contextual factors within communities to inform their work.** The pragmatic approach acknowledges the complexity of local contexts and the need for interventions that address specific challenges and opportunities, often aligning with initiatives such as WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene). Rather than listing a theoretical framework, projects justified their work by outlining how they developed

Table 3: References to a Theoretical Framework of Approach	
Theoretical Framework or Approach	References
Human Rights and Gender-Transformative Approach	1
Community Engagement and Participatory Approach	2
Gender Analysis and Gender Mainstreaming	5
Continuous Professional Development for Teachers	1
Equity-Based Approach	1
Social Behavior Change Communication Strategy	1

targeted and contextually appropriate solutions by grounding their strategies in the realities girls face in accessing education. The following Table 4 are **critical barriers to quality education for girls** determined through the data collection (project-based document review), with further examples outlined in [Appendix 2](#) by country and region:

Table 4: Summary of Barriers to Quality Education for Girls	
Main Theme	Description
Access and Inclusivity	Unequal opportunities for marginalized children, particularly children with disabilities.
Conflict and Displacement	Restrictions on freedom of movement and displacement of families (disrupts educational continuity); school closures and teacher migration.
Financial Constraints	Lack of household resources due to economic constraints; boys' education prioritized during financial pressures; expectations for children to contribute to family income and not attend school.
Infrastructure and Facilities	Inadequate WASH facilities and a lack of MHM products in schools; rehabilitation needs for school infrastructure.
Psychosocial Support and Training	Lack of psychosocial support for traumatized students and teachers (affects their ability to engage in education); insufficient training for teachers on gender-sensitive pedagogy and social-emotional learning.
Security and Safety	Fear due to insecurity and threats of attacks on schools impact attendance, vulnerability to violence (corporal punishment and bullying) both within and on the way to school; risks associated with roads around schools and assaults on educational institutions add to safety concerns.
Social Barriers for Migrants and Returnees	Xenophobia and tensions with host communities impact education access for migrant and returnee populations.
Gender Inequality, Socio-Cultural Norms and Practices	Rights-based issues such as violence against women and children; social norms and attitudes that stigmatize girls in schools; gender disparities in decision-making regarding education and household responsibilities impact girls' access to schooling; Girls face violence both within schools and in their communities, affecting their safety and well-being.
Teacher Skills and Training	Limited teacher skills and low literacy levels affect the quality of education, challenges in student retention and transition.

In all project locations, there were **aspects of socio-cultural norms and practices identified as barriers to education**, outlined in the project-based documents as the justification for their project (see [Appendix 2](#) for aggregated data). In West and Central Africa, barriers to girls' education included human rights violations like SGBV, FGM and forced marriages, as well as social norms perpetuating gender disparities, stigmatization in schools, expectations for domestic roles and acceptance of domestic and gender-based violence, especially in conflict zones. The threat of violence, including gender-based violence (GBV), both within school premises and during the journey to school, further impacted girls' safety and security, deterring many from attending school regularly. In East and Southern Africa, similar challenges were not related to gender disparities in schooling, exacerbated by increased household responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic and persistent societal attitudes devaluing girls' education, leading to early marriage and dropout risks. In the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia, women also face barriers to education due to traditional gender roles but manifest differently through limited mobility, high childcare responsibilities and the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence, including cyberbullying, disproportionately affecting girls.

Acknowledging that projects often span multiple focus areas, projects identified their primary, secondary, and/or tertiary focuses¹¹, our analysis determined the **projects demonstrate a comprehensive approach to addressing the identified barriers to girls' education across diverse regions affected by conflict and instability**. Interventions included improving literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills, alongside addressing access barriers like enrolment, retention, and dropout rates. Health-related initiatives include counseling and sexual and reproductive health education for girls' well-being. Projects prioritized tackling gender-based violence in schools to enhance girls' safety. Infrastructure enhancements aimed to create conducive learning environments with girl-friendly water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities. Additionally, teacher professional development was initiated for effective curriculum delivery. Emphasis was placed on community and parental engagement to challenge socio-cultural norms and support girls' education. However, our analysis concluded that there continue to be **persistent barriers to girls' quality education that are deeply rooted in systemic challenges and socio-cultural norms that perpetuate gender disparities in education**. In the FGDs and KIs, participants discussed how these deeply ingrained beliefs about gender roles, education, early marriage, and household responsibilities that reinforce traditional gender roles and prioritize boys' education require long-term interventions.

Through our research, we found that seven projects (33.3%) demonstrated an intentional **integration of men and boys as catalysts for societal change**, recognizing the constrained autonomy and agency experienced by girls and women in effecting change within their circumstances. While efforts to engage with men and boys can be a step towards empowerment, meaningfully addressing broader social injustices and power imbalances requires integrating men and boys in project activities. The project-based document analysis provided examples of how they integrated groups for boys focusing on life skills, positive masculinity, social cohesion, GBV and adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (ASRHR), with discussion from the FGDs and KIs further outlining the impact of including boys in their interventions. Aligned with the literature, gender equality initiatives should prioritize addressing structural inequalities rather than solely focusing on individual agency, taking into account social injustices and the power dynamics that perpetuate gender

¹¹ See additional public data at INEE (2022) Charlevoix funding dashboard: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/inee/viz/CharlevoixDashboard-English/Dashboard1>

disparities. In their documents, one project described that their original design was not explicit on how men and boys can and should be engaged to become change agents for supporting gender equality, but an external training session helped outline strategies to engage men and boys in addressing harmful gender norms and inequalities. While the project demonstrated an awareness of gender issues and the importance of addressing them, it did not fully adopt a gender-transformative approach. Such an approach goes beyond acknowledging gender disparities; it seeks to challenge and transform the underlying power dynamics and societal norms that perpetuate gender inequality. By not fully embracing this approach, the project could have missed an opportunity to enact meaningful change that promotes equitable outcomes. Nevertheless, the project's recognition of the need to involve men and boys indicates a step in the right direction. Aligned with the literature, engaging men and boys as allies in promoting gender equality can be a powerful strategy to challenge traditional gender norms.

Many of the FGD and KII participants argued the need for a **sustained approach to address societal attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate gender inequality in education**, particularly in conflict-affected areas. A prolonged intervention of four to five years was recommended by a participant to effectively challenge deep-rooted gender norms and practices alongside flexible funding mechanisms prioritizing local organizations.

“If we really aim to transform gender norms, gender practices and behaviours, we really need more time—like four or five years with enough flexibility for funds. Not just in that specific project but also with the possibility for local organizations, for example, women’s rights organizations or Indigenous organizations, to use that money. Because we are talking about gender transformation and talking about controversial issues around gender and sexual and reproductive health or education, comprehensive sexuality education in schools really raises resistance and backlash. Funding should be useful also to respond... and defend the integrity, security and safety of community leaders, especially women and girls, who are really at the frontline dealing with everything.” - FGD/KII participant

A participant shared their organization’s realization that a one-off training session was insufficient and their deeper understanding of the complexity of integrating gender-responsive pedagogy into educational practices. The organization recognized the need for ongoing, continuous training to reinforce and sustain the adoption of gender-responsive practices over time.

*“When we started the program, we thought of a one-off [training] on gender responsive pedagogy, and we later, after our learnings, we realized that a one-off [training] is not, is not sufficient to introduce some good practices. So, what we did was to introduce a kind of continual continuous [training].”
- FGD/KII participant*

The shift towards continuous training reflects a commitment to long-term investment in capacity-building to address cultural norms and behaviors that uphold gender inequality in education. Similarly, other participants expressed concerns about the need to invest more time and resources in strategies for sustainable, long-term impact that supports girls' right to quality education. Other projects spoke of working with school fathers and mothers as champions of gender-transformative initiatives.

“It takes really deep investment and very targeted approaches for male engagement. [...] we had male-only groups to kind of discuss issues that are specific to men. We learned [we] need a kind of approach that's really designed for men and is longer term. It's not kind of, you know, we're doing a community meeting with men here and another here. Something that is engaging the same participants for a longer period of time is really going to be more effective around entrenched norms.” - FGD/KII participant

In summary:

- All organizations utilized various theoretical frameworks and approaches, including human rights and gender-transformative approaches, community engagement, gender analysis and mainstreaming, continuous professional development for teachers, equity-based strategies, and social behaviour change communication.
- All projects relied on Logic Models and Theory of Change documents to outline outcomes and pathways of change.
- While theoretical frameworks provided guidance, most projects also considered local barriers and contextual factors and several more from standard methods such as cash-transfers to integrate a more individualized approach.
- One third of projects targeted systemic challenges and socio-cultural norms perpetuating gender disparities through engaging boys and men but felt that they needed more time and resources to make a long-term impact in this area.

Theme 2: Interventions, Partnerships, and Contextual Variations

Theme Two also highlights key findings associated with the second and third research question.

The following Table 5 summarizes the international partners, education stakeholders and local partners involved in the projects.

Table 5: Partnership and community engagement based on the project document analysis (summarized for confidentiality)	
Partnership	Details
International partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danish Refugee Council (DRC) • Department for International Development (DFID) • European Union (EU) • Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) • Girl’s Education South Sudan (GESS) • Humanity & Inclusion (HI) • International Labor Organization (ILO) • Netherland Red Cross • Red Cross Movement partners • Strømme Foundation (SF) • UNICEF • United States Agency for International Development (USAID) • Various UN Agencies • War Child • World Food Programme (WFP)
Education stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Education (MOE) • Ministry of Health (MOH) • Ministry of Social Development, Education Secretariats • School Governing Councils • Parent Associations • Teacher Associations • Education Boards • Education Cluster and the Education in Emergencies Working Group (EIEWG) • Teaching Academies • Educational Animation Centre • School Management Committees
Local partners	All projects referenced a range of local partners including community-based organizations, religious organizations and women’s organizations

Our research indicated that there was a varied level of community engagement and partnership among projects, with some showing more meaningful involvement than others. Community consultations were directly referenced in project-based documents by twelve projects (57.1%) with two of the twelve listing only community organizations as part of the consultation. While many projects mentioned working with communities, the depth and clarity of this engagement varied. Some projects provided extensive details on their collaborative efforts, including integrating community leadership or networks (seven projects, 33.3%), while others offered vague descriptions using terms like "sensitize" and "support" without specifying actions.

There was a diverse approach to engagement, such as radio campaigns (three projects, 14.2%) and community consultations involving over 8,500 participants, including children. However, the lack of explicitly outlining potential community partner activities suggests a potential area for improvement in project documentation and transparency. We also acknowledge there may be logistical barrier to partnership engagement—two participants spoke about Canadian governmental regulations limiting partner selection where they were directly advised to not partner with a local government that was seemingly in conflict with the Canadian government (quote omitted due to confidentiality).

The significance of partnerships to successful projects emerged as a recurring theme within the FGDs and KIIs. Education stakeholders, notably the relevant Ministries of Education, were mentioned nine times as actively endorsing the projects. These partnerships with Ministries and educational authorities showcases a commitment to working closely with governmental bodies and local institutions to strengthen the longevity and effectiveness of these initiatives, explained by an FGD participant.

“We're aligning [our project] with the Ministry of Education's teachings, requirements and standards, and so forth... we see that as a big success because of sustainability of the work that we've done in this project. And, in aligning with the Ministry of Education, we are continuing to support that work around teacher training and competency strengthening.” - FGD/KII participant

Importantly, sustained collaboration with local stakeholders was seen as promoting ownership and capacity building to drive long-term change beyond the project duration. Participants recognized that local partners often have established relationships and trust within the community, which facilitated project acceptance and active participation. Strong, collaborative relationships, particularly between international NGOs and local government entities, led to the successful implementation of development projects. An FGD participant described how some NGOs may enter a community with preconceived notions or inadequate understanding of local contexts and needs. In contrast, they spoke about the significance of being embedded within the local context from the outset, working closely alongside the Ministry of Education and establishing trust and rapport with key government officials.

“There's so many NGOs who come in. They're halfway through their project, and that's when they discover what they're doing. We've been alongside [the Ministry of Education]. We have a very close relationship with both the Minister and the Deputy Minister of Education which helps. It's very much about relationships as well.” - FGD/KII participant

Yet, another project, affiliated with an organization with an extensive track record of project implementation within the region, expressed challenges during interactions with government officials and educators. The divergence in their encounter suggests the repercussions of lacking authorization from the Ministry and, thus, the implication of such partnerships.

