Ex-post evaluation

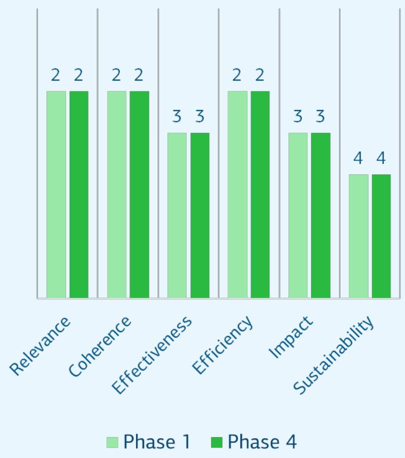
Education Development Fund, Zimbabwe Phases 1 & 4

Title	Contribution to preventing a lost generation, Education Development Fund III (EDF III), Zimbabwe, Phases 1 and 4
Sector and CRS code	Education; Phase 1: 73010 Short-term reconstruction / Phase 4: 16050 Multisectoral assistance for basic social services
BMZ number	Phase 1: 2016 18 792 / Phase 4: 2019 18 168
Commissioned by	BMZ
Recipient and executing agency	UNICEF
FC financing volume and instrument	Phase 1: EUR 14 million ÜH (KWI title) / Phase 4: EUR 10 million ÜH (KWI title)
Project duration	Phase 1: 2016-2021* Phase 4: 2019-2022*
Year of random Sample/ reporting	2025

*Year of PCR (project completion report/ final inspection)

Overall rating

moderately unsuccessful



1: very successful – **6:** completely unsuccessful

Project objectives and implementation

The objective at the outcome level was for children and young people in Zimbabwe to have access to and benefit from measures to restore school operations and improve the quality of the education system. At the impact level, the objective was to improve the educational situation of children and young people in Zimbabwe. In addition, the aim was to contribute to the resilience of the school system in the face of crises. To this end, the Education Development Fund was financed in four phases with measures in the three areas of (i) School Improvement Grants (SIG), (ii) Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and (iii) Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The evaluation focused on phases 1 and 4.

Key findings

The phases of the two projects were relevant and were implemented coherently and efficiently. However, given the extremely difficult conditions, they could only be effective to a limited extent and lacked sustainability

- ***Relevance:*** The projects were highly relevant in terms of the core problem identified and development policy priorities, but conceptual standards were not consistently met, such as the determination of beneficiary numbers.
- ***Coherence and efficiency:*** There were no indications of double financing or misuse of funds, which is also attributable to the quality of the project executing agency, which coordinated and efficiently implemented the multisectoral measures.
- ***Effectiveness and impact:*** Despite failing to meet targets, particularly at the outcome level, and insufficient monitoring of the measures, it seems plausible that the measures had a limited impact. Overall, however, the effects at both levels fell short of expectations.
- ***Sustainability:*** The continuing high volatility in the Zimbabwean intervention context required further external support after the end of Phase 4 in order to continue measures and maintain the effects achieved in the long term. However, no follow-up funding was provided for Phase 4.

Conclusions

- In order to determine the specific impacts of FC projects, conceptual requirements for the target and monitoring system must be consistently implemented.
- Where bilateral development cooperation is not possible, UN organisations are suitable as project executing agencies for implementing projects in a coherent and efficient manner.
- Such framework conditions require a high degree of flexibility and context sensitivity in project implementation.
- Even in fragile contexts, exit strategies for FC projects are necessary if follow-up financing is not forthcoming.

Contents

List of abbreviations

PCR	Final completion report
GDP	Gross domestic product
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EDF	Education Development Fund
EPE	Ex-post evaluation
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
FC	Financial cooperation
FC E	FC Evaluation
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation
HDI	Human Development Index
MP	Module proposal
MoPSE	Ministry for Primary and Secondary Education
n.a.	not availabe
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PA	Project appraisal
PP	Project proposal
SIG	School Improvement Grant
TC	Technical cooperation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
ÜH	Transitional assistance
USD	US dollar
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

Overview

General conditions and classification of the project

The economic and political conditions for implementing the evaluated project/programme deteriorated significantly at times during the implementation phase.[1] With an average annual demographic growth rate of 1.6% between 2016 and 2022, the population of Zimbabwe increased from 14.60 million to 16.07 million; the proportion of the population aged 0-14 fell from 43.6% to 37.9% during this period.[2] Population pressure in Zimbabwe, i.e. the ratio of the number of inhabitants to the country's land area, is mitigated by high emigration, mainly to South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States.[3] Remittances from the Zimbabwean diaspora are economically important for the livelihoods of relatives, but also for building houses or making investments in small businesses in Zimbabwe.[4]

As a result of external shocks (including Tropical Storm Idai in March 2019, extreme drought in 2020 with negative effects on agriculture, and the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020), the country's overall economic development has been highly volatile: with average annual GDP growth of 1.6% in the period 2016-2022, there was a decline in overall economic value added of 6.3% in 2019 and 7.8% a year later. While per capita national income (in constant 2015 USD) was USD 1,247, it had fallen to USD 1,209 in 2022. The rise in the cost of living peaked during the period under review in 2020 at 557% compared to the previous year and was still 105% in 2022.[5] With ongoing currency devaluation, the proportion of the population affected by multidimensional poverty (monetary poverty, education, basic services) increased from 48.3% in 2017 to 50.8% two years later.[6]

The political situation in Zimbabwe also remained tense during the implementation phase of the project/programme. Even after the 2017 overthrow of President Robert Mugabe, who had been in power since 1987, and the accession to power of his deputy Emmerson Mnangagwa, the country remained in a deep crisis. The state is controlled autocratically by the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party and its Central Committee, and the government has done little to reform the highly clientelistic political and economic system.[7] Rampant corruption is perceived as endemic in Zimbabwe.[8]

President Mnangagwa held general elections at the end of July 2018 in accordance with the constitution, with the ruling ZANU-PF party emerging as the clear winner of the parliamentary elections. However, the opposition MDC Alliance refused to recognise the election results, further exacerbating social polarisation in Zimbabwe. The conflict dynamics between the complex constellations of actors prevented the implementation of urgently needed political and economic reforms.[9] Despite some political reform efforts, Zimbabwe is still classified as a fragile state on "alert level" – almost on a par with countries such as Niger and Guinea.[10] Growing discontent among the population is manifesting itself in protest movements and demands for greater government control and accountability, while at the same time civil society political action is being restricted for fear of state repression. The political environment remains characterised by the suppression of opposition voices, restrictions on freedom of assembly and expression, and human rights violations.

The economic situation in Zimbabwe has improved somewhat recently. The recovery of agriculture thanks to more favourable weather conditions and higher world market prices for certain minerals (including gold) suggest that price-adjusted GDP will rise by 6% in 2025 compared to the previous year.[11] In order to curb massive inflation and the severe distortions caused by parallel (USD) markets, a new currency, the Zimbabwe Gold Currency (ZiG), was introduced in 2024. The annual inflation rate is expected to fall to 92% in 2025, after accelerating to 667% in 2023 and 736% in 2024.[12] With high public debt, the fiscal scope for structural reforms remains limited, and Zimbabwe has little access to international credit as it is in arrears on its debt servicing obligations.[13]

