Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform (SPHEIR)

Mid-Term Evaluation Report

Prepared by:

IPE Triple Line
Technopolis Group
University of Bedfordshire

APRIL 2021

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

IPE TRIPLELINE
Expanding Horizons. Enriching Lives.

technopolis group

University of Bedfordshire

Document Control

Document Title	Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform (SPHEIR) *Mid-Term Evaluation Report*
Reference No.	WOR-1632
Prepared by	CP, MI, RA, AK, JS, AR, JH, MW, DS, DP, NL
Checked by	MM, JS, MW, JR, RA
Date	April 2021

Cover photo: PADILEIA students celebrating graduation © AUB CCECS

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACE	African Education Centres of Excellence
ACU	Association of Commonwealth Universities
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
AQ-HESL	Assuring Quality Higher Education in Sierra Leone
AU	African Union
AUB	American University of Beirut
BC	Business Case
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CUE	Commission for University Education
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
Danida	Danish International Development Agency
DelPHE	Development Partnerships for Higher Education
DFID	Department for International Development
DVC	Deputy Vice Chancellor
EE	External Evaluator
EQ	Evaluation Question
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
FM	Fund Manager
GESI	Gender and Social Inclusion
GiZ	*Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit* (Department for International Cooperation)
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HPE	Health Professions Education
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IAU	International Association of Universities
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INASP	International Network for Advancing Science and Policy
Incl.	Including
IT	Information Technology
JAG	Joint Advisory Group
KII	Key Informant Interview
LEAP	Lending for Education in Africa Partnership
MoE	Ministry of Education
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

NORHED	Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PADILEIA	Partnership for Digital Learning and Increased Access
PAVEU	Pan-African Virtual and E-University
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
PEBL	Partnerships for Enhanced and Blended Learning
PedaL	Partnership for Pedagogical Leadership in Africa
PfP	Prepared for Practice
Q&A	Question and Answer
QA	Quality Assurance
R&D	Research and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SPHEIR	Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TESCEA	Transforming Employability for Social Change in East Africa
TIDE	Transformation by Innovation in Distance Education
ToC	Theory of Change
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VC	Vice Chancellor
VfM	Value for Money
WRT	With Regards To

Table of Contents

List of Boxes

List of Figures

List of Tables

Executive Summary

SPHEIR – Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform – is FCDO's principal programme for higher education. Launched in 2016, SPHEIR aims to improve the quality, relevance, scale, accessibility and affordability of higher education and the performance, governance and influence of HE systems and institutions in FCDO focus countries, in order to promote inclusive growth and development. This report is of the mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the programme.

SPHEIR funds eight partnerships across many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Myanmar, Jordan and Lebanon. Between them, the partnerships include 58 formal partnership organisations: universities, educational NGOs, professional bodies, private sector and research units. SPHEIR is managed by a consortium led by the British Council. The total value of the current portfolio of SPHEIR grants is £30.05 million while the total value (SPHEIR grant and match funding) of partnerships is £39.37 million[1].

The purpose of the mid-term is to capture progress against the outcomes, results and achievements of the SPHEIR programme. It provides progress on a number of indicators reported on during the baseline and sets the stage for the summative endline evaluation where it will be possible to assess the achievements of the programme as a whole in terms of intermediate outcomes and early contribution towards longer term outcomes and impact.

The over-arching framework for the evaluation is designed to answer the evaluation by measuring the impact, outcomes and effectiveness of the programme, and evidence for what works and why, at five different levels of assessment:

- Higher Education System level: SPHEIR aims to catalyse reform and innovation in entire higher education systems at national level. The final impact goal is that such reforms contribute to economic and social development.

- Sector/employer (World of work) level: A significant number of SPHEIR partnerships aim to contribute to a better match of supply and demand in specific sectors of the economy.

- Higher education institution level (partnership): SPHEIR aims to contribute to institutional capacity building, innovation capabilities and department-level reform.

- Educator level: A large share of SPHEIR projects include a component of developing the capacity of lecturers (or educators), for instance for new curricula elements, or the use of digital tools or new pedagogies.

- Student level: One of the main beneficiaries and key pathway to eventual economic and social impact is at the level of learners (students).

The mid-term evaluation covers four out of five levels of the assessment in full. The assessment level of the world of work is only covered partially and will be a focus for the summative evaluation as it will bring in evidence from a graduate tracer study, testing the effects of the new ways of teaching and learning on the skills and competences of the students as they enter the labour market.

Data collection tools are oriented to provide evidence of change at the different levels of assessment as well as being mapped to the overall evaluation questions. The tools complement each other in order to generate evidence from a range of sources which can be triangulated to provide robust conclusions, and findings have been tested through an evaluation team workshop.

The context for the mid-term evaluation has been dominated by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Adaptations were made to the methodology to respond to COVID-19. The evaluation team could not

---

[1] Figures for total partnership grants and match funding taken from SPHEIR (February 2021) based on budgets for all current partnerships except the Kenya-Notts partnership, which is based on actual figures. Figures do not include the LEAP capital grant of £1.5 million.

travel to undertake field work in SPHEIR countries and all interviews were conducted remotely. The initial plans for student and lecturer focus groups were replaced with "stories". COVID-19 also required flexibility in scheduling interviews, to accommodate the pressures which partners were under, liaising closely with the Fund Manager (FM) and trying to minimise the burden on partnerships. This has introduced some limitations in relation to the strength of evidence and its representativeness across the partnerships, which will be addressed through the summative evaluation. As well as affecting the evaluation, COVID-19 impacted SPHEIR implementation during 2020. The programme has been given a 9-month no-cost extension to enable implementation activities to complete, after some delays (which may in practice only extend to six months).

Political Economy Analysis of Higher Education Systems in SPHEIR and Comparator Countries

The importance of the role of HE in the national (economic) development has either increased or remained stable in the PEA countries, measured as the change to the indicator introduced in the baseline report. The literature supports the crucial contribution of higher education to national development but provides little guidance on how the contribution of higher education to national development, in particular in the Global South, could be monitored and measured in a harmonised and sustainable way.

PEA countries have seen a rapid increase in the number of HEIs over the last decade, as reported at the baseline. This trend largely continues in 2020. Increasing numbers of HEIs has implications on the SPHEIR programme, in particular on the potential for scaling up of the results of the interventions.

The national governments remain the largest public funders of higher education. Issues remain in relation to the cost to the individual for their higher education experience. Going forward, it is important to assess the extent to which higher education funding will be affected by the current COVID-19 pandemic, through the responses of governments. In some countries, the immediate responses have been to divert funding for higher education to other policy areas deemed by national governments as more important in the fight against COVID-19. This could negatively affect access and participation,

Robust higher education QA systems have not yet been established in any of the SPHEIR and comparator countries. In addition, there are a lack of formal mechanisms in place to ensure that educational standards are based on factors such as student interactions, extracurricular activities, non-academic collaborations and students' assessments of academic staff, as well as ensuring that HE students learn in an environment conducive to critical thinking.

The PEAs highlight particular other weaknesses in the system which are being addressed through the SPHEIR programme, or will impact on its sustainability. This includes the working environment for academics, which is not conducive for rewarding new innovation and change, the traditional approaches to teaching and learning which are common in the FCDO priority countries, the important and ongoing focus of gender equity and social inclusion, in a system which is still fairly male dominated, especially within staff, and the lack of support services around higher education which hampers the student experience.

Evaluation Findings

Effectiveness: Delivery of Outputs and Intermediate Outcomes

Projects clearly adhere to the programme theory of change, which is a pre-requisite for being able to deliver supporting results, although there are some limitations to scale of likely impact. Project results clearly contribute to programme level results, which are also clearly aligned to the theory of change. Each project has its own results framework and reports progress against projections (milestones)

towards an end of project target. Reported achievement at the project level is aggregated against programme logframe indicators to measure results and progress for the programme as a whole. Each indicator in the SPHEIR logframe maps onto a comparable ToC output or intermediate outcome.

A high-level analysis of all the partnerships indicates good progress is being made in relation to their intended outputs and emerging outcomes. As at the end of the 2020 (as captured in the reports of the Fund Manager), the portfolio of SPHEIR projects had trained a total of 2,535 staff (43% of whom are women) in teaching and learning, assessment, student support and curriculum design, exceeding its initial projections of 2,131 trained staff. It is too early to indicate whether some partnerships are more successful than others in terms of their achievements to date. There has been some revision of targets, both downwards and upwards, some in light of COVID-19. The funding reductions, due to FCDO budget cuts has introduced an element of uncertainty. However, the no-cost extension recently awarded to the projects, also allows them catch up on any delays in 2020 (albeit some will not be able to take advantage of the extra time without extra funds).

At the mid-term evaluation, it has not been possible to find detailed evidence of factors associated with the success of the partnerships to date. There is emerging evidence of the importance of the model of partnership itself, with factors such as good internal communication and trusted relationships being cited as key contributors to success. With these internal mechanisms working well, it is much easier to tackle external challenges such as COVID-19 and policy and regulatory conditions, for example.

Effectiveness: Progress Towards Impact at the Institutional Level

There is good evidence of increasing quality of teaching and learning within the SPHEIR programme. Four main approaches are being taken by the partnerships to varying degrees. These are pedagogical training, curriculum design or enhancements, enhancing quality assurance (QA) practices in universities and the use of blended and/or distance learning. Across all of these approaches, there are emerging positive outcomes. There is evidence of a shift from teacher-centred didactic approaches to a more student-centred approach involving more interactions, such as class discussion and role play. In addition, there has been an upward trend in the use of ICT and technology in classroom teaching, accelerated by COVID-19. However, access and connectivity remain an ongoing issue, which requires government and institutional level solutions.

The partnerships have exceeded on their outcome indicators for the number of reforms in targeted higher education institutions where institutionalisation of those reforms have taken place. This provides good evidence of partnerships working with governance, leadership and institutional management to further enhance the effect of the SPHEIR programme. The framework conditions are favourable for partnerships, with the majority reporting that their university leadership is greatly or moderately open to change. There is good evidence that when university leadership is involved that there is wider uptake and implementation of the SPHEIR activities. This is particularly the case in relation to COVID-19 and the interest in leadership to implement wholescale online learning and using the SPHEIR teams to drive this agenda. All partnerships indicate that the scale up of teaching and learning is contingent on further buy-in of the university management, and additional resources and time.

Progress Towards Impact and Unexpected Outcomes: Systems, Institutional, Individuals, and GESI

At the systems level, there is only limited observable impact to date. The specific signs of emerging impact at the system level relate to enhanced pedagogy, relevance for the labour market, and access to higher education. Achieving substantial system-level impact is rarely found among the objectives of higher education interventions of other international donors (evidence from the benchmarking), highlighting how challenging this is, and how much time is needed for system level effect to take place.

At the institutional level, SPHEIR has enabled partner organisations to drive institutional change and skill development necessary to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The most significant observed unintended outcomes concern online learning, redesign of curricula allowing online delivery and the related skills of teachers necessary for this new type of delivery (although this can be described as adaptation). The COVID-19 pandemic brought about a swift end to the in-person teaching and learning at university campuses, and with it, an urgent need to shift online. The SPHEIR teams were often the only, and most prepared set of staff for this shift. Their role within their universities, therefore, became crucial for the successful online transition of the whole institution. SPHEIR teams were able to provide this assistance successfully, building on the results of their partnerships produced to date, and they used guidance and methodologies developed within SPHEIR for expansion across the whole university. The outcomes around the expanded use of online learning have gone beyond the SPHEIR partner organisations.

At the level of the individual, the mid-term evaluation results find some positive indications that student learning experiences are improving, for most SPHEIR partnerships. However, as students are the final beneficiaries of SPHEIR, it is still too early still to expect a good level of evidence and thus it is difficult to evaluate fully. Nonetheless, student reports suggest improvements in their interactions with staff, in teaching activities used in classrooms, range and quality of resources made available to them and the use of technology in their classrooms. There are positive developments in the provision and learning of 21st Century competences, mostly in critical thinking and problem solving. Students largely feel positive about their career prospects and considered that their university was adequately preparing them for work. COVID-19 has negatively impacted on students in this academic year, with reports of challenges in internet connectivity and access to online learning, feelings of isolation and negative mental health effects, absence of teachers online and difficulty in teaching practical elements of courses. On the positive side, students report learning new ways of learning and building their IT skills.

SPHEIR is likely to achieve good impact in the areas of gender equity and social inclusion (GESI). There is clear progress on integrating GESI into project implementation, and leadership on GESI within some partnerships stands out. The SPHEIR portfolio provides some very good examples of best practice strategies and tactics to drive forward GESI in HE. There is some evidence of progress towards impact on GESI at institutional, lecturer and student levels. GESI problem analysis at fund level and for some partnerships could be strengthened to better understand issues and opportunities; likewise, the ToC and results framework could both better integrate GESI.

Progress Towards Sustainability

Scalability and sustainability are closely inter-linked. In both cases it is too early to assess the sustainability of results and the likelihood for scale-up. There is some evidence of partnerships discussed and planning for this, but many are still to do so. There are three main conditions for scalability, these are: additional resources (financial and human), community building, and conducive external environment. For sustainability, most of the focus is around the newly designed online and/or blended courses and the newly designed curricula. These are areas where sustainability seems most likely to be assured after the end of the programme. In order to ensure a wider sustainability of SPHEIR results, additional effort is likely to be necessary, such new systematic investment, funding and/or fundraising, and a good level of institutional and stakeholder buy-in, similar to the conditions for scalability. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic will certainly keep affecting the whole programme.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The mid-term evaluation of the SPHEIR programme provides an opportunity to review the progress to date of the programme and to plan for the endline summative evaluation. The evaluation report covers a significant number of evaluation questions from interrogating the theory of change through to the emerging outcomes in relation to the higher education system level, the higher education institution

level, on teaching and learning and on the students. At the mid-term evaluation, the SPHEIR programme is on **track to achieve the programme objectives**. Good progress is being made in relation to the intended outputs and emerging outcomes of the programme, although there has been some revision of targets, in light of COVID-19. A key strength of SPHEIR is the partnership model.

Transformation in higher education systems takes years, and for long term impact to be achieved at scale, there is a need for the sustained involvement of higher education institutions, in cooperation with its leadership, alongside the wider stakeholder community who have a central role to play in embedding change more sustainably within the system. The portfolio of SPHEIR partnerships include a wide range of approaches in a small number of partnerships. For the future, the FCDO might look at how to create clear sets of common themes under its programme, learning from SPHEIR, working with other actors in the international higher education space, and concentrating efforts on a few strands of activity and facilitating the emergence of communities of practice which have a shared vision of change.

Conclusion: Including an overview of the political economy for higher education provides important contextual information in which to situate the SPHEIR partnerships. Very few evaluations explore the system level situation in depth, and yet by doing so, it becomes much easier to evidence the relevance of the intervention and its scope for ongoing impact, scalability and sustainability. The evidence base of official up to date statistics remains incomplete, but with the additions of the stakeholder interviews, the PEA provides information on trends and challenges in the system and is useful for the evaluation and the wider stakeholder community (including the partnerships).

Recommendation: The PEA for the summative evaluation includes additional interviews with policy makers as well as councils for higher education, employer organisations and quality assurance bodies.

Conclusion: The theory of change for the SPHEIR programme has worked well and remains valid. There are however some discrepancies in relation to the way the partnerships are aligned with the theory of change and the logframe at the outcome level.

Recommendation: There is a refresh of the theory of change in the final stages of the programme, in conjunction with the log frames. This should be undertaken by the FM in cooperation with the EE and FCDO

Conclusion: All projects are mostly on track, taking into account some revision of targets, in light of COVID-19. At the mid-term evaluation, it is difficult to conclude whether some are more successful than others in relation to progress.

Recommendation: At the summative evaluation, a set of success criteria extending out from the key indicators reported by the partnerships should be put in place so that a more nuanced assessment of success can be reported on, including aspects of GESI, positive spill over effects, plans for sustainability and, where relevant, graduate impact

Conclusion: There is emerging evidence of the importance of the model of partnership itself, with factors such as good internal communication and trusted relationships being cited as key contributors to success.

Recommendation: The EE's second SPHEIR research project will take place in 2021 and is intended to explore partnership networks and relationships and how this can bring about effective and sustainable change. It will provide very useful evidence and insights for the summative evaluation and proposals will be put to FCDO shortly.

Conclusion: There are four main approaches to teaching and learning being taken by the partnerships. These are pedagogical training, curriculum design or enhancements, enhancing quality assurance (QA) practices in universities and the use of blended and/or distance learning. Across all of these approaches, there are emerging positive outcomes. Teaching practices are shifting from teacher-

centred didactic approaches to a more student-centred approach. In addition, there has been an upward trend in the use of ICT and technology in classroom teaching, accelerated by COVID-19.

Recommendation: The response to COVID-19 and the experiences of the higher education institutions in changing their teaching and learning models is an area where SPHEIR could capitalise further on its results, through additional cross fertilisation of practices across the portfolio of SPHEIR and outside of the partnerships. The FM could ensure that opportunities are made for this cross fertilisation (as they have been doing) and partnership can consider this aspect in their strategies for scale-up.

Conclusion: The partnerships have exceeded on their outcome indicators for the number of reforms in targeted higher education institutions where institutionalisation of those reforms has taken place. University leadership involvement and endorsement is highly important for the SPHEIR partnerships and seen as a success factor. All partnerships indicate that the scale up of teaching and learning is contingent on further buy-in of the university management, and additional resources and time.

Recommendation: Encouraging further involvement of leadership should be included in the FM dissemination plans, and partnerships should reflect on how this engagement can be further stimulated by demonstrating its success. This could usefully be included within their evaluation plans, in relation to Outreach, Engagement and Communication and impact enhancement.

Conclusion: At the higher education systems level, there is only limited observable impact to date, with many of the partnership concentrating on institutional level change in the first instance. Achieving substantial system-level impact is challenging and time is needed for effect to take place. What is evident is that ensuring the outward and upward links of the partnerships into other higher education institutions and into government organisations helps to drive this more systemic change for the future.

Recommendation: During the final stages of the partnerships, as more system level impact, or potential impact arises, the time and effort devoted to communication, dissemination and take up of good practice should include a consideration of the stakeholder landscape and key influencers in the system. There is a role for both the FM and the individual partnerships in further engagement with wider stakeholders

Conclusion: Although early for student level impact, there are positive indications that student learning experiences are improving, for most SPHEIR partnerships. This in particular relates to the provision and teaching of 21st Century competencies, mostly in critical thinking and problem solving. COVID-19 however has negatively impacted on students in this academic year. On the positive side, students report learning new ways of learning and building their IT skills.