“We felt that there was a great deal of resistance from the Ministry of Education and from our teams in the field about implementing some of the curriculums that we wanted to introduce to the teachers. There was a lot of negotiation around that in terms of what was acceptable to them and what we were expecting would be acceptable to them as well. [...] it was like, 'But this isn't the same as the ministry's curriculum,' and 'We could talk to the ministry about it, but that would be a real challenge.' and 'The ministry already has a module. We don't need to use this other one.' The ministry does have a module, but it's more talking about the barriers to girls' education and the module that we wanted to use was much more about what the roots of gender equality in our society are and how we transform them.” - FGD/KII participant

Community-based organizations often have a deeper understanding of local contexts and may be more receptive to innovative or transformative educational approaches. Collaborating with such organizations can provide valuable support in overcoming resistance from government entities and facilitating the adoption of curriculum changes aligned with project goals. Further, working closely with community-based organizations demonstrates a strong commitment to socially just programming that recognizes the importance of community involvement in educational efforts and prioritizes equity, diversity, and social justice. By partnering with entities deeply rooted in local contexts, educational initiatives embrace a participatory approach that values diverse perspectives, experiences, and voices within communities.

“Local partners need to be in the driver's seat in terms of identifying needs. They have that trust in their communities and [know] what are the solutions, the gaps that they're trying to fill because they have that intimate knowledge of what their communities need. We should always be listening to the local partners in terms of program design and identifying gaps and needs... then organizations like ours can be that bridge to technical support and can help to bring those resources.” - FGD/KII participant

While collaborations with international organizations offer valuable resources, building local capacity is essential to ensure the continued effectiveness of initiatives. The dynamic between international and local entities can create power imbalances, with decisions and resource allocation favouring international partners. Therefore, developing equitable partnerships prioritizing local perspectives is necessary for transnational, intersectional, and gender-equitable programming. Many of the participants spoke about the critical role of trust and adaptability in partnerships between international organizations and local actors to navigate challenges in effectively delivering impactful results in changing contexts.

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“Even in unstable contexts, trusted Canadian partners working with local partners can still have the capacity to be flexible and move and still deliver results.” - FGD/KII participant

Projects understood that at the core of these community-based or community-led strategies was an effort to respect the cultural, social and political factors in each context, summarized by a participant: “You can't come in with a set of predefined outcomes, because the context is sensitive. One country will not have the same level of complexity as the other... Effective methodologies are always context sensitive.” One project document explained the reasoning behind working with the local community (specifically boys and men) was to “address school-related and gender-based violence and mitigate backlash against girls”; the mention of mitigating backlash against girls suggests an awareness of potential resistance or pushback from certain segments of the community in response to efforts aimed at addressing gender-based violence. In other FGDs, a participant shared the challenges they face when integrating these approaches. Some teachers, notably men, still opposed the gender-responsive pedagogy even when introduced by community partners:

“Teachers really have it in their mind that, you know, ‘not everything is about gender. Not every conversation has to be divided by girls and boys.’ We did a fair bit of work helping teachers understand how they teach influences gender roles in the classroom and how they model it.” - FGD/KII participant

While community organizations have an essential role, they are not always equipped to address the multifaceted nature of gender inequality. Gender dynamics are deeply embedded within broader socio-economic, cultural, and political systems, necessitating a holistic approach that extends beyond the capacities of community organizations independently. One participant points out the assumption that all staff members or collaborators within an organization inherently prioritize gender equality; staff members can also disagree with the organization's gender-sensitive practices. For community members who have lived in the social context are still exposed to the deeply ingrained societal norms perpetuating gender disparities.

“I think we are too quick to gloss over this assumption that staff, are coming into [an organization] that prioritizes gender equality and gender equity; all [in-country] staff in these local contexts, who've spent their entire lives exposed to the exact norms that we're coming in trying to counter, that they're just gonna play by our rules. And sometimes they don't. You can learn that the hard way. Through our recruitment process, we put in processes to try to make sure there's alignment between the staff that we're hiring [...] but if you refuse to hire someone because they don't perfectly align with your ‘values’ that you're trying to promote. You're almost countering your own values of being inclusive.” - FGD/KII participant

There is an opportunity for organizations to engage communities more comprehensively, particularly in the design phase of projects, rather than exclusively during implementation or as beneficiaries. A participatory approach can be integrated to prioritize meaningful dialogue, collaboration, and co-creation with communities. Organizations can either describe how the community is involved in each stage if they are already doing so, or involve diverse community members (age, gender, religion, socio-economic status, migration status, etc.) in the project design process. We suspect the issue is more the former, as during the FGDs and KIs, there was a vibrant discussion about the importance of partnerships.

In summary:

- Community engagement levels varied among projects, with some showing more meaningful involvement than others.
- Sustainable progress towards gender equality requires a nuanced understanding of local contexts and collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs and local communities.
- Projects collaborated closely with government bodies such as Ministries of Education and Ministries of Gender Affairs; building partnerships aligned with official educational standards and promoting sustainability.
- Community-based or community-led strategies must respect cultural, social, and political factors and use methodologies for the specific contexts for effectiveness with communities acting as agents of change.
- Addressing resistance from certain segments of the community requires ongoing education and awareness-raising efforts.
- Trust and adaptability are essential in partnerships between international and local actors.
- Organizations should engage communities comprehensively, particularly in the design phase of projects.

Theme 3: Strategies in Fragile, Crisis, and Conflict Settings

In further response to the second, third and fourth research questions this theme focuses on the country projects situated in regions characterized by a history of fragility and political instability, many with recurring, and complex conflicts. As with many of the regions affected by conflict, security concerns pose significant barriers to girls' education. Through our research, we found many examples of girls, along with their parents and educators, expressing their fear of the risk of attacks on schools and the general instability in the region. In response to this, projects had community-based strategies integrated from the outset as 'risk mitigation' to proactively adapt to evolving circumstances (only some explicitly having a reference to these strategies as mitigating risk), with examples outlined in Table 6. One participant described the importance of having these types of processes in place.

“If you get the proper strategies, if you have a good assessment of the local context and the difficulties up front, I think that you can take the ‘risk’ of going in different countries.” - FGD/KII participant

While flexibility and adaptability were frequently cited by participants as essential to project design in fragile, crisis, and conflict settings, projects must also **develop disaster risk management (DRM) and contingency plans to effectively respond to unforeseen crises and mitigate potential disruptions to program implementation**. Nevertheless, we recognize that projects cannot anticipate every eventuality, as many factors may remain unknown or outside their direct control, bringing back the need for adaptability.

Table 6: ‘Risk mitigation’ strategies in fragile, crisis, and conflict settings based on project document analysis	
Challenge	Strategies
School closures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance learning packages (virtual and physical) developed collaboratively with government and local partners • Collaborated with schools to identify adaptable resources for students • Utilized radio-based/MP3 education programs • Integrated methodologies to analyze various data categories that can be done remotely • e-learning courses for teachers
Heightened security concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted more KIIs rather than FGDs to avoid any potential risks associated with group discussions by directing undue attention to them, and in line with Do-No-Harm principles • Engaged community volunteers to discreetly conduct outreach and gender equality awareness activities among the broader school community, including parents, to avoid large group sessions and minimize security risks • Offering short courses in villages • ‘Exposure visits’ for teachers in comparable contexts outside the country with less restrictions on women’s movement • Conducting regular activities to seek community feedback on suggestions for safety

<p>War and conflict</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged with religious and community leaders, women’s rights advocates to foster local ownership and support for interventions, while avoiding perceptions of cultural insensitivity • Psychosocial support and resources available for beneficiaries • Increase direct and prompt communications through social media regarding scheduling changes and campus closures due to external events and disruptions • Install lockers to leave tools, laptops, and other equipment so beneficiaries do not have to carry valuable items in public during incidents of unrest
<p>Climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed programs acknowledging the devastating impact of climate change on pastoralist families, particularly on the education of their children who are often the most excluded. Climate change was not referenced directly often.
<p>Financial Constraints</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children were given drinks and biscuits during the project activities to support their attention and engagement in regions where children did not have equitable access to food • Cash and vouchers to reduce financial burden on girls’ parents who met the criteria for vulnerability • Scholarship programs • Partnering with existing support for school feeding programs
<p>Gender-based violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborated with boys and male mentors to address school-related and gender-based violence, mitigate backlash against girls, and increase safety at school by building a broad support base • Targeted spouses, partners, or family members of young women • Ensured beneficiaries have access to technology for reporting violence and obtaining support, including hotlines and referral systems • Including men’s success stories • Girls in several programs were empowered with tools and training to defend themselves when faced with school-related SGBV

<p>Weak education structures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapted proven local systems strengthening approaches to address systemic challenges in education systems, focusing on capacity-building at the local government and school level • Used approaches that did not undermine or run parallel to the relevant Ministry of Education • Ensured interventions are integrated and aligned with existing structures to maximize impact and sustainability
<p>Emergencies and changing contexts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracked emerging trends and worked closely with community and government stakeholders to adjust project implementation • Allocated contingency funds within the budget to mitigate negative impacts of emergencies on project beneficiaries • Integrated a disaster risk management plan • Kobo Toolbox using tablets • In terms of the level of preparedness and capacity, there is understanding about the risks of potential disasters, but bureaucratic delays and lack of gender-sensitivity in scenario-planning inhibit the response

Despite facing significant challenges, none of the participants expressed the belief that the project should be discontinued or that the intervention settings were too risky to engage with. On the contrary, participants perceived the challenges inherent in these settings as further evidence of the importance of their work.

“Our Feminist International Assistance Policy remains our policy framework for our investments in development in which I would say that binds us to work with the hardest to reach children and youth... We want to be reaching the hardest to reach children. And that's where we should be going.”

- FGD/KII participant

The overarching objective of many of the projects was to contribute to the development and resilience of affected communities and the importance of building sustainable solutions amidst uncertainty. Recognizing various dynamics, including insecurity, conflict, disaster and climate change, further indicates the complex challenges faced in in fragile, crisis, and conflict settings. One FGD participant acknowledges that carrying out effective projects in these contexts requires flexibility and responsiveness in addressing prolonged and evolving emergencies. The concurrent consideration of future project trajectories amidst ongoing emergencies is a complex balancing act, where immediate humanitarian needs must be addressed alongside long-term development goals.

“We adapted to this protracted crisis. We can discuss what's next for the project, but we are having an emergency at the same time. We are trying to contribute to the development and resilience of these communities, but the future is uncertain because of the dynamics, insecurity, conflict, disaster and climate change.” - FGD/KII participant

While acknowledging the comprehensive approach of the projects to improve education access and quality in fragile, crisis, and conflict settings, one fundamental gap is the need to integrate **specific conflict-sensitive education strategies aligned with peacebuilding under the triple nexus** within project frameworks. While strategies in these settings were identified, the projects could benefit from incorporating peacebuilding and conflict resolution components into their interventions.

“I have to admit I had questions every week... Can we use the budget to pay for an armed escort, or to do our monitoring? And stuff like that. That question was never really resolved for me. If we're going into a fragile country, that country will have some difficulties for the project. We have to take that into account, and then give ourselves a little bit more flexibility, because we know we're going to have difficulties. It's a given. It's very important, because that can be the difference between results fully achieved and only partially achieved.” - FGD/KII participant

Aligned with the literature, traditional humanitarian and development organizations, alongside local partners, may lack the mandate or expertise for peacebuilding (Garcia, 2022, p. 3). The triple nexus framework, aligned with the localization agenda, risks imposing multisectoral interventions on local agencies without recognizing the benefits of integration (Garcia, 2022, p. 3). This approach may strain local staff and resources while raising questions about prioritization (Oxfam, 2019). Achieving successful peacebuilding relies on striking a delicate balance between external security assurances and resources and the autonomy of the local system to develop bottom-up solutions (de Coning, 2013).

In summary:

- There is a gap in integrating conflict-sensitive education strategies aligned with peacebuilding within project frameworks. Incorporating peacebuilding and conflict resolution components could enhance intervention effectiveness in fragile contexts.
- Projects implemented innovative solutions for continued access to education despite disruptions in fragile, crisis, and conflict settings.
- There was an emphasis on safety and security of beneficiaries while facilitating community involvement aligned with the ‘Do-No-Harm’ principles.
- Projects can be strengthened by developing a disaster risk management and contingency plans to effectively respond to unforeseen crises and mitigate potential disruptions to program implementation.

Theme 4: Flexibility in Changing Circumstances

Emerging from the FGD/KIIs were discussions about flexibility in changing circumstances—both the ability of the projects and personnel to adapt to change, and areas where they felt they could be more supported to respond effectively to evolving situations and needs within the community. In addition to addressing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, it was discerned from our research that **all projects encountered multiple intersecting and unforeseen obstacles that influenced their implementation:** political instability or unrest, electoral processes, environmental and climate-related issues, adverse weather conditions such as heavy rains, migration patterns, armed conflict, coups, economic downturns, security concerns, technological hurdles, disruptions in supply chains, occurrences of natural disasters, and legal disputes. However, they maintained conflict-sensitive projects through community partnerships and the existing capacity to adapt funding as needed.