[1] Phase 1 was implemented from December 2016 to December 2018, with the final review taking place in 2021. Phase 4 was planned from December 2019 to September 2022, with the final review taking place in August 2022, but the implementation period was actually extended until 31 March 2023.
[2] World Development Indicators. https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators (accessed: 13 October 2025). The World Bank's population statistics are significantly higher than the (estimated) population figures from the Zimbabwean statistics authority, which are cited in the final reviews of the evaluated projects.
[3] Statistical data on the Zimbabwean diaspora are contradictory, ranging from 4 million (final review EDF II, BMZ No. 2018 18 640 and 2019 18 168, para. 2.01) and 909,000 (International Organisation for Migration (2022): Zimbabwe Diaspora Profiling and Mapping Survey, Harare, p. VII).
[4] Moyo, Inocent (2024): Rethinking diaspora remittances in the post-Mugabe era in Zimbabwe, Comparative Migration Studies, 12, 9, https://comparativemigrationstudies.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40878-024-00368-1 (accessed: 13 October 2025).
[5] https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators (accessed: 13 October 2025).
[6] Ibid.
[7] Shayamund, Locardia (2021): Zimbabwe. Federal Agency for Civic Education. https://www.bpb.de/themen/kriege-konflikte/dossier-kriege-konflikte/54685/simbabwe/ (accessed: 13 October 2025).
[8] In Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2024, Zimbabwe is classified as "highly corrupt", on a par with Guinea-Bissau and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
[9] Müller, Melanie (2019): Zimbabwe after Mugabe. Actors, reforms, areas of conflict, SWP Study 7, Berlin.
[10] Fund for Peace (2025): Fragile States Index. Annual Report 2024, Washington DC, p. 7. https://fragilestatesindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/FSI-2024-Report-A-World-Adrift-2.pdf (accessed: 14 October 2025).
[11] World Bank (2025): Global Economic Prospects, June, Washington, DC, p. 99.
[12] International Monetary Fund (2025): World Economic Outlook, April, Washington, DC, p. 140.
[13] The Structured Dialogue Platform (SDP) between the Government of Zimbabwe and development partners, established in 2022, has identified a number of key reforms and offered a solution to Zimbabwe's urgent arrears and debt problems; see World Bank (2024): Zimbabwe Economic Update 2024. Improving Resilience to Weather Shocks and Climate Change, Washington, DC, p. xi. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099013025065013130/pdf/P507080-79273934-3058-455d-9d65-9c295d34cc66.pdf (Accessed: 14 October 2025)

The Zimbabwean education sector has been severely weakened over the past decade by the various crises mentioned above: Government spending on education fell dramatically to 2.5% of gross domestic product, teachers' salaries did not allow them to work full-time, parents could no longer afford to pay school fees for their children, and a six-month lockdown due to the pandemic meant no face-to-face teaching or school meals, etc. Zimbabwe was still threatened by "lost generations", children without education and prospects.

Brief description

The EDF Education Development Fund, supported by several donors, aimed to restore a functioning school system in Zimbabwe in the long term and to support early childhood education and the adaptation of schools to crisis situations. The projects evaluated (phases 1 and 4) were part of the Education Development Fund (EDF) 2016-2020/2021 III, financed by transitional aid.

At the outcome level, the goal was for children and young people in Zimbabwe to have access to and benefit from measures to restore school operations and improve the quality of the education system. The impact-level goal was to improve the educational situation of children and young people in Zimbabwe. In addition, the aim was to contribute to the resilience of the school system in the face of crises.

Phases 1 and 4 financed EDF measures in the areas of (i) School Improvement Grants (SIG), (ii) Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and (iii) Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The EDF's target group was all primary and secondary school pupils, including pre-school children aged 3 and above.

Note: The final review for phase 1 in September 2021 also included an assessment of phase 2, while the final review of phase 4 in August 2022 included phase 3. Therefore, it is not always possible to clearly distinguish between the phases under the individual evaluation dimensions (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, overarching developmental impact and sustainability), which is why the results of phases 2 and 3 are sometimes included in the ex-post evaluation. Furthermore, as each phase constituted a separate FC project/programme, the terms 'phase' and '(FC) project' are used synonymously in the EPE.

Breakdown of total costs

	Phase 1 (plan)	Phase 1 (actual)	Phase 4 (plan)	Phase 4 (actual)
Investment costs (total) in EUR million	14,0	14,0	10,0	10,0
Own contribution in EUR million	0	0	0	0
External funding in EUR million	14,0	14,0	10,0	10,0
of which BMZ funds in EUR million	14,0	14,0	14,0	14,0

Table1: *Breakdown of costs*

Map of the project region

Figure 1: *Map of Zimbabwe*
Source: *Own illustration.*

Project-specific strengths and weaknesses of the project

The strengths include in particular:

- The projects were clearly aligned with national and international policies, development policy priorities and urgent needs.
- The project executing agency and implementation partners were well suited and experienced to implement multi-sectoral measures – despite difficult conditions – largely on time and nationwide.
- The criteria for selecting SIG schools were transparent, and the monitoring of the use of SIG funds by beneficiaries was institutionalised and carried out regularly.
- There is evidence that the EDF and individual measures financed by the FC, such as grants for schools (SIG), have contributed to gender equality.

The weaknesses include in particular:

- There is insufficient documentation and data available on the measures financed by the FC during the two phases, which means that only limited conclusions can be drawn about the effectiveness of the FC measures. Similarly, beneficiary numbers and relevant gender outcomes and risks were not systematically recorded.
- The added value of German FC in this type of financing and implementation of the projects in the form of sector-specific expertise was not apparent. The FC's influence within the framework of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDT) was extremely limited.
- Ensuring sustainability through direct communication with the Zimbabwean government was not possible due to the nature of multilateral support via UNICEF and could not be achieved by UNICEF and the donor community.
- There was no exit strategy or systematic handover of tasks and services to local structures, which was also criticised by the project executing agency. This, combined with a lack of long-term follow-up funding, jeopardised the sustainability of the projects.
- Against the backdrop of insufficient self-financing by the Zimbabwean state and the socio-economic burdens on families to finance school fees, donor contributions were insufficient to achieve the objectives.
- UNICEF's EDF reporting was largely summary for all donors involved, meaning that it was not always possible to specify the FC contributions for individual components and measures.

General conclusions/lessons learned

- Where bilateral development cooperation with a state is not possible, cooperation with UN organisations as project executing agencies is a viable option. In the case of multi-donor funds, however, the formulation of specific (output) indicators for FC measures and the corresponding data collection are crucial in order to be able to record and control the specific contribution of FC projects.
- In such difficult contexts, where there is a lack of capacity for medium-term self-financing or for local structures to take over the measures, the sustainability of the effects achieved cannot be guaranteed, but can at best be 'saved' by follow-up financing (or a follow-up project). For this reason, future projects must place greater conceptual emphasis on longer-term financing mechanisms in order to achieve lasting levels of sustainability.
- The positive indications of contributions to gender equality show that targeted measures can be effective. In order to achieve these positive contributions, gender-responsive approaches must be systematically integrated into planning, monitoring and evaluation and underpinned by measurable indicators.
- Ex-post evaluations should be carried out as soon as possible after the completion of a project so that the responsible project managers at KfW and the project executing agency are available.
- To date, there is no evidence of sufficient ownership on the part of the Zimbabwean government, which is why local approaches should be given greater consideration in the design of future projects, such as the role of local communities in providing education.

Assessment according to OECD DAC criteria

Relevance

1. Alignment with policies and priorities

The objectives of the multi-phase Education Development Fund (EDF), which has been implemented since 2012, initially focused on the long-term reconstruction of a functioning school system. From 2016 onwards, the focus was broadened: in addition to early childhood education, greater emphasis was placed on adapting the education system to crisis situations.[14] The latter was intended in particular to strengthen the resilience of regions in Zimbabwe threatened by climate change.

Phases 1 and 4 of the FC projects considered here were part of the EDF for the period 2016-2020/2021. Its long-term and crisis-adaptive orientation was in line with the political priorities of the partner side and, from today's perspective, also corresponded to the development policy objectives of the BMZ.[15] The strategic basis for the EDF 2016 to 2020/2021 was the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2016-2020 of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE). This took into account not only the relevant political and institutional framework conditions of the Zimbabwean education sector, but also relevant quality characteristics of German development cooperation – such as the promotion of gender equality and the inclusion of vulnerable population groups. [16]

2. Alignment with the needs and capacities of stakeholders and beneficiaries

A key problem in Zimbabwe's education sector was its chronic underfunding, the loss of qualified teachers and the temporary collapse of school operations as a result of the severe economic crisis and political unrest from 2008 onwards. In the years that followed, the serious effects of the climate change induced El Niño phenomenon also significantly exacerbated the already precarious social and humanitarian situation in the country.