Recommendation: As the programme effects start to emerge in relation to student skills acquisition, and eventually their employability, there is a role for the partnerships to embed lessons learned into their ongoing teaching practices and support scale-up and sustainability. In addition, the FCDO has a role to ensure that the ultimate impact on students is understood and used for future programme design, if it continues to support higher education in the area of skills and competence development.

Conclusion: SPHEIR is likely to achieve good impact in the areas of gender equity and social inclusion (GESI). There is clear progress on integrating GESI into project implementation, and leadership on GESI within some partnerships stands out.

Recommendation: GESI problem analysis at fund level and for some partnerships could be strengthened to better understand issues and opportunities; likewise, the ToC and results framework could both better integrate GESI.

Conclusion: The COVID-19 pandemic has been playing a very important role in generating the unintended outcomes There is only limited evidence outside of COVID-19 on the emergence of unintended outcomes (positive or negative).

Recommendation: The summative evaluation should review more fully, the changes in the log frame over time as well as probe deeper into the unintended outcomes, especially if they positively or negatively affect scale up and sustainability.

Conclusion: Scalability and sustainability are closely inter-linked. Partnerships have been thinking about sustainability at least since 2017 (when sustainability was addressed in their plans of work and budget and in the value for money guidance). However, it was only over the past year that partnerships have started to discuss sustainability systematically and emphasise it as part of the project management, prompted by FM's modifications of the reporting template to include sustainability and scalability. In order to ensure a wider sustainability of SPHEIR results, additional effort is likely to be necessary, such new systematic investment, funding and/or fundraising, and a good level of institutional and stakeholder buy-in, similar to the conditions for scalability.

Recommendation: The FM and the partnerships should keep discussing the sustainability and scalability of the results and the resources and conditions necessary for this to happen.

1 Introduction

1. SPHEIR – Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform – is FCDO's principal programme for supporting higher education in low- and middle-income countries, launched in 2016 and building on Development Partnerships for Higher Education (DelPHE) phase 1. SPHEIR aims to improve the quality, relevance, scale, accessibility and affordability of higher education and the performance, governance and influence of HE systems and institutions in FCDO focus countries, to promote inclusive growth and development.[2] A further aspect is to ensure graduates meet the needs of the labour market and are better prepared for entrepreneurship. The programme has recently been extended to 2022. This report is of the mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the programme.

2. SPHEIR funds eight partnerships across countries in sub-Saharan Africa,[3] Myanmar, Jordan and Lebanon. Each partnership is working towards the programme goal in different ways. Approaches include curriculum reform, pedagogical improvement, increasing access to higher education through private financing models and use of technology, improving quality frameworks and initiatives to strengthen HE management and governance. Some partnerships aim to strengthen national higher education systems whilst others are more focused on higher education institutions themselves. Between them, the partnerships include over sixty organisations: universities, educational NGOs, professional bodies, private sector and research units. SPHEIR is managed by a consortium led by the British Council.

3. The MTE report opens by outlining the context and the MTE purpose, objectives and governance. Section 3 provides more detail on the SPHEIR programme including change since baseline. The evaluation approach and methodology are set out in Section 4. Section 5 provides a contextual analysis of higher education by theme, drawing on evidence from across seven countries where SPHEIR is implemented and three comparator countries. Evaluation findings are set out in Section 6, by evaluation question, each sub-question ending with considerations for the final summative evaluation. The report ends with a conclusion, recommendations and a look ahead to the final summative evaluation in Section 7.

4. An extensive set of annexes includes a composition analysis (Annex 1), methodological detail (Annex 2, Annex 3, Annex 4, Annex 5, and Annex 6), an update of the benchmarking report undertaken at baseline (Annex 7), four case studies (Annex 8), the institutional assessment data (Annex 9), supporting information on the evaluation questions (Annex 10), and supporting information on gender equality and social inclusion (Annex 11). Political economy analysis for the SPHEIR and comparator countries is in Annexes – Vol. II.

---

[2] SPHEIR business case, accessible at https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-203166/documents

[3] Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somaliland, Tanzania, Uganda

2 SPHEIR Mid-Term Evaluation

2.1 Context

5. The external evaluation manager for SPHEIR was appointed in late 2017 with the aim of enabling '… a better understanding of what design aspects make higher education interventions successful and to improve … knowledge on the longer-term impact of HE strengthening [to ensure] future investments are informed by rigorous evidence'.[4] The Evaluation and Research Plan (April 2017) sets out three component strands as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Principal Strands of the SPHEIR Evaluation
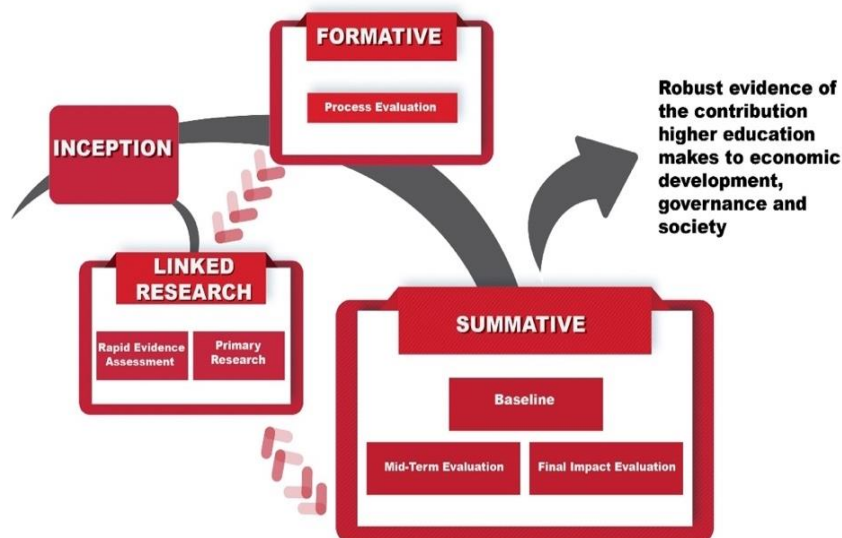
6. Several evaluation products have been delivered already, with some yet to come, as set out in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: SPHEIR Evaluation Phases and Products

Evaluation Phase	Evaluation Component	Date
Formative evaluation	● Rapid process review ● Process evaluation	June 2018 Dec 2019
Summative evaluation	● Baseline study ● Mid-term evaluation (this report) ● Final evaluation	Dec 2019 Dec 2020 Dec 2022

Linked research	● Rapid Evidence Assessments
	  - HE practices to deliver 21st century competences
	  - To be decided with FCDO
	● Research Projects
	  - A tool for assessing student skills (used for the evaluation)
	  - Partnership networks
		
		Early 2021
		2021/2022
		
		Jan 2019
		
		2021

---

[4] SPHEIR Evaluation Terms of Reference 2016 accessible through https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/ecf9255d-ada0-4055-b6d8-924ca122054b

7. The aim of the summative evaluation is to assess progress at the impact / outcome level through answering evaluation questions which look at the effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability of the programme (see Section 2.3). The evaluation is theory-based, so at end-line will test the extent to which the theory of change holds true, demonstrating pathways of change and testing the underlying assumptions.

2.2 Purpose and Objectives

8. In line with the overall evaluation plan for the SPHEIR evaluation, the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) builds on the work from the inception and baseline phases. It provides data on progress against a number of indicators reported on during the baseline and sets the stage for the summative endline evaluation, when partnerships will have finished and it will be possible to assess the achievements of the programme as a whole in terms of intermediate outcomes and early contribution towards longer term outcomes and impact. We identify a number of considerations for the endline throughout the presentation of the midterm findings which we will reflect in our concept note for this final phase.

9. The mid-term therefore has the following objectives:

● **Setting the Stage for the Final Impact Evaluation:** Collecting evidence and analysing progress in comparison to the situation at baseline provides an early but helpful indication of the progress being made by SPHEIR towards its anticipated outcomes at the end of the project, which will be assessed in the final evaluation, and any unintended outcomes.

● **Informing decision-making and learning**: FCDO and the Fund Manager will be able to use MTE findings and evidence, particularly where progress is not on track and in relation to challenges and issues to be addressed, to inform:

  ● Management actions on the part of the FM, in relation for example to weak performance or risk management

  ● Programming decisions by FCDO, including possible SPHEIR extension or, should one of the partnerships be particularly weak, early closure

  ● HE policy development by FCDO early in the current Government's term of office and in the context of Brexit

10. As the MTE coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluators used it as an opportunity to collect pertinent information on the impact COVID-19 is having on HEIs, individual educators and students as well as on how SPHEIR partnerships have responded.

11. The audience for this report includes: the FCDO, to continue providing information on the success of the programme; the Fund Manager to help identify progress against the programme logframe and help strengthen the delivery model; SPHEIR partnerships and partner HEIs to inform their own monitoring and provide information to help guide them towards mutual learning; and a wider audience including other HE institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors with interest in this area, including on the impact of COVID-19 on higher education.

2.3 Scope

12. The evaluation questions for the summative evaluation are set out in Table 2.2.[5] The mid-term evaluation, because it focuses on intermediate outcomes and progress, does not cover those

---

[5] The evaluation questions were refined and proposed in the SPHEIR Evaluation and Research Plan (April 2018). EQs 7 and 8 were further refined at baseline. Further slight modifications are proposed for the final evaluation.

evaluation questions which are focused on longer-term outcome and impact and reliant upon end of programme results.[6]

Table 2.2: SPHEIR Evaluation: Summative Evaluation Questions and Sub-Questions

	Summative Evaluation Questions and Sub-Questions	Incl. in MTE
Effectiveness		
1.	To what extent are the outputs of the partnerships in line with the programme Theory of Change?	✓
2.	Which of the partnerships has been most effective in delivering the programme's intended outputs and outcomes?	✓
3.	What have been the factors associated with a higher level of success of the partnerships in driving positive changes and achieving successful outcomes?	✓
Effectiveness / Impact		
4.	What have been the outcomes of the programme (and its different partnerships) at the level of institutions?[7]	✓
4.1	What have been the outcomes of the programme on quality in delivery of teaching and learning in higher education institutions?	✓
4.2	What have been the outcomes of the programme on governance, leadership and institutional management?	✓
Impact		
5.	What have been the intermediate outcomes and longer-term outcomes of the programme (and its different partnerships) at the higher education system (national) level?	✓
5.1	To what extent has the programme delivered improvements in equity in access and affordability of higher education?	✓
5.2	To what extent has the programme delivered improvements in quality and efficiency of higher education?	✓
5.3	To what extent has the programme delivered improvements in relevance of higher education?	✓
6.	What have been the longer-term outcomes and impact of the programme (and its different partnerships) at the level of individuals?	✓
6.1	What has been the impact on student learning?	✓
6.2	What activities of the programme have had the most impact?	✓
7.	What impact has SPHEIR had on gender equality and social inclusion in higher education?	✓
7.1	To what extent have SPHEIR partners influenced / worked with HEIs to develop, implement and monitor policies and practices that promote gender equality and social inclusion?	✓
7.2	Is there a link between the existence of HEI policies on gender equality and social inclusion (or diversity) and an increase in the percentage of those who are	✓

---

[6] Longer term impact questions include: EQ9 on employer satisfaction with graduates entering the labour market; EQ11 on contribution to changes at the impact level; EQ12 on evidence of multiplier effects including indirect impact of HE on other sectors of the economy; and EQ13 on value for money of the programme.

[7] We will be assessing the outcomes at all levels of the evaluation not just at the level of the institution

Summative Evaluation Questions and Sub-Questions		Incl. in MTE
	disadvantaged in a) employment as a faculty member; b) gaining access as a student and c) qualifying as a graduate?	
7.3	What are the barriers that continue to prevent those who are disadvantaged from being a faculty member / student / graduate and, for students, accessing learning?	✓
8.	No Question 8.	
9.	How satisfied are employers with the quality of graduates entering the labour market?	
10.	What have been the unintended outcomes and impacts of the programme?	✓
10.1	Have there been any unintended outcomes and impacts at the level of individuals?	✓
10.2	Have there been any unintended outcomes and impacts at the level of institutions?	✓
10.3	Have there been any unintended outcomes and impacts at the system (national) level?	✓
11.	To what extent has the programme contributed to changes at the impact level?	
11.1	To what extent has the programme contributed to economic development and growth?	
11.2	To what extent has the programme contributed to strengthening of public institutions?	
11.3	To what extent has the programme contributed to civil society?	
12.	Is there evidence of multiplier effects of the programme, including the indirect impact of higher education growth on other sectors of the economy?	
Efficiency		
13.	To what extent has the programme (and its interventions) delivered value of money?	
14.	Is there any evidence of the added value of the partnership arrangement to delivery of the selected higher education interventions?	✓
Sustainability		
15.	What are the key considerations for a scaled-up programme to deliver wider higher education transformation?	✓
16.	To what extent are positive changes driven by the programme likely to be sustained beyond the life of the current programme and/or to catalyse other long-term changes?	✓

13. The mid-term evaluation began early in 2020 and included re-visiting plans and tools in Q1, data collection in Q2 and Q3, and data synthesis, analysis and write up in Q4. The evaluation covers the whole SPHEIR project portfolio with the exception of the Kenya-Notts partnership, which was terminated based on the outcome of the project's midpoint review – a contractual mechanism used to assess the continuing viability of all projects in the portfolio.[8]

---

[8] Baseline data from the student and lecturer surveys might still prove useful at the endline summative, as a control group

2.4 Governance

14. The contract for the external evaluation is held by IPE Global. The evaluation team comprises IPE Triple Line (a wholly owned subsidiary of IPE Global), Technopolis Group and the University of Bedfordshire. IPE Triple Line has responsibility for contract management, relations with FCDO and with the Fund Manager, oversight of contract delivery including good quality, timely evaluation products and reports, and internal project management. Technopolis Group' s Rebecca Allinson is the evaluation team leader, with particular responsibility for overall methodology, technical direction and oversight of execution. University of Bedfordshire lead on the linked research programme and provide valuable technical insights on higher education. The evaluation has been undertaken by staff from all three consortia members. The report was quality assured by the Project Director (Martin Wright), a senior evaluator from IPE Triple Line (Juliette Seibold) and by Professor Mary Malcolm, University of Bedfordshire. The evaluation team was able to work freely and without interference.

3 The SPHEIR Programme

3.1 Policy Aims and Context

15. FCDO's Education Policy[9] has a strong focus on primary and lower secondary education. But despite this, and although only 6% of the DFID education budget 2014/15 to 2016/17 went into higher and vocational education, the policy recognises the crucial role which higher education can play in developing 'the highly skilled people that societies need to lift themselves out of poverty'. It notes that 'many developing countries spend a disproportionate amount on the higher education sector' and commits to supporting initiatives which can drive benefits for society as a whole through catalytic investment to build skills and strengthen the quality of higher education in developing countries. SPHEIR is DFID's flagship policy to achieving this goal. Its intended impact is that HEs contribute more effectively to economic development and growth, public institutions and civil society through better graduate outcomes (quality, diversity, employability) and improved quality and efficiency of the HE sector, as articulated in the theory of change. A review of SPHEIR in 2018 confirmed and reinforced the focus on higher level impact through systemic change.

16. More widely, FCDO's higher education policy is aligned with the higher education sub-targets of the UN's fourth Sustainable Development Goal on education and to the supporting Education 2030 declaration supported by 184 country signatories at Incheon in March 2015:

- SDG 4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- SDG 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- SDG 4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

17. The context for the mid-term evaluation has been dominated by the global COVID-19 pandemic. As well as impacting very significantly on SPHEIR implementation during 2020, as explored in the political economy analysis, evaluation findings and in two case studies specifically, the pandemic has impacted SPHEIR budgets. The reduction in the UK's Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) budget due to the pandemic[10] means that SPHEIR partnerships have had their budgets for the second half of 2020/21 reduced by 15%. The programme has also been given a 9-month no-cost extension to enable implementation activities to complete, after some delays (which may in practice only extend to six months).

3.2 Theory of Change

18. The theory of change (ToC) for SPHEIR was reviewed and updated by the EE and the FM in May 2019[11] and can be found at Figure 3.1. The ToC sets out the expected change pathways towards impact through the expected outputs, intermediate and longer-term outcomes and the assumptions which underpin each. Each partnership is plotted onto the ToC, to show how each contributes to the

---

[9] DFID Education Policy 2018 *Get Children Learning* accessible at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/685536/DFID-Education-Policy-2018a.pdf

[10] Legislation fixes UK ODA at 0.7% of GNP. The reduction in UK GNP due to the pandemic has resulted in a £2.9bn ODA cut.

[11] The version at Fig 2 does not include the Kenya-Nottingham partnership, Transformation of Pharmacy and Chemistry Degree Provision, which stopped early 2020.

programme. The SPHEIR programme logframe which maps onto the ToC aggregates data reported against partnership results frameworks (see EQ1 at Section 6.1.1).

Figure 3.1: SPHEIR Theory of Change

Impact

HEIs contribute more effectively to economic development and growth, public institutions and civil society

Skill acquisition is deployed in-country and does not result in graduate (or staff) migration

There is a Govt strategy to develop the country and stimulate demand for skilled graduates

SPHEIR success increases wider Government commitment (including resources) to HE as an engine of development

Graduates will use their skills positively and for wider civic good rather than to just serve their own interests

Longer-term outcomes

1. Number, quality and diversity of graduates better meet needs and shortages in the labour market (public & private sectors and enterprise devt)

2. Improved graduate outcomes including graduate employability

3. Improved quality and efficiency of HE sector including through strengthened regulatory framework

Intended outcomes will positively impact on student completion rates

Engaging labour market actors in the development/revision of curricula is the most effective employer engagement model

Partnerships able to develop effective influencing strategies including outreach, engagement and communications within and beyond their own institutions

Necessary degree of commitment and capacity to change from HE, political and HEI leadership

Employer engagement leads to improved employability

Intermediate outcomes

Sustained improvement in HE teaching, learner experience and outcomes, HE governance and management, and equitable access

1. Increased and more equitable access and retention

2. Increased quality and relevance in delivery of teaching and learning, and student experience in HE

3. Strengthened governance, leadership and institutional management in partner HEIs and beyond, respecting diversity principles

Social and cultural context is ready to support women and excluded groups to access HE

Quality and coverage of student services meet the needs

On-line learning delivers HE at quality and scale, and enhances access and affordability

Partnerships and HE institutions recognise that curriculum relevance means 'soft' and business skills as well as technical

Sufficient absorptive capacity and basic institutional framework for change within partner HEIs and HE system

Diversity is valued by the HEI

Individual HE staff have sufficient level of capacity and incentive to change practices & champion change

Students are receptive to the changes from expected standard practices

Cross-partnership collaboration enhances programme outcomes

Governance is strengthened through widening engagement

Outputs

1. Equitable access and diversity initiatives

2. New or transformed complementary, non-curricula based student services

3. More effective pedagogical models, practice and modes of delivery, including assessments

4. Curricula which is more relevant to the desired graduate outcomes

5. Cross-institution and cross-partnership collaboration and/or resource sharing

6. Increase in capacity of a diverse staff cohort

7. Improvements to partner HEI management and contributions to wider reform processes including quality assurance.

Finances and timeframes are sufficient to effect change

The fund management and curated portfolio approaches are effective

Partner institutions have the capacity to implement donor funded projects

Selected partnerships work closely and effectively with local partners (focus on the South)

Partnerships are more able than other implementation models to test, review and adjust their approach as needed.