“The pandemic had the biggest impact on the project by far. The project was designed before the pandemic for in-person implementation; however, lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic left schools closed for two full academic years. For the most vulnerable and deprived children, it meant having absolutely no access to learning. To address this issue, organizations had to make programmatic adjustments such as switching to distance learning through printed materials and supporting children with connectivity and learning materials to motivate learning at home.” - FGD/KII participant

Given the context of the regions funded by this project and noting the regional contexts of fragility, crisis, and conflict, adjustments based changing local contexts and geopolitical factors contributed to the overall success of projects. All projects were clearly focused on education but had direct connections between gender equality and broader societal issues (previously outlined in Table 4, Barriers to Education) that engage with sectors beyond education.

“We have seen a shift in all the Charlevoix projects around gender equality to be more— to have a more of a gender lens. And really tackling the obstacles that are preventing girls in particular from accessing education. And so it actually goes outside of education.” - FGD/KII participant

Across all the participants in the FGDs and/or KIIs, it was articulated that quality education meant more than just having girls present at school. There were discussions around what this meant for projects to respond to this understanding in a way that integrated the localized needs of learners who were impacted by fragility, conflict, and crisis.

“Given the nature of what’s happened globally, with more conflicts, there’s also an importance around well-being outcomes. Which is mental health, psychosocial support, and social emotional learning. And I think what’s really interesting around projects is most of them did engage in education and emergencies and crisis. We see naturally that they integrated that well-being piece into many of the projects... which is a very positive transition.” - FGD/KII participant

However, as projects were experiencing a shift in their strategies and approaches, there were challenges in accurately capturing and reporting on these changes. Two participants expressed specific uncertainty regarding the extent to which projects were effectively documenting and communicating their efforts to address additional well-being outcomes in order to align with the GAC reporting timelines and track the longevity of these changes, given the relatively short project timeline.

“I do know is that projects have shifted. I’m not sure how well the projects are reporting on that, necessarily, but I also think that is a struggle that we’re all sort of feeling out and understanding. But I think the first step of recognizing that well-being outcomes are just as important as learning outcomes is also like a really important.” - FGD/KII participant

There is a paradox where gender mainstreaming is over-politicized when it is linked to resources to be competed for and depoliticized when it becomes a process to produce toolkits and checklists (Standing, 2007). Projects can be limited in their reach because they confine themselves to relatively easy measurements of progress. These measurements include counting how many women and girls are involved in or affected by policy interventions that have broader societal and other goals. Participants shared about the limitations of how projects are traditionally measured—through numbers and beneficiaries reached—that doesn’t account for well-being or quality of the education being received. Yet, there was also a concern that if projects did not have large numbers to share, future funding would be jeopardized, leading to some relying on standardized testing to determine impact.

There is an inherent unpredictability of such environments and the participants acknowledged the need embrace this reality in their day-to-day work, but questioned if the frameworks from GAC were receptive this type of flexibility. Based on the research, there was a gap in how projects felt they were permitted to respond to emerging challenges and ensure that their interventions remain relevant and practical, but they felt there could be more openness and receptivity to pivoting and adjusting project plans from GAC.

“GAC needs to be a little bit more comfortable to be open and receptive to pivoting and twisting where the needs and it’s called for. I think that would be really helpful... something to make that case to say that this work can and should continue to happen, even when there are disruptions. And we have seen that partners are capable of making those pivots. And need to find the ways to get GAC to approve those changes and approve those pivots and be a little bit like less risk averse to sort of meet the urgency of it.” - FGD/KII participant

Participants emphasized the importance of trust and confidence in the capacity of implementing partners to navigate uncertainties and make necessary adaptations: local partners are often well-positioned to identify evolving needs on the ground and propose appropriate responses. However, for these adaptations to occur seamlessly, donors must be willing to approve changes and provide the necessary support.

The findings indicate that several of the projects were challenged by the **differences between donor frameworks or guidelines and what is happening in the field** in the context of fragility, crisis, and conflict.

“...the team in the field wanted to try some other things, and there were a lot of negotiations between what the field wanted to do and what they were willing to approve in terms of the budget and what the project proposal was stating. Lots of unexpected developments. When you have a proposal that’s already set and the budget that’s already set, it becomes difficult if you want to do new things.”

- FGD/KII participant

Fundamentally, participants expressed the need for a shift in donor mindset from perceived rigidity and risk aversion to flexibility and responsiveness. Numerous solutions were suggested in response to the difficulties of operating in fragile countries. One proposal was to include clauses in contractual agreements that allow for quick response to unforeseen situations, such as provisions for extending projects without lengthy renegotiation processes. Other suggestions involved the need for a specific contingency fund to respond to potential crises set at a certain percentage of the overall project funding. This fund would provide flexibility to address unforeseen events, such as conflicts, health crises, or force majeure events, without additional approvals or administrative burdens. Another proposal is to increase the budget line revision threshold beyond the standard 20% to, for example, 35-40% to expedite decision-making and alleviate administrative constraints during emergencies. However, during our member checking, we found that GAC makes such accommodations available for projects in these regions; this suggests that **there are existing mechanisms, but there is a disconnect between what projects felt they could do, tried to do, or what was offered.**

Monitoring project objectives was another area that was suggested to benefit from program flexibilities, which allow projects to submit not just budget adjustments but also flexibility in program design during a crisis, such as when COVID-19 required changes in delivery.

“Of course, there has to be checks and balances in regards to like investments of funding. And so we do. It’s Canadian taxpayer money. And I think we all take that very seriously that we want to make sure that money is also spent to achieve the results... we have to be prudent with the money that we are very luckily to have from the Canadian public. It’s that sort of fine balance that our ‘FIAP’ absolutely says, ‘go to the hardest place hardest to reach children and make sure that they have access to all the services that they need.’ But we also have to be prudent. We still have to make sure that we are managing Canadian taxpayer money... And sometimes there is absolutely tensions between those two pieces.”

- FGD/KII participant

For some, the dual objective of reaching vulnerable populations and ensuring responsible stewardship of public funds remained a challenge. While there is a clear mandate to prioritize services for girls' education, balancing this with fiscal responsibility is also necessary. The tension reflects the broader challenge faced by organizations where competing priorities and short-term finite resources are a reality.

In summary:

- With the support of local partners, projects successfully adapted to changing circumstances in their strategic approaches.
- Projects succeeded when there was leniency to adjust their interventions based on changing contextual circumstances.
- An interventional, stratified approach was used regardless of regionality — as country-to-country access to education can vastly differ.
- Projects expressed a need for enhanced flexibility in contractual agreements and funding to allow for rapid responses to unforeseen challenges.

Section 5: Conclusion

The research presented in this report affirms that the **collective outcomes of the 21 Charlevoix projects align with the articulated objectives and vision outlined in the Charlevoix Declaration.**



Section 5: Conclusion

Specifically, the Charlevoix-funded projects have shown commitment towards advancing gender equality, promoting inclusive education and supporting sustainable development—central to the Charlevoix Declaration’s intended objectives.

The projects have effectively addressed the barriers that prevent girls from receiving quality education, integrated theoretical frameworks with practical solutions and taken a holistic approach to education that includes well-being. The projects prioritized partnerships and community engagement to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability. Lastly, the projects’ efforts in fragile, crisis, and conflict settings demonstrate their dedication to addressing complex challenges and contributing to resilience and development in vulnerable communities.

Therefore, based on our findings, the **Charlevoix-funded projects have adopted and implemented a wide range of interventions aimed at improving access to quality education for girls in fragile, conflict, and crisis situations**, which, aligned with the literature on this subject (Aapola et al., 2005; Agapitova & Navarrete Moreno, 2017; Cobbett, 2014; GC, 2021; Karam, 2014; Khoja-Moolji, 2015; Pike et al., 2023; Somani, 2017; United Nations, 2023; UNGEI, 2024; UNICEF, 2021; UN Women, 2023; World Bank, 2023), has contributed to an improvement in girls’ long-term educational attainment and overall life outcomes. Based on the research, some of the projects experienced uncertainty with the pervasive impact of instability and fragility and the unpredictability of conflict dynamics. However, projects indicated working with local partners (including community-based organizations, religious organizations and women’s organizations) as well as education stakeholders (Government Ministries, Education Associations and Teacher’s groups) alongside other international partners allowed them to navigate these challenges more effectively. A research participant summarized:

“This investment was life changing and we want to keep doing more of that. And Canada needs to continue to play that leadership role [...] there was such great work that was done during really hard time. The context in of itself of the countries were really hard. Then, adding on [COVID-19] and the complexity around that. But yet we’re still achieving results and really seeing interesting shifts and trends We’re all just super proud of all the work— making sure that more children are learning and getting the well-being outcomes that they need in school.” - FGD/KII participant

Despite these challenges, projects demonstrated resilience and innovation in adapting to changing circumstances. Strategies such as distance learning packages, community-based outreach and psychosocial support were implemented to mitigate risks and ensure continued access to education. While projects implemented innovative solutions for continued access to education, there needed to be a more explicit incorporation of peacebuilding and conflict resolution components into interventions.

The triple nexus approach represents a paradigm shift in how we conceptualize and address challenges in fragile contexts and recognizes that humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts are not siloed, but are intricately interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Allowing for integrated responses in fragile, conflict, and crisis situations is critical in regions where crises often manifest in interrelated forms, which necessitates coordinated and multifaceted interventions. However, despite the theoretical appeal and potential of the triple nexus approach, translating its principles into practice poses significant challenges, which also impact the projects. The evidence from our findings indicates persistent obstacles to aligning frameworks, strategies and action plans across the ‘conflict’ aspect of the nexus initiatives. A specific consideration was the need for projects to develop disaster risk management (DRM) and contingency plans to effectively respond to unforeseen crises and mitigate disruptions to program implementation. While flexibility and adaptability were acknowledged as essential attributes for projects operating in such contexts, integrating such plans could lessen the complexity of anticipating and responding to these challenges. Another noteworthy finding was the challenges projects faced in navigating donor frameworks and guidelines, which often posed constraints on their ability to respond effectively to emerging challenges. Participants emphasized the need for GAC to adopt a more flexible and responsive approach to project funding, including provisions for quick responses to unforeseen situations and increased flexibility in budget revisions. The discrepancy between donor expectations and on-the-ground realities can create tensions and frustrations for project implementers, leading to delays, inefficiencies and suboptimal outcomes. Suggestions for adaptive programming, including flexible work plans and non-linear theories of change, can also enhance agencies’ responsiveness to crises and prioritize relevant aspects of the nexus (Garcia, 2022). Alarabeed (2023) proposes implementing a unified reporting system to monitor the allocation of funds that includes expenditures associated with state participation in peacekeeping missions or third-party mediation, as well as the disbursement of humanitarian, development, or peace-related assistance; this consideration supports the participants’ requests for clear policy frameworks for each term, which has the potential to reshape current funding distributions.

Many projects aimed to embrace a gender-transformative approach to achieving the goal of providing quality education to girls. However, it was widely recognized that this approach requires a longer timeline and greater resources due to the persistence of systemic challenges and socio-cultural norms perpetuating gender disparities in education. It was agreed across different project regions that these barriers are deeply rooted and cannot be addressed in relatively short-term timelines. Nevertheless, within the scope of their project, interventions did aim to challenge and transform the underlying power dynamics and societal norms by integrating men and boys as allies in promoting gender equality and move away from the victim-blaming paradigm that position girls as the problem and the solution. But, these approaches still require sustained engagement and long-term investment in capacity-building to be effective.

Further Research Requirements

Future research is needed to better understand the linkages between education programs and the triple nexus of humanitarian aid, development, and peacebuilding. While substantial progress has been made in implementing educational programs in conflict-affected regions, there is more to learn about how education initiatives contribute to peaceful, sustainable and gender-transformative change while facilitating well-being, social cohesion, conflict resolution, and community resilience as well as direct beneficiary impacts. In the context of peacebuilding efforts, exploring how education systems can mitigate drivers of conflict and violent extremism by promoting critical thinking, tolerance, and inclusivity are other areas that can be explored. Finally, further analysis and impact mapping can be done to determine how best to document transformative impacts to disaggregate them at the individual, community and broader systemic levels.