Against this backdrop, phase 1 of the project/programme, planned for the period from December 2016 to December 2018, aimed to implement measures in three key areas: (i) School Improvement Grants (SIG), (ii) water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and (iii) disaster risk reduction (DRR).[17] The SIG served as financial grants to strengthen school structures and ensure the functioning of schools. At the same time, they were intended to increase the resilience of schools to crises and external shocks, such as droughts. The structural measures implemented as part of the SIG, such as the creation of school gardens or the construction of wells, were intended to benefit vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people in particular. The construction and rehabilitation of WASH infrastructure was intended to improve hygiene conditions in schools, with particular attention being paid to the special needs of girls and young women. The DRR measures aimed to strengthen national risk reduction structures and the capacities of key actors in the education sector in the long term.

Phase 4 also included activities in these areas of action but also responded specifically to the consequences of Cyclone Idai, which caused considerable damage to the education infrastructure in 2019 and led to a prolonged drought (see Relevance – Adaptability – response to change). Against this backdrop, targeted measures such as the provision of temporary classrooms, school meals and school emergency improvement grants were planned to directly address critical bottlenecks in the Zimbabwean education sector.

3. Appropriateness of design

The design of phases 1 and 4 was based on the EDF 2016-2020/2021 impact matrix, from which selected indicators were used to conduct an appraisal of the impact of the FC projects.[18] The selection and weighting of the indicators for phases 1 and 4 are considered appropriate overall. It also makes sense in principle to base FC projects on a comprehensive impact matrix with a view to ensuring a coherent and coordinated approach. However, the adoption of indicators from the impact matrix of a multi-donor fund such as the EDF makes it difficult to clearly assign specific FC contributions to the impacts. To address these

[14] The EDF followed on from the Education Transition Fund (ETF), which was set up in 2009 with the support of the international donor community to restore school operations and improve the quality of the education system. Up to 15 donors supported the ETF, whose emergency aid measures included, in particular, providing primary and secondary schools with textbooks and teaching materials.

[15] See the BMZ's current position paper, https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/233400/bmz-fragilitaet-ueberwinden-ziele-und-ansaetze-fuer-eine-wirksame-entwicklungspolitik.pdf (accessed on 7 December 2025).

[16] https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/2016-2020-education-sector-plan-zimbabwe (accessed on 15 October 2025).

[17] These three areas were anchored in the central components of the EDF. The three components of the EDF were: (i) equal access to education, (ii) improving the quality of education, and (iii) strengthening the education system.

[18] The outcome-level objective was defined as follows: "Increased scope and quality of educational provision will improve equitable access, retention and performance, with a focus on vocational skills and special attention to the needs of disadvantaged and out-of-school young people. At the impact level, the objective was "improved equitable access to quality primary and secondary education for all children in Zimbabwe, resulting in far-reaching social and economic benefits".

challenges, output indicators were added to the EDF impact matrix from Phase 2 onwards in order to better capture and perform an appraisal of the specific contribution of FC projects (see Effectiveness | Achievement of objectives). [19]

The aim of the FC project/programme was to restore school operations, improve the quality of education and strengthen resilience in the regions of the country particularly affected by climate change. However, conceptual standards, such as specifying the number of beneficiaries of the project/programme or distinguishing between impact and outcome levels, were not included in the project documents. Nor did the objectives stated in the documents take into account relevant requirements for their formulation, such as the reference to the target group or the use of access.

The target system is therefore specified as follows in this EPE: At the outcome level, the goal was for children and young people in Zimbabwe to have access to and benefit from measures to restore school operations and improve the quality of the education system. The objective at the impact level was to improve the educational situation of children and young people in Zimbabwe. In addition, a contribution was to be made to the resilience of the school system in the face of crises. The latter thus also takes into account the objectives of the transitional aid through which the projects were financed. At the same time, this meant that the planned measures to be financed by the FC projects were very broad in scope. However, from a scientific and evidence-based perspective on the development policy effectiveness of education projects, the measures complemented each other in a meaningful way and are also appraised as fundamentally feasible from a technical and organisational point of view.[20]

In addition, the underlying impact assumption of the EDF and the FC projects is plausible, namely that the complementary, multi-sectoral orientation of the measures contributes to the restoration of school operations and to the qualitative improvement of the education system, thereby improving the educational situation of children and young people and making the school system as a whole more crisis-resilient. However, qualitative aspects of education, such as the equipment of learning spaces, or ecological criteria, such as durable materials in connection with infrastructure measures, were not sufficiently taken into account or specifically mentioned in the concept.

4. Adaptability – response to change

In phase 4, the SIG was expanded to include emergency and reconstruction measures in the wake of Cyclone Idai. This included, for example, the expansion of the SIG to include school meals. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic, which began during the implementation period of phase 4, required adjustments to measures. These included, for example, the provision of masks, protective clothing, soap and washing facilities. As phase 4 was severely hampered by the consequences of Cyclone Idai, extreme droughts and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the project/programme had to be extended until March 2023.

Rating summary of relevance: successful (2) for both phases

Both projects were clearly aligned with national and international policies and development priorities, addressed the core problem correctly and adapted to changes. The overall rating of relevance is therefore successful for both phases. However, weaknesses were identified in the conceptual design of the projects, for example in the formulation of objectives or the lack of consideration of qualitative and ecological aspects, which from today's perspective are part of the conceptual standards for planning broad-based education projects.

Coherence

5. Internal coherence

After German government development cooperation with Zimbabwe was suspended in 2002 due to political developments in the country – in particular the sometimes violent expulsions of farmers as a result of controversial land reforms – Germany's support was provided exclusively through non-governmental channels via partners such as UN organisations, the World Bank, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or jointly with the EU.[21] Germany's support focused on measures that contributed to the immediate improvement of the livelihoods of the population and the promotion of democracy and the rule of law at the local level, such as the TC project/programme to strengthen democracy and citizen participation, which was implemented by NGOs[22] The evaluation did not identify any overlap in terms of content or funding with the FC measures financed by the FC projects in phases 1 and 4. What all projects had in common was that they were based on international standards and norms of development cooperation, such as respect for human rights and the "Leave no one behind" principle of Agenda 2030.

6. External coherence

[19] For Phase 4, the following three output indicators were added: (1) "Number of children in areas affected by cyclones/droughts benefiting from learning and teaching materials", (2) "Number of schools in areas affected by cyclones/droughts benefiting from WASH in Schools" and (3) "Development of a Disaster Risk Management & Resiliency Plan".
[20] See https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280713457_Argumentationsrahmen_Die_entwicklungspolitischen_Wirkungen_von_Bildung (accessed on 7 October 2025).
[21] Germany and Zimbabwe: Bilateral Relations – Federal Foreign Office (accessed on 12 November 2025)
[22] Detailed search • BMZ transparency portal (accessed on 12 November 2025).

The Zimbabwean government documented its willingness to restore a high-quality education system in strategies and plans such as the ESSP (see Relevance | Alignment with policies and priorities), but at the same time, public spending on education declined sharply during the implementation period.[23] The EDF therefore usefully supplemented or compensated for the Zimbabwean government's insufficient financial efforts. In addition to Germany, its donors during the implementation period included the United Kingdom, and UNICEF also used its own funds, according to its own statements.[24]

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) was also active in the education sector. To ensure a coherent approach between the EDF and the GPE, the Education Coordination Group was established under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Education. In addition, the EDF Steering Committee, which included UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank and other donors, ensured that activities in the education sector were implemented in a coordinated manner and that double financing was avoided. However, according to the project executing agency, a joint monitoring and evaluation system between the partners in the education sector or a joint system for learning and accountability was not used.