Partnerships offer an effective model for change and provide incentives for engagement

Inclusion in partnership of new actors and relationships will bring innovation and better approaches to addressing issues

Inputs

Grant funding over 3-5 years

Partnership agreements and relationships

New actors (businesses, content/finance providers, NGOs etc.)

● AQHESL ● LEAP ● PADILEIA ● PEBL ● PEDAL ● PfP ● TESCEA ● TIDE

Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform (SPHEIR)
Mid-Term Evaluation Report

3.3 Partnerships

19. SPHEIR is currently providing funding to a portfolio of eight partnerships. The projects were commissioned in two rounds. An 'Initial Call' was launched in May 2016, prior to the completion of the Fund Manager's inception phase, and led to the selection of three partnership projects: PADILEIA, PEBL and PfP. A second 'Open Call' was launched in October 2016 leading to the selection of a further six projects: AQ-HESL, LEAP, PedaL, TESCEA, TIDE and Kenya-Notts (now discontinued). A summary of the partnerships and their full details are included in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Overview of SPHEIR Partnerships

Project Name and SPHEIR Grant[12]	Summary	Implementing Organisations	Countries
Initial Funding Round			
PfP - Prepared for Practice **£3,139,443**	Focuses on building health capacity in Somaliland through technology enhanced learning for students and faculty training in interactive teaching.	Lead Partner: ● King's College London (*UK*) Other Partners: ● Amoud University (*Somaliland*) ● Edna Adan University (*Somaliland*) ● MedicineAfrica (*UK*) ● Tropical Health and Education Trust (*UK*) ● University of Hargeisa (*Somaliland*)	● Somaliland
PEBL - Partnerships for Enhanced and Blended Learning **£2,114,559**	Promotes technology enhanced, blended learning that would allow the sharing of teaching resources among universities through credit bearing degree modules. The project also emphasises soft skills and aims to involve employers in course design.	Lead Partner: ● Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) *(UK)* Other Partners: ● Commonwealth of Learning (*Canada*) ● Kenyatta University (*Kenya*) ● Makerere University (*Uganda*) ● Open University of Tanzania (*Tanzania*) ● Staff and Educational Development Association (*UK*) ● State University of Zanzibar (*Tanzania*) ● Strathmore University (*Kenya*) ● University of Edinburgh (*UK*) ● University of Rwanda (*Rwanda*) ● Commission for University Education (CUE) *(Kenya)*	● Tanzania ● Kenya ● Uganda ● Rwanda

---

[12] Budgets are subject to change in the light of reductions to the overall programme budget following cuts in UK Overseas Development Assistance.

Project Name and SPHEIR Grant[12]	Summary	Implementing Organisations	Countries
PADILEIA - Partnership for Digital Learning & Increased Access **£4,961,508**	Technology-enhanced education to enable Syrian refugees and disadvantaged people in host communities to access HE and address labour market needs in Jordan and Lebanon.	Lead Partner: ● King's College London (*UK*) Other Partners: ● Al Al-Bayt University (*Jordan*) ● American University of Beirut (*Lebanon*) ● FutureLearn (*UK*) ● Kiron Open Higher Education (*Germany*)	● Jordan ● Lebanon

Open Call

Project Name and SPHEIR Grant[12]	Summary	Implementing Organisations	Countries
TIDE - Transformation by Innovation in Distance Education **£4,278,349**	Aims to improve the quality, relevance, and governance of environmental sciences disciplines in HE, through distance learning and development of an Open University in Myanmar.	Lead Partner: ● The Open University (*UK*) Other Partners: ● Irrawaddy Policy Exchange (*Myanmar*) ● University of Manchester (*UK*) ● University of Oxford (*UK*) ● University of Yangon (*Myanmar*) ● Yadanabon University (*Myanmar*) ● Yangon University of Distance Education (*Myanmar*)	● Myanmar
AQ-HESL - Assuring Quality Higher Education in Sierra Leone **£3,898,806**	Supports the establishment of a national Quality Assurance system centred on improved quality management, outcome-based education and labour market informed curricula.	Lead Partner: ● University of Sierra Leone (*Sierra Leone*) Grant Agreement Holder: ● King's College London (*UK*) Other Partners: ● 50/50 Group (*Sierra Leone*) ● INASP (*UK*) ● Njala University (*Sierra Leone*) ● Sierra Leone Institute of Engineers (*Sierra Leone*) ● Tertiary Education Commission (*Sierra Leone*) ● University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (*USA*) ● University of Makeni (*Sierra Leone*) ● Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology (*Sierra Leone*) ● Eastern Polytechnic (*Sierra Leone*)	● Sierra Leone

Project Name and SPHEIR Grant[12]	Summary	Implementing Organisations	Countries
		● Freetown Teachers' College (*Sierra Leone*) ● Milton Margai College of Education and Technology (*Sierra Leone*)	
LEAP - Lending for Education in Africa Partnership **£2,755,684 (excl. the capital grant of £1,500,000)**	Aims to pilot and scale a non-profit social lending fund to provide affordable loans to youth who are unable to access existing forms of student funding.	Lead Partner ● Volta Capital (*UK*) Other Partners: ● Equity Group Foundation (*Kenya*) ● inHive [formerly Future First Global] (*UK*) ● Lundin Foundation (*Canada*) ● Mandela Institute for Development Studies (*South Africa*)	● Kenya
PedaL - Partnership for Pedagogical Leadership in Africa **£3,541,909**	Innovative pedagogy in graduate social science programmes through integrated teaching, learning and training interventions and institutional policy strengthening.	Lead Partner: ● Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (*Kenya*) Other Partners: ● African Research Universities Alliance (*Ghana*) ● Egerton University (*Kenya*) ● Institute of Development Studies (*UK*) ● Uganda Martyrs University (*Uganda*) ● University of Dar es Salaam (*Tanzania*) ● University of Ghana (*Ghana*) ● University of Ibadan (*Nigeria*)	● Ghana ● Nigeria ● Uganda ● Kenya ● Tanzania
TESCEA - Transforming Employability for Social Change in East Africa **£3,849,150**	East Africa through bringing together universities, industry and government to develop and embed new content and pedagogies in existing degree programmes, which enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills.	Lead Partner: ● INASP (*UK*) Other Partners: ● Ashoka East Africa (Kenya) ● Association for Faculty Enrichment in Learning and Teaching (*Kenya*) ● Gulu University (*Uganda*) ● Mzumbe University (*Tanzania*) ● Uganda Martyrs University (*Uganda*) ● University of Dodoma (*Tanzania*)	● Tanzania ● Uganda ● Kenya (limited)

20. Six of the eight partnerships work in African countries. PfP (Somaliland), and AQ-HESL (Sierra Leone). Four work across multiple countries - three in East Africa (PEBL, LEAP and TESCEA) and one

in both East and West Africa (PedaL). One project (PADILEIA) is located in the Middle East and one (TIDE) in Southeast Asia (Myanmar). Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda benefit from the most SPHEIR interventions, with four out of the eight partnerships working in these countries. Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somaliland, Jordan. Lebanon and Myanmar are each benefiting from one SPHEIR project.

21. Overall, 58 organisations implement SPHEIR. One organisation, King's College London is part of three partnership (AQ-HESL, PADILEIA and PfP). Two organisations are part of two partnerships: INASP (AQ-HESL and TESCEA) and Uganda Martyrs University (TESCEA and PedaL).

22. The size of the partnerships varies. LEAP is the smallest with five partners, and AQ-HESL is the largest with 13 organisations. Six partnerships are led by a UK organisation (LEAP, PADILEIA, PEBL, PfP, TESCEA and TIDE), AQ-HESL is led by the University of Sierra Leone, with King's College London as the grant agreement holder and one is led by a Kenyan organisation (PedaL).

23. The total value of the current portfolio of SPHEIR grants is £30.05 million while the total value (SPHEIR grant and match funding) of partnerships is £39.37 million. Grant sizes range from £2m to £5m. The grants are also supplemented with match funding, with PfP contributing the largest share of match funding (45% of the total project budget), followed by AQ-HESL (31% of the total budget). The smallest match funding proportion (9% of their total budget) is made by PEBL and TESCEA.

24. More information on the composition and key characteristics of the SPHEIR partnerships is included in Annex 1.

4 Evaluation Approach and Methodology

4.1 Approach

25. The over-arching framework for the summative evaluation is designed to answer the evaluation questions (see Table 2.2 in Section 2.3) by measuring the impact, outcomes and effectiveness of the programme, and evidence for what works and why at five different levels of assessment:

- **Higher education system level**: SPHEIR aims to catalyse reform and innovation in entire higher education systems, at national level. The final impact goal is that such reforms contribute to economic and social development, which implicitly includes gender equality and social inclusion.
- **Sector/employer (world of work) level**: A significant number of SPHEIR partnerships aim to contribute to a better match of graduate supply and demand in specific sectors of the economy. The partnerships seek to build a relationship between higher education institutions and employers to acquire the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes for the world of work.[13]
- **Higher education institution level**: This is the typical entry point of intervention of the partnerships. SPHEIR aims to contribute to institutional capacity building, innovation capabilities and department-level reform. This is also the entry point to evaluate partnership dimensions and process-aspects
- **Educator level**: A large share of SPHEIR projects include a component of developing the capacity of lecturers (or educators), for instance through new curricula elements, in the use of digital tools or new pedagogies.
- **Student level**: Finally, one of the main beneficiaries and key pathway to eventual economic and social impact is at the level of learners (students).

26. Data collection tools are oriented to different assessment levels. The baseline report sets findings for each assessment level in turn while at the mid-term evaluation, evidence to answer each EQ has been drawn from a number of different sources and assessment levels.

27. **The evaluation's utilisation focus** is informed by clarity about who will use this evaluation and for what purpose and ensures that we provide credible, robust and actionable evidence with clear findings, results, conclusions and appropriate recommendations for the mid-term for FCDO and the FM. (The baseline report sets out stakeholders at each assessment level, and their relevance to and interest in the evaluation.[14]) We have regular meetings with both FCDO and the FM to discuss the progress of both SPHEIR and the evaluation, will incorporate their feedback in the final report, and will discuss with them how best to communicate it – or particular elements of, such as the case studies – more widely. We will reflect on our experience through the MTE when we develop the concept note for the final summative evaluation and make any final refinements to tools as needed.

28. **How SPHEIR has integrated gender equality and social inclusion (GESI)** into programme approaches is addressed in EQ7 (see Section 6.3.3). We have also collected, and analysed data disaggregated by gender in order to refine interpretation (of student and lecturer stories in particular), and capture different experiences of intersecting disadvantage (e.g. gender, disability, socio-economic status and geography).

4.1.1 Evaluation Ethical Research Principles

29. The evaluation has been guided by the principles set out in the Evaluation and Research Plan and has adhered to FCDO's Ethical Guidance for Research, Evaluation and Monitoring Activities.

---

[13] This can also include self-employment /entrepreneurship

[14] Stakeholders for each level of assessment can be found in Section 2.1 of the SPHEIR Evaluation Baseline Report

30. **Sampling** was not appropriate to the data collection methods employed at mid-term, as explained in the methodology (Section 4.2.3). The limitations of differential response rates and potential bias are discussed in Section 4.3.

31. **Data has been collected under conditions of voluntary participation, transparency, confidentiality and informed consent.** All interviewees were sent a consent form in advance which set out the purpose of the interview, how data would be stored and used and that individual responses would only be seen by the evaluation team and anonymised in the report. We explained that participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any point. Signed or verbal consent was obtained before embarking on the interview. We were guided by 'do no harm' principles.

32. **Data protection and storage.** We have ensured high standards of data storage and use and transparency of ownership. Raw data is stored securely and only accessible to IPE Triple Line and consortium evaluation team members. Aggregated data will be publicly available on open access principles. Qualitative data from stories and focus groups will be uploaded onto University of Bedfordshire's data repository within 12 months of final data collection and kept available for at least five years. (Qualitative data derived from interviews will not be available since this contains identifiable markers.) FCDO will have unlimited access to appropriately anonymised data and evaluation material (including analytical tools) as per FCDO's general conditions of contract. Details can be found in our data access and management plan.

33. **Data collection and analysis is robust.** We developed our data collection tools at baseline against the evaluation questions, to focus our enquiries. The tools complement each other in order to generate evidence from a range of sources which can be triangulated to provide robust conclusions. Tools were refined for the mid-term evaluation based on learning from baseline and the scope of the mid-term. Findings from data analysis have been tested through an evaluation team workshop. Each EQ section records the main data sources, for transparency.

34. **We have taken a flexible approach** not least in adapting our methodology in response to COVID-19, as explained below, which meant that we could not travel to undertake field work in SPHEIR countries. COVID-19 also required flexibility in scheduling interviews, to accommodate the pressures which partners were under, liaising closely with the FM and trying to minimise the burden on partnerships.

35. **We have ensured broad participation** by partnerships and SPHEIR beneficiaries, ensuring that we obtained insights from lecturers and students by other means when in-country focus group discussions were no longer possible

4.2 Methodology

36. The MTE methodology is set out in detail in the SPHEIR Evaluation Concept Note for the Mid-term review (Feb 2020) and subsequent Methodological Update note for the mid-term (April 2020) which discussed options in response to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. This section therefore provides a summary.

4.2.1 Evaluation Framework

37. The evaluation matrix developed at inception and further refined at baseline sets out for each evaluation question, evaluation indicators, data sources (primary and secondary, qualitative and quantitative) and data collection methods and remains relevant,[15] as does our mapping of theory of change, levels of assessment, evaluation questions and lines of enquiry.[16] The evaluation matrix is

---

[15] See SPHEIR Baseline Evaluation Report Annex 2

[16] See SPHEIR Baseline Evaluation Report Section 4.1

supplemented by a matrix of data sources plotted against lines of enquiry (included in the concept note) and a summary matrix of data sources against evaluation questions, both of which can be found at Annex 2 of this report. The methodology encompasses several evaluation outputs (PEAs, case studies, benchmarking report) which provide useful stand-alone evaluative material as well as feeding into the assessment of evaluation questions.

38. The counterfactual approach outlined in the baseline report will apply at end-line rather than at mid-term, other than the programme benchmarking comparators.

4.2.2 Data Sources

39. Data sources for the MTE are both primary and secondary, qualitative and quantitative, in support of the mixed methods approach to the evaluation. Sources are:

- Secondary data:
  - Programme and partnership reports and documents, including blogs and papers published on FM and partner websites, on all aspects of delivery, progress and results.
  - Wider literature such as published reports, national qualitative or statistical information, academic articles, research papers etc., principally to inform the political economy analysis, benchmarking and case studies.

- Primary data was collected from stakeholders and beneficiaries of SPHEIR across the five assessment levels through interviews, self-assessments and stories, as explained below.

40. The mixed methods approach allows for triangulation of evidence from different sources during analysis. It reduces over-reliance on a single source of data which is particularly important where there might be bias, for example due to the response rate or pattern, or variable quality in the evidence. Using mixed methods and multiple data sources thereby increases the robustness of the conclusions drawn or serves to highlight inconsistencies, which enable findings to be appropriately qualified.

4.2.3 Data Collection and Tools

41. **Desk review of documentary sources** has included partnership and FM reports, wider literature (especially for the political economy analysis) and sources such as blogs. Partnership information was collected into summary partnership profiles. This and other evidence was captured by EQ and by PEA and case study themes, in analytical frameworks. A list of documentary sources is at Annex 3.

42. **Key informant interviews** have been undertaken with all partnerships: the project leader within lead partners and lead personnel for all other partners. A total of 52 partner interviews were held, covering very nearly all partner organisations. Interviews were not limited to a sample, to ensure coverage and the fullest range of perspectives. Interviewees were all closely involved with project implementation and well informed. In addition, a handful of key informants selected for their particular value to the political economy analysis and case studies were interviewed. Interviews were semi-structured and used interview guides developed for the baseline data collection and updated slightly. A list of all interviewees is at Annex 4.

43. **Student and lecturer stories** were introduced as an innovative alternative to focus groups, when travel became impossible and universities had closed down and was the main methodological adjustment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.[17] Separate templates were prepared for both lecturers and students, but similar questions were asked in each to enable comparison of responses from the different perspectives. Respondents were asked about their experience of COVID-19's impact on teaching and learning; preparation of students for work; the learning experience / professional development; and equality and inclusion. Templates were distributed to lecturers and students who had

---

[17] The approach was presented to FCDO staff at a learning event of presentations from EQUALS providers (which includes IPE Triple Line) convened by FCDO Research and Evidence Division in June 2020.

been reached by the SPHEIR intervention in their HEI in some way and responses were incentivised by the offer of a prize to be selected at random from respondents. (This was not considered to have introduced any bias who chose to respond.) Responses were received from all partnerships (although not in equal numbers) from 53 lecturers (30 male, 23 female) and 60 students (26 male, 34 female). Details are provided in Annex 5. Although not statistically representative, the stories provided very useful qualitative insights from across a wide range of disciplines.

44. **Institutional self-assessment forms** asking about institutional policies and practice were sent to partners. 14 completed forms were received from six partnerships, although there was little overlap with responding universities at baseline. As at the baseline, self-assessments were completed by an informed member of the SPHEIR project team in each institution, giving their perspective on the institution as a whole. The data provided is fairly robust rather than definitive (i.e., another respondent might give a different assessment).

45. **All data collection tools are available on request**. They were validated and refreshed from baseline at the start of the MTE, and the student and lecturer templates tested before deployment. The evaluation team is satisfied with the depth and coverage of data collection, notwithstanding the limitations noted below.[18]

4.2.4 Data Analysis

46. **Secondary, documentary information was captured in data matrices[19] against the evaluation questions which it provided evidence for. Programme and partnership documents were particularly rich but further secondary sources gave specific insights or wider perspectives.** There was an intermediate step of synthesising evidence from partnership reports into partnership profiles on an ongoing basis, as it was received, throughout the MTE. Separate, focused data capture was used to gather secondary evidence for the political economy analyses and for the case studies, and again evidence was organised against the lines of enquiry for each in matrices.