Based on our findings from the project document analysis, FGDs and KIIs, and the following considerations could be put forward as critical elements to inform future funding initiatives:

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Including evaluation indicators on and funding for engaging with diverse stakeholders including government authorities, educators, students, parents, community leaders, and civil society organizations to understand their perspectives, needs, and concerns regarding education.
- **Capacity Building:** Building the capacity of education authorities, institutions, and teachers in conflict-sensitive approaches to education. Provide training on conflict resolution, intercultural communication, and trauma-informed teaching methods.
- **Inclusive Decision-Making:** Promoting inclusive and localized decision-making processes in education governance, involving all relevant stakeholders in planning, budgeting, and policy formulation.
- **Conflict Mapping:** Mapping out existing conflicts or tensions related to education resource allocation, access, and quality. Identify underlying causes such as inequalities, discrimination, exclusion, or marginalization. Mapping needs to take into account gender, ethnic and religious divisions, as in certain areas, minorities may feel unable or unwilling to speak up.
- **Risk Analysis:** Assessing the level of risk and vulnerability in different areas, considering factors such as ongoing violence, displacement, presence of armed groups, and access constraints. Prioritizing areas with the greatest needs and the potential for positive impact. Assessing the need for flexible funding mechanisms to assist with evacuation, harm or injury to program participants, not just implementers. Identifying program members and building M&E assessment frameworks that establish pay, duration of personnel on the project, flexible funding for trainers or emergency consultants, project evaluation mechanisms and redress, and budget allocations for extenuating circumstances.
- **Equitable Resource Allocation:** Implementing funding policies that ensure equitable allocation of resources such as funding, infrastructure, textbooks, and trained teachers. Prioritizing marginalized or conflict-affected areas to address disparities.

- **Cross-sectoral Collaboration:** Integrating incentive structures that encourage cooperation and bring together the agents of change required for better development outcomes. Involving and coordinating with peacebuilding actors in programmatic building, deployment and results.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establishing culturally relevant or sensitive mechanisms to monitor the impact of education interventions on conflict dynamics and student outcomes. Evaluating the effectiveness of conflict-sensitive approaches and adjusting strategies as needed including non-standardized testing. Documenting the impact of cross-sectoral collaboration to develop policy frameworks and policies to help strengthen global and country-level interventions to validate the need for peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian assistance to work together to address underlying drivers of conflict and promote holistic solutions to education challenges.
- **Safe Learning Environments:** Creating safe and inclusive learning environments that protect students and educators from violence, harassment, and discrimination. Implementing measures to prevent and respond to bullying, conflict, or extremism.
- **Conflict-sensitive Curriculum:** When appropriate, developing a curriculum and/or teacher training that promotes peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and tolerance. Incorporating local perspectives, histories, and cultures to foster a sense of belonging and reduce divisive narratives; also noting that as conflict-sensitive aims at catharsis there may be times when this narrative is not favourable and a more generic self-improvement model is required.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in the report, it can be concluded that **Canada's leadership under the Charlevoix initiative, backed by its CAD\$400 million investment, did indeed help to improve access to education for refugee and displaced children, including the hardest-to-reach girls and women living in regions experiencing crisis and conflict.**

Given the results outlined in the research, the following are recommended to be considered for future gender-transformative education programming:



Recommendation 1

Capitalize and expand upon gender-transformative education gains to ensure that all children, especially girls, can access education opportunities.

Areej attends vocational training sessions in Syria. **CREDIT:** Christopher Wilton-Steer / Aga Khan Foundation

While the projects were able to work to address the root causes of gender inequality, shifting societal norms and cultural attitudes toward gender equality is a gradual journey that demands time and commitment that could not be fully achieved within a 3-year project cycle. To that end, it is recommended to **continue to program gender-transformative education projects to offer scope and opportunity to address societal norms and cultures that negatively impede girls from accessing quality education.**

Future projects are **recommended to ensure that gender-based analyses (GBA) are undertaken** prior to the project design. And, **projects should offer continuous training to project managers and participants (including teachers, amongst others) to reinforce and sustain the adoption of gender-transformative practices over time.**

In addition, in terms of best practice, the research found that those projects that work intentionally with men and boys were able to address systematic power imbalances. Therefore, **it is recommended that projects work to more intentionally integrate men and boys** into activities and solutions to better address the systematic power imbalances that perpetuate gender inequality.

To align with global research and some noted limitations within the original conceptualization of gender-transformation education, **it is recommended that future project iterations address the gendered, nuanced, and intersecting barriers to education** for girls, boys, and other marginalized groups, such as LGBTQ+ learners, refugee learners, and children and youth living with disabilities.



Recommendation 2

Work towards improving students' learning outcomes, including literacy, numeracy, and social and emotional skills development, while strengthening education systems to deliver and track results.

Students at a primary school in Uganda. **CREDIT:** Rich Townsend / Aga Khan Foundation

The research found that while the projects focused on gender-transformative access to quality education, there was a notable absence on the gains realized in terms of learning. It is **recommended, therefore, to work towards improving learning outcomes, and track results systematically**, using global and local tools to best fit the context.

To complement the measurement of learning outcomes, other indicators should be included in results frameworks, including, but not limited to, transition rate and retention rate. Moreover, there is great need identified within the research beyond primary education, which was the focus of most of the projects under the Charlevoix Initiative. It is **recommended that future programming in education consider the broad range of education opportunities, from pre-primary to tertiary, non-formal and formal.**

The education projects had a noted impact in cross-sectoral programming, resulting in gains across the health, sanitation, and protection sectors. **Future programming is recommended to consider the holistic nature of education programming, with funding opportunities made accordingly.**

Recognizing the multi-pronged approach to improving learning outcomes that is needed and the uniqueness of the education sector in measuring and realizing gains, it is **recommended that all future education projects have a minimum duration of 5 years.**

To improve learning, evidence notes the specific need for quality teachers. To that end, it is **recommended to expand on the good practices under the Charlevoix Initiative to continue to build capacity of teachers in gender-responsive pedagogy.**

In doing so and aligning with the need of students within education in emergencies (EiE), it is recommended that **future projects promote mental health and psychosocial wellbeing** in and around the school community, social and emotional development and skills such as collaboration, conflict resolution, social cohesion, critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and respect for diversity.

Finally, it is **recommended to support safe school infrastructure and violence-free learning** environments that meet comprehensive school safety standards. This includes safety audits for travel to and from school, secure transportation, and gender-segregated and well-lit latrines.



Recommendation 3

Increase flexibility and adaptability in projects to enable adaptability to unforeseen humanitarian situations and ensure the continuation of education in emergency situations.

A Canada-supported learning centre in Syria. **CREDIT:** Christopher Wilton-Steer / Aga Khan Foundation

The projects under the Charlevoix Initiative were all impacted, to various degrees, by unanticipated humanitarian crises, not least of which being the COVID-19 pandemic.

Canadian partners demonstrated resilience and were able to adapt, innovate, and deliver good quality programs in ever-changing humanitarian contexts. Moreover, working in these challenging contexts underscored the importance of the work and helps to deliver on Canada's commitment to reach the most vulnerable and support fragile states.

It is recommended that **future projects incorporate peacebuilding and conflict resolution components** which could enhance effectiveness of future interventions in fragile contexts. Given that a number of these humanitarian crises could be attributed to climate change, it is **recommended that climate resilience is embedded into the project design to mitigate impact on education systems** while building sustainability and resilience of communities in the provision of education.

It is recommended that projects remain flexible to adapt indicators, targets, and budgets according to the changing risks and burdens faced when delivering projects in times of crises. A **people-centered approach should be considered** to address the evolving needs of populations regardless of their context within the humanitarian-development continuum.



Recommendation 4

Enhance localization efforts for equitable partnerships, equal participation, strong coordination, and strengthened capacity for results for children.

Students drying reusable menstrual products at a primary school in Uganda. **CREDIT:** Rich Townsend / Aga Khan Foundation

Noting the considerable effort each organization undertook to develop their projects, specific guides, manuals, and tools, it is **recommended that as much as possible, projects under a common initiative – such as the Charlevoix Initiative – form a Community of Practice – for joint learning and sharing.**

Building upon the good practices of localization seen in initiatives in the projects stemming from the Charlevoix Declaration, it is recommended that moving forward **further education projects deepen efforts to localize education interventions.** This involves incorporating local perspectives, resources, and capacities more comprehensively to ensure interventions are culturally relevant and sustainable.

It is **recommended that future projects build upon the commitments under the *Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative*, as well as global best practices that deepen efforts to localize education interventions.**

In addition, it is recommended that **future projects are co-created with key stakeholders**, including, but not limited to children and their duty-bearers, to understand local needs, solutions, and approaches at all stages of implementation, as well as to promote ownership and foster supportive learning environments in and around the school community.

The research findings were limited due to lack of qualitative and quantitative research outside of project baseline and endline monitoring. To that end, **more research is needed to better understand the linkages between education programmes and the triple nexus of humanitarian aid, development, and peacebuilding.**

Furthermore, **more investments and support should be made to engage with external research partners and academic institutions to gather relevant project data, including learning outcomes, throughout the project life cycle to be able to make adjustments during real time.** This will also support evidence-based decision-making on the most effective mechanisms to deliver quality education in times of crisis.



Recommendation 5

Ensure that education is at the forefront of emergency planning and humanitarian assistance.

Students at a learning centre in Syria. **CREDIT:** Christopher Wilton-Steer / Aga Khan Foundation

Noting the need for education in humanitarian response and recognizing its inherent value to protection, stability, and ensuring the rights of the child, it is **recommended that donors commit to funding predictable, flexible, multi-year gender-transformative education interventions in times of crises.**

As such, it is recommended that appropriate and quality education programming is sustained or quickly initiated in the wake of acute emergencies, protracted crises, and throughout recovery and reconstruction.

The research noted gaps in effort and coordination between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation within the project implementation and, therefore, it is **recommended that greater coordination among these organizations be undertaken.**

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Questions Provided for the Consultancy¹²

1. What approaches did Canadian development organizations adopt in response to the Charlevoix Declaration?

- a. What are the underlying theoretical/conceptual assumptions that guided project development?
- b. What are the main types of interventions, and the similarities and differences across organizations and contexts?
- c. What forms of partnerships were formed, and their merits and limitations regarding authentic community participation, localization sustainability, and the inclusion of southern epistemologies?

2. How do organizations conceptualize, define, and categorize learning and measurable outcomes?

- a. How do organizations define learning?
- b. What internal and external factors (geopolitical changes/policy shifts in response to refugees, etc.) contributed to selected learning outcomes and their utility for decision-making and program reforms?
- c. What were the challenges and barriers in measuring learning outcomes within and across organizations based on selected indicators?
- d. What good practices were learned for measuring learning outcomes (in non-formal and formal education projects)?

3. What pedagogical (Western and Non-Western) practices improved student (f/m) performance and learning experiences?

- a. What teacher professional development practices were supported (mode of delivery, focus areas, duration, follow-up, etc.)?

4. What monitoring and evaluation methods and tools did organizations adopt (participatory, decolonized, gender-responsive, transformative, etc.)?

- a. What contextual and operational factors influenced the selection and application of these methods and tools?
- b. What key indicators and benchmarks did organizations use to measure the progress and impact of education in emergencies?
- c. What were the merits and limitations of the monitoring and reporting frameworks adopted?

¹² Please note the decision was made by the COP to focus on selected questions.

5. How do different stakeholders (e.g., government agencies, NGOs, community-based organizations) collaborate and coordinate in monitoring and reporting on EiE interventions and use the data to refine practices?

- a. What networks provide mechanisms for knowledge sharing?
- b. How do organizations integrate a more robust learning agenda to move beyond project-level monitoring to design evidence for learning?

6. What concepts/frameworks/forms of feminism guided gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) practices in the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting frameworks?

7. How did projects integrate programming across the triple nexus?

- a. What are the challenges specific to working with conflict and/or crisis-affected communities and the responsive/proactive strategies adopted by organizations?
- b. What intersectoral synergies were effective?
- c. What are the policy implications for education programming across the triple nexus?
- d. What types of support could you have received that would have been beneficial for you?

Appendix 2: Key Barriers to Quality Education for Girls by Country and Region

The following table outlines the key barriers to education identified by projects based in West and Central Africa separated by country.