Rating summary of coherence: successful (2) for both phases

Given the circumstances, such as the discontinuation of Germany's bilateral development cooperation with Zimbabwe, the internal coherence of both phases is appraised as meeting expectations, with no significant shortcomings. The external coherence of both phases also shows no significant shortcomings due to established coordination mechanisms, which is why coherence for both phases is appraised as successful overall.

Effectiveness

7. Achievement of objectives

The objective at the outcome level was for children and young people in Zimbabwe to have access to and benefit from measures to restore school operations and improve the quality of the education system. Measured against the indicators, this objective was largely not achieved. At the time of the final checks and at the time of the EPE, there was a significant decline in gross enrolment rates in lower secondary education compared to the time of the audit (indicator 1). The proportion of 13- to 16-year-old children and young people not attending school could not be reduced at any point in time; the corresponding target value has been significantly missed to date (indicator 2). In addition, the values at the time of the PCR and EPE are below the status at the time of the appraisal. On a positive note, however, the level of performance – as a measure of the quality of the education system – has improved (indicator 3). The target value for the delivery of learning materials (indicator 4) was also achieved in 2020, but not the target value for the implementation of WASH measures in schools in areas affected by cyclones and droughts (indicator 5).

The following indicators were used to measure the outcome objective:

Indicator	Status at time of review	Target value at EPE (review)	Actual value at PCR	Actual value at EPE
(1) Gross enrolment rate for lower secondary education	73.4% (2014)	70 % (2020)	Phase 1: 69.4% (boys 68.6%, girls 70.2%) (2020) Target not achieved Phase 4: 65.7% (boys 65.8% and girls 66.3%) (2021) Target value not achieved	2024 69.33% (boys 67.85, girls 70.81) Target value not achieved
(2) Number of children (aged 13-16) not attending school	16 % (2014)	6 % (2020)	Phase 1: 24% (2020) Target not achieved Phase 4: 25% (2021) Target value not achieved	2024: 23.55% (boys 24.36%, girls 22.74%) Target value not achieved
(3) Achievement level in maths and English appropriate for the class	English: 51% (boys 47%; girls 56%),	English: 60% (2020) Mathematics: 70% (2020)	Phase 1 and Phase 4*: English 60% (boys 57%, girls 63%) (2020)	2024 English 74.95% (boys 70.7%, girls 79%)

[23] Before the EDF began in 2015, education spending in the national budget stood at 6.4% of GDP. In 2018, it was 4.6%, falling to 3.6% in 2019, 2.5% in 2020 and 2.3% in 2021.
[24] However, no information is available on the amount (see Efficiency | Production efficiency).

	Mathematics: 67% (boys 65%; girls 70%) (2014)		Target achieved Mathematics 70% (boys 67%, girls 73%) (2020) Target achieved	Target achieved Mathematics 70% (boys 67%, girls 73%) (2020) Target achieved
(4) Number of children in areas affected by cyclones/droughts who benefit from learning and teaching materials	0	25.000 (2020), 80.000 (2022	Phase 4: 51,958 children (2020) Target achieved n/a (2022)	n/a
(5) Number of schools in areas affected by cyclones/droughts benefiting from WASH in Schools	0	20 (2020). 60 (2022)	Phase 4: 0 (2020) Target value not achieved n/a (2022)	n/a

Table 2 *: Outcome target achievement*
Source*: Final report on transitional assistance – contribution to preventing a lost generation, Education Development Fund III (EDF III), Zimbabwe, BMZ No. 2016 18 792 and 2017 18 493, Final review of transitional assistance – contribution to preventing a lost generation, Education Development Fund II (Phases III & IV) BMZ No. 2018 18 640 and 2019 18 168, and written response from the project executing agency in November 2025.*
Note*: No robust data was available for the indicator "Net enrolment rate in preschool (ECD A and ECD B)" included in the evaluation design. *Data is only available for 2020*

8. Contribution to the achievement of objectives

While the measures in phase 1 were implemented as planned, implementation in phase 4 was partially restricted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to lockdowns and nationwide school closures, only around 52,000 pupils in the districts affected by drought and flooding could be supplied with learning and teaching materials during this phase; further deliveries were not possible.

There were also delays in the payment of School Improvement Grants (SIG), which for planning reasons should have been made at the beginning of the school year, as was the case in phase 1. Many schools first had to go through complex procedures to open so-called nostro accounts in order to receive the grants – a process that proved particularly difficult for remote schools. In addition, there were pandemic-related delays in payments in phase 4.

According to the project manager, however, measures in the area of water, sanitation and hygiene were not affected by the consequences of the pandemic. However, it was not possible to determine within the scope of the EPE whether the WASH infrastructure was in good condition and in use at the time of the EPE, as UNICEF had concluded the EDF and handed over responsibility for the infrastructure to the Ministry of Education.

In the area of DRR, measures such as the development of a national DRR strategy, psychosocial support for teachers and training in psychosocial counselling for children and young people were also implemented as planned in both phases.

The fact that the contribution of the measures implemented nationwide – whose outputs essentially ensured equal access for disadvantaged and vulnerable population groups – is not reflected in the satisfactory achievement of the outcome targets (see Effectiveness | Achievement of objectives) is attributable to the political, social and economic conditions in Zimbabwe during the implementation periods of the projects. In addition to insufficient financial contributions from the Zimbabwean government to the education sector, many parents were unable to pay school fees due to the difficult economic situation, as they suffered from unemployment and poverty, which was exacerbated by extreme weather events. These burdens on private households had an additional negative impact on the financial situation of schools.

Overall, despite significant contributions from the EDF totalling around USD 130 million between 2016 and mid-2022[25] , funding for the education system was insufficient to fully stabilise school operations in the context of the multiple crises in the country and achieve a significant improvement in the quality of the education system. However, SIGs in particular, which accounted for around two-thirds of the EDF, made a significant contribution to stabilising the education system. An impact study from 2021 shows that in 2020, over 4,500 schools across Zimbabwe received grants to maintain their functionality despite limited public funds – this corresponded to more than half of all schools in the country.

The criteria for selecting SIG schools were also appraised as transparent. In addition, the monitoring of the use of SIG funds by the beneficiaries was institutionalised and carried out regularly. The study also showed that schools with the lowest own income

[25] The share of phase 1 was EUR 14 million, and that of phase 4 was EUR 10 million.

benefited most from SIG. In these schools, both key education indicators and the learning environment improved significantly more than in schools without support. In addition, schools with access to SIG saw an increase in enrolment and attendance rates among particularly vulnerable children and young people, as well as girls. The latter is partly due to improved school facilities, especially in the area of WASH. However, anecdotal evidence from interviews conducted as part of the EPE indicates that gender inequalities increased to the detriment of girls as boys and girls progressed to higher grades.

9. Quality of implementation

As the project executing agency, UNICEF not only had cross-country experience in managing and implementing multisectoral education measures, but also extensive experience in cooperating with local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Within the framework of the project/programme, these NGOs took on tasks in the WASH sector in particular, such as the provision of water, the construction of gender- and disability-friendly sanitary facilities, and the distribution of hygiene kits, and implemented these tasks nationwide. The EPE did not reveal any indications of insufficient qualifications on the part of the NGOs involved.

Nor were there any indications of double financing or a lack of coordination between actors in the education sector. This is due to the project executing agency's regular exchange with relevant actors and UNICEF's active participation in the EDF steering committee (see Coherence | External coherence). There was also regular exchange between UNICEF and the German FC. However, both sides failed to adequately document the measures financed under the FC project/programme at individual project locations. For example, the progress reports prepared by UNICEF for all donors provide little insight into the effectiveness of the FC measures. Similarly, relevant gender outcomes and risks were not systematically recorded.