47. **Primary evidence recorded in interviews or provided in written form (for lecturer and student story data) was also entered into matrices and organised by evaluation question.** Equal weight was given to all informants, as they were all informed and involved in the partnerships. Story data was clearly labelled by gender and responses coded to allow for quantitative analysis by gender or type of response, as well as qualitative analysis to build an overall picture.

48. **Institutional self-assessment data** was analysed quantitatively into a standalone synthesis report which provided an additional source of evidence for answering the evaluation questions. Self-assessment data and synthesis is provided at Annex 9.

49. **Once organised, all data relevant to an evaluation question, case study or PEA theme was** triangulated across single data sources (e.g. the KIIs) and across different sources of evidence and assessment levels (e.g. KIIs, lecturers and students, institutional self-assessments) to identify common themes and points of convergence and thereby draw findings for which there was good strength of evidence. Weaker evidence or conflicting evidence has been noted in the EQ findings where relevant and methodological issues arising from the analysis for consideration for the summative evaluation have been noted in the report.

---

[18] As previously discussed with FCDO, MTE methodology did not include a repeat of the student and lecturer surveys. It had been hoped that gaps in the baseline could be filled by questionnaire completion during field visits. The baseline survey report is being prepared nonetheless and the EE will explore the feasibility of filling remaining gaps from certain HEIs through surveys of students un-touched by the SPHEIR intervention, once universities have resumed in-person teaching. Survey administration for the end-line will likely take place during field visits, following the difficulties of securing completion remotely.

[19] Data matrices are available on request.

50. **The benchmarking exercise of comparable programmes to SPHEIR** undertaken at baseline was refreshed with additional evidence now available on the programmes selected, plus evidence from two new (follow on) programmes identified. Findings from the benchmarking have been used to augment findings about SPHEIR's progress by providing a counter-factual.

4.2.5 Additional Evaluation outputs

51. **Political economy analysis** was undertaken at baseline and updated at mid-term, providing a rich landscape on a wide variety of aspects of higher education and the wider context for it, from the institutional landscape to employment prospects of graduates, the international donor landscape and gender equality and social inclusion. The PEA extended to seven countries in which SPHEIR partnerships are operating (Ghana, Kenya, Myanmar, Rwanda, Somaliland, Tanzania, Uganda) and three similar countries which can serve as counterfactuals at the summative (Malawi, Nigeria[20] and The Gambia).

52. **Case studies** were identified in the concept note as a means of investigating emerging impact and significant learning and providing additional in-depth evidence for some EQs. The methodology for case studies was developed and potential topics identified through the desk review and consultation with the FM. Four topics were selected as being of particular relevance and were investigated through focused desk review and some additional interviews. The case studies are in Annex 8 and cover the following topics:

- Partnerships' support for the wider COVID-19 response in higher education
- Inequalities emerging through the move to on-line teaching
- Attributes of transformative women's leadership to strengthen pedagogy
- Engagement of Employers in SPHEIR

4.3 Limitations

53. The weak quality of secondary data on national higher education systems noted at baseline and general lack of internationally comparable data on HE systems and outcomes was still evident at the MTE and limited what was possible to inform the PEA. The evaluation team increased the number of interviews undertaken compared to baseline to compensate to some extent and focused desk research on policy trends and new initiatives to bring the analysis up to date with highly relevant contextual information. No other significant methodological limitations had been expected before the COVID-19 pandemic struck. This led to adjustments to the methodology and several resulting limitations.

54. **Firstly, in person visits were no longer possible and all interviews were undertaken remotely.** Whilst a fairly high proportion of interviews at baseline were not conducted in person, having none at all at mid-term meant that there was no opportunity for discussions 'in the margins', for observing the university environment, or seizing opportunities for additional unscheduled interviews, for example with senior university leadership or external stakeholders in the HE system to inform the PEAs, as had been possible during visits at baseline. Poor internet connections also reduced the quality and length of some interviews.

55. **Secondly, interviews had to accommodate the disruption and stress to partners caused by the pandemic.** The evaluation team reduced the demands on partnerships and accommodated logistical difficulties as far as possible, for example by keeping interviews to an hour and holding them across a much longer window than originally planned so that they could be scheduled at a convenient time. Despite the difficulties, the evaluation team considers that the quality of evidence collected was good.

---

[20] Nigeria is not wholly independent from the programme, benefitting through PedaL

56. **Finally, as noted above, focus groups were not possible.** The lecturer and student stories provided a good alternative but were necessarily extractive rather than exploratory, and respondents were self-selected from those who received the template, rather than purposefully selected to represent a good cross-section. Having spoken to nearly 200 students in over 21 focus groups held across all SPHEIR countries, 125 student stories were received, the large majority from PfP, fairly high numbers from PADILEIA, low responses from PedaL, PEBL and TIDE and none from AQ-HESL. Responses would have been skewed towards those students with internet connections who could receive and send them easily. This means that the quantitative data presented has to be qualified and taken as an illustrative perspective rather than a statistically robust and representative result. Qualitative evidence has had to be taken at face value on the assumption that the question had been understood, which is not the case in discussion forums. The story format limited the scope of what could be explored, and this was limited to mirroring the themes from the student baseline (see Section 5.5 of EE baseline report) regarding the evaluation of progress in embedding provision and learning for 21st century competences and work. Despite the limitations, the evidence provided has been valuable and provides some good insights, and is definitely better than having no lecturer or student voice at all.

57. Primary evidence from students is limited with an overrepresentation from some partnerships and none from others. Whereas at the baseline, we were able to speak to nearly 200 students in over 21 FGDs held across all SPHEIR countries, for this mid-term evaluation we received a total of 127 student stories (53 female and 49 male, where disclosed), with the majority of these from PfP and PADILEIA, and with low responses from PedaL and TIDE, and none from the AQ-HESL partnership (see Section 4.2 for how this data was collected).

58. The relatively poor and patchy response rate to the institutional assessments were another weak area but these will be of most value at endline in any case. The intention is to seek completion ahead of the field visits to enable them to be followed up in interview, but where responses are not received, they can be secured during field visits. The response rate will therefore be much higher.

5 The Higher Education System in SPHEIR Countries: The Political Economy Context

59. This section of the mid-term evaluation of SPHEIR provides a summary update of the Political Economy Context for Higher Education over the SPHEIR countries and three additional comparator countries (PEAs).[21] The objective of providing information at the country level is to understand the higher education landscape in the SPHEIR countries (and the comparators) as a whole and any changes which are taking place during the lifetime of the programme. This is to provide context for the evaluation results, particularly at the summative stage. The PEAs provide system level information on the status of higher education policy and its implications at the institutional level. A fuller synthesis is found in Annex 6.

5.1 The Most Significant Challenges in SPHEIR and the Comparator Countries

60. SPHEIR is being implemented in 10 countries and the most significant relevant challenges for all these countries are:

- COVID-19: The need to reconfigure teaching and learning; as well as contend with reduced funding in the face of the global economic downturn
- National framework conditions for HE (funding, regulation, governance, quality assurance) which hinder wider scale adoption of reforms
- Capacity and infrastructure constraints at HEIs (staff and qualification, infrastructure)
- Access, success, progression and outcomes from HE (equity, dropouts, employability)

61. Overall, our research for the mid-term review suggests that most challenges identified and reported to FCDO in 2019 remain prevalent. In the individual PEAs, in 2019, we reported on the short- to medium-term plans of governments to address some of the challenges. However, in most cases, the COVID-19 pandemic (a new challenge) has put these reforms on hold.

62. Countries are also making progress in tackling these challenges. Examples include:

- Somaliland: the progress achieved towards introducing **high-speed Internet connectivity across the country** has facilitated institutions in offering online courses although connectivity remains an issue for students and lecturers as indicated in our case study
- Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya: the share of academic staff with PhDs has increased by an average of 2.4 percentage points[22]
- Sierra Leone: mobile operators have started to provide free of charge mobile data packages to students which could be used for e-learning on selected e-learning platforms

63. Alongside the main common higher education challenges, there are country-specific higher education challenges summarised below and discussed in more detail later in this section. COVID-19 related challenges are dealt with separately in Section 5.1.1. In addition, we report two major natural disasters:

- Flooding affecting mainly Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda between March and May 2020

---

[21] In this chapter, when referring to PEA countries, it means the SPHEIR countries covered and comparator countries. If the countries are referred to as SPHEIR countries, this excludes the comparators. Jordan and Lebanon are not included.

[22] Rwanda: the share of academic staff with PhD has increased from 19% to 20.3%; Uganda: the share of academic staff with PhD has increased from 13% to 17.7% since the baseline figure; Kenya: the share of academic staff with PhD has increased from 34% to 36% since the baseline figure

- Plague of locusts affecting mainly Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Somaliland earlier in 2020.[23]

Table 5.1 provides a summary of selected country level challenges identified in the PEA countries (SPHEIR countries and benchmarks).

Table 5.1: Summary of Some Selected Country-Specific Challenges Affecting HE in 2020 in the PEA Countries[24]

Country	Main Challenges
Myanmar	Lack of qualified academic staff, lack of innovative pedagogies, cultural traditions, skills gap / employability of graduates, resources and infrastructure, ongoing effort towards decentralisation of HE, students having caring commitments, poor level of English, low participation of women in research, disciplines being siloed
Rwanda	Quality assurance, employability, funding, lack of qualified academic staff, innovative pedagogies
Uganda	Massification, quality of education, resources and infrastructure, particularly ICT, funding, risk of drop-outs, strikes, floods, plague of locusts
Kenya	Massification, overproduction of graduates, skills gap / employability, lack of qualified academic staff, lack of STEM courses at universities, resources and infrastructure, failing loan scheme, inadequate data, low enrolment among females, poor linkages with the industry, floods, plague of locusts
Tanzania	Limited autonomy of HEIs in academic appointments, insufficient funding, lack of qualified academic staff, high staff turnover, low enrolment among females and students with disabilities, services for students are sub-optimal, failing loan scheme, teacher-centred pedagogies, HIV/AIDS mortality, employability of graduates, floods, locusts
Somaliland	Lack of infrastructure, financial constraints, lack of qualified staff, quality assurance, employability, systemic gender inequality, locusts
Malawi	*Low intake of students, low enrolment among females, limited student services, shortage of qualified lecturers), lack of quality assurance, lack of 21st Century skills in students, employability, poor staff remuneration*
Sierra Leone	Lack of basic facility, research underperformance, lack of technology, employability, governance, quality assurance, underfunding, lack of linkages between universities and industry
Ghana	Lack of university places, funding, failing loan scheme, accreditation, shortage of STEM programmes and STEM graduates, low technology integration, limited research capacity
Nigeria	*Underfunding of universities, strikes, tuition increases, deterioration of basic infrastructure, shortages in electricity and water supplies, quality assurance, employability*
The Gambia	*Lack of standardised curricula*

5.1.1 The COVID-19 Pandemic and its Effects on Higher Education Systems in the Global South

64. **The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges for the higher education sector across the globe.** HEIs have been severely affected both in the Global North and the Global

---

[23] Source: National Geographic, available online at: https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/02/locust-plague-climate-science-east-africa/

[24] Non-SPHEIR counterfactual countries are in italics.

South. According to the IAU survey in May 2020 on the COVID-19 Impact on Higher Education,[25] 77% of African Universities closed in spite of the region being less badly affected than Europe or America.

65. At the **system level**, HEIs in the middle- and lower-income countries have been hit by the pandemic particularly hard, with competing demands for funding across different government priorities. This has negative implications in those countries where SPHEIR has an ambition to achieve impact on the system level. Supra-national efforts are underway to help to support higher education. UNESCO has called for higher support for scientific research and for young researchers, which is seen as one of the ways out of the crisis,[26] and the African Union (AU) has announced further support for its Pan-African Virtual and E-University (PAVEU),[27] an initiative contributing to meeting the needs of AU's Agenda 2063. PAVEU's activities are around online and blended teaching and learning and they promote open online educational resources.

66. At the **institutional level**, all types of HEIs are significantly affected, to varying extents. This has not, as yet, been monitored in any systematic way. Many institutions were ill-prepared to shift learning online. MTE evidence shows that even before the pandemic hit, HEIs in middle- to lower-income countries in the Global South, lacked sufficient infrastructure for online teaching and learning (e.g. lack of reliable, stable and sufficient internet bandwidth, lack of computers and laptops available to academic staff and students etc.). According to the IAU survey on the COVID-19 Impact on Higher Education,[28] one third of the universities in Africa reported they had no communications infrastructure in place at the time of closure. The move to online environment has only made this lack of infrastructure more pressing, particularly in rural areas. The effect is seen on public and private HEIs alike.

67. For **academic staff and faculty across the Global South**, there are also multiple challenges linked to COVID-19. Academics engaged in research have lost opportunities to collaborate across institutions and across countries, regardless of scientific discipline. There has also been a negative effect of the pandemic on the staff mobility, both internally within countries, but also internationally.[29] Academic staff are also working longer hours with higher workloads. Even though some countries, such as Tanzania, have shortened the academic semester, governments still require higher education institutions to deliver the courses to the same extent (as measured by workload) as before the pandemic.

68. The effects of COVID-19 are also evident on **students** across countries in the Global South. There are serious concerns around worsening in equity in access and participation in higher education. For many students, especially for those coming from difficult socio-economic backgrounds, the higher education campus is regarded as their home, providing them with access to accommodation, food, libraries, and other services to students. It remains unclear how many of those students who were forced to leave campuses will be able to return and when, and how many will be able to successfully continue in their studies. To solve the issues affecting students, government action will be required, amending policies to allow re-engagement with studies, additional funding and changes to study durations.

69. Even when the immediate threats posed by the COVID-19 pandemic have disappeared, its negative effects on equity in access and participation are likely to continue. In the context of SPHEIR, this has

---

[25] https://www.iau-aiu.net/IAU-releases-Global-Survey-Report-on-Impact-of-COVID-19-in-Higher-Education

[26] UNESCO (2020) The response of Higher Education to COVID-19 - Higher Education in Africa: challenges and solutions through ICT, online training, distance education and digital inclusion, available at: https://en.unesco.org/news/response-higher-education-COVID-19-higher-education-africa-challenges-and-solutions-through-ict

[27] The official website at: https://paveu.africa-union.org/

[28] https://www.iau-aiu.net/IAU-releases-Global-Survey-Report-on-Impact-of-COVID-19-in-Higher-Education

[29] World Bank Group (2020) The COVID-19 Crisis Response: Supporting tertiary education for continuity, adaptation, and innovation

implications across all partnerships because students are meant to be the ultimate beneficiaries of the SPHEIR interventions, and if they find impossible to progress and succeed in higher education, these benefits cannot be realised for them. In addition, there are more immediate negative effects of COVID-19 on those SPHEIR partnerships which directly work with students, such as LEAP, TESCEA, TIDE and PADILEIA.

70. The following sections provide an overview of these challenges as set out in the PEAs.

5.2 Contribution of HE to National Development

5.2.1 Relevant Evaluation Issues

71. This section links HE to national development. This relationship is an important one for the evaluation because it situates higher education, research and development within the strategic priorities of governments in the countries where SPHEIR is being implemented, alongside the benchmark countries, and shows its importance.

72. Evidence for this section draws on secondary data (quantitative and qualitative) such as country level data and documents, the academic and grey literature, and primary data in the form of key informant interviews with national stakeholders and SPHEIR partnerships, conducted at baseline, mid-term and summative stages. The data sources cover the wider Global South (rather than just those countries covered in the PEAs), unless indicated as a single country source.

5.2.2 Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

73. Overall, the importance of the role of HE in the national (economic) development of countries examined by the PEA has either increased or remained stable since the baseline report. There is little guidance in the wider literature on how the contribution of higher education to national development, in particular in the Global South, could be monitored and measured in a harmonised and sustainable way. Understanding developments in government priorities in higher education helps to assess the extent to which the outcomes and impacts of the SPHEIR partnerships can be scaled up and/or are sustainable. In the summative phase, we will update this research and analysis based on new data.

5.2.3 Snapshot from the Literature on HE's Contribution to National Development

74. There is clear evidence in the literature of the crucial contribution of higher education to the national development.[30] Evidence highlights that for education to enhance economic growth, children must be both in school (education) and learning. Looking closer at countries in the Global South, higher education is generally considered to have a direct and important impact on economic and social development. However, despite progress, the challenge of how to fully release the developmental potential of universities remains. Global higher education has been characterised by trends in commercialisation and internationalisation. However, the process of internationalisation in higher education has been more beneficial in the short-term to established universities in high-income countries than to more fragile institutions in middle- to lower-income countries. In parallel with the internationalisation of the public higher education sector, access to higher education has grown significantly, providing more opportunities for young people. This has been driven by the private sector and it has implications for equity in that only more wealthy students can afford the fees.

75. In many African countries (including SPHEIR countries), the lack of coherent development models and the impact of internal and external power struggles has contributed to an insufficient promotion of the development role of universities. Cloete et al.,[31] note that this has resulted in a lack of trust and scepticism from many governments, other stakeholders and academics. As it has been hard to see what universities can offer to development, higher education can be viewed by policy makers as a

---

[30] For example, Hanushek, E., and Woessmann, L (2008) The Role of Cognitive Skills in Economic Development In Journal of Economic Literature 46 (3)

[31] Cloete, N., Bailey, T., Pillay, P. Bunting, I. and Maassen, P. (2011) Universities and Economic Development in Africa

luxury ancillary, rather than necessary for development. This suggests that a good governance framework and political reforms are still needed in a number of countries in the Global South to create an enabling environment for HEIs to play their role in national development.

76. Although there is a general consensus on higher education being crucial for building a nation's intellectual capital required for poverty reduction, sustainable development and positive engagement in the global knowledge economy, there is a significant lack of evidence (including research and evaluation) into the impact of higher education on development. Those studies that do provide some evidence suggest that the returns to higher education might have been underestimated, as compared to the returns to lower levels of education.[32] Hawkes and Ugur[33] support this need by further evidencing investment in human capital to boost the economic growth in countries.

77. In Section 5.2.4, we provide an analysis of the importance of HE in the national priorities of countries where SPHEIR is being implemented, as well as comparator countries.

5.2.4 Importance of HE in National Development Strategies in SPHEIR and Comparator Countries

78. Annex 6 provides a synopsis of national-level strategic goals related to HE in the SPHEIR and comparator countries. Whilst some countries have adopted strategies specifically for higher education, for other countries, higher education remains to be part of wider policy areas, such as education in general and/or strategies for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

79. For seven of the eleven countries reviewed, higher education access to underrepresented groups is a strategic priority. This includes girls and women, socio-economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities. Rwanda, for example, mentions in their National Strategy for Transformation 2017– 2024: "ensure that people with disabilities can start and complete all levels of education".