Table 1: Key Barriers to Education — West and Central Africa	
Burkina Faso	
Barriers to Education	Examples
Infrastructure and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of girl-friendly water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) practices in schools • Unavailability of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) products • Rehabilitation needs for school infrastructure
Security and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear among girls, boys, parents, teachers, and other education actors due to insecurity and threats of attacks on schools; • Vulnerability to violence, including corporal punishment and bullying, both at school and on the way to school; • Risks associated with roads around schools; assaults on educational institutions and disruptions to the educational process
Conflict and Displacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictions on freedom of movement and displacement of families due to conflict • Direct impact of conflict on the provision of education, leading to school closures and teacher migration • Insecurity and intermittent school closures leading to children leaving school
Psychosocial Support and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of psychosocial support (PSS) for traumatized students and teachers • Insufficient training for teachers on gender-sensitive pedagogy, psychosocial support, and social emotional learning
Socio-cultural Norms and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of human rights issues such as violence against women and children, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM), child labor, and sex trafficking on education

Burundi	
Barriers to Education	Examples
Access and Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal opportunities for marginalized individuals, particularly those with disabilities, in accessing education • Scarcity of data on children with disabilities in sub-Saharan Africa, with less than 5% enrolled in primary education • Debate over whether to provide extensive assistance to schools for inclusive education or integrate students with disabilities into regular courses while accommodating their needs
Socio-cultural Norms and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social norms and attitudes perpetuating gender disparities in education • Stigmatization of girls in schools based on beliefs about their behaviour • Women expected to be submissive and handle household duties, while men provide and represent the family • Women engage in agricultural tasks, men in cash crop farming or employment • Acceptance of domestic violence — seen as acceptable to ‘control’ or ‘discipline’ wives; reluctance from women to report violence due to fear of repercussions including loss of financial support
Security and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence against girls in school from their peers and teachers • Gender-based violence in the community

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Barriers to Education	Examples
Access and Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal opportunities for marginalized individuals, particularly those with disabilities, in accessing education
Security and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of armed actors and frequent armed attacks restricts community mobility (school absenteeism) • Sexual violence resulting from armed attacks (trauma and early pregnancy) • Displacement caused by attacks
Psychosocial Support and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of psychosocial support for traumatized girls following sexual and gender-based violence by armed groups
Socio-cultural Norms and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social norms and attitudes perpetuating gender disparities in education • Cultural norms contribute to the perception that boys have more cultural acceptance in attending school regularly compared to girls

Mali	
Barriers to Education	Examples
Infrastructure and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of girl-friendly water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) practices in schools • Rehabilitation needs for school infrastructure • Weak governance in key state administrations leads to school closures and teacher abandonment, particularly in central regions • Fewer schools located farther away from local communities
Teacher Skills and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low success rates in exams and high repetition rates, particularly in the final year of fundamental education • Challenges in student retention and transition
Security and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear among girls, boys, parents, teachers, and other education actors due to insecurity and threats of attacks on schools • Unstable security situation • Weak governance in key state administrations exacerbates these issues, leading to school closures and teacher abandonment, particularly in central regions
Research and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data inconsistencies, such as missing or inaccurate information, hinder effective planning and decision-making
Socio-cultural Norms and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household duties and engagement in fieldwork or animal care also hinder enrollment, particularly among boys • Child, early, and forced marriage • Gender-based violence and sexual assault have been reported in conflict-affected areas.

Nigeria	
Barriers to Education	Examples
Infrastructure and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of girl-friendly water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) practices in schools • Unavailability of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) products • Rehabilitation needs for school infrastructure
Socio-cultural Norms and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities uphold traditional beliefs about gender roles, placing the burden of household and childcare responsibilities primarily on girls and women • Stigmatization of girls in school, based on beliefs that schooling leads to immoral behavior, persists within communities • Strongly held gender norms in communities perpetuate damaging beliefs, such as the acceptance of threats to girls' safety • Girls feel pressured by perceptions from families and communities to marry young (i.e., child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM))
Gender Inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescent girls may face challenges in exercising their rights among their peers due to uneven awareness of rights between girls and boys • Male caregivers tend to make final decisions regarding children's education, potentially impacting girls' access to schooling • Girls often miss school due to household chores and responsibilities, reinforcing gender disparities in education • Boys perceive themselves as participating more in class, viewing girls as "slow learners"
Financial Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of resources, exacerbated by the economic impact of COVID-19, is identified as the primary barrier to education for both girls and boys • Financial constraints often lead households to prioritize boys' education when forced to choose, perpetuating gender disparities in access to schooling
Security and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls express feeling unsafe on the way to school, particularly when encountering unknown men in their community, impacting their ability to attend school regularly • Vulnerability to violence, including corporal punishment and bullying, both at school and on the way to school

Sierra Leon	
Barriers to Education	Examples
Teacher Skills and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low number of women teachers and lack of gender-responsive pedagogy in classrooms • Limited amount of teachers preparing lesson plans with engaging learning experiences
Socio-cultural Norms and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social norms and attitudes perpetuating gender disparities in education • Cultural norms contribute to the perception that boys have more cultural acceptance in attending school regularly compared to girls

Table 2 outlines the key barriers to education identified by projects based in East and Southern Africa separated by country.

Table 2: Key Barriers to Education — East and Southern Africa	
Kenya	
Barriers to Education	Examples
Socio-cultural Norms and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social norms and attitudes perpetuating gender disparities in education • Cultural norms contribute to the perception that boys have more cultural acceptance in attending school regularly compared to girls
Infrastructure and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of girl-friendly water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) practices in schools • Laws, policies, and systems limits learning outcomes and increasing workforce participation among adolescent girls and young women

Rwanda	
Barriers to Education	Examples
Access and Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal opportunities for marginalized individuals, particularly those with disabilities, in accessing education.
Socio-cultural Norms and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social norms and attitudes perpetuating gender disparities in education • Cultural norms contribute to the perception that boys have more cultural acceptance in attending school regularly compared to girls

Somalia	
Barriers to Education	Examples
Socio-cultural Norms and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social norms and attitudes perpetuating gender disparities in education • Girls face household chores and increased workload during the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting their access to education • Cultural norms contribute to the perception that boys have more cultural acceptance in attending school regularly compared to girls • While girls generally feel safe at school, safety on the way to school remains an issue due to fears of harassment
Teacher Skills and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low literacy levels among girls, particularly those with non-mental health disabilities
Financial Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many households struggle to meet basic needs without charitable assistance, affecting girls' access to education.

South Sudan	
Barriers to Education	Examples
Access and Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education providers express dissatisfaction with the availability of resources and information to support inclusive environments, despite reported efforts to improve
Infrastructure and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of girl-friendly water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) practices in schools • Unavailability of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) products • Rehabilitation needs for school infrastructure
Teacher Skills and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited perception of teacher skills • Poorer literacy performance among 14-24-year-olds, highlighting potential disparities in curriculum effectiveness or teaching methods
Socio-cultural Norms and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent societal attitudes devaluing girls' education, limiting their agency, and contributing to issues like early marriage and dropout risks • Acceptance of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against girls and women
Financial Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial constraints, including school expenses, often force adolescents to forgo education for economic reasons, impacting their ability to participate in learning or work
Infrastructure and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent school environments, lacking essential resources or facilities such as classrooms, hygiene facilities, schoolbooks, and pens, hinder effective learning experiences for students

Uganda	
Barriers to Education	Examples
Access and Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education providers express dissatisfaction with the availability of resources and information to support inclusive environments, despite reported efforts to improve
Teacher Skills and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited perception of teacher skills • Poorer literacy performance among 14-24-year-olds, highlighting potential disparities in curriculum effectiveness or teaching methods
Socio-cultural Norms and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent societal attitudes devaluing girls' education, limiting their agency, and contributing to issues like early marriage and dropout risks

Zimbabwe	
Barriers to Education	Examples
Access and Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls with disabilities face a higher risk of dropout compared to those without disabilities • Parents are twice as likely to pay for non-disabled girls' education compared to disabled girls
Socio-cultural Norms and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent societal attitudes devaluing girls' education, limiting their agency, and contributing to issues like early marriage and dropout risks • Acceptance of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against girls and women • Communities uphold traditional beliefs about gender roles, placing the burden of household and childcare responsibilities primarily on girls and women
Financial Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty and inability to pay school fees, which limited sustained engagement of girls in secondary education or training

Table 3 outlines the key barriers to education identified by projects based in Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia separated by country.

Table 3: Key Barriers to Education — Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia	
Afghanistan	
Barriers to Education	Examples
Socio-cultural Norms and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities uphold traditional beliefs about gender roles, placing the burden of household and childcare responsibilities primarily on girls and women • Attitudes prioritize girls' education over boys • Education system struggles to meet the demand for qualified teachers, particularly female teacher due to safety concerns and poor working conditions
Infrastructure and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient school facilities in remote or conflict-affected areas • Many districts lacking schools specifically for girls who under local law require segregated classes • Male dominance in school governance structures (district and provincial education departments)
Security and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat of conflict, violence and insecurity • Taliban rule limiting girls' education

Palestine	
Barriers to Education	Examples
Socio-cultural Norms and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities uphold traditional beliefs about gender roles, placing the burden of household and childcare responsibilities primarily on girls and women • Expectations regarding appropriate activities and behaviours for women (wives, mothers, and caretakers) • Privatization and high cost of child care services restrict women as they are often responsible for childcare duties within the family • Restriction on mobility by husband (married women must obtain permission from their husbands for employment or travel) • Girls disproportionately affected by SGBV and cyberbullying
Access and Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical and administrative barriers (checkpoints, searches, and long commutes due to the separation wall) • Challenges for people with disabilities to access institutions or transport
Teacher Skills and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited perception of teacher skills • Inappropriate comments or behaviour by male instructors
Security and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School children in Gaza suffer from psychological distress, which adversely affected their ability to learn and engage in educational activities • Teachers may not have received sufficient training to identify and assess children in need of additional support or provide psychosocial support through classroom activities • Corporal punishment • Peer violence against newcomers

Syria	
Barriers to Education	Examples
Access and Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education providers express dissatisfaction with the availability of resources and information to support inclusive environments, despite reported efforts to improve
Teacher Skills and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited perception of teacher skills • Poorer literacy performance among 14-24-year-olds, highlighting potential disparities in curriculum effectiveness or teaching methods
Socio-cultural Norms and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent societal attitudes devaluing girls' education, limiting their agency, and contributing to issues like early marriage and dropout risks

Table 4 outlines the key barriers to education identified by the project based in Latin America separated by country.

Table 4: Key Barriers to Education — Latin America	
Columbia	
Barriers to Education	Examples
Gender Inequality and Gender-Based Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undervaluing of girls’ right to education and prioritization of domestic labour roles • High levels of SGBV, early pregnancy, and sexual exploitation perpetuated by harmful gender norms • Higher dropout rates for girls and female adolescents, often due to pregnancy, marriage to armed group members, or caretaker duties
Social Barriers for Venezuelan Migrants and Returnees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xenophobia and tensions with host communities hindering access to education for Venezuelan migrants and returnees • Lack of accredited certification and discrimination, particularly xenophobia towards migrant girls, discouraging school attendance
Financial Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families unable to afford schooling costs such as uniforms and transport’ • Expectation for children, especially girls, to contribute to family income generation and domestic work • Caregivers facing pressure to find livelihood opportunities, limiting their ability to support learning at home or engage with the school system

Appendix 3: Research Guide

The following tables highlight research frame applied to document analysis and FGG/KIIs.

Project-Based Document Analysis Questions	
Category	Question
Approaches and Theoretical Assumptions	What overarching approaches and theoretical frameworks are explicitly stated or implied in the project documents regarding the Charlevoix Declaration?
Interventions, Partnerships, and Contextual Variations (Triple Nexus)	What were the main barriers to gender equality and quality primary and secondary education identified?
	How do the project documents describe the interventions implemented in the context of fragility, crisis, and conflict, and what partnerships are emphasized or mentioned?
	How are contextual variations considered in the project documents, especially within the framework of the triple nexus (humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding)?
Learning and Effective Pedagogical Practices	How do the project documents define and measure learning outcomes?
	What effective pedagogical practices are highlighted or recommended in the documents?
Monitoring and Evaluation of Charlevoix-Funded Interventions	What methods and tools are proposed in the project documents for monitoring and evaluating the funded interventions?
	How are dynamic or emerging contexts acknowledged and addressed in the monitoring and evaluation strategies outlined in the documents?

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interview (KII) Questions	
Category	Question
Approaches and Theoretical Assumptions	How did your project’s approach align or differ from what was outlined in the project documents?
Interventions, Partnerships, and Contextual Variations (Triple Nexus)	From your perspective, how effective were the interventions in addressing educational challenges in contexts of fragility, crisis, and conflict?
	Please share insights on the role of partnerships in implementing these projects. What partnerships did you form, and how effective were they?
	How were local communities actively involved in designing and implementing educational initiatives?
Learning and Effective Pedagogical Practices	How do you perceive the definition and measurement of learning outcomes in the context of the Charlevoix-funded projects?
	To what extent do the pedagogical practices promote inclusivity and representation of diverse voices, perspectives, and backgrounds in the learning materials, activities, and classroom discussions?
	Based on your experience, what pedagogical practices were particularly successful or challenging?
Monitoring and Evaluation of Charlevoix-Funded Interventions	How well did the methods and tools proposed in the project documents capture the impact of interventions?
	How adaptable were the projects to dynamic or emerging contexts, and what adjustments were made?
	How did the dynamic or emerging context influence the monitoring and evaluation process in practice?
	What lessons have been learned from the Charlevoix-funded projects that can inform future initiatives in similar contexts?