10. Unintended effects (positive or negative)

No unintended positive or negative effects could be identified within the framework of the EPE. This is due, among other things, to inadequate monitoring and incomplete documentation of the FC-funded projects (see Effectiveness | Quality of implementation). The interviews conducted with project managers as part of the EPE also did not allow for further clarification of the intended or unintended effects of Phase 1 or Phase 4. Overall, however, the project executing agency UNICEF observed an increase in negative coping strategies within the target group due to the deteriorating economic conditions. These included school dropouts – especially among girls – as well as an increase in teenage pregnancies and early marriages.

Rating summary of effectiveness: moderately successful (3) for both phases

Despite recognisable slightly positive results, the negative results dominate the aggregated values of the education indicators for both phases, and no significant improvements have been achieved to date. However, as the SIGs financed by the FC projects in particular are having demonstrable positive effects, the overall effectiveness is appraised as limited success.

Efficiency

11. Production efficiency

When conducting the appraisal of efficiency, it was taken into account that UNICEF, as the project executing agency, was not obliged to provide a detailed cost and performance account for the measures carried out. This was in line with the standard procedure (single audit principle) for cooperation with UN organisations. The available cost statements do not reveal whether or to what extent UNICEF and/or Zimbabwean government agencies made their own contributions to the financing of the project measures (see Coherence | External coherence). The PCR for phase 1 only states, with regard to the criterion of efficiency, that the costs of data collection for 41 indicators of the EDF impact matrix were not efficient ([26] . The efficiency criterion is not mentioned in the report on phase 4.

The assessment of production efficiency is based on UNICEF cost statements for Phase 1 and Phase 4.[27] A breakdown of the types of costs incurred for the total of USD 14.9 million (EUR 14 million) in FC resources shows clear differences between Phase 1 and Phase 4. While transfers and grants to partners commissioned by UNICEF accounted for 79% in Phase 1, this share fell to 64% in Phase 4; by contrast, services provided by third parties rose from 2.7% to 8.3%. Operating costs remained relatively low in both phases, accounting for 2.1% of total costs in each case.[28]

[26] Final report on transitional aid Contribution to preventing a lost generation, Education Development Fund III (EDF III), Zimbabwe BMZ No. 2016 18 792 and 2017 18 493, para. 4.04.
[27] Some of the information in the KfW final reports (table of total costs and financing) does not match the information provided by UNICEF, so the UNICEF data was used for the efficiency assessment; for phase 1, UNICEF Financial Update of 31 July 2021, p. 1, and UNICEF Final Certified Statement of Account as of 31 December 2019; for phase 4, UNICEF Final Certified Statement of Accounts as of 31 May 2024.
[28] By way of comparison, in the EPE for the FC project/programme 'UNICEF Syria Education and Child Protection Phase V' (BMZ No. 2020 18 091), operating costs were estimated at 3.9 per cent.

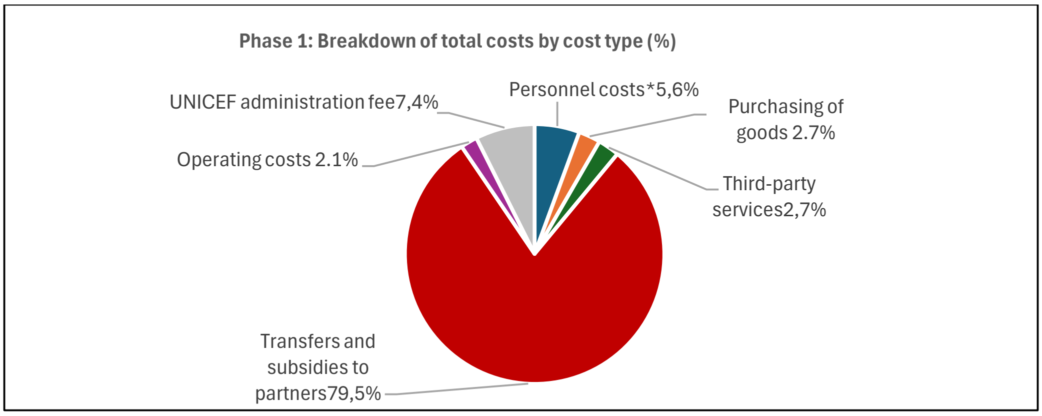


Figure 2: *Own illustration.*
Source: *Appendix Total costs and financing, Table a.*

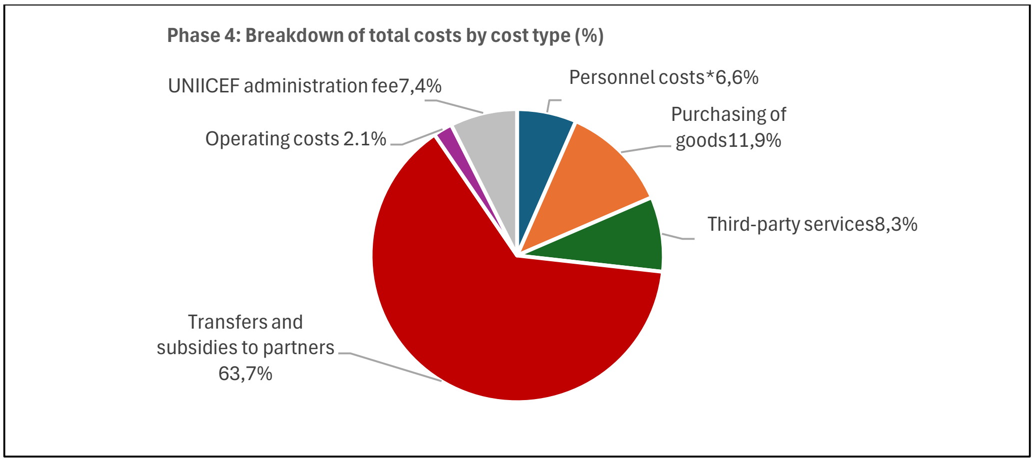


Figure 3: *Own illustration.*
Source: *Appendix Total costs and financing, Table b.*

In phase 1, the total FC funds of USD 14.9 million (EUR 14 million) were used for the project/programme as follows: USD 10.7 million (72.0%) was allocated to component 1, USD 1.8 million (12.2%) to component 2 and USD 277,000 (1.9%) to component 3. The allocation of funds to components 1 and 2 thus corresponded to the core problems addressed, namely unequal access to education and inadequate training quality.

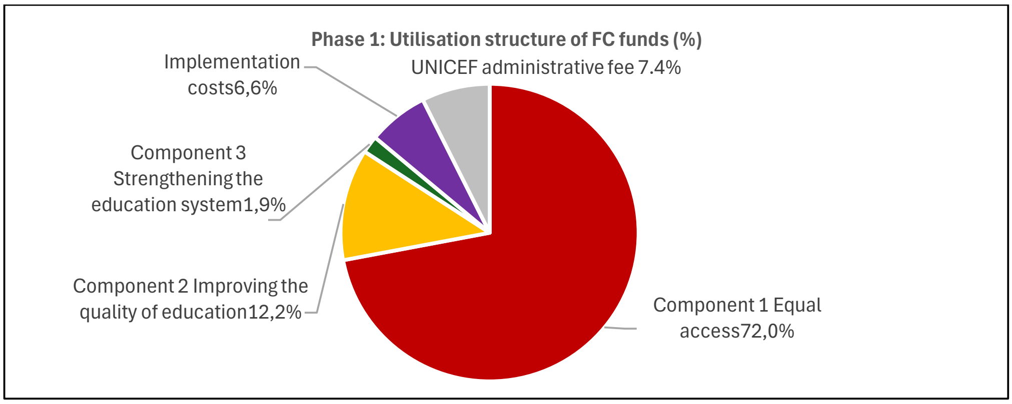


Figure 4: *Own illustration.*
Source: *Appendix Total costs and financing, Table c.*

The cross-component implementation costs – including technical support, monitoring and third-party services – amounted to approximately USD 973 thousand (6.6% of total costs).[29] UNICEF charged a flat-rate administrative fee of USD 1.1 million; given the difficult operating environment in Zimbabwe, the standard administrative costs of 7.4% of total costs are considered reasonable.