80. For six countries linking higher education to societal challenges and the needs of the communities more broadly is a strategic priority. This includes emphasis on providing graduate skills which support employability, and in particular to 21st Century skills,[34] a priority of the SPHEIR programme. For example, in Somaliland, through the Somali Higher Education Development Support, a project funded by the European Union, is assisting the Higher Education Directorate at the Ministry of Education to carry out a wide range of projects linking the HE sector to the country's development needs.[35]

81. For six countries, the quality of higher education is a strategic issue, and this includes accreditation and reviews of academic programmes. In Kenya, the National Education Section Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022[36] contains ambitious goals, among which is to "review all academic programmes". The Tanzania Development Vision 2025 emphasises quality education at all levels and the need for public universities to produce graduates that are globally competitive.

82. For five countries, research and development (R&D) is linked closely both to HE and the national development. Malawi, for example, has set itself a goal in its Growth and Development Strategy "to

---

[32] Oketch, M., McCowan, T. and Schendel, R. (2014) The Impact of Tertiary Education on Development

[33] Hawkes, D., & Ugur, M. (2012) Evidence on the Relationship Between Education, Skills and Economic Growth in Low-income Countries

[34] There are many definitions of "21st Century skills". All definitions, however, recognise that the 21st Century skills are those skills which are becoming more important at a workplace in the 21st century. The British Council, for example, defines the 21st Century skills as decision-making, critical analysis, communication skills, problem solving and imagination (see: https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading/intermediate-b1-reading/skills-21st-century-workplace). In 2018, the SPHEIR External Evaluator organised an academic workshop where the 21st Century skills were discussed in the context of SPHEIR, and the outcomes of this workshop informed the evaluation tools, such as the survey and interview topic guides.

[35] This action funded by the European Commission covers the whole of Somalia and includes Somaliland

[36] part of the documents forming the overall Vision 2030 strategy

raise the status of research". Kenya would like to increase the number of research personnel by 5% and develop ST&I infrastructure in priority areas by 2022.

83. For five countries, employability of graduates is a goal within HE policy. Myanmar, for example, aims at achieving a "Transformational Shift". Students should "have equitable access to a world-class higher education system, leading to better opportunities for employment and significant contributions to a knowledge-based economy."[37]

84. Five countries mention the importance of strengthening governance in higher education. For example, Ghana includes capacity building workshops on governance and management for 500 heads of departments at HEIs.

85. For four countries, developing higher education infrastructure is important, and three countries set an explicit goal of increasing general enrolment into higher education even though many have already witnessed a rapid massification process in HE. Kenya, for example, aims at improving gross enrolment from 15% to 20%, and increasing gender parity from 0.71 to 0.9 by 2022.

86. Only one country explicitly sets a strategic goal for online learning. For the summative stage of evaluation, it will be very important to review whether national strategic priorities have been updated to address digital access to higher education.

5.3 The Higher Education Landscape

5.3.1 Relevant Evaluation Issues

87. The higher education landscape in each country is important for SPHEIR. The growth of the sector can positively and negatively affect issues such as the quality of graduate learning, the quality and accreditation of the degrees, the funding of the institutions, equity and access and other aspects central to the SPHEIR programme.

88. **Evidence** for this context section of the PEA comes from country level data and documents as well as key informant interviews with national stakeholders and SPHEIR partnerships.

5.3.2 Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

89. PEA countries have seen a rapid increase in the number of HEIs over the last decade. This trend largely continues in 2020, with some exceptions. Increasing numbers of HEIs has implications on the SPHEIR programme, in particular on the potential for scaling up of the results of the interventions.

90. The higher education sector across the SPHEIR and comparator countries is still expanding (measured by the number of HEIs). This increase can be largely attributed to a growth of private higher education sector in countries.

91. The continuing increase in numbers of HEIs from the 2019 baseline is documented for six out of 11 countries (Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Myanmar and the Gambia). In Kenya, the Government aims to accredit 50 more new campuses by 2021. In the Gambia, a new university of science and technology is being set up. In Ghana, the government announced its intention to establish an open university. In Myanmar, the newly established Open University of Myanmar is the first 100% online university in Myanmar to offer internationally recognised degree programmes.

92. In two countries (Nigeria and Malawi), the expansion of the HEIs was brought about by foreign higher education providers opening campuses. In Nigeria, a new system has been put in place to enable universities based in other countries to establish courses and campuses, something which was previously prohibited. Our PEA interviewees believed that this would lead to an increased access to high quality higher education in Nigeria. In Malawi, UNICAF (a private company founded in 2012, which partners with universities in the Global North) opened a new campus in April 2020 offering locally

---

[37] Myanmar: National Education Strategic Plan 2016 – 21.

accredited degrees to African students who want to study online while continuing to work. In three countries (Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Uganda), the 2020 update does not point to any significant change.

93. In Rwanda, there has been a slight drop in the number of institutions. The reason behind the reduction is the merging of eight public HEIs (in TVET) into one public institution. The reduction of private HEIs was due to more strict external audits that led to three closures.

94. The other characteristics of the higher education landscape in the countries remain largely unchanged from the baseline in relation to the geographical concentration of HE provision (typically clustered around urban areas) and the expansion of private higher education.

5.4 The Funding of Higher Education

5.4.1 Relevant Evaluation Issues

95. Higher education funding is a universal challenge including for the vast majority of countries in the Global South (including the SPHEIR countries and its comparators). The COVID-19 pandemic places additional pressures on funding needs. Governments in the Global South find it difficult to allocate sufficient public resources into higher education. This is part of a wider funding issue that includes the whole education and social services sector.

96. For SPHEIR to "contribute more effectively to economic development and growth, public institutions and civil society"[38] a key assumption is that governments commit resources.

97. **Evidence** for this section of the PEA comes from World Bank and Country level statistics, the academic literature and key informant interviews with national councils and other national stakeholders, where available conducted at baseline, mid-term and summative evaluation stages

5.4.2 Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

98. Higher education funding systems and the amounts of public funding available are unlikely to be affected directly by SPHEIR interventions. Funding decisions are subject to political priorities. LEAP is perhaps the only exception as it is introducing an additional source of available funding into the funding mix rather than aspiring to change the current funding systems in Kenya and Tanzania.

99. For the summative evaluation, it will be crucial, to assess the extent to which higher education funding has been affected by the current COVID-19 pandemic. In some countries (see Annex 6), immediate government responses have been to divert funding for higher education to other policy areas deemed to be more important in the fight against the pandemic.

5.5 The Higher Education Regulatory Environment and Quality Assurance

5.5.1 Relevant Evaluation Issues

100. The improvement of the quality and efficiency of the higher education sector relies on good quality assurance (QA) processes and procedures either at the national or institutional level. This is a key longer-term outcome within the programme theory of change.

101. **Evidence** used includes country level policy documents, key informant interviews with national stakeholders, and qualitative data collected from the partnership-level interviews.

5.5.2 Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

102. Our research for the mid-term review shows that **robust higher education QA systems have not yet been established in any of the SPHEIR and comparator countries**. All countries acknowledge the need to tackle this issue and have varying degrees of development of QA procedures.

---

[38] ToC impact level result.

103. In relation to the summative evaluation of the SPHEIR programme, the data will be revisited to see if there are positive or negative changes which may affect the results of the partnerships. It will be important to collect additional reflections of how governments and HEIs have been tackling QA during the COVID-19 pandemic in the SPHEIR and comparator countries.

5.6 Higher Education Regulatory Environment and Governance in the SPHEIR and Comparator Countries

5.6.1 Relevant Evaluation Issues

104. Higher education governance goes hand in hand with the autonomy of higher education institutions, which is their ability to operate independently of the government, in particular in the area of designing, running and awarding degrees. Understanding governance and changes to the models allows the evaluation to better understand why changes occur and where barriers outside of the control of the partnership can hinder success.

105. **Evidence** for the PEAs comes from country-level policy documents as well as key informant interviews with national stakeholders and qualitative collected from the partnership level interviews conducted at baseline, mid-term and summative evaluation stages

5.6.2 Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

106. With the exception of Malawi, Sierra Leone and Ghana, there have been no major changes in the area of HE systems level governance in the SPHEIR and comparator countries since the baseline report was prepared. The general level of autonomy of higher education institutions remains low, with evidence of improvement in Uganda and Sierra Leone.

5.7 Working Environment for Academic Staff

5.7.1 Relevant Evaluation Issues

107. The quality of teaching within higher education is linked to a number of different variables including access to training and the skills and competences of those who are employed in faculties and departments. As a programme, SPHEIR has a number of partnerships which are directly intervening at the level of academic staff to increase training in relation to curriculum design, teaching skills and new ways of course delivery. The wider environment in which academics work may impact on the extent to which these interventions lead to the desired outcomes relating to the increased quality of teaching, and thus ultimately the employability of graduates. The issues on gender equality and academic staffing are discussed in more detail in Section 5.9.

108. **Evidence** is drawn from country level policy documents and key informant interviews with national stakeholders.

5.7.2 Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

109. It remains challenging to source up to date publish statistics on all of the countries covered by the PEAs. However, there is a richness of qualitative data. The analysis shows the key issues that continue to plague the academic environment are the low level of autonomy, the poor pay, the number of PhDs, career progression and the access to training and opportunities for research (as well as the gender gap). For the summative evaluation, the evaluators will continue to source official statistics but remain mindful of the data lags and the methodologies used to collect the data, which do not allow for easy cross comparison.

5.8 Operational Delivery of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

5.8.1 Relevant Evaluation Issues

110. The delivery of high-quality teaching and learning experiences is central to the SPHEIR programme and is explicitly addressed in the theory of change in relation to "increasing the quality and

relevance". All partnerships but LEAP provide teaching and learning support as part of their activity. In Section 5.7, it is evident that training is very rarely available for academics and this in turn affects their ability to deliver high quality teaching and learning to students in higher education (either online or offline). This section gives the wider perspective of the status quo in relation to the delivery of teaching and learning at the national level in the PEA countries, with particular attention given to the impact of COVID-19 and the delivery during the lockdown.

111. **Evidence** is provided from the academic literature and key informant interviews with national stakeholders.

5.8.2 Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

112. The response to COVID-19 has seen an **upturn in the delivery of online teaching and learning** in all PEA countries. At the same time, it has revealed weaknesses in the open and distance learning provision. Issues which continue to affect provision include the lack of ICT infrastructure, lack of teaching materials, continued scepticism amongst academics to the introduction of new methods and the language of instruction.

113. At the summative evaluation, it will be important to further assess the extent to which the changes brought about by COVID-19 have affected the long-term institutional approach to teaching and learning. In addition, the extent to which there has been a mainstreaming of good practice and reflection on the positive and negative implications of wide-scale online teaching and learning.

5.9 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

5.9.1 Relevant Evaluation Issues

114. SPHEIR is expected to contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 5: **Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.** SDG 5 aims to provide women and girls with equal access to education, including higher education, decent work on an equal footing with men and equal rights in economic and political decision-making processes. UK legislation requires that gender equality is built into international development interventions.[39] Addressing gender and social inclusion in SPHEIR is important because institutions, including HEIs, can exacerbate disadvantages facing women and girls in all countries and perpetuate inequality and poverty unless they purposefully address inequalities. Gender inequality is exacerbated by other intersecting characteristics such as disability, religion, class, ethnicity and socio-economic status, which can also negatively affect men and boys.

115. **Social inclusion** is equally important for the FCDO and the SPHEIR partnerships. The exclusion of people living with disability from education (formal and informal) is a global phenomenon. Poverty reduction and education for all cannot be achieved without addressing the rights of 600 million people who live with disability. Social Inclusion and empowerment are central to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). FCDO has a disability inclusive development strategy to double the proportion of disability inclusive education programmes by 2023.

116. **Evidence** for this context analysis of GESI in SPHEIR countries draws on secondary data (quantitative and qualitative), such as UN report, national statistics (including Councils for Higher Education and Ministry of Education statistics), UNESCO and World Bank statistics and academic literature and primary data from interviews and institutional self-assessments. There are no global indicators on social inclusion.

5.9.2 Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

117. Overall, the PEA countries score poorly on UNDP's indexes that measure gender equality, gender inequality and human development (see Annexes – Vol. II). The majority of the countries covered have

---

[39] UK International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014

policy commitments in national development plans to gender equality and social inclusion but they are less explicit about disability.

118. In HEIs in PEA countries, male academics outnumber female academics and there is little change since the baseline. More female academics are seen in the social sciences in general, but far less in STEM subjects. At the student level, there are more signs of increasing numbers of females entering higher education, but no system which has reached parity. There is very little available data on disability and inclusion. There is little evidence collected in the PEAs on gender responsiveness in the curriculum as a key concern at the national or institutional level.

119. For the summative evaluation, looking at the progress made in the partnerships in the national contexts will shed light on the extent to which interventions can help to accelerate progress in this area.

5.10 Services and Facilities for Students

5.10.1 Relevant Evaluation Issues

120. For students to have an enjoyable, supported experience at HEIs, a variety of student services should be available. These include support for: physical and emotional well-being, learning enrichment and also careers advice. Support services are important as a means for ensuring students have a solid foundation on which to base their academic activities, as well as providing opportunities to explore and practice skills and competences, particularly when related to some of the cross cutting 21st century skills and competences which are valuable for every part of the journey from academic studies to the world of work.

121. **Evidence** is provided from interviews with key stakeholders and the institutional self-assessments undertaken as part of the evaluation.

5.10.2 Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

122. Student support services are generally not well developed in the PEA countries. The policy level support is poor, and the implementation is varied. Furthermore, the services are often not designed to deal with the different levels of demand among different groups of students and their ability/propensity to use and benefit from these services. The full positive impact of good student services on inclusion can only appear when the services become customisable.

123. Only in the case of career services is support provided systematically (although there is no indication of quality). There is little evidence of support for mental health and well-being, although more services are being considered as a consequence of COVID-19.

124. Availability of student services is a key assumption in the theory of change which supports the intermediate outcome of "increased and more equitable access and retention". At the summative evaluation, the evaluation will explore the extent to which provision, of lack of provision hinders the educational experience of those undergraduates benefitting from the SPHEIR intervention and also their future employability.

5.11 Labour Market Opportunities

5.11.1 Relevant Evaluation Issues

125. Employability is a key expected impact of SPHEIR with the theory of change looking for contribute to economic development and growth at impact level through graduates (m/f) having the right skills and competences to gain access to the labour market. Understanding the labour market for graduates is therefore very important to assessing the successful of implementation, and to answering evaluation questions on success factors (EQ3), HE relevance (EQ4.3) and employer satisfaction with graduate quality (EQ 11). The labour market is gendered, and an appreciation of this is also central to achieving results for both men and women, and effective integration of gender and social inclusion (EQ7).

5.11.2 Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

126. The statistical data available on labour market opportunities is still patchy for the majority of the PEA countries, and outdated. There is no standard source on graduate employment and no new data available since the baseline, therefore it is not repeated for the MTE. From the qualitative data, it is easy to discern the ongoing issues with the graduate labour market in the PEA countries. There is an increasing focus on entrepreneurship as a means of employment.

127. For the summative evaluation, it will be important to link these challenges to the tracer study on SPHEIR graduates.

6 Evaluation Findings

128. Evaluation questions are grouped in this section of the report by evaluation theme or criteria. Each sub-section answers one main evaluation question or sub-question. Each sub-section opens with a summary of the findings, followed by a comment on the question and the data used. The analysis to support findings follows, and the sub-section concludes with considerations for the final evaluation.

6.1 Effectiveness: Delivery of Outputs and Intermediate Outcomes

6.1.1 EQ1: Extent of Alignment of Partnership Outputs with the Programme Theory of Change

Box 6.1: EQ1: Summary of Mid-Term Findings

- **Projects clearly adhere to the programme theory of change, which is a pre-requisite to them delivering results (outputs) likely to lead to the intended outcomes and impact. There are some limitations to the scale of likely impact due to the variety of partnerships funded.**
- **Project results clearly contribute to programme level results, which are also clearly aligned to the ToC.**

129. This EQ is designed to ensure alignment of projects with the programme ToC in terms of results being delivered. The main data sources used have been the FM programme logframe and reporting, partner reporting, the ToC, the EE Formative Process Evaluation and some KII evidence.

Findings

130. **SPHEIR projects with their multiple approaches fit well with the theory of change, which is a pre-requisite for delivering results**, as found by the SPHEIR Formative Process Evaluation. This evaluation noted variations in approach across partnerships, and variations in the extent to which the partnerships focused on systemic change (i.e., change within the engaged institutions) or system change (i.e., change within HE as a whole at the national level). The variations across partnerships, therefore, mean that the impact at the programme level could be less visible and its assessment is difficult to make. **Project results clearly contribute to programme level results, which are also clearly aligned to the programme theory of change.** Each project has its own results framework and reports progress against projections (milestones) and a final project target. Each contributes to programme results: reported achievements at the project level are aggregated against programme logframe indicators to measure results and progress for the programme as a whole. Each indicator in the SPHEIR logframe maps onto a comparable ToC output or intermediate outcome. There is overall consistency. Analysis is set out in Annex Table 26 and Annex Table 27 in Annex 10.

131. **Analysis of the relationship between the SPHEIR ToC and logframe and how projects contribute to achievement of both at outcome level shows a little inconsistency.** Some partnerships are represented on the ToC as contributing to intermediate outcomes which they are not contributing to on the programme logframe, suggesting that the ToC should be updated (see Annex Table 27).

Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

132. **A revised EQ is suggested for the final evaluation as the current EQ has been answered. We propose: to what extent has the SPHEIR Theory of Change held true**? We would examine whether outputs have led to intermediate outcomes as anticipated in the ToC, and in turn to longer-term outcomes and impacts (insofar as there has been time for change at this level to occur). The answer to this revised EQ can also highlight weaker ToC assumptions underpinning the change pathway, which

might ha/ve undermined progress. COVID-19 will also clearly be a major factor, unanticipated at the start of the programme, and we will consider how best to build it into the analysis.

6.1.2 EQ2: The More Effective Partners in Delivering Outputs and Intermediate Outcomes

Box 6.2: EQ2: Summary of Mid-Term Findings

- **Up until mid-2020, all partnerships were making good progress and were largely on track.**
- **From mid-2020 onwards final outputs and outcomes appear less certain due to COVID-19.**
- **Funding reductions and the no-cost extension also add uncertainty.**

133. The EQ examines which partnerships have been more effective at output and outcome level, to identify those which have made a significant contribution to the programme overall. The eight partnerships are diverse and contribute in different ways, not only in what they are contributing to in the ToC (see Paragraph 130), but also for example in the numbers of students or lecturers they expect to reach (breadth) and to what extent (depth). They are also still very much in progress rather than arrived, at the mid-term. Comparing 'effectiveness' is therefore complex. At mid-term, analysis centres on progress against plans to date. The main data sources are the partnership reports up to mid-2020 and FM aggregate reports.

