

Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS)

Management Response from WFP Malawi to the recommendations of the decentralized evaluation of the Joint Programme on Girls' Education (JPGE I) in Malawi with financial support from the Norwegian Government, 2014 to 2017

Rec #	Recommendation	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action By	Implementation timeframe	Status
1	<p>Interventions that aim at closing an existing gender gap may target activities to boys or girls but should avoid excluding boys from project activities that provide visible benefits</p> <p>It is recommended for future interventions that aim at closing a gender gap for girls, not to only include activities that visibly only target girls. Especially if certain activities are relevant or interesting for boys, inclusion of boys must be considered, even if their need seems lower if it comes to hard data. Activities may be different – sexual education for instance can be different for boys and girls – but there is scope for a much stronger engagement for boys. Also, some activities need to be adapted to avoid unintended impact. THR for instance is justifiably provided, but WFP may contemplate providing it through a different channel or in another location than at school, so as not to create unnecessary resentment.</p> <p>Awareness raising activities need to be conducted for boys and girls together, or in separate tailored sessions, depending on the topic. Leadership</p>	Accepted	<p>This aspect was in part addressed in the design of JPGE II – as a number of interventions also target specifically boys (e.g. empowerment/transformation programmes; club activities at school level; Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS) etc.). The evaluation of JPGE II will give insights on whether these have had any impacts in shifting perception. However, still some actions to be taken to ensure the needs of boys are considered:</p> <p>1.1 In-depth gender analysis to understand the unmet needs of boys and how they can further be engaged as champions in promoting gender equality and stand against GBV and how to equitably meet the needs of boys and girls in targeted areas/schools.</p>	WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA and MoEST ¹	December 2020	Not Started Due to COVID-19 activities needed to be re-prioritized (with more focus given on adapting and implementing existing programme components than new initiatives). However, this recommendation has

¹ Ministry of Education Science and Technology

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	<p>training and sessions related to girls' empowerment can be conducted with girls only, but the boys must be informed about the reason and sensitized on the importance of such empowerment on a parallel trail. It is important to conduct activities around avoiding pregnancy with both boys and girls, since only targeting girls will not be sufficient. The voices of boys need to be included. WFP, UNICEF and UNFPA need to find ways to better include boys and to make sure that they do not feel left out, to avoid counterproductive resentment.</p> <p>Dropout girls are a very specific category, and they are not in schools, so boys do not perceive that focus as unfair to them. This work is therefore recommended for implementation with girls only.</p>					been fully taken on board in the ongoing design of Phase 3 of the programme, where the focus on boys will still be prioritized across interventions. The analysis might not as such be required as a tool for further programming, in the short term.
			1.2 Ensure continued inclusion as per plans in JPGE II of boys in the programme initiatives to promote gender equality initiatives	WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA and MoEST	December 2020	Ongoing (this is already part of regular activities planned in JPGE II).
			1.3 Ensure that the final evaluation of JPGE II assesses progress made in this regard and the findings of the evaluation inform design of JPGE III	WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA and MoEST	December 2020	Ongoing Due to COVID-19 the evaluation was put on hold.
2	<p>Parents in general and mothers need to be more strongly addressed with awareness raising and engaged in JPGE II</p> <p>There was little direct work in JPGE with the parents, beyond those who were member of committees. JPGE II should therefore maintain a stronger focus on working with parents. Parents need to be made aware that taking girls out of school serves a short-</p>	Accepted	<p>This aspect was considered in the design of JPGE II – Outcome 5 of the programme revolves around communities and parent's involvement.</p> <p>2.1 Specific intervention in JPGE II designed at involvement of parents, is the development of a Parent Child Communication training manual and ensuing training of district level</p>	UNICEF, UNFPA, MoEST,	January 2018	Implemented