For Phase 1, the financing agreement signed on 7 December 2016 provided for a term from 2016 to 2018 under the EDF 2016-2020/21. The PCR for phase 1 was submitted at the end of September 2021. When conducting the appraisal of the time efficiency of the project/programme, it should be noted that the implementation of the PCR was subject to restrictions due to natural disasters and the Covid-19 pandemic. Against this background, the time efficiency of phase 1 of the project/programme is assessed as successful.

Insofar as UNICEF's proof of use of funds for phase 1 of the project/programme is verifiable, the objectives were achieved economically. Taking into account the extremely difficult conditions, the production efficiency of phase 1 of the programme can be appraised as successful from today's perspective, as the results are without significant shortcomings and meet expectations. There were no indications of direct misuse of funds.[30]

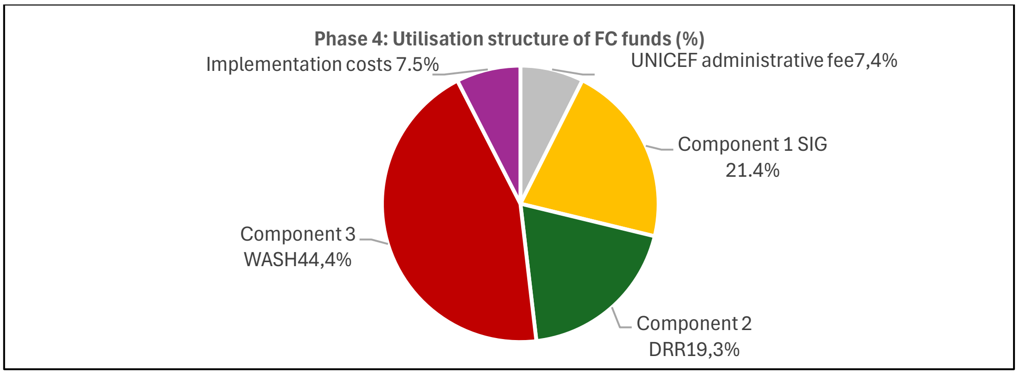


Figure 5: *Own illustration.*
Source: *Appendix Total costs and financing, Table d.*

The structure of the use of FC funds in Phase 4, amounting to just under USD 11 million (EUR 10 million), shows the following: USD 2.3 million (21.4%) was allocated to component 1, USD 2.1 million (19.3%) to component 2 and USD 4.9 million (44.4%) to component 3.[31] The cross-component implementation costs of USD 824,000 amounted to 7.5% of the total costs, which is significantly more than in Phase 1. UNICEF charged a flat-rate administrative fee of USD 811,000, i.e. 7.4% of the total costs, as in Phase 1. Production efficiency is also appraised as successful for Phase 4, as the results achieved are in line with expectations, taking into account the difficult operating environment. The MoPSE was responsible for the appraisal of isolated cases of misuse of SIG funds, but no deliberate misuse of funds was identified.[32]

For Phase 4, the EDF planned a duration from the beginning of December 2019 (signing of the financing agreement) to September 2022; the final report was available at the end of August 2022. The assessment of time efficiency takes into account that implementation was hampered by Cyclone Idai, extreme droughts and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. We make an appraisal of the time efficiency of phase 4 as successful.

12. Allocation efficiency

The final reports for phases 1 and 4 do not contain any explicit statements on allocation efficiency, i.e. the relationship between input and outcome. In this EPE, therefore, the appraisal of Allocation efficiency was derived indirectly from the PCR and UNICEF final reports by interpreting the numbers of beneficiaries (teachers/learners) of a measure mentioned therein as an indicator of outcome utilisation from the perspective of the target group and by assuming that the utilisation of the outputs had positive effects for the target group (cf. effectiveness and overarching developmental impact). Input indicators are the FC funds used for

[29] For comparison: in the FC project/programme "Transitional Assistance UNICEF Syria Education and Child Protection, Phase V, BMZ No. 2020 18 091", the cross-component implementation costs amounted to 22%.
[30] Zimbabwe is classified as "highly corrupt" in Transparency International Zimbabwe's Corruption Perceptions Index 2024.
[31] Components 1, 2 and 3 of phases 1 and 4 cannot be compared due to differences in the allocation of measures to respective components and the naming of components, even though measures in the areas of SIG, WASH and DRR were financed in both phases.
[32] Final review of transitional assistance – contribution to preventing a lost generation, Education Development Fund II (Phase III & V) BMZ No. 2018 18 640 and 2019 18 168, TC 2.29.

the beneficiaries.[33] However, the available documents do not allow the number of beneficiaries to be assigned to each individual measure implemented, but only to the components for the entire duration of the respective phase in summary form.

In phase 1, the measures in component 1 (equal access) were beneficial to 1.3 million schoolchildren and 18,000 teachers, and those in component 2 (improving the quality of education) were beneficial to 70,000 learners.[34] Accordingly, the direct costs per beneficiary amounted to USD 9.69 in Component 1 and USD 25.81 in Component 2.

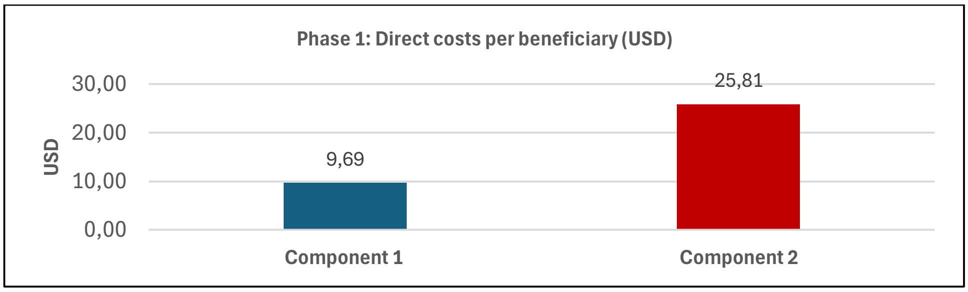


Figure 6: *Own illustration.*
Source: *Appendix Total costs and financing, Table e.*

In phase 4, the beneficiaries of measures in component 3 (WASH) were 316,000 people, the beneficiaries of measures in component 1 (SIG) were just under 150,000 learners and teachers, and the beneficiaries of measures in component 2 (DDR) were around 63,000 people. The highest direct costs per beneficiary were USD 33.35 in component 2, compared to USD 15.66 in component 1 and USD 15.39 in component 3.

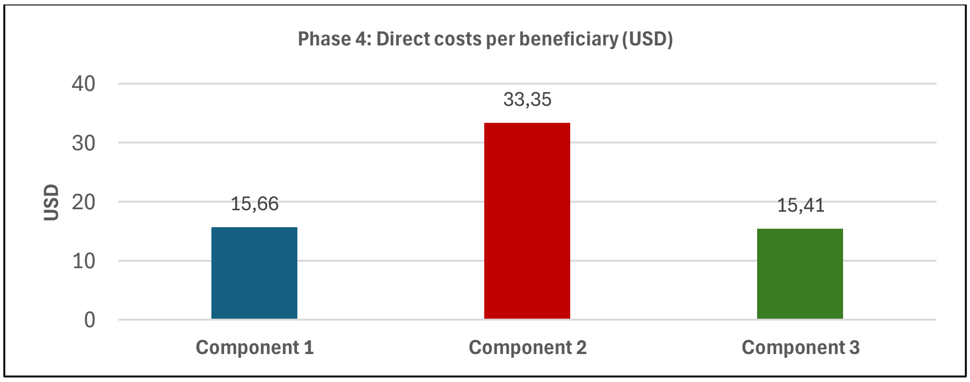


Figure 7: *Own illustration.*
Source: *Appendix Total costs and financing, Table f.*

Since it was not possible to draw direct conclusions about the relationship between input and outcome and given the limited significance of the number of beneficiaries per component, the Allocation efficiency in phases 1 and 4 is appraised as only partially successful.