Findings

134. **The evaluation analysis shows that all partnerships were making good progress and largely on track up to mid-2020 against projected results.** Partnerships report against the SPHEIR logframe annually (the latest available data is from mid-October 2020). From our analysis of available information and FM aggregate reports, the partnerships are making steady progress. This is particularly commendable in the case of AQ-HESL, where the FM had had concerns about viability but a structured, concerted effort to address them has paid off. As noted in Section 2.3, one partnership was terminated earlier in 2020, due to a lack of confidence that barriers to progress could be tackled satisfactorily. The assessment of progress is set out in Table 6.1

Table 6.1: High-Level Assessment of Partnership Progress

Partnership	Progress Against Outputs	Progress Against Outcomes	Comments	Risk Status (FM Assessment 30/11/2020: COVID-19 Impact)
AQ-HESL	On track although some aspects might remain incomplete (COVID-19 dependent)	Adequate progress	The mid-point review concluded that the project was viable.	Moderate
LEAP	Was on track but impacted by COVID-19 related delays	Largely on track	Significant areas of business activities affected by COVID-19. Shortfall in fundraising; Uganda activities paused. Moved to 'delay' contingency scenario.	Major
PADILEIA	On track / above expectations	On track	Impact of COVID-19 on outcomes should be moderate	Moderate, trending to minor

Partnership	Progress Against Outputs	Progress Against Outcomes	Comments	Risk Status (FM Assessment 30/11/2020: COVID-19 Impact)
PEBL	Broadly on track	Broadly on track	Key milestones achieved but more to be done on adoption of blended learning modules beyond originating universities (a key anticipated result)	Moderate
PedaL	On track	On track	Face to face engagement needed for HEI policy reform on hold but spill over effects seen within HEIs.	Moderate
PfP	Overall, on track (mixed picture across outputs)	Evidence of progress	The interruption of clinical supervision and the internship programme will negatively affect the outcome relating to improved practice-oriented learning.	Moderate, trending to minor
TESCEA	On track overall	On track (anecdotal evidence)	Less able to see impact of revised courses in the classroom when teaching has moved online.	Moderate
TIDE	Slower progress	Good progress	Projections likely to be downgraded; severe Govt restrictions on activities due to COVID-19 response	Major

135. **At present, there is much uncertainty about final project outputs and outcomes due to COVID-19.** The turmoil caused by COVID-19 is referenced elsewhere (see Sections 5.1.1 and A8.1 in particular) and affects all partnerships as outlined in Table 6.1, but thus far it has had the greatest impact on LEAP and TIDE. LEAP's fundraising progress has been impacted by Covid-19, requiring the development of a contingency plan in the latter part of 2020. However, more recently it has secured significant additional investment for student lending from family trusts, private foundations and public development finance impact investors. Disbursements to students was paused except for those in private universities offering online programmes, and commencing January 2021 the volume of loan renewals is expected to grow as Kenyan public universities resume, although a number of current LEAP Fellows are expected to continue to defer their studies until later in 2021. Projections for reach are likely to be revised further downwards. The achievement of outcome targets for TIDE is likely to be further reduced by the switch from in-person capacity building to online, due to poor internet access, low capacity of trainers and heavy lecturer workloads, as well as difficulties in engaging policy makers.

136. **Funding reductions and the no-cost extension also add uncertainty.** Partnerships are having to cut their budgets for the second half of 2020/21 by 15%, due to a reduction in ODA[40] - a further consequence of the pandemic. This is currently being worked through, along with the implications of a recent 9-month no-cost extension to the programme, which will enable projects to continue beyond their

---

[40] Overseas Development Assistance. In the UK, this is 0.7% of GNP. The reduction in UK GNP due to the pandemic has resulted in a £2.9bn cut to ODA.

current end dates, where this makes sense (although for many projects the extension may only be for 6 months as it is a no-cost extension). These challenges will have an impact on eventual degree of effectiveness of different partnerships.

Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

137. The final project reports will provide invaluable data for the summative evaluation. We will discuss with the FM how we might develop an analytical framework for this EQ, which provides a more nuanced assessment of success than solely relying on the programme logframe's quantitative output and outcome indicators, including aspects of GESI, positive spill over effects, plans for sustainability and, where relevant, graduate impact. Through EQ3 we will also explore reasons for effectiveness including how challenges have been overcome and risks managed, which will also inform conclusions about relative effectiveness, although the diversity of the partnerships will always present some limitations to such an analysis.

6.1.3 EQ3: Factors Associated with a Higher Level of Success in Driving Positive Changes and Achieving Successful Outcomes

Box 6.3: EQ3: Summary of Mid-Term Findings

> **These factors matter in driving positive changes:**
> - **Leadership and management within the partnerships on a shared agenda that supports SPHEIR goals (transforming systems, inclusive development)**
> - **The strength of the partnership itself, and how it is managed**
> - **Good working relationships between individuals, which lead to successful collaboration and an ability to overcome the challenges inherent to partnership working**
> - **Institutional support within the HEI or HE system**
> - **Effective implementation is in large part about tackling or managing external challenges**

138. This EQ examines factors associated with success, with a view to informing efforts to strengthen the programme in the final phase. As examined in EQ1 (Section 6.1.1), SPHEIR partnerships are contributing to change in HE in a wide variety of ways. Whilst some partnerships are on a firmer footing than others (see EQ2, Section 6.1.2), it is premature to single out those which are or will be more successful, and as noted above there needs to be an agreed framework for defining success in any case. Factors influencing partnerships are also diverse, given the range of types of organisation involved and contexts where implementation is taking place (some have a single country focus, some are regional; number of HE partners vary). At this stage, we have therefore looked at factors influencing partnerships and some of the challenges being encountered.

139. **The factors are characterised as internal or external.** Internal factors are within the control of the partnership and include management and quality of the partnership itself, as well as implementation design and execution. External factors are outside the control of the partnership and strongly related to context. Analysis has drawn on evidence from the desk review and KIIs to identify factors which stood out as enabling reported achievements or which partnerships themselves felt had been important to their own success (or difficulties).

Findings

140. **Beyond progress towards outcomes (EQ2), four partnerships stand out as having potential to contribute to SPHEIR's aims of delivering systemic and sustainable change within Higher Education to meet graduate and labour market needs and thereby to support the programme impact of inclusive development and economic growth.** These are PedaL, TESCEA, AQ-HESL and PADILEIA and all are working on a clear transformative agenda in relation to inclusive development, with supporting factors being strong partnership leadership, teamwork and a shared agenda.

141. **The partnership itself, and how it is managed, seems to be a key factor in progress.** The way in which partnerships work, particularly across diverse organisations, locations, languages and contexts, is undoubtedly complex. Several lead partners (PfP, PADILEIA, AQ-HESL, LEAP) reflected on how they had learnt about the importance of strong internal communications, and the need for clear, shared strategic direction. Different working practices and cultures can cause unanticipated issues and require capacity building support, interviewees from AQ-HESL and LEAP mentioning this in relation to financial management and reporting and programme design approaches. This does not only apply between Northern and Southern partners of different types but also between different HEIs in the same country (e.g. public/private; rural/urban; with better or worse digital capacity), especially where there is no history of working together.

142. **Relationships between individuals seem key to successful collaboration and being able to overcome the inherent challenges to partnership working.** Positive qualities include trust, transparency, mutual respect and commitment. The case study on leadership in PedaL also highlights other factors such as selfless commitment on the part of the team, team buy-in to a shared agenda, and problem solving through inclusive discussion, particularly noteworthy for having generated real demand and drawn in additional universities. A couple of partnerships (TESCEA, PEBL) reflected on how power imbalances within the partnership (e.g. between technology partners and HEIs, or between Northern and Southern partners) could cause barriers to implementation and gave examples of how they had worked hard to address these. Staff turnover or vacancies within partnership teams were also a problem for some (PADILEIA, AQ-HESL), weakening relationships.

143. **Effective implementation is in large part about tackling or managing external challenges.** Partnerships have encountered a wide range of challenges, some which they were able to address, and others which they had to accommodate or manage. Table 6.2 provides a typology of the challenges identified by partners when asked about them in interviews.

Table 6.2: External Challenges Encountered by SPHEIR Partnerships

Type	Example	Partnership
Contextual	- COVID-19, an over-riding challenge since March 2020, influencing all aspects of implementation - Political control / blocks to engagement - University strikes, political unrest and economic crisis	- All - TESCEA - AQ-HESL, PfP, PADILEIA
Operational	- Reaching target audience - Loan repayment model, ability to raise funds - No visits from UK possible (link to COVID-19) - Timing of university terms - Funding limitations (equipment, expenses payments, events, internet etc.)	- PADILEIA - LEAP - PfP, PADILEIA - AQ-HESL Several
Delivery	- Demand outstripping expectations/funds - Poor internet connectivity - Inflexible HE practices e.g. securing agreements, finances - Turnover of lecturers - Resistance of lecturers, pressures on their time, lack of recognition for their involvement	- PedaL - All - PADILEIA, AQ-HESL - AQ-HESL, TIDE - AQ-HESL, TESCEA

144. **A key supporting factor is institutional support from within HEIs and national HE commissions / bodies.** PedaL is an outstanding example. This partnership as a team and through individual members, have actively cultivated relationships with senior academics including Vice Chancellors to ensure that their work was understood and championed. Where a partnership's aims align with and further the partner HEI's organisational strategy it is likely to receive the political support it needs to drive change. PEBL also has active involvement from senior university management. PEBL, AQ-HESL and PfP have the support of regulatory bodies and Government ministries, essential to any reform at the system level. This significant factor is explored further in Section 6.2.2.

Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

145. **For the summative evaluation, we will develop a methodological framework for assessing which factors have contributed to success.** At endline, evidence of the outcomes and achievements within the framework proposed in EQ2 will enable us to define and identify partnerships with a 'higher level of success'. We will identify the principal factors which appear to have influenced success, informed by the MTE analysis and further analysis at endline, and correlate each factor against the successful partnerships, possibly using scoring criteria, to uncover patterns or common themes.

6.2 Effectiveness: Progress Towards Impact at the Institutional Level

6.2.1 EQ4.1: Outcomes in Terms of Quality of Teaching and Learning in HEIs

Box 6.4: EQ4.1: Summary of Mid-Term Findings

- **There are emerging positive outcomes of SPHEIR across the four main approaches; pedagogical training, curriculum design or enhancements, enhancing quality assurance (QA) practices in universities and the use of blended and/or distance learning.**
- **There is preliminary evidence of improved teaching practices amongst lecturers who have received development and training.**
- **Teaching practices appear to have shifted teacher-centred didactic approach to a more student-centred approach involving more interactions, such as class discussion and role play.**
- **ICT and technology have been increasingly incorporated in classroom teaching approaches, accelerated by COVID-19. However, challenges to the access of technology remain.**
- **Furthering positive outcomes are contingent on further buy-in from university management and the availability of resources and scheduling time to allow for staff development.**

146. All the SPHEIR partnerships, except LEAP, involve one or more of the following programmatic enhancements: improving teaching amongst staff through pedagogical training, curriculum design or enhancements, enhancement of quality assurance (QA) practices in universities and the design and implementation of blended and/or distance learning.

147. This EQ feeds into two of the long-term outcomes of SPHEIR: 1) improved learner outcomes, and 2) improved quality and efficiency of HE and at the intermediate outcome level – to increase quality and relevance in the delivery of teaching and learning and student experience in HE.

148. Our findings draw on primary data collected through KIIs with individuals within the partnerships and HEIs as well as stories from students and lecturers. We have also drawn from a rich source of secondary data shared by the Fund Manager (including its FCDO Annual Reviews and partnership quarterly progress reports, as well as internal and external reports published by the partnerships themselves) to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of the programme compared with the baseline. We also draw comparison to the baseline report where possible, especially pp. 84-7.

149. Findings are presented below in accordance with the four areas of programmatic enhancement.

Pedagogical Capacity Development and Changes in Approaches to Teaching

150. Acknowledging the key role of educators to deliver quality education, SPHEIR partnerships predominantly intervene at the level of the educators, providing pedagogical training on effective approaches and innovative methods of teaching, while training educators in curriculum review and redesign. **As at the end of the 2020 (as captured in the reports of the Fund Manager), the portfolio of SPHEIR projects had trained a total of 2,535 staff (43% of whom are women) in teaching and learning, assessment, student support and curriculum design, exceeding its initial projections of 2,131 trained staff**. PedaL, having designed a contextualised pedagogical training programme for the African region, has successfully trained 1,294 (530 female and 764 male) teaching staff in over 60 Universities across Africa, far exceeding its original target of 10 universities. Other partnerships such as PEBL, TESCEA, PfP and AQ-HESL have also successfully delivered pedagogical trainings to academic staff. For instance, AQ-HESL, PedaL and TESCEA's training has incorporated key essential elements such as critical thinking and gender-responsive pedagogy. TESCEA is working to develop an 'East Africa model' of pedagogy that builds on the pedagogical patterns adopted by faculty trained through the project to provide a future model for continuous professional development for academics. PedaL and TESCEA have similar approaches in their localities.

151. **Training across the SPHEIR portfolio has not been limited to academic staff.** TIDE has – as planned - delivered capacity building to 252 academic (191 female and 62 male) and 94 IT support staff (68 female and 26 male) to improve skills that support distance education and online learning with a focus on environmental science degrees. PEBL and AQ-HESL have also trained university administrators in quality assuring redesigned courses and PfP provided additional administrative training to university staff. Overall, training across the portfolio has been well received by educators and the reach of this training within a relatively short time frame is noteworthy.

152. **There is evidence that across the portfolio, staff training has begun to translate into enhanced teaching practice and students' learning experiences.** 32 out of 47 interviewees from our KIIs representing over 20 different partner HEIs indicate that implementers have begun to observe some changes in the approaches adopted by educators trained by their SPHEIR project. This is also confirmed by our educator stories with 34 (15 female and 19 male) out of 54 educators self-reporting enhancements in their own approaches to teaching, as indicated more specifically in the following aspects.

153. **There is some evidence that predominant teacher-centred approaches have been replaced by more student-centred approaches,** as reported by KII interviewees from all partnerships (excluding LEAP which does not intervene with educators) and our educator stories. This contrasts with the baseline which showed the prevalence of teacher-centred and led approaches. These were termed as the "chalk and talk" method, where typical classroom sessions involved the lecturer speaking, and the students sitting passively, with limited opportunities to be actively involved in their learning.

154. **Educators are making their lessons more interactive and engaging students more in the classroom.** They achieve this by facilitating classroom discussion, incorporating 'question and answer' sessions throughout the lesson, and sharing lesson plans with students ahead of class to allow them to prepare and bring questions to the classroom (flipped classroom).

> "It [TIDE] has changed my teaching. I avoid continuous teaching […]. I discuss the lecture for 15 minutes and assess the students understanding through prompt questions. If they cannot answer, I inspire all student to think together." - TIDE educator

155. **Educators identify themselves as more open to being challenged by students and to facilitate and receive feedback from students.** Educators indicate their willingness to hear and discuss in class questions which students raise. This compares with the baseline where it was evident that many educators discouraged students from asking questions in class. Some even viewed student

questions as threatening to their authority or knowledge. The baseline also indicated that teachers rarely asked students for feedback on their teaching nor created opportunities for them to do so. Where opportunities were provided, students were apprehensive about giving any negative feedback in fear of any negative repercussion. This shift is succinctly expressed by an educator from the PEBL partnership in Uganda,

> "I have come to appreciate that a teacher is not a fountain of knowledge and the students are not empty vessels that need filling. This gives me a clearer moral starting point for the way in which I approach my teaching".

Educator stories suggest that many are more willing to admit to not knowing an answer and manage this situation by telling students that they will check and report back later. In turn, it seems that this has resulted in educators preparing more thoroughly for their classes. Many educators report feeling more inspired to do research to work and improve their teaching.

156. **Educators are increasingly adopting varied practices and activities into their teaching, which in principle, leads to more effective engagement of students in their learning**. This has included dividing students up into break out groups and group work. In some partnerships, such as PedaL and PfP, educators have incorporated case studies, role playing and simulations into their teaching.

> "This program has improved or developed different teaching styles and methods compared to before this training when I only knew and used the lecturing system which was boring for my students. After this program I got other teaching methods that can be used to help my students, including small group learning[..] The different student-centred teaching skills such as the flipped classroom means that sometimes I give my students books, PowerPoints, and other journal articles that can be used to improve their level of understanding." Educator, PfP HPE program

157. **For the AQ-HESL partnership, and others, development activities for educators has meant that they now strive to incorporate gender-sensitive teaching by creating inclusive environments and avoiding stereotypes in the classroom**. For example, educators avoid using only male names and references to illustrate issues and draw female students into discussions. In the AQ-HESL partnership this is especially significant for female students in the male-dominated departments of Engineering and Agriculture. PedaL and TESCEA are similarly introducing gender-sensitive teaching (the former illustrated by the case study in Section A8.3).

158. **Educators' enhanced professional development is increasing their capacity to influence and enhance the practices of their peers.** The cascading and multiplier approach, where trained teachers have themselves become trainers for their peers, is used by a number of partnerships e.g. TIDE, TESCEA, PEBL, PedaL and AQ-HESL. PfP have plans to do the same. Trained educators have provided peer support and disseminated improved teaching methods amongst their colleagues. The effect, increased by the exemplary dynamics of their classrooms, appears to have boosted the professional confidence of the educators. This bodes well for the sustainability of the projects and suggests that sufficient capacity has been built within these institutions to continue future training.

Curriculum Design and Re-Design

159. **Seven partnerships in the portfolio deliver course design/ redesign or enhancements**. Partnerships have either designed whole degree programmes or redesigned or adapted course modules to improve on quality. To date, five whole degree programmes and 1,145 course modules have been redesigned/enhanced across these seven partnerships.

160. **Significant achievements in course design and enhancements have been made across partnerships.** PfP is currently developing and has shared a first draft of a new national undergraduate medical curriculum and designed and delivered three postgraduate courses in Health Professions Education (HPE), a certificate, diploma and Masters. These equip current and future cohorts of faculty

members at partner universities with the knowledge and skills to design and deliver student-centred medical courses. These courses are a first of their kind in Somaliland. PADILEIA has designed and delivered a new Foundation Certificate course to facilitate access to higher education for Syrian refugees and marginalised host community students in Lebanon and Jordan. 183 students (116 females, 67 males) have graduated across the two cohorts of PADILEIA's Foundation Certificate courses. The partnership has also designed bespoke short courses, including Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in subjects such as English, Business and Entrepreneurship, and Healthcare, with 6 MOOCs developed so far. The AQ-HESL project has revised 34 modules across its eight selected degree programmes in four subject clusters – agriculture, management, STEM, and health.