Appendix 4: Codebook

Codebook	
Code	Question
1.0 Approaches and Theoretical Assumptions	
1.1 Theoretical Frameworks	Mentions of specific theoretical frameworks guiding Canadian development organizations in response to the Charlevoix Declaration.
1.2 Approaches	Common approaches across organizations (use to compare similarities and differences).
2.0 Interventions, Partnerships, and Contextual Variations (Triple Nexus)	
2.1 Interventions (types)	Information on the types of interventions implemented in contexts of fragility, crisis, and conflict within the triple nexus.
2.1 Interventions (effectiveness)	Insights into how effective participants perceive their project interventions to be in addressing educational challenges in fragile, crisis, and conflict contexts within the triple nexus.
2.3 Partnerships (description)	Details on partnerships formed and their role in addressing educational challenges
2.4 Partnerships (positive)	Information on the role of partnerships and their positive effect
2.5 Partnerships (negative)	Information on the role of partnerships and their negative effect
2.6 Community Involvement	Insights into how local communities were actively involved in designing and implementing educational initiatives.
2.7 Contextual Variations	Insights into how contextual variations (geographical, socio-political, or economic) are considered within the triple nexus framework.
2.8 Barriers to Gender Equality and Quality Education	Information on the main barriers to gender equality and quality primary and secondary education identified.

3.0 Learning and Effective Pedagogical Practices	
3.1 Learning Definitions	How organizations define learning.
3.3 Pedagogical Practices (description)	Information on pedagogical practices (methods, strategies, and techniques) emphasized by organizations which educators used to facilitate effective teaching and learning experiences.
3.4 Pedagogical Practices (positive)	Insights shared by participants on pedagogical practices that were successful.
3.5 Pedagogical Practices (negative)	Insights shared by participants on pedagogical practices that were challenging.
3.6 Socially Just Pedagogies	When addresses or implies the implementation of pedagogical practices aligned with socially just principles.
4.0 Monitoring and Evaluation of Charlevoix-Funded Interventions	
4.1 Methods and Tools (description)	Details on the methods and tools proposed for monitoring and evaluation.
4.2 Methods and Tools (positive)	Insights into how the methods and tools captured the impact of interventions were effective.
4.3 Methods and Tools (negative)	Insights into how the methods and tools captured the impact of interventions were not effective.
4.2 Collaborative Approaches	Information on collaborative approaches in the monitoring and evaluation process.
4.3 Adaptability and Adjustments	Information on project changes that were made based on emerging or changing contexts.
5.0 Lessons Learned and Recommendations	
5.1 Lessons Learned	Discussions on lessons learned from Charlevoix-funded projects that can inform future initiatives in similar contexts.
5.2 Recommendations	Recommendations provided by participants for improving future projects in similar contexts.
0.0 General Code	General notes or information that doesn't fit into the specified categories.

Appendix 5: Charlevoix FGD/KII Research Questions Summary

Charlevoix FGD/KII Research Questions Summary
Theme: What are the Approaches and Theoretical Assumptions?
Category: Theoretical frameworks guiding their project
Network Theory: The project aimed to establish and leverage network relationships within the government and different areas of education. This network extended from district education representatives up to the Ministers of Education. The goal was to ensure visibility and involvement at various levels of governance and education.
Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP): A significant focus of the project was on gender-responsive pedagogy, which involves teaching methods and materials designed to address gender disparities and promote gender equality in education. This framework guided the development of teaching materials, training programs for teachers, and initiatives to support female students and teachers.
Community-Based Approaches: While the project primarily focused on building education systems and improving teaching quality, there was recognition of the importance of community involvement, particularly through School Management Committees (SMCs). This approach acknowledges the role of communities in education but emphasizes engagement from the school outward rather than the community inward.
Adaptive Management: The conversation highlighted the need for flexibility and adaptability in project implementation. The project team recognized the importance of responding to evolving challenges and contexts, which may require adjustments to initial plans and strategies. This framework underscores the importance of learning from experience and making iterative improvements over time.
Decolonized Approach: There was a strong emphasis on adopting a decolonized approach to project implementation, particularly in the context of gender equality initiatives. This approach involves understanding and respecting local contexts, engaging in collaborative and co-constructive processes, and avoiding imposition of external ideologies or solutions.
Long-Term Perspective: The project emphasized the long-term nature of educational transformation, highlighting the need for sustained investment and consistency over time. This framework recognizes that meaningful change in education systems requires ongoing support and capacity-building efforts, particularly for teachers.
Critical Reflection on Funding Mechanisms: The conversation also touched upon funding mechanisms and their influence on project implementation. There was recognition of the limitations imposed by rigid funding structures, which may hinder adaptability and localization efforts. There was a call for funding models that allow for greater flexibility and partnership with smaller NGOs, enabling bottom-up planning and responsiveness to local contexts.

Integrated Multisectoral Approaches: Many of the projects had additional insights from other sectors and collaborated with local and international agencies. For examples, WASH programs and food programs.

Theme: Interventions and Partnerships (Triple Nexus)

Category: Barriers to gender equality and quality primary and secondary education

Cultural Norms and Traditional Gender Roles: The discussions highlighted the influence of cultural norms and traditional gender roles on education. These norms often perpetuate inequalities by restricting opportunities for girls and reinforcing stereotypes about gender roles within society. Addressing these entrenched beliefs and practices is essential to promoting gender equality in education.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV): Gender-based violence emerged as a significant barrier to girls' education and overall gender equality. The prevalence of GBV in school settings, as well as in wider communities, creates hostile environments that undermine girls' safety and well-being, ultimately affecting their ability to access and benefit from education.

Pregnancy and Early Marriage: The interviews referenced challenges related to pregnancy and early marriage, which disproportionately affect girls' educational outcomes. Social norms and practices that condone early marriage and discourage continuation of education for pregnant girls contribute to high dropout rates and limited opportunities for girls to complete their schooling.

Lack of Qualified Teachers: The shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in remote or disadvantaged areas, was mentioned as a barrier to quality education. Inadequate teacher training and support can compromise the quality of instruction, impacting learning outcomes for both girls and boys.

Limited Access to Educational Resources: Access to educational resources, including textbooks, teaching materials, and school infrastructure, was identified as a challenge. Unequal distribution of resources and inadequate funding for education can hinder students' learning experiences and perpetuate disparities in educational attainment.

Rigid Funding Mechanisms: The interviews highlighted the limitations of rigid funding mechanisms from GAC, which may restrict flexibility and responsiveness in project implementation. Funding structures that favor larger organizations or fail to prioritize long-term capacity-building initiatives can impede efforts to address systemic barriers to gender equality and quality education.

Lack of Community Engagement: While community involvement was recognized as important, there were indications that meaningful engagement with communities, particularly in decision-making processes related to education, may be lacking. Building strong partnerships with communities is essential for creating supportive environments that promote gender equality and quality education for all.

Theme: Interventions and Partnerships (Triple Nexus)

Category: How their project will address barriers identified

Gender-Responsive Pedagogy (GRP): The projects prioritized gender-responsive pedagogy, which involves integrating gender considerations into teaching practices and curriculum development. This approach aimed to challenge traditional gender norms and promote equal participation and opportunities for girls and boys in the classroom. By incorporating diverse perspectives and stories in educational materials and providing training to teachers on gender-responsive teaching methods, the projects sought to create more inclusive and supportive learning environments.

Teacher Training and Capacity Building: Recognizing the critical role of teachers in promoting gender equality and delivering quality education, projects invested in teacher training and capacity-building initiatives. Provided professional development opportunities to educators, focusing on topics such as gender-responsive pedagogy, gender-based violence prevention, and adolescent sexual health education. By enhancing teachers' knowledge, skills, and confidence in addressing gender-related issues in the classroom, the projects aimed to improve learning outcomes and create safer and more supportive school environments.

Community Engagement and Partnerships: The projects actively engaged with communities and local stakeholders to foster collaboration and ownership of educational initiatives. They involved community members, including parents, school management committees, and community leaders, in decision-making processes and program implementation. By building strong partnerships with communities and leveraging local knowledge and resources, the projects aimed to ensure that interventions were contextually relevant and responsive to the needs and priorities of the communities they served.

Policy Advocacy and Systems Strengthening: In addition to implementing interventions at the grassroots level, the projects advocated for policy changes and system-wide reforms to address structural barriers to gender equality and quality education. They conducted research, gathered evidence, and shared findings with policymakers and stakeholders to inform policy development and decision-making. By advocating for policy changes that support gender equality, inclusive education, and investment in teacher training and educational resources, the projects aimed to create enabling environments for sustainable change at the national and regional levels.

Theme: Interventions and Partnerships (Triple Nexus)

Category: Types of interventions implemented

Gender-Responsive Pedagogy (GRP):

- **Curriculum Development:** Developing educational materials and resources that promote gender equality and challenge traditional gender stereotypes.
- **Teacher Training:** Providing professional development opportunities to teachers on gender-responsive teaching methods and strategies.
- **Classroom Practices:** Encouraging teachers to adopt inclusive teaching practices that actively engage both girls and boys in the learning process.
- **Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention:** Conducting training sessions and workshops to raise awareness about GBV issues and equip teachers with tools to prevent and address gender-based violence in schools.

Community Engagement and Partnerships:

- **Stakeholder Involvement:** Engaging with community members, parents, school management committees, and local leaders to ensure their active participation and support in educational initiatives.
- **Decision-Making Processes:** Involving stakeholders in decision-making processes related to program implementation, curriculum development, and resource allocation.
- **Collaboration and Coordination:** Building partnerships with local organizations, government agencies, and other stakeholders to leverage resources, expertise, and networks for more effective program delivery.

Policy Advocacy and Systems Strengthening:

- **Research and Evidence Generation:** Conducting research studies and evaluations to gather evidence on the impact of interventions and identify areas for policy reform and system improvement.
- **Policy Dialogue and Engagement:** Advocating for policy changes and reforms through dialogue with policymakers, government officials, and other stakeholders.
- **Capacity Building:** Strengthening the capacity of government agencies and educational institutions to design, implement, and monitor gender-responsive education policies and programs.

Theme: Interventions and Partnerships (Triple Nexus)

Category: Partnerships involved in the project

Government Partnerships:

- Collaboration with government agencies at various levels, including ministries of education and district education representatives.
- Engagement with government officials related to girls' education such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Gender Affairs, among others.
- Involvement of local government representatives in training sessions and workshops.

Community Partnerships:

- Engagement with community stakeholders, including school management committees (SMCs), parents, and local leaders.
- Collaboration with community-based organizations, NGOs, and international donors to implement joint initiatives.
- Participation of community members in consultations, meetings, and outreach activities to gather input and build consensus.

Academic Partnerships:

- Collaboration with academic institutions for research and curriculum development projects.
- Engagement with academic experts and researchers to contribute to the design and evaluation of educational interventions.

Local NGO Partnerships:

- Collaboration with NGOs working in related fields, such as gender equality, education, and development.
- Partnership with organizations like World Vision, Oxfam, and CARE to leverage resources, share expertise, and implement collaborative projects.

Theme: Interventions and Partnerships (Triple Nexus)

Category: How the community is involved in the project

- **Participation in Training Sessions:** Community representatives, including district education representatives and teachers, were involved in training sessions organized by the projects.
- **Involvement in School Management Committees (SMCs):** The projects worked closely with School Management Committees (SMCs), which are community-based structures managing local schools. These committees played a critical role in the projects and were actively engaged in various activities.
- **Community Meetings:** Teachers, community representatives, and school leaders participated in meetings where they discussed project activities, shared feedback, and contributed to decision-making processes.
- **Community Leadership Engagement:** The projects engaged with community leadership through the local schools where they were implemented. Community representatives, including head teachers, teachers, and community leaders, were involved in discussions and decisions about project activities.
- **Engaging Parents:** School fathers and mothers were involved in including prevention of early marriage for girls, and become trainers of students, teachers and community members about prevention of SGBV, including importance of girl education. The point is that the community is not only get training, participation in decision-making but also change agents for promoting girl’s education.

Theme: Interventions and Partnerships (Triple Nexus)

Category: Contextual variations relevant to humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding (i.e., war, strikes, etc.)

War and Conflict Zones:

- Presence of conflict and instability in certain regions, impacting educational infrastructure and access to services.
- Challenges in implementing projects due to security concerns and the risk of violence against staff and beneficiaries.

Social Unrest and Strikes:

- Occurrence of social unrest and strikes affecting educational institutions and project implementation.
- Need for flexibility and adaptability in project planning and delivery to mitigate the impact of disruptions.
- Engagement with local communities and stakeholders to address grievances and ensure the continuity of educational initiatives.

Political Instability and Governance Issues:

- Variation in political philosophies and governance structures influencing approaches to gender equality and equity discussions.
- Challenges in navigating political sensitivities and regulations when implementing projects related to gender, education, and humanitarian efforts.