Rating summary of efficiency: successful (2) for both phases

In view of the difficult conditions under which UNICEF had to operate as project executing agency in Zimbabwe on the one hand, and the results that met expectations on the other, the production efficiency of the projects is appraised as successful for both phases from the perspective of the project executing agency. The allocation efficiency of the projects is assessed as limited success from the perspective of the target group for phases 1 and 4. Time efficiency is assessed as successful for both phases. Taking all appraisal dimensions into account, we assess the overall efficiency of the projects as successful.

[33] The number of beneficiaries may include double counts if identical persons benefited from several measures.
[34] For Component 3, the final report for Phase 1, Annex 3.1, does not provide any information on the number of beneficiaries.

Impact

13. Overarching developmental changes

The impact-level objective was to improve the educational situation of children and young people in Zimbabwe. In addition, the aim was to contribute to the resilience of the school system in the face of crises. The actual values of the indicators regarding the improved educational situation at the time of the final reviews of the two phases paint a mixed picture: For example, the target values for completion of seven years of primary school and passing final examinations were largely not achieved at the time of the final checks for phases 1 and 4 (indicators 1 and 2), but gender parity was achieved (indicator 3). The resilience of the school system to crises – measured by the implementation of a disaster risk management and resilience plan – also shows a positive result. At the time of the EPE, all targets had been achieved except for the target value for passing final examinations in primary school.

The following indicators were used to measure the impact objective[35]

Indicator	Status at time of review	Target value at EPE (review)	Actual value at PCR	Actual value at EPE
(1) Completion of 7 years of primary school	77,25 % (2014)	84 % (2020)	Phase 1: 86.8% (boys 86.5%, girls 87% (2020) Target achieved Phase 4: 83.34% (boys 82.71%, girls 83.94% (2021) Target value not achieved	2024: 91.44% (boys 89.96%, girls 92.92%) Target value achieved
(2) Final examinations passed	Primary school 52.02% (2014) Lower secondary school 23.5% (2014)	Primary school 58% Lower secondary school 33%	Phase 1 Primary school 37% Lower secondary education 25.6% (2020)* Target not achieved Phase 4: Primary school 40.98% (boys 37.32%, girls 44.41%). Lower secondary school 27.19% (boys 25.4% and girls 26.34%) Target not achieved	2024 Primary school 49% (boys 43.8%, girls 53.7%) Target value not achieved Lower secondary education 33.7% (boys 33.0%, girls 34.3%) Target value achieved
(3) Gender parity index	1,01 (2014)	>0,95-1,0 (2020)	Phase 1: 0.99 Primary school (2020) 1.02 Lower secondary education (2020) Target value achieved Phase 4: 0.99 Primary school (2021) 1.02 lower secondary education (2021) Target value achieved	2024: 0.99 Primary school 1.04 Lower secondary Target value achieved
(4) Development of a Disaster Risk Management & Resilience Plan	Not available (2018)	Finalisation (2021)	Phase 4: Draft completed	2024 Plan institutionalised

***Table 3** : Impact target achievement*
***Source**: Final report on transitional assistance – contribution to preventing a lost generation, Education Development Fund III (EDF III), Zimbabwe, BMZ No. 2016 18 792 and 2017 18 493; Final review of transitional assistance – contribution to preventing a lost generation, Education Development Fund II (Phases III & IV) BMZ No. 2018 18 640 and 2019 18 168.*
***Note**: *Data broken down by gender not available*

14. Contribution to overarching intended developmental changes

Even though – as already explained under effectiveness – the specific contribution of the FC measures financed by the FC to development policy changes cannot be precisely quantified, it seems convincing that the EDF which had a total volume of around

[35] Overall, data availability was extremely limited, which meant that it was only possible to define and record indicators retrospectively to a limited extent.

USD 130 million between 2016 and mid-2022 –contributed to improving the educational situation of children and young people in Zimbabwe measured by the indicators (see effectiveness | Contribution to the achievement of objectives). In addition, the multisectoral focus of the EDF measures has had an additional impact on development policy, as without the contribution of the FC programme to the EDF, the educational situation of children and young people in Zimbabwe would probably have deteriorated further. However, the EDF funds were not sufficient to achieve significantly greater development policy impacts. In addition, the deteriorating economic and political conditions during the implementation period contributed to the fact that only limited overall development policy changes could be achieved.

15. Contribution to overarching unintended developmental changes

The contributions of the FC projects and the EDF to overarching (intended) developmental changes suggest that funding several areas – such as SIG in conjunction with WASH – was beneficial, for example in terms of girls' attendance at school (see Effectiveness | Contribution to the achievement of objectives). At the same time, some of the schools that were beneficiaries of SIG were unable to absorb the increasing demand for school places from pupils, which had arisen as a result of improvements in the school environment through SIG and other measures, such as the distribution of learning materials. This increased demand could either not be met at all or only by introducing a shift system for lessons.

Rating summary of impact: moderately successful (3) for both phases

Overall, the results show that the educational situation – measured in terms of graduation rates – and resilience – measured in terms of institutionalised DRR – have improved slightly in both phases, even though the results are below expectations overall. We therefore appraise the impact of both projects as moderately successful overall.

Sustainability

Preliminary remark: No limited sustainability requirement was formulated in the project proposals for phases 1 and 4;[36] nor was this subsequently determined in the final reviews in 2021 (phase 1) and 2022 (phase 4).[37] There were no circumstances that would justify a subsequent adjustment of the sustainability requirements, such as a lack of legitimacy on the part of the responsible government or highly volatile political conditions, which would have made it possible to assume a limited sustainability requirement retrospectively within the framework of the EPE. Instead, in the multi-phase EDF, ensuring sustainability was repeatedly postponed to subsequent phases[38] . In addition, no exit strategy was developed to transfer tasks to local structures in order to ensure the effects. Within the framework of the EPE, a realistic level of sustainability impact is therefore assumed.

16. Capacities of beneficiaries and stakeholders

Under the conditions prevailing in Zimbabwe, the relevant state educational institutions did not have the necessary capacities and resources to effectively organise contributions to restoring school operations, improving the quality of the education system and strengthening the resilience of the school system to external crises. They were unable or unwilling to implement the necessary measures. The project executing agency was only able to implement the necessary measures within the framework of the EDF 2016-2020/21 to the extent that donors provided the necessary financial resources.

17. Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities

The projects helped to strengthen UNICEF Zimbabwe's capacities in the areas of administration, monitoring and evaluation of projects. For the target groups, some of the measures implemented can continue to have a positive impact, at least in the short term, even after the end of external funding. These include, for example, the use of the skills acquired by schoolchildren, the health effects of rehabilitated wells and established WASH components, and the institutionalised DRR plan. Whether the positive effects achieved by the projects can be maintained in the long term for the target group depends on further external financial support to continue activities to restore school operations and their quality. UNICEF's financial situation remains highly dependent on donations from the international donor community, which also has consequences for the sustainability of the measures offered by UNICEF in Zimbabwe.