161. **The curriculum (re)designs under SPHEIR have included the development of key 21st century competences, including critical thinking, creativity and problem solving.** Notably, the TESCEA project, following an initial skills mapping and validation exercise involving employers and sector-wide stakeholders, has redesigned 87 existing courses to incorporate critical thinking and problem-solving skills aimed at enhancing employability of graduates. Similarly, the AQ-HESL partnership has appointed INASP as a partner organisation to champion the integration of critical thinking components in its curriculum review process and staff development. A critical thinking taskforce has now been set up with representatives in each partner institution who champion this workstream. The development of these competences is expected to improve the employability of graduates and contribute to bridging the industry skills gap. The EE will be implementing a graduate tracer study as part of its summative evaluation in 2022 to measure impact on graduate outcomes.

162. **There is evidence, from KIIs, of institutional-wide uptake and policy-changes to incorporate SPHEIR curriculum reforms, in many cases with institutions contributing resources. This indicates that partner HEIs are satisfied with the outcomes of these curriculum redesign processes and is evidence of the positive impact on teaching.** In PfP, Amoud University have rolled out a number of the HPE modules to their wider health faculty and have recently taken the decision to make the HPE a core postgraduate programme in their College of Health Sciences. The HPE Certificate (a four-module course covering learner-centred pedagogy, clinical supervision, assessment, and course planning and evaluation) has been made a mandatory requirement for all teaching staff that sit within the College's six schools. In PedaL, the University of Ibadan in Nigeria has adopted the PedaL framework for curriculum design for all its postgraduate programmes, not just social sciences. In AQ-HESL, the curriculum revision template drawn up to standardise the quality process as part of the curriculum reform process has been recently adopted by the University of Sierra Leone (the largest university in the country), Njala University and University of Makeni beyond the project's target degree programmes, with works in progress to recommend this template university-wide.

163. **There is evidence of student satisfaction with these modified courses.** Whilst we delve further into program outcomes on student learning in EQ6, (Section 6.3.2), student satisfaction with courses is a key indicator for progress towards impact on quality of teaching and learning. From internal assessments conducted by PedaL in its student feedback survey to which 356 students responded (181 female and 175 male), 79% were satisfied with the learning experience. There is further anecdotal evidence from our KIIs with partners of PADILEIA, PfP, PEBL and TESCEA of students reporting higher satisfaction with their learning experience. For the AQ-HESL partnership, since the modified courses have only just been rolled out, student satisfaction has not yet been captured. LEAP provides student support and financial literacy interventions to improve the academic, employability and financial literacy skills of loan beneficiaries. They have achieved nearly 80% student satisfaction.

164. **37 out of 50 educators (13 female and 24 male) providing stories expressed satisfaction with their professional development under SPHEIR making particular reference to involvement in curriculum review processes**. Educators have gained valuable skills in curriculum design. This is expressed most succinctly by an educator in Somaliland

"We have been exposed to new teaching methodology and education principles.... [and] letting us know what teachers need to be. Many things have changed, even the teaching system and many of us were just educators or medical professionals who are not experts in how to form a curriculum".

Enhancing Quality Assurance Practices

165. **Quality assurance (QA) processes have been established and used.** QA is a focus of AQ-HESL, PedaL, PEBL and PfP. To date, all five new degree programmes and 1,145 enhanced course modules implemented by the partnerships have been quality assured (or approved). Partnerships have taken a variety of approaches as to who and how quality assures the new degree programmes and course modules. AQ-HESL has developed a Quality Assurance Teaching Learning and Assessment manual which is planned to be rolled out nationally in Sierra Leone through the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). In addition, the project has developed and delivered a diploma in quality assurance to 12 staff to date from the national TEC and the project's three core higher education institutions. At the institutional level, there is ongoing training and the appointment of QA officers within the universities. In the University of Sierra Leone, there is now a directorate in place with three QA officers trained through SPHEIR. PedaL's standards for training in pedagogy have been shared with regulatory bodies in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Nigeria, with plans for further engagement across the sector in 2021. Quality assurance processes are key to PedaL and its new course modules. Each course module has to be quality assured or approved within the PedaL team. PEBL also has a strong strand relating to learning outcomes and assessment which is helping to change the quality of teaching. PEBL has developed a QA rubric collaboratively with the Commonwealth of Learning. There are discussions on this in Tanzania for example with the Tanzanian Council for Universities. PfP has already implemented a number of reforms which include standards for medical education, and more recently for nursing. At the institutional level (Amoud University) QA reform is being led by a new committee for monitoring and evaluation which is supervising all teaching. This has also led to other innovations, such as the online supervision of educators. Although TESCEA does not focus on quality assurance per se (tending to work within the boundaries set for curriculum change without the need for wide scale reform), the work is still having a tangible effect on quality in relation to the curriculum offer and there is significant institutional involvement.

166. **QA has influenced the approach educators take to assessing students**. This was a recurrent theme in the stories from educators from PfP but also mentioned in stories from PedaL and PEBL. Facilitated by the SPHEIR enhanced QA processes, educators mentioned their deepened understandings of the role of assessment and how to assess student learning. Traditional summative methods such as sit-in examinations are being complemented with more formative and practical methods such as structured clinical observations. In AQ-HESL, educators now appreciate the significance of continuous assessment of and feedback to students, rather than just relying on final examinations.

Design and Implementation of Blended Learning

167. **SPHEIR partnerships have introduced or strengthened the use of blended learning (combining face-to-face with online delivery) in the HEIs where they operate.** At the heart of this is the PEBL project. PEBL has successfully rolled out six quality-assured modules developed by participating universities to be delivered in a blended format, with a further nine to be completed this year. It has also trained educators on practical skills related to designing, developing and delivering online learning through a Learning Management System. Similarly, for PADILEIA, educators in Jordan and Lebanon received training on how to teach online using Google classrooms. Strengthening online teaching and learning pedagogies is integral to TIDE as it targets distance education students in improving the quality of distance learning for environment science degree programs.

168. **A blended approach alleviates the pressures of large class sizes.** As highlighted in our PEAs and in our baseline report, a classic challenge facing Higher Education in many of the SPHEIR countries is large class sizes, which in turn affecting the quality of learning and delivery of teaching.

169. **From a student perspective, blended learning provides greater flexibility**. This was highlighted in student stories from the PEBL partnership, especially for working students.

170. **The wider adoption of blended learning has also been accompanied by the increased use of technology**. In contrast, the baseline evaluation found the use of media and ICT was limited for majority of SPHEIR HEIs in partner countries. Where this was present, it was in a limited fashion such as the use of PowerPoint presentations to deliver lessons. Commenting on their skills development from being trained under TIDE, an educator indicates,

> "Due to the results of this training, I can now create online learning materials such as assignments question, assessment tools, etc. that have applied to create online learning material for blended learning".

171. **With the emergence of COVID-19 and closures of HEIs, our evidence shows that educators were more prepared and ready for the accelerated shift to entirely online learning as a result of prior training and exposure to blended learning approaches under SPHEIR.** This outcome is extensively documented in our case study on how involvement in the SPHEIR partnerships contributed to adapting to COVID-19 (see Section A8.1), with further discussions in EQ10.

172. **It may be too early to predict how the increased use of technology and shift to online learning will impact on quality of delivery of teaching. At this stage our evidence points in both negative and positive directions.** On the positive side, educator stories mention how online learning has broadened the possibility of incorporating more resources and up-to-date teaching materials in their lessons. It has also enhanced communication and interaction with students, creating more informal and relaxed avenues for students to reach out to their educators to ask questions or provide feedback. On the other hand, educators mentioned the severity of the challenges they faced with internet connectivity and access to the internet. This was particularly challenging for educators within TIDE in the rural areas of Myanmar but also students in Somaliland, Kenya, Uganda, Lebanon and Jordan. Across many HEIs, students and educators testify to higher costs associated with online learning which can be demotivating and burdensome. Further, some educators as well as students do not have access to personal laptops. This has limited the ability of many to engage with online learning and platforms, exacerbating the digital divide between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' and consequently, the quality of teaching and learning. Our case study on equity in access to online learning in times of COVID-19 provides further insights. (see Section A8.2).

173. **In conclusion, across all partnerships the positive outcomes on quality of teaching and learning are expected to translate to wider and long-term impact**. This is however contingent on further buy-in from university management regarding enhanced teaching and learning, institutional policies to make teaching training compulsory for all educators; a strengthened Quality Assurance system to ensure highest standards are adhered to and infrastructure to support these new methods such as tech tools; resources and training.

Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

174. **The activities delivered by SPHEIR appear to be in line to deliver impact on the quality on the delivery of teaching in participating HEIs**. The summative will provide the opportunity to gather more empirical evidence, both qualitative and quantitative, at the educator and institutional level to test whether the early developments recorded here have been sustained.

6.2.2 EQ4.2: Outcomes in Terms of Governance, Leadership, and Institutional Management

Box 6.5: EQ4.2: Summary of Mid-Term Findings

- **The partnerships are exceeding their projects outcome indicator for number of reforms in targeted HEIs where institutionalisation of those reforms has taken place.**
- **The majority of the partnerships HEIs report their university leadership as greatly or moderately open to change.**
- **University leaderships' involvement in the SPHEIR partnerships facilitates wider take up and implementation of the SPHEIR activities.**
- **Where, missing, lack of leadership endorsement is raised as a potential challenge.**

175. Sustained improvement in higher education governance and management are key elements of the SPHEIR theory of change. An intermediate outcome is 'strengthened governance, leadership and institutional management in partner HEIs and beyond, respecting diversity principles' and a longer-term outcome is "improved quality and efficiency of the HE sector including through strengthened regulatory frameworks".

176. Six partnerships (AQ-HESL, PEBL, PedaL, PfP, TESCEA and TIDE) have outputs which intend to deliver HE institutional benefits in target countries. This implies that in the majority of cases, an effect on institutional governance and management is directly expected by the partnership level activities.

177. The main data sources used for this section included the partnership documents and profiles; institutional policy documents; qualitative collected from the partnership level interviews; institutional self-assessments and the benchmarks.

Table 6.3: Overview of the Governance and the Management of the Partnerships – MTE 2020[41]

Partnership	Strategic and Management Oversight	Coordination and Day-to-Day Management	Management of Project Components and Workstreams
PfP	Strategic Management Board	Coordinating Unit	Technical working groups
LEAP	Board of trustees Executive Committee	Lead partner responsible	Global and local credit committees
TIDE	Strategic Management Board	Lead partner responsible and a coordinating unit	Technical working groups
TESCEA	Steering Group	Lead partner responsible	Joint Advisory Groups (JAG) set up by each partner university (with representatives of employers, community, authorities etc.)
PADILEIA	Strategic Management Board	-	Technical working groups
PEBL	Steering Committee	Lead partner responsible	Academic working groups

---

[41] Source: Partnership reports (FM)

Partnership	Strategic and Management Oversight	Coordination and Day-to-Day Management	Management of Project Components and Workstreams
			Module development fund Committee
PedaL	Steering Group	Lead partner responsible	PedaL Communities of Practice
AQHEDSL	Project Management Board	Project Coordinating Unit	Technical working groups

University Leadership and Management

178. For the outcome indicator **"cumulative number of reforms supported by SPHEIR in targeted HEIs where institutionalisation of those reforms has taken place" the programme has achieved 75 reforms, rather than the projected 62.**[42] Although the exact nature of the institutionalisation of the reforms varies across the different partnerships, this includes policy reforms, inclusion in strategic plans, and new or adapted organisational structures. At the output level, in this period, **30 HEIs report significant improvements to HEI management** (with a target of 28). These management improvements include curriculum reviews, quality assurance, employer engagement and policies for training in pedagogy. None of the benchmarks had institutional change through leadership and management as a specific objective, unlike SPHEIR.

179. **The results from the evaluation self-assessment indicate that university leadership is open to change in three partnerships to a greater extent (PADILEIA, PEBL, TESCEA), and to a more moderate extent in PfP and PedaL.** The institutional survey was not filled in by LEAP and TIDE (although in a paper from TIDE on early insights[43], openness to change is cited as an important element to facilitate the quality and relevance of distance education).[44] The results indicate slightly higher levels of openness at the leadership level in comparison to the department and faculty level. Although this is filled in by different universities in comparison to the baseline, the results are broadly similar, with TESCEA, PEBL and PADILEIA indicating a more systematic openness to change, in comparison with other partnerships. In the case of TESCEA, there has been a review of institutional policies as a direct result of the partnership, which was an intentional part of the partnership's approach.

---

[42] From milestone reporting

[43] http://dspace.col.org/bitstream/handle/11599/3328/PCF9_Papers_paper_121.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[44] In addition, not all universities from all partnerships completed the survey.

Table 6.4: Extent to Which Leadership and Faculty are Open to Change – Mid-Term Indicators from the Self-Assessment – 2020

Partnership	PfP	PfP	PfP	PAD	PAD	PEBL	PEBL	PEDAL	PEDAL	SL	SL	SL	TESCEA	TESCEA
Institution	Amoud University	Edna adan University	University of Hargeisa	Al Al-Bayt University	American University of Beirut	Keynatta University	Open University Tanzania	Egerton University	University of Ibadan	Eastern Polytechnic College	Milton Margai College Of Education and Technology	University of Sierra Leone	University of Dodoma	Gulu University
Leadership open to change and innovation	moderate	large	moderate	large	large	large	large	large	moderate	moderate	moderate	moderate	large	large
Departments + faculties open to change and innovation	moderate	moderate	moderate	moderate	large	large	small	large	large	small	moderate	small	large	large

LEGEND

✔ Yes

✖ No

● (green) To a large extent/very important/often

● (yellow) To a moderate extent/important/ most of the time

● (pink) To a small extent/somewhat important/sometimes

● (red) Not at all/not important/never

180. **University leadership involvement in the SPHEIR partnerships aids wider take up and implementation of the SPHEIR activities.** In seven of the partnerships, there are examples of how involving leadership, either in discussions, or formally as part of the partnership team has helped with the roll out of activities (TESCEA, PfP, PEBL, AQ-HESL, PedaL, PADILEIA, TIDE). For all seven partnerships indicated, there are direct benefits from close involvement of senior management. For example, in PEBL the approval of Senate at Kenyatta University and the Open University of Tanzania has been instrumental in supporting the roll out for blended learning. Other partnerships report similar achievements. TESCEA reports that the buy-in of institutional management across all four HEIs is supporting the long-term institutionalisation of TESCEA's approaches (there is a VC and DVCs forum for TESCEA HEIs). This is an active approach which forms part of the strategy for sustainability.

181. The results from the interviews with partners indicate that **engaging with university leadership cannot be a one-off effort**. In the last year PedaL's held consultation meetings with the leadership of partner and non-partner universities. As a consequence, PedaL has resulted in commitments from seven leading African universities to invest resources towards implementing training in their respective universities. TIDE has focused on change management activities as a way to engage with universities and has also undertaken high level briefings for university leaders, and follow up discussions on change management with Rectors and Pro Rectors. As reported in the section on unintended outcomes (Section 6.3.4), the role of the partnerships in the PADILEIA universities has been crucial for online transition. In PEBL, TESCEA, TIDE and PADILEIA, in particular, the SPHEIR teams have used guidance and methodologies developed within SPHEIR for expansion across the whole university, something which is made possible by the engagement of the leadership.

182. Where missing, **lack of leadership endorsement is raised as a potential challenge.** Even in those partnerships where leadership is involved, there is an issue of prioritisation which can impact on the level of involvement. Although there has been ongoing activity in relation to involving university leadership within AQ-HESL, the partnership interviews point to slow (but growing) institutional endorsement, with significant work being undertaken to encourage Deans, Directors of Courses and Heads of Department to switch to new curriculum. This has been facilitated through communicating about the project.

183. **Leadership endorsement is one way in which other barriers such as absence of recognition and reward can be overcome.** PedaL is unified as a group of institutions in relation to calling for university managers and education policy makers to reward quality teaching as part of the promotion

criteria for university faculty. TESCEA, through the involvement of leadership, is changing the culture of institutions, and helping to reinforce an understanding of the value of advances in transformative learning. As indicated in the baseline, where institutional endorsement is stronger, there is more likelihood for SPHEIR to become visible in relation to facilitating access to training or to physical infrastructures such as laboratories and libraries.

Table 6.5: Access to Training and Encouragement of New Approaches – Mid-Term Indicators from the Self-Assessment – 2020

Partnership	PfP	PfP	PfP	PAD	PAD	PEBL	PEBL	PEDAL	PEDAL	SL	SL	SL	TESCEA	TESCEA
Institution	Amoud University	Edna adan University	University of Hargeisa	Al Al-Bayt University	American University of Beirut	Keynatta University	Open University Tanzania	Egerton University	University of Ibadan	Eastern Polytechnic College	Milton Margai College Of Education and Technology	University of Sierra Leone	University of Dodoma	Gulu University
Access to staff training opportunities	🔴	🟡	🔴	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟡	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟢
University encourages new approaches	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟡	🔴	🟢	🟢

🟢 To a large extent/very important/often
🟡 To a moderate extent/important/ most of the time
🔴 To a small extent/somewhat important/sometimes
🔴 Not at all/not important/never

Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

184. **Partnerships have paid attention to engaging with leadership and governance across the institutions.** The institutional self-assessment is a good tool for capturing information on the changes to policy, however it has not been completed by all institutions. The institutional self-assessment will be administered ahead of planned summative evaluation country visits and reflected upon in the follow up interview. Finding on issues such as 'openness to change of institutions" will be triangulated with the finding on the outcomes, impact and sustainability of the partnerships.

6.3 Progress Towards Impact and Unexpected Outcomes: Systems, Individuals, and GESI

6.3.1 EQ5: Intermediate Outcomes at the National Higher Education System Level

Box 6.6: EQ5: Summary of Mid-Term Findings

- **So far, SPHEIR has had only a limited observable impact at the system level, with some specific examples of where SPHEIR has become visible at the national level and also contributed to shaping strategies and policies.**
- **There are specific signs of emerging impact at the system level in relation to pedagogy, relevance for the labour market, and access to higher education across six SPHEIR partnerships.**
- **Achieving substantial system-level impact is rarely found among the objectives of higher education interventions of other international donors.**
- **More data is necessary in order to answer this evaluation question at summative evaluation stage.**

185. The SPHEIR programme aims to "transform the quality, relevance, scale, accessibility and affordability of higher education - helping to address challenges and generate the job-ready, skilled

graduates that business and societies need".[45] In order to achieve this, the programme should, therefore, demonstrate capability to have impact at the higher education system (national) level. The aim of this evaluation question is to assess whether there has already been any indication of the programme having impacted the higher education systems in the SPHEIR countries.