Environmental Challenges:

- Impact of environmental factors such as natural disasters or climate change on vulnerable communities, exacerbating social and economic disparities.
- Integration of environmental education and awareness into broader educational initiatives, promoting sustainability and resilience.
- Adaptation of projects to address environmental challenges and build community resilience to mitigate future risks.

Economic Inequalities and Poverty:

- Socioeconomic factors influencing access to education and opportunities for women and girls, particularly in marginalized communities.
- Importance of addressing poverty and economic empowerment as part of holistic development and peacebuilding efforts.

Theme: Learning and Effective Pedagogical Practices

Category: (if applicable) Pedagogical practices highlighted or recommended

Gender-responsive pedagogy:

- Emphasis on creating gender-responsive educational materials, such as textbooks and resources.
- Training teachers on gender-responsive pedagogy to model gender equality in the classroom.
- Incorporating stories of girls and boys in educational materials to break down gender stereotypes.
- Promoting gender equality in the classroom environment.

Comprehensive sexual education:

- Development and dissemination of educational resources on adolescent sexual health.
- Providing training for teachers on sexual and reproductive health rights.
- Addressing gender-based violence (GBV) through sexual education and awareness programs.

Capacity building for teachers:

- Providing extensive training for teachers on gender-responsive pedagogy.
- Supporting female student teachers from impoverished backgrounds to obtain qualifications.
- Focusing on long-term capacity building for teachers to promote educational quality and sustainability.

Collaboration and partnerships:

- Collaborating with local stakeholders, including government officials, first ladies, and faith communities, to implement educational initiatives.
- Partnering with academic institutions, such as Columbia University, to develop educational materials and resources.
- Engaging in research projects to assess the impact of educational interventions and inform future initiatives.

Gender Norms and Girls' Empowerment

- Providing girls with the education and tools to defend themselves (ex., HERO in ME) when faced with school related SGBV.
- Sessions that integrate a rights-based approach to education and learning.

Theme: Monitoring and Evaluation of Charlevoix-Funded Interventions

Category: Methods and tools for monitoring and evaluating the projects

Classroom Observations: Involved conducting classroom observations to assess the implementation of gender-responsive pedagogy and to monitor teacher practices related to gender equality and inclusion. This method allowed for direct observation of teaching methods and interactions within the classroom environment.

Gender Review of Educational Materials: A gender review process was employed to assess and ensure the inclusivity of educational materials, such as books and resources developed for the projects. This involved examining the content to ensure it represented both genders equally and addressed gender-related issues appropriately.

Training and Workshops: Teachers received extensive training and workshops on gender-responsive pedagogy, gender-based violence, and sexual and reproductive health. These training sessions aimed to build the capacity of teachers to integrate gender equality principles into their teaching practices and to create a more inclusive learning environment.

Research Projects: were conducted to evaluate the impact of the initiatives and interventions implemented as part of the projects. These research efforts involved assessing the effectiveness of the interventions in achieving their objectives and identifying areas for improvement.

Surveys and Assessments: Surveys and assessments were utilized to gather data on various aspects of the projects, including changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior among students and teachers. These tools provided quantitative data that could be analyzed to measure the outcomes and impact of the projects.

Collaborative Feedback Mechanisms: The projects emphasized collaboration and feedback mechanisms involving stakeholders such as teachers, students, and community members. These mechanisms facilitated ongoing communication and dialogue to gather feedback, identify challenges, and make adjustments to project implementation as needed.

Theme: Monitoring and Evaluation of Charlevoix-Funded Interventions

Category: Strategies for responding to changes in fragile, crisis, and conflict settings

Adaptability and Flexibility: Projects emphasized the importance of being responsive and adaptive to changing circumstances on the ground, particularly in crisis-affected areas.

Long-term Commitment and Consistency: Recognition of the need for consistency and long-term commitment in addressing educational transformation, especially in crisis-affected regions.

Building Local Capacity: There was a call for funding mechanisms that support localization, enabling smaller NGOs to respond effectively to local needs. This involves engaging with local partners and communities, as well as investing in building the capacity of local educators and institutions.

Engagement with Government and Policy: Advocacy for policy changes and engagement with government bodies to support sustainable educational initiatives, ensuring that projects align with national priorities and policies.

Appendix 6: Charlevoix Project Document Analysis Research Questions Summary

Charlevoix Project Document Analysis Research Questions Summary
Theme: What are the Approaches and Theoretical Assumptions?
Category: Theoretical frameworks guiding their project
Social Learning Theory: This is implicit in projects aiming to reduce barriers to education, such as gender-based violence (SGBV) and socio-economic factors, by providing skills and support for teachers and communities.
Feminist Theory: Many projects explicitly address gender inequalities and aim to empower girls and women through education, challenging socio-cultural norms and systemic barriers.
Systems Theory: Projects targeting various levels of the education system, from classroom interventions to policy planning and coordination, reflect a systemic approach to addressing gender disparities in education.
Human Rights-Based Approach: Several projects frame their interventions within a human rights framework, aiming to ensure the right to safe, inclusive, and quality education for all, with a particular focus on marginalized groups like girls, adolescents, and persons with disabilities.
Gender-Transformative Approach: Emphasized in projects seeking to challenge and transform gender norms and stereotypes, these approaches aim to create more inclusive and equitable educational environments.
Community Engagement Models: Projects involve various stakeholders, including communities, families, teachers, and local authorities, reflecting a community-based approach to addressing educational barriers and promoting gender equality.
Theory of Change (ToC) and Logic Model: Utilized in project planning and evaluation, these frameworks provided a structured approach to understanding the pathways through which interventions lead to desired outcomes, often incorporating elements of empowerment, capacity-building, and systemic change.
<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employing a multi-level approach, involving schools, communities, families, and local organizations, to address socio-cultural, economic, and institutional barriers to education (Community Engagement) • Identifying key barriers and leverage points for change, focusing on increasing attendance, improving learning environments, and enhancing the enabling environment for girls' education (Theory of Change)

<p>Theme: Interventions and Partnerships (Triple Nexus)</p>
<p>Category: Barriers to gender equality and quality primary and secondary education</p>
<p>Sociocultural Norms and Gender Roles: Gender norms perpetuate power dynamics that condone violence against women and girls. Domestic violence may be seen as acceptable, and girls are often burdened with domestic chores, limiting their time for education.</p>
<p>Barriers to Girls' Education: These include early and forced marriage, early pregnancy, violence against girls in school, gender-based violence in the community, gender stereotypes, lack of gender-sensitive facilities like toilets, stigma against children with disabilities, and discrimination (xenophobia) faced by migrant girls.</p>
<p>Enrollment and Attendance Issues: Dropout rates are higher for girls due to various reasons such as pregnancy, marriage to armed group members, caretaking duties, financial constraints, lack of accredited certification, and fear of stigma. Girls may also miss school due to household chores, safety concerns on the way to school, and cultural attitudes.</p>
<p>Safety Concerns: Both girls and boys face risks of violence, including corporal punishment, bullying, attacks by armed groups, and harassment on the way to school. Safety issues also extend to the inadequacy of school infrastructure and sanitation facilities.</p>
<p>Economic Barriers: Financial constraints, exacerbated by factors like the COVID-19 pandemic, often lead to boys being prioritized for education over girls. Many households struggle to afford schooling costs, and children, especially girls, may be expected to contribute to family income through labor, including tasks that may involve sexual exploitation.</p>
<p>Cultural and Societal Norms: Conservative attitudes and restrictions on female mobility and participation in education and employment limit opportunities for girls and women. Girls may face stigma for attending school and may be subject to restrictions imposed by male family members.</p>
<p>Teacher Training and Support: Teachers often lack training in gender-sensitive pedagogy and psychosocial support, and there is a need for better teacher-student interactions and non-punitive discipline methods.</p>
<p>Conflict and Insecurity: In conflict-affected areas, insecurity disrupts education, leading to school closures, teacher migration, and increased risks for students. Armed conflicts also result in displacement, further disrupting access to education for girls and boys.</p>

Examples:

- Conservative cultural attitudes and restrictions on female mobility hinder girls’ access to education. Societal norms dictate that girls should fulfill traditional roles as wives and caretakers, limiting their opportunities for formal education and employment. Moreover, physical and administrative barriers, such as checkpoints and long commutes, further restrict girls’ ability to attend school, particularly those with disabilities.
- Girls face multiple barriers to education, including gender-based violence, early marriage, and insecurity. The presence of armed actors increases the risks faced by children, leading to school closures and teacher migration. As a result, girls are more likely to drop out of school due to safety concerns and family pressure to prioritize household duties over education.

Theme: Interventions and Partnerships (Triple Nexus)

Category: How their project will address barriers identified

Enhancement of Teacher Professionalization: The projects emphasized the need to enhance the professionalization of teachers to ensure education quality, equity, and inclusiveness. This involved promoting psychosocial well-being, developing skills reflecting UN values, and providing training and support for teachers, counselors, and administrators.

Capacity Building of Key Duty-Bearers: Efforts were made to increase the capacities of key duty-bearers such as teachers, counselors, school administrators, and parents to protect children. This involved enhancing the protective environment for children, raising awareness on child rights concerns, and working with existing structures to support child protection.

Community of Practice (CoP) Workshops: Projects conducted CoP workshops/meetings at cluster levels to gather local feedback and input, ensuring responsiveness to grassroots needs. These workshops involved convening stakeholders, mentors, and supervisors to discuss strategies and share best practices.

Cluster-Based Approach: Schools were grouped into clusters to facilitate targeted support and intervention. Each cluster comprised several schools, allowing for tailored interventions and collaborative efforts to address specific challenges.

Distribution of Educational Resources: The projects distributed educational resources such as MP3 radios, solar panels, workbooks, and anthologies to schools, particularly in conflict-affected regions. This aimed to improve access to learning materials and create a conducive learning environment.

Addressing Gender Barriers: Efforts were made to reduce harmful gender norms and socio-economic barriers to girls’ education, including those with disabilities. This involved promoting inclusive, equitable, safe, and resilient education services and providing relevant vocational skills training opportunities.

Strengthening Partnerships: Strong partnerships were cultivated with government ministries, local authorities, and community stakeholders to ensure project effectiveness and sustainability. Collaboration with influential stakeholders at the grassroots level was emphasized to advance the education system.

Gender-Transformative Approach: Projects utilized a human rights and gender transformation approach to tackle root causes of gender inequality and multi-dimensional barriers to education. This involved capacity building, awareness raising, empowerment of girls, and engagement with communities to challenge harmful gender norms.

Innovative Initiatives: Innovative initiatives such as cash transfers, school-based radio programs, and community-led projects were implemented to support girls' education, combat gender-based violence, and promote gender equality. These initiatives aimed to empower girls, enhance their access to education, and create supportive environments.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks were developed to measure progress, attribute change to project interventions, and inform future programming. Baseline studies, research questions, and performance measurement frameworks were utilized to track outcomes and ensure project effectiveness.

Theme: Interventions and Partnerships (Triple Nexus)

Category: Types of interventions implemented

Educational Programs and Support:

- Delivering life skills sessions, mentorship programs, and leadership training to equip adolescent girls and young women with essential knowledge and skills.
- Implementing online mentorship programs connecting with female mentors from the diaspora.
- Providing remedial education, scholarships, and extra classes to support girls' education.
- Supporting schools to develop gender-responsive plans and providing training for teachers to create safe and inclusive learning environments.
- Distributing educational materials, solar lamps, and in-kind assistance to overcome barriers to education.
- Facilitating ICT-enabled learning and outreach sessions to raise awareness among parents and community members.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Initiatives:

- Conducting gender-responsive multimedia campaigns and facilitating community dialogues to address harmful gender norms and promote girls' education.
- Supporting gender-segregated discussion groups and engaging male champions to advocate for girls' rights.
- Incorporating gender equality concepts into training programs and promoting the participation of girls in decision-making processes.
- Implementing flexible response funds to pilot solutions that break down barriers to girls' education, involving community and faith leaders.
- Strengthening gender-responsive psychosocial services and providing support for caregivers to reduce barriers to education.

Capacity Building and Training:

- Delivering evidence-based teacher professional development courses and training sessions for duty-bearers to enhance their capacity to protect children and promote education.
- Organizing community consultations, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews to gather insights and involve stakeholders in project planning.
- Conducting trainings on gender-based violence prevention, trauma response, and reporting mechanisms for education stakeholders.

Environmental and Infrastructural Improvements:

- Promoting environmental practices and improving school infrastructure to create safe and conducive learning environments.
- Supporting alternative education modalities, such as radio-based programming and accelerated learning programs, to ensure continuity of education in conflict-affected areas.
- Organizing exposure visits and sensitization trainings to promote gender equality and economic empowerment.