In both phases, the FC projects enabled UNICEF to finance activities in the three components of school grants (SIG), disaster risk reduction (DRR) and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Without external financial support, the target group would not have been able to implement and continue these measures. In addition, the capacities of NGOs involved in the implementation of the measures on behalf of UNICEF were strengthened.

[36] Financing proposal for transitional aid "Contribution to preventing a lost generation – Education Development Fund III (EDF III)" – BMZ No. 2016 18 792; Project proposal (PV) for transitional aid: "Contribution to preventing a lost generation – Education Development Fund III (Phase 4)" – BMZ No. 2019 18 168.
[37] Final report on transitional aid – Contribution to preventing a lost generation, Education Development Fund III (EDF III), Zimbabwe, BMZ No. 2016 18 792 and 2017 18 493; Final review of transitional assistance – Contribution to preventing a lost generation, Education Development Fund III (Phases III & IV) BMZ No. 2018 18 640 and 2019 18 168.
[38] According to the responsible PM, the importance of longer-term follow-up financing for sustainability was regularly emphasised.

18. Durability of impacts over time

At the time of the EPE, an evidence-based assessment of the project/programme's sustainability was hampered primarily by uncertainty about further political, economic and social developments in Zimbabwe. Given the continuing high volatility in the Zimbabwean intervention context, the sustainability of the positive effects achieved with FC funds was called into question at the time of the final audits of phases 1 and 4. In view of the severe economic crisis and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, Zimbabwe was not in a position to ensure the sustainability of the measures in phase 1, meaning that without further financial support from donors, it would not be possible to stabilise the education system and guarantee educational opportunities, especially for disadvantaged children.[39] For Phase 4, the finding was that the Zimbabwean government's lack of commitment posed a risk to the reforms that had been initiated, as these were not yet sustainable and robust enough; maintaining and sustainably stabilising the school system was currently not possible without external support.[40] However, after phase 4, the BMZ refused to provide further follow-up funding for UNICEF under the EDF, which meant that the sustainability of the two FC programmes was not ensured.

Rating summary of sustainability: moderately unsuccessful (4) for both phases

Overall, the sustainability criterion is appraised as rather unsuccessful, as the results fall significantly short of expectations; despite some positive results (such as strengthening the capacities of NGOs and the project executing agency, building DRR capacities) , the negative findings outweigh the positive ones in terms of the capacities of those affected, the contribution to supporting sustainable capacities and the sustainability of the effects . With the sustainability criterion (exclusion criterion) rated as "rather unsuccessful", the overall rating of the FC projects can no longer be successful.

Overall assessment: moderately unsuccessful (4) for both phases

The results in terms of relevance, coherence and efficiency met expectations. The results in terms of effectiveness, overarching developmental impact and, in particular, sustainability were appraised as below expectations. The appraisal of sustainability as no longer successful inevitably leads to the projects being appraised as rather unsuccessful overall, despite positive temporary effects[41] .

The alignment of the projects with policies and priorities of the United Nations and German development cooperation, as well as their coherence with projects of other partners in Zimbabwe, are assessed positively. In addition, the projects took into account the high urgency of access to education for the target group. However, contributions to the achievement of objectives at the outcome and impact levels were not directly verifiable, but plausible. The sustainability of the projects was assessed in the ex-post evaluation on the basis of realistic expectations regarding sustainability impacts. Although the projects contributed to supporting sustainability among the target group and the project executing agency, the durability of effects over time could only be appraised as rather unsuccessful at the time of the evaluation due to the continuing uncertainty about further political and economic developments in Zimbabwe and the lack of follow-up funding.

Contribution to Agenda 2030

The projects made a contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals SDG 1 – No Poverty, SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being, SDG 4 – Quality Education worldwide, SDG 5 – Gender Equality, SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation, and SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals-

[39] Final report on transitional aid – contribution to preventing a lost generation, Education Development Fund III (EDF III), Zimbabwe, BMZ No. 2016 18 792 and 2017 18 493, p. 23.
[40] Final review of transitional assistance – contribution to preventing a lost generation, Education Development Fund III (Phases III & IV) BMZ No. 2018 18 640 and 2019 18 168, p. 19.
[41] A failure to meet the exclusion criterion of sustainability necessarily leads to a failure to meet the overall rating criteria for the project/programme.

Methodology

Evaluation methodology

The ex-post evaluation follows the methodology of a rapid appraisal, i.e. a data-based, qualitative contribution analysis, and represents an expert opinion. The project is attributed effects based on plausibility considerations, which are based on a careful analysis of documents, data, facts and impressions. Where possible, this also includes the use of digital data sources and modern techniques (e.g. satellite data, online surveys, geocoding). The causes of any contradictory information are investigated, attempts are made to resolve them, and the assessment is based on statements that are confirmed by several sources of information (triangulation), where possible.

The analysis of the effects is based on assumed causal relationships, documented in the impact matrix developed during the project appraisal and updated during the ex-post evaluation, if necessary. The evaluation report sets out arguments as to why certain influencing factors were identified for the effects observed and why the project under review probably made a certain contribution (contribution analysis). The context of the development measure is taken into account in terms of its influence on the results. The conclusions are put into relation to the availability and quality of the data basis. An evaluation concept serves as the reference framework for the evaluation.

The method offers a balanced cost-benefit ratio for project evaluations, on average, with a balance between knowledge gain and evaluation effort, and allows for a systematic assessment of the effectiveness of DFG projects across all project evaluations. Individual ex-post evaluations cannot therefore meet the requirements of a scientific assessment in the sense of a clear causal analysis.

The main objective of the evaluations (knowledge interest) is to measure impacts, provide accountability, promote transparency and enable institutional learning.

Type of evaluation:

Remote without national experts (desk review).

Key questions of the evaluation according to the evaluation concept:

- Was there equal access to EDF services nationwide?
- To what extent did the programmes or individual measures contribute to gender equality?
- What influence did supplementary and follow-up projects have on the overarching developmental impact of the first phase?
- What added value did KfW's participation in this type of financing and implementation of the projects bring?
- What lessons can be learned for follow-up projects in Zimbabwe's education sector?

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Data sources and analysis tools

KfW project documents, UNICEF reports, secondary specialist literature, analyses by the World Bank, IMF, ex-post evaluations of comparable FC projects with UN organisations as project executing agencies.

Project sites visited

Visits to project sites were not planned.

Interview partners and modality (in person, virtual/by telephone, in writing)

KfW employees from the Operations Department (in writing and virtually). UNICEF Zimbabwe employees (in writing and virtually)

The following aspects limited the evaluation

Project documents were only made available to the EPE after repeated requests.

Insufficient data basis for assessing outcomes and impacts

Some of the statistical data in the PCR did not match the corresponding data in the UNICEF reports.

The project managers at KfW and the project executing agency responsible during the implementation phases could no longer be interviewed.

Assessment methodology

A six-point scale is used to assess the project according to OECD DAC criteria, with the exception of the sustainability criterion. The scale values are as follows:

Level 1 Very successful: results significantly above expectations

Level 2 Successful: results fully in line with expectations, without significant shortcomings

Level 3 Moderately successful: results below expectations, but positive results predominate

Level 4 Moderately unsuccessful: significantly below expectations and negative results dominate despite recognisable positive results

Level 5 Unsuccessful: despite some positive partial results, the negative results clearly dominate

Level 6 Highly unsuccessful: the project is useless or the situation has deteriorated

The overall rating on the six-point scale is based on a project-specific weighting of the six individual criteria. Levels 1–3 of the overall rating indicate a 'successful' project, while levels 4–6 indicate an 'unsuccessful' project. It should be noted that a project can generally only be classified as "successful" in terms of development policy if both the achievement of objectives at the outcome level (effectiveness) and impact level, as well as sustainability, are rated at least as "moderately successful " (level 3).

The annex to this report is available upon request (German only).

Imprint

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