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	<p>term purpose only, and that in the long run everyone will benefit if girls remain in school. They must start to realize what the rights of girls are and that they have a role in safeguarding these rights. They also need to understand that access to education is a right.</p> <p>Parents should be made aware of their potential to play a strong role in preventing girls from loitering the streets in the evening and at night, thus contributing to lowering risks that lead to school dropout. They are also the ones who allow their daughters to take part in initiation rites, so more work needs to be included to help raise awareness and eradicate this. Parents may find it difficult to resist this, among others due to peer pressure from other community members, and hence the programme should reach a large number of parents to create a critical mass, as there is a need for conscientisation. A sensitization campaign that tackles SRHR and sexual violence may be one of the ways to reach a larger number of parents and raise their awareness.</p> <p>Like their daughters, mothers are often not sufficiently empowered either and are not always able to take decisions on important issues regarding their daughters. Nonetheless, they are the ones who have suffered similarly and may want to spare their daughters from it. It would be good for JPGEII to</p>		<p>PCC facilitators and community level sessions.</p>	MoGCDS ² , Districts, and local NGOs working at community level		
			2.2 The evaluation of JPGE II will give insights on the observed impacts.	UNICEF, UNFPA, MoEST, MoGCDS, Districts, and local NGOs working at community level	December 2020	On-going (Due to COVID-19 the evaluation was put on hold)
			2.3 Results will be further incorporated into design of JPGE III.	UNICEF, UNFPA, MoEST, MoGCDS, Districts, and local NGOs working at community level	September 2020	Ongoing. Design of third phase is underway, and the aspect of parents' engagement has already been considered as a key approach.

² Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare

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	include a component that works on the leadership and empowerment of women in the community, which goes beyond the members of the MSGs only. Thus, more women will benefit from empowerment and be able to be a role model for the girls.					
3	<p>Central and local Government bodies responsible for education, gender, health and sports need to be fully engaged in a coordinated manner in all stages of JPGE II</p> <p>Central Government bodies had been engaged in the design of JPGE, but local government authorities had not. Though local authorities were engaged in the implementation, it is recommended to engage them more strongly starting from the design stage. Though for JPGE II this is no longer possible, since the programme is already running, the recommendation remains valid for other future programmes.</p> <p>For recruiting NGOs, it is recommended to engage the Government at central and local level into the selection of implementing partners, to allow them to select partners with a stronger local background and previous working history. At the same time, using UN rules should guarantee a transparent selection process.</p> <p>In order to create strong ownership of JPGE II, the evaluation recommends that the position of the</p>	Accepted	<p>3.1 This aspect was considered in JPGE II, where its design and implementation included a stronger engagement of central and local level government counterparts. Particularly JPGE II includes a significant shift of implementation and coordination responsibilities to the District Councils.</p> <p>3.2 The evaluation of JPGE II will provide insights on whether this approach was successful and remaining gaps.</p> <p>3.3 In the meantime, for the development of design for JPGE III central and local authorities will be engaged from the beginning.</p>	<p>WFP, UNICEF and UNFPA. MoEST</p> <p>WFP, UNICEF and UNFPA. MoEST</p> <p>WFP, UNICEF and UNFPA. MoEST</p>	<p>January 2018</p> <p>December 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>Due to COVID-19 the evaluation is currently on hold</p> <p>On-going. The process of design is ongoing and one of the first steps was the engagement of the districts and they have provided inputs on analysis of needs, successes and challenges with implementation of</p>