Theme: Interventions and Partnerships (Triple Nexus)

Category: Partnerships involved in the project

WUSC (World University Service of Canada) and Aga Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC): Joint initiative in South Sudan, Uganda, and Syria.

Windle International Uganda and Windle Trust International in South Sudan, along with **Charlie Goldsmith Associates** and the **Episcopal Church of South Sudan**.

Syrian Society for Social Development (SSSD): Local implementing partner in Syria.
Association of Language and Literacy Educators (TALLE) and McGill University Faculty of Education.
TGEP: Partners with Gender-Responsive Pedagogy (GRP).
Ministries: Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small Medium Enterprises Development (MoWACSMED), Ministry of Youth, Sport, Arts and Recreation (MYSAR), Department of Social Development.
Local organizations: Various local organizations involved in specific municipalities.
Malian Association for Survival in the Sahel (AMSS), Subaahi Gumo Association (ASG), Association Eveil “waalde Pinal”, and Malian Association for Solidarity and Development (AMSODE), along with technical assistance from Charlie Goldsmith Associates (CGA).
Teaching Academies (AE), Educational Animation Centres (CAP), School management committees (CGS), and Associations of Mothers of Students (AME).
Community and religious leaders in targeted municipalities and local authorities.
War Child and Caritas Développement.
United Nations system: Including UNFPA, UNICEF, MONUSCO.
International NGOs: IRD, War Child, Oxfam.
National NGOs: UIA, state structures like DIVAS.
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
Socioeconomic advisor to the Governor of Ruyigi Province and other provincial officials.
Local stakeholders: Including representatives from various organizations and committees.
Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and International Rescue Committee (IRC): Operating in refugee camps.
Plan International, Danish Refugee Council, and Help Age International.
Governmental organizations: Windle International Kenya (WIK) and Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

Plan International Canada, Plan International Burkina Faso, Stromme Foundation Norway, and Stromme Foundation Burkina Faso.
Local Schools and various management structures.
Governmental bodies: Federal Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education of Somalia, Somaliland Ministry of Education and Science, Puntland Ministry of Education and Higher Education, State Ministry of Education of Jubaland.
Canadian Embassy representatives.
Children, teachers, staff, and members of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) / School Management Committees (SMCs).
Lutheran World Federation Jerusalem (LWF Jerusalem), CLWR, and LWF-VTP.
Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) and Ministry of Health (MOH).
Netherlands Red Cross.
World Vision Canada (WVC) and Save the Children Canada (SCC).
Theme: Interventions and Partnerships (Triple Nexus)
Category: Partnerships involved in the project
Participation in Consultations: Community members, including both male and female adults and adolescents, participated in consultations with various stakeholders, including UNRWA, teachers, counselors, supervisors, school principals, and education officials.
Training and Capacity Building: Community members, including teachers, school management committees, guidance and counseling teachers, and Child Protection Committees (CPCs), received training and capacity building sessions to enhance their roles in promoting education, addressing gender-based violence (GBV), and supporting vulnerable students.
Engagement in Decision-Making: Parents, community leaders, and religious leaders were engaged in decision-making processes related to education initiatives, including the formation of school management committees, advocacy for girls' education, and promotion of positive masculinity.
Community Mobilization and Awareness: Community members, including teachers, coaches, parents, and caregivers, were involved in community mobilization and awareness-raising activities on various topics such as child protection, sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), and gender equality.

Support for Reintegration and Access to Education: Community members, including RECOPE members, supported the reintegration of children into formal or informal education systems and facilitated access to education for marginalized groups, including out-of-school or drop-out students.

Engagement in Monitoring and Feedback: Community members, including representatives from youth organizations, women’s groups, and advisory committees, were involved in monitoring activities, providing feedback on project implementation, and suggesting changes or improvements.

Involvement in Project Design: Community members, including girls, young women, and beneficiaries of pilot projects, provided input into the design of education initiatives, including menstrual hygiene practices, distribution of sanitary pads, and improvement of water and sanitation facilities in schools.

Theme: Interventions and Partnerships (Triple Nexus)

Category: Contextual variations relevant to humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding (i.e., war, strikes, etc.)

Sierra Leone:

- Impact of COVID-19 on education and the closure of schools for many months.
- Utilization of radio as a medium for educational programming during school closures.
- Proposal for a lessons-learned activity to review educational programs implemented during COVID-19 closures.

Mali:

- Efforts to stabilize the country post-conflict through initiatives like the Algiers Peace Agreement and the PRODEC II program.
- Challenges in education due to conflicts and COVID-19, including the closure of schools and disruptions in learning.
- Intensification of military operations against armed groups affecting access to project areas and humanitarian activities.

Colombia:

- Challenges in the education system, including overcrowded schools and budget shortfalls affecting teacher hiring.
- Political instability, including the election of a left-wing president and challenges in signing cooperation agreements for girls’ education.
- Impact of the La Niña phenomenon causing flooding and damage to schools in different regions.

Nigeria:

- Systematic destruction of education by Boko Haram insurgents, resulting in the closure of schools and hindering access to education.
- Targeting of girls in attacks, leading to abductions and restrictions on their education and freedom of movement.
- Efforts by humanitarian agencies to improve access to education, but challenges remain due to funding gaps and ongoing insecurity.

Tanzania:

- Hosting of a large number of Burundian refugees, with restrictions on their movement and employment.
- Reliance on humanitarian aid and NGOs for basic necessities in refugee camps.
- Challenges faced by refugees in accessing formal education and generating income due to restrictions and limited opportunities.

Theme: Learning and Effective Pedagogical Practices

Category: (if applicable) Pedagogical practices highlighted or recommended

Classroom Observation Tool:

- Used to assess teachers' understanding, adoption, and adaptation of pedagogical methods taught in the program.
- Helps track progress and guide future Community of Practice (CoP) topics and support.

Encouraging Equal Participation:

- Teachers actively encourage both boys and girls to participate equally in classroom activities.
- Success in creating inclusive classroom environments that promote girls' participation.

Combination of Individual and Group Work:

- Pedagogical approach includes a mix of individual reflection and group work.
- Methods like storytelling and co-writing, although less utilized, have specific purposes and applications.

Gender Equality Plan:

- Addresses socio-cultural barriers and constructs related to gender impacting children's education.
- Aims to empower girls and young women to make positive changes at various levels.

Advocacy for Constructive Masculinity:

- Advocates for promoting constructive expressions of masculinity to mitigate gender-based violence.
- Seeks to challenge patriarchal norms and validate the authority and advantages of men.

Inclusive Education Training:

- Enhances teachers' competencies in inclusive education and children's rights through collaboration with professional teacher training schools.
- Aims to prevent negative consequences from staff reassignment.

Engagement of Stakeholders:

- Involves all stakeholders and institutions in education, health, and childhood in implementation and oversight.
- Engages municipal authorities, local leaders, and individuals with impairments in educational inclusion activities.

Capacity Building and Empowerment:

- Implements initiatives to enhance women's capacity through income-generating activities and vocational training.
- Enhances the capacity of childcare facilities and infrastructure to support individuals affected by various forms of violations.

Modification of Curriculum:

- Adapts educational curriculum for students in areas affected by security problems, utilizing mobile schools for displaced communities.

Life Skills and Entrepreneurship Training:

- Enhances confidence and skills of targets through safe spaces, life skills development, and entrepreneurship training.
- Focuses on integrating individuals into the job market and providing them with necessary literacy and vocational skills.

Engagement of Instructors:

- Encourages instructors in Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) to utilize modern instructional practices like creative and critical thinking methodologies.
- Aims to promote the use of these practices in school classrooms by teacher trainees.

Theme: Monitoring and Evaluation of Charlevoix-Funded Interventions

Category: Methods and tools for monitoring and evaluating the projects

Quantitative Surveys:

- Data collection through tablets using software such as Kobo Toolbox for quantitative surveys targeting project participants, parents, and caregivers.
- The surveys aim to collect information on key project indicators and outcomes specified in the Performance Measurement Framework (PMF).

Qualitative Data Collection:

- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted with targeted stakeholders to gather qualitative insights and perspectives on the project's relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability.
- In-depth reviews of available documentation, including project documents and external sources, to supplement qualitative data collection.

Mixed-Methods Approach:

- A mixed quantitative and qualitative methodological approach is employed to evaluate the project, ensuring both depth and breadth of data analysis.
- Quantitative methods include household surveys, while qualitative methods include focus groups and semi-structured interviews with key project stakeholders.

Performance Measurement Framework (PMF):

- Utilization of the PMF to specify project indicators and outcomes, against which progress and achievements are measured.
- The PMF serves as a guide for monitoring and evaluating the project's advancement towards anticipated outcomes.

Data Triangulation:

- Triangulation of data from various sources, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups, to strengthen the reliability of evaluation findings and enhance data analysis.

Community-Level and School-Level Participation Data:

- Involvement of community mobilizers to gather real-time updates on enrollment, attendance, transition rates, and perceptions around quality and safety indicators using mobile technology.
- Collection of geospatial data on targeted formal and non-formal schools to track project activities and outcomes.

Sampling and Census Methods:

- Combination of sampling and census methods to gather data at various levels, including community, school, and local government levels.
- Sampling surveys conducted to capture diverse perspectives and demographics, including children, adolescents, parents, teachers, and community stakeholders.

Electronic Data Collection:

- Use of tablets and electronic data collection software like Kobo Toolbox for efficient and accurate data capture during surveys and assessments.

Permission and Consent Processes:

- Prior to conducting interviews, informed permission processes are initiated, with parents and guardians providing consent on behalf of their adolescent participants.

Theme: Monitoring and Evaluation of Charlevoix-Funded Interventions

Category: Strategies for responding to changes in fragile, crisis, and conflict settings

Psychosocial Support Services: Providing access to psychosocial support services and resources to help individuals cope with challenges and trauma, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amplification of Existing Programs: Increasing the dissemination and use of existing educational packages to help prepare parents, teachers, head teachers, and learners for the return to school after extended closures.

Utilization of Radio Programming: Using radio programming to support education during times of crisis, such as the suspension of extracurricular activities, to provide additional learning opportunities and support.

Scholarships and Distance Learning: Offering scholarships and support for distance learning to ensure continued education for vulnerable populations, despite disruptions caused by crises like COVID-19.

Comparative Analysis and Consultations: Conducting analyses and consultations to understand obstacles and issues related to access to education, gender dynamics, and power relations in crisis-affected regions.

Community Engagement and Mobilization: Engaging community leaders, religious leaders, women's rights leaders, and community education committees to increase local ownership and support for education, particularly for marginalized groups like girls and displaced children.

Flexible and Adaptive Interventions: Designing interventions that are flexible, adaptive, and responsive to emerging trends and risks in crisis-affected contexts, with contingency plans to mitigate negative impacts.

E-Learning and Teacher Training: Implementing e-learning courses for teachers and providing training on constructive discipline, gender-sensitive pedagogy, and management of child hygiene issues, especially related to menstruation.

Infrastructure Development and Resource Provision: Assisting schools in enhancing infrastructure, ensuring the availability of educational resources, and addressing the specific needs of vulnerable populations, including females.

Extracurricular Initiatives: Establishing extracurricular initiatives targeting adolescents and young children to foster gender equality, empower individuals, and promote exercise of their rights.

Thorough Examination and Collaboration: Conducting thorough examinations into root causes of issues such as teacher strikes, utilization of physical force by educators, and barriers to education, and collaborating with stakeholders to address concerns and find solutions.

Advocacy and Awareness: Advocating for parental understanding of the significance of education, enhancing awareness of menstrual hygiene management, and promoting the importance of education for all children's future and welfare.

Theme: Other

Category: General notes or information that doesn't fit into the specified categories

Recommendations for Project Improvement:

- Prioritize stakeholder engagement, sustainability planning, targeting men for increased support of girls' education, and implementing behavior change communication strategies.
- Redefine project targets based on baseline information and reflect on program strengths to modify and scale activities to reach more beneficiaries effectively.
- Implement inclusive education practices, enhance menstrual hygiene management, and promote safe and gender-sensitive infrastructure.
- Engage local leaders, integrate gender equality initiatives, and provide educational resources to support continued enrollment, especially for girls and those with disabilities.

Household and Education Dynamics:

- Caregivers, especially men, play a crucial role in deciding girls' participation in education.
- Financial instability affects households, and female caregivers typically have lower education levels.
- Adolescent girls are generally aware of their rights, but awareness among boys varies, impacting the school environment.

The Adolescent Girls Education in Crisis Initiative (AGENCI) focused on empowering adolescent girls and female youth pursuing an education in crisis-affected areas of South Sudan, Syria, and Uganda. This report was funded through the AGENCI project.

GLOBAL PARTNERS

In collaboration with local governments and communities, and:



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