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	<p>coordinator should be hosted by the MoEST rather than by WFP.</p> <p>The coordination between the various authorities at local level needs to be further improved. This could be achieved by linking the implementation more strongly to the DPD office. This will promote more involvement and control by DPD as well as exclusively make the office of DPD the coordinating office that heads the sector. A stronger coordination of WFP, UNICEF and UNFPA at field level, and their input in bringing their regular partners together, will contribute to achieving this.</p>					JPGE II as well as key priorities they would like to see addressed in phase 3. Due to COVID-19 the engagement was however, limited to virtual consultations, rather than extensive field work that had been original planned.
4	<p>Stronger or more innovative components must be included into JPGE II to strengthen sustainability</p> <p>A clear exit strategy in the design for JPGE would have created more potential for sustainability. WFP, UNICEF and UNFPA should have put more thought and effort into developing and detailing such a strategy. Some community members were not even aware of the project not being of a more permanent nature.</p> <p>To avoid such issues, JPGE II needs to put a strong and detailed exit strategy in place. This exit strategy should include descriptions on how certain activities will be taken over by the different stakeholders, what resources are available and how additional resources can be mobilised, who will be responsible and what</p>	Accepted	<p>4.1 Initiatives for strengthening sustainability of certain components were considered in the design of JPGE II, including a stronger role for districts and community engagement. However, it is recognized that more needs to be done to strengthen sustainability.</p> <p>4.2 JPGE II is now in the final year and process is being initiated for the design of phase III, hence these aspects will be considered further in this design, including: clear exit strategy and community exit plans, work with government on developing sustainable national</p>	WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, MoEST	December 2020	On-going. This recommendation has been taken on board in the design of the third phase, since JPGE II is in its final year and the limitations in implementation in the last few months due to COVID 19.
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	<p>support WFP, UNICEF and UNFPA will still be able to provide beyond the finalisation of JPGE II and in what time frame. Community exit plans must also be developed, based on the overall strategy.</p> <p>A number of other steps can be taken to improve the sustainability potential. Especially for HGSE, continuation is questionable. WFP needs to start working with the Government on to developing a sustainable detailed national school meals programme within the existing policy framework with a costed plan and resource strategy. WFP has impressive experience in many countries, that can be used as a basis for such engagement.</p> <p>Joint advocacy was not visibly included in JPGE I and may be given additional impetus in JPGE II. This is one of the areas where WFP, UNICEF, and UNFPA can benefit from their joint engagement. It is recommended that joint advocacy be conducted on various subjects related to girls' education, including HGSE, and for increasing Government budget allocation for and focus on girls' access to education (including at the secondary level) and addressing girls sexual and reproductive health rights. Agencies should also advocate with government and district councils to include integrated programs in District Development Plans and to allocate funding from district revenue that is collected at council level.</p>		<p>initiatives (e.g. school meals programme), mainstreaming the multi-sectoral approach promoted by JPGE into the government agenda. These will be accompanied by joint advocacy initiatives by the UN agencies (e.g. High-level discussions, roundtables on key topics, advocacy for increased government commitment through engagement also in the Steering Committee forum).</p>			<p>implementation in the last few months due to COVID 19.</p>

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5	<p>Implementing agencies need to ensure that a strong M&E framework and system is in place for JPGE II to allow data collection related to outcomes and results and facilitate synergetic data collection and decision-making</p> <p>For JPGE II and potential other joint programmes, the responsible agencies (Government as well as UN) need to ensure a strong M&E framework and system is developed and established as soon as possible. This should include a better focus on measuring results and outcomes, and have clearly delineated responsibilities, time frames and regularity of data collection, analysis and sharing.</p> <p>M&E should not be done through singular systems based on agencies' or sectoral priorities, but on a comprehensive programme-wide approach. Feedback on all components should be shared with all responsible partners and be used for joint taking evidence-based decisions that help further improve the intervention.</p>	Accepted	<p>5.1 Actions taken in JPGE II to improve M&E framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design of common tools for data collection; - Training of district teams. - Database design. 	WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA and MoEST	January 2020	Implemented
			<p>5.2 Actions that are still required to strengthen M&E framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update/review of missing baselines and targets; - Review use of database/functionality. 	WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA and MoEST	January 2020	Implemented
6	<p>In-depth studies and analyses into issues related to girls' access to education should be included in JPGE II to provide deeper understanding and improve the effect and impact of the programme</p> <p>A number of issues that JPGE has addressed are clearly worth support but the root causes and</p>	Accepted	<p>This will be done to the extent possible, and in consideration of budget availability linked to the development of Phase III.</p> <p>6.1 In-depth analysis into the driving factors behind girls getting pregnant at a young age, and what approach could be the most successful to prevent and decrease this.</p>	WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA,	September 2020	On-going. This has not been possible yet due to COVID-19 re-prioritization and limitations. It is being considered under the third phase design.

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	<p>pathways are still not fully understood. If the pathway and influencing factors would be unravelled, and projects align their approach to the findings, the impact of a JPGE II and other future interventions will increase likewise. One of the topics for research would be the pregnancy rate among young girls in the target areas and in Malawi in general. Even though it was acknowledged that JPGE was relevant in this regard and a lot was done to keep girls in school and prevent them from getting pregnant, the pregnancy rate had not discernibly decreased.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended to conduct an in-depth analysis into the driving factors behind girls getting pregnant at a young age, and what approach could be the most successful to prevent and decrease this. Such a study could also look into the prevalence and causes of sexual violence and harassment, and the reason why these have not declined significantly notwithstanding the efforts of JPGE and what could be done to speed up results. Based on the findings of such studies, relevant activities and outcomes under JPGE II should be further improved.</p>					