186. This evaluation question covers three main areas:

● Improvements in equity in access and affordability of higher education
● Improvements in quality and efficiency of higher education
● Improvements in relevance of higher education

187. The main data sources used in this section were the PEAs initially prepared at baseline and their updated versions prepared for this mid-term review; SPHEIR partnership monitoring data and results framework; additional review of SPHEIR-related documents; key informant interviews with SPHEIR partner organisations and with wider stakeholders; the impact case studies; and the benchmarking. This section also refers back to Section 5.1 of the baseline report (The Political Economy Context in SPHEIR countries).

188. **So far, SPHEIR has had only limited impact at the system level**. There is only limited evidence available for the mid-term review of SPHEIR to suggest that the programme has had a substantial impact on the higher education systems in the countries. There are some specific examples where SPHEIR has not only become visible at the national level but has also contributed to shaping strategies and policies. These examples are presented below in detail, however, in general, it is still too early to assess impact of the programme at this level.

189. **The official SPHEIR monitoring data shows optimism about the expected system-level impact.** The target value of the Outcome Indicator 2 (as per the SPHEIR results framework)[46] at the system level has been revised upwards. The value for this indicator for 2020 was revised (as of 30/04/2020) from 7 to 8. The FM explained that:

> "The increase is due to an expectation of more reforms through PfP. This year, they expect to see institutionalisation of medical schools' assessment systems, a new national medical curriculum, state funding of clinical supervisors and of a national internship system, and a new national nursing standards framework."

However, the projected targets most likely do not take into account the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

190. **Only AQ-HESL, PfP and TIDE have been aiming for considerable effects at the national policy level from the outset (with PfP focused on the national health system and medical education),** although three other partnerships have achieved this, to some extent, in the meantime:

● **AQ-HESL** – In Sierra Leone, AQ-HESL has been working with the aim of achieving reforms at the national level since the outset, in the area of quality assurance. Therefore, the success of this partnership is tied to demonstrable positive changes in the Sierra Leonese system of HE quality assurance. One of the main planned outcomes is the creation and adoption of the National Qualification Framework which will standardise course requirements across all HEIs in Sierra Leone. However, overcoming the fact that quality assurance is highly political in Sierra Leone, and therefore getting the buy-in from HEIs leadership is difficult, is still one of the major challenges for the partnership.

---

[45] The official aim of the SPHEIR programme, see: https://www.spheir.org.uk/about.

[46] # of reform processes at the national level supported by SPHEIR which have led to institutional change at that level, # of reform processes at national level underway which have been triggered/inspired by SPHEIR-supported reform at HEI level

- **PfP** – KII evidence suggests that work on designing the national curriculum in the health area have been progressing successfully. This is also linked to the new system of medical school assessment in Somaliland. There is, therefore, work in progress with a clear potential impact at the national level.
- **TIDE** – The SPHEIR partnership in Myanmar focuses on improving the quality of distance learning in higher education in Myanmar. KIIs suggest that the partnership has already had positive effect at the national level, for example by contributing to the National Education Plan 2016 – 2021 and to its continuation for the period 2022 – 2030.

191. **The specific signs of emerging impact at the system level relate to several areas, such as pedagogy, relevance for the labour market, and access to higher education.** More specifically, the following are examples of SPHEIR partnerships where the evaluation has found signs of emerging impact at the system level:

- **TESCEA** – The TESCEA universities in Uganda and Tanzania have been systematically working with their wider stakeholders on a curricular reform (with a view to enable students to identify challenges in their communities and work on them). Each university has set up a Joint Advisory Group (JAG) with representatives of local and regional businesses, local authorities, NGOs, but also national authorities (such as the Prime Minister's Office in Tanzania, Tanzania Commission for Universities etc.). This is helping to increase the visibility of the partnership and, based on the interviews with the TESCEA partners, some national-level stakeholders have expressed interest in scaling the "TESCEA approach" up and/or applying it at other universities across the countries.
- **PADILEIA** – By offering courses to young Syrian refugees, but also to other individuals from underrepresented groups, the PADILEIA partnership helps to improve the equity in access to higher education. The courses focus on providing young people (men and women) with skills that are necessary to enter higher education, such as English language, working with computers (and with common software) etc. In Jordan, PADILEIA has gained visibility at the national level and the Ministry of Higher Education is now using PADILEIA as a success example of effective delivery of online courses. In Lebanon, the American University of Beirut (a PADILEIA partner university) is regularly represents the PADILEIA project management team at the national higher education forums, with participation from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Lebanon.
- **PEBL** – The partnership has become visible at the national level in East Africa, especially in Kenya and Tanzania. It has been developing and delivering blended learning courses. The courses can be shared across HEIs and across countries. The Commission for University Education in Kenya is one of the PEBL partners and the partnership is working on the development of a closer relationship with Tanzania Commission for Universities. Close linkages with national HE regulators help leverage the results of PEBL and disseminate more widely.

We have not yet found evidence of system-level impact in the other SPHEIR partnerships (i.e., PedaL and LEAP), however, this does not mean that they will not achieve any in the future.

192. Achieving substantial system-level impact is rarely found among the objectives of higher education interventions of other international donors. This was the case only for two (out of eight) of the benchmarked programmes (see Annex 7). Most international donors' funding programmes do not have clearly articulated intentions to bring about systemic level change in the higher education sector (of the benchmarked programmes, this was the case only for the ALFA III and NORHED programmes), although one programme has achieved system-level impact even without having this as a specific objective (OpenMed). More specifically, achieving equity in access to higher education was clearly articulated as an intention in only one comparator programme, ALFA III. ALFA III was also the only comparator with a specific focus on improving the quality of the whole higher education system. The importance of networks of multipliers seems, therefore, crucial for achieving the desired effect which goes beyond the programme beneficiaries.

Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

193. **More data is necessary to respond to this evaluation question at summative evaluation stage**. Our inception report foresees several evaluation indicators based on the national statistics for this evaluation question, such as entry rates, HEI ranking, vacancies in targeted sectors etc. We have tried to collect up-to-date data for the mid-term PEAs however there are significant data gaps across the SPHEIR countries, issues of incomparability of the data and, where data exists, significant delays in reporting. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that the national data will currently reflect any of the effects of SPHEIR at the national level when the final evaluation takes place. For the summative stage, we will therefore aim at:

- Collecting new statistical data for the SPHEIR countries (this could also mean making direct contact with international bodies, such as World Bank, UNESCO, hopefully facilitated by FCDO).
- Probing deeper into the emerging impacts at the national level during our site visits to the SPHEIR countries, in a way not possible at the mid-term.

6.3.2 EQ6: Intermediate Outcomes of the Programme at the Level of Individuals (Students)

Box 6.7: EQ6: Summary of Mid-Term Findings

> - **Whilst there are positive indications that student learning experiences are improved, for most SPHEIR partnerships, it is still too early still to expect evidence.**
> - **Nonetheless, student reports suggest improvements in their interactions with staff, in teaching activities used in classrooms, range and quality of resources made available to them and the use of technology in their classrooms.**
> - **Educator stories and partner interviews indicate positive developments in provision and learning of 21st Century competences, mostly in critical thinking and problem solving.**
> - **On issues of equity and access, evidence from the LEAP and PADILEIA indicate some progress in targeting economically disadvantaged students.**
> - **COVID-19 has had negative impact on student learning with challenges in access to online learning, feelings of isolation and negative mental health effects. On the positive side, students report learning new ways of learning and building their IT skills.**

194. SPHEIR's main goals include improving the quality and suitability of graduates, and graduate outcomes including employability (longer-term outcomes 1 and 2) through strengthening teaching and learning (intermediate outcome 2). Findings relating to impact on student learning is therefore central to assessing the effectiveness of SPHEIR. All the partnerships except LEAP provide some variant of curriculum enhancement, pedagogical training and/or stakeholder engagement as part of programme activities to enhance student learning and in the long run to impact on graduate outcomes. LEAP impacts on student learning by increasing access and retention through provision of loans to otherwise underfunded talented youth. **Fund Manager reports as at the end of September 2020 place the cumulative number of students engaging with at least one SPHEIR-supported innovation across the portfolio at 21,403.**

195. This section presents data on changes in the formal learning environments and interactions between students and staff as key indicators of the quality of student learning. We also look at the evidence of the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, students' future aspirations and issues of equity and access. Finally, we evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on student learning to anticipate the potential consequences for SPHEIR implementation and our summative evaluation.

196. This section draws on primary data from KIIs with partnerships, student stories, the lecturer stories and secondary data including key reports from the Fund Manager and partnerships. Where relevant we compare data with the SPHEIR baseline report, particularly Section 5.5.

The Formal Learning Environment and Interactions with Staff

197. The learning environment asserts a strong influence on student learning, and comprises the physical environment, including infrastructure, the dynamics of interactions with the teaching and wider university staff, sense of community and belonging and classroom activities. We look at the extent to which these changes might be occurring.

198. **Testaments from students indicate positive changes in their classrooms and improvements in teaching. Most significantly, and reflecting the section on educators (Section 6.2.1), there is a shift away from teacher-centred practices.** Specifically, 46 out of the 126 students (19 females and 23 males, where disclosed) identified new teaching approaches as what they most liked about their learning experience in the past year. Of these, 32 were from PfP and 11 from PADILEIA.[47] Students mention classes were interactive and lessons incorporated more multi-modal approaches to aid their understanding of the subject matter. Lessons involve more practical and applied activities which are relevant in relating their learning to real world experiences, the use of case studies and role plays. This is corroborated in some educator stories as they observe students are more open, interactive and engaged in class as a result of the new practices they adopt. Students are more eager to learn as their classes become more exciting and relevant. They ask questions more freely and frequently. However, similar to findings from the baseline, it appears the interactive and multi-modal approach experience was dependent on individual educators or instructors and was not yet systematic or the standard experience across all their classes.

199. **Students appreciated their increased levels of engagement during classroom teaching. In PedaL, students liked being tasked to conduct research, work on projects and present during class.** Similarly, in PADILEIA, students liked taking an active role, such as by being required to explain lessons to peers through preparing slides or writing introductions to the topics to present in class. In PEBL, students clearly enjoyed their Q&A sessions dedicated at the end of their classes. Whilst students admit the interactive and varied class activities required them to work harder, they preferred this because they understood that it developed their learning. This experience is evident in the words of this student from PedaL:

> "I have to admit that it was demanding and initially I didn't like it. I, however, appreciate it now when am doing the project work since I understand more, especially the areas I presented, and also I tend to recall most of what I learnt through this method".

200. **Students note the increased opportunities they have to feedback on the teaching and to interact with their lecturers within and outside the class.** Some student cohorts share informal platforms such as WhatsApp chat groups with their educators which allows them to easily communicate with their teachers. More formal means, such as Google Classroom and email, were also being used outside of class times. This practice seems to have been intensified by the COVID-19 induced shift to online learning. Educators and students alike have needed to stay in touch via these channels in the presence of HEI closures prohibiting face-to-face communication. In some cases, these chat groups were initially set up as a means for educators to share lecture materials and slides but they have also turned into an avenue for educators to keep in touch with students. The new form of interaction was also confirmed in interviews with university staff from PedaL, PEBL and AQ-HESL where they considered that, as a result of students interacting more with lectures outside of class, they ask more questions and that in turn is more likely to support student learning.

201. **Students report improvements in learning materials**. 34 out of 126 (19 females and 15 males) named the resources they had been provided or exposed to as part of their studies, as part of what they

---

[47] The number of students from PfP and PADILEIA contributing to a particular finding have been specified in this section given the dominance of responses from these two partnerships (see Section 4.3)

most liked about their learning experience during the last year, and were satisfied with them as being relevant to their studies. 22 of these 34 were from the PfP partnership and another 5 from PADILEIA. Students expressed satisfaction with the resources and felt they were relevant to their studies. Students also appreciated the variety of online resources, such as videos and interactive exercises. For students in PfP and PADILEIA on clinical and practical courses, these allowed them learning through seeing and doing made it easier to grasp and relate to, which they indicate deepened their understanding and knowledge.

202. **Students increased the use of technology in their learning.** This mirrors the findings from that of educators from Section 6.2.1**.** By contrast, at the baseline, students indicated low levels of incorporation of technology in their classrooms which was generally limited to PowerPoint presentations. This time, students referred to a wider range of technological resources including YouTube videos, interactive quizzes for practice and assessments. This finding was most significant amongst students from PEBL, TIDE and PADILEIA, all of which incorporate blended learning for students as part of their intervention approach. In addition to the online multimedia material being highly engaging, there are reports of students have gaining important technical IT skills in the process of navigating online courses. This increased use of technology, again, seems to be facilitated by COVID-19 and the shift to online learning. However, as earlier mentioned, limited availability and access to the internet remains a challenge. See Section 5.1.1 for a more detailed discussion of the impact of COVID-19 on student learning and our case study on how COVID-19 has affected access to online learning (Section A8.1).

203. Overall, 79 of the 126 students (35 females and 40 males, where disclosed) who shared their stories expressed a sense of general satisfaction with their HE courses in the last year. 54 of these were from the PfP partnership and 14 from PADILEIA while others were from HEIs in TIDE, PEBL and PedaL.

Student 21st Century Skills

204. The most frequently mentioned academic skills that educators mentioned relate to progress in provision of cognitive development, specifically critical skills and problem-solving skills. Since many of these described the application of these in relation to actual real life or community challenges, the specific context of their development means these comprise 21st Century skills. Particularly, for TESCEA where modules are being tailored to enhance graduate employability skills, educators believe there will be likely impact on the students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills in relation to actual social challenges. Educators from the AQ-HESL partnership, where critical skills development is a key component of the curriculum review process and pedagogical training, believe themselves to have acquired critical thinking skills and have begun to incorporate elements of this into their teaching which is expected to impact on students in the long run.

205. PfP and PADILEIA students report that that they have gained some critical thinking skills. This is validated from secondary evidence generated by partnerships which demonstrates learning outcomes on critical skills and other course specific cognitive skills such as financial literacy. As expressed by a PADILEIA student:

> "In the last year there was some experience I gained from my program including critical thinking, reasoning and discussions during my class lectures".

From an internal student feedback survey conducted by the PedaL partnership to 356 (181 female and 175 male) students who were taught on courses using PedaL methodology, 79% responded they were satisfied with the learning experience. When asked whether about the skills they had developed, student responses which align with the competences that are internationally recognised[48] as being key

---

[48] As per the National Survey of Student Engagement on which the

and which SPHEIR partners validated[49] as being relevant to their respective programmes - indicate that they 21st Century skills have been developed. Specifically, 97% of students said that they had developed critical thinking skills, 81% that they had developed collaboration skills, 79% skills for reflecting and connecting, 76% skills for change and adaptability, and 73% skills around innovation and creativity. In the LEAP partnership, besides providing loans to student to finance their education, students are given financial literacy training and to improve their skills on financial management as well as career readiness training such as interview skills and public speaking. Pre-post assessment surveys administered by LEAP after the training sessions show that students that took this finance education gained an average of 20% points (sample size of about 800 students) between pre and post training on student finance literacy skills. This should translate to a life-long skill which should benefit them further along in their careers.

Future Aspirations and Preparing for the World of Work

206. **Many students felt positive about their career prospects after university. This included 51 of the 127 students (20 females and 31 males), of whom 37 were from PfP**. 58 students (21 females and 37 males), with PfP accounting for 45 of these responses, reported having received some support from their university to prepare them for work. They highlighted both the specific technical skills they were studying as well as other competences, including transferable skills. The types of support mentioned by students included clinical rotations for experiential medical training, workshops and clubs, fieldwork, leadership skills, internships, job interview training. Students wanted to see more of this support incorporated into their learning. On the other hand, 49 of these students (22 females and 27 males), indicated that real-world problems were incorporated into their current curriculum. As expressed from a student in PEBL:

> "The university gives us many opportunities as students to learn in workshops and clubs to get experience of how we are going to face the community conditions in the world of work"

207. **As with the baseline findings, most students aspire to be self-employed and anticipate applying the technical skills they developed in their various courses to an entrepreneurial setting.** This remains an outstanding finding and possibly highlights the reality of high graduate unemployment rates that students from various disciplines face. This is the case even for those enrolled in high demand courses such as medicine, who also view self-employment as a desirable graduate destination. In this context, it will be necessary to identify the extent to which HEIs are preparing students to be entrepreneurs and the corresponding competences they will seek to incorporate in course designs and re-designs in the future. Speaking about her future aspirations, a student from Somaliland indicates:

> "Definitely, I want to be an entrepreneur and social worker when I finish university since I think it's crucial to my future and everybody is good at something, and can be entrepreneur"

Likewise, a computer science student from Syria:

> "For the future I would like to invent an application that will be useful for our life. Also, I have a dream to make a pen which shake when we make spelling mistakes".

208. **Consistent with the baseline, a common motivation and aspiration was to help their community after graduation.** Students provided positive reasons including wanting to give back and improve their communities and the world beyond through applying their technical knowledge. Speaking from Kenya,

---

[49] During the EE's consultation with SPHEIR partners at the British Council hosted meeting in Nairobi in September 2018.

"I have big dreams of working with any world class university as a lecturer and to prosper in my teaching career to become a PhD holder in Education so that I may contribute research projects to the world many unsolved problems in education especially in my country Kenya"

209. **Students in Jordan and Lebanon also wanted to give back to young people like themselves through mentorship and this appears to be inspired in the** PADILEIA **program.** Another student in Syria shares:

"When I complete my studies, I will volunteer to guide students to apply for scholarships and personal assistance no matter how simple and in what field. I can offer a lot of advice and education in addition to providing guidance and workshops to poor regions, programs that help students complete their studies and help them to enter the university, just like this program [PADILEIA]"

Equity and Access

210. SPHEIR intermediate Outcome 1 (see ToC, Section 3.2) concerns increased and more equitable access and retention, and is expected to result from partnership outputs concerning diversity initiatives and support services for students. Removing barriers of equity and access for disadvantaged students improves their learning experience and contributes to positive learning outcomes. EQ7 (Section 6.3.3) provides a more in-depth discussion on GESI.

211. **There are some partial results on student equity and access in relation to economic disadvantaged students from two main projects, LEAP and PADILEIA, but with very much more limited results for gender for LEAP**. The LEAP partnership specifically provides student financing to otherwise un(der)funded talented youth across Sub-Saharan Africa, targeting youth from low and middle-income backgrounds who cannot access conventional commercial loans, nor benefit from bursaries or scholarships. Monitoring data from the FM shows 814 students (largely men) in Kenyan universities have received financial support via LEAP. To date, 84% of LEAP Fellows come from the bottom three wealth quintiles in Kenya, 65% from the bottom two quintiles, and 36% from the poorest quintile, with a further 85% of LEAP Fellows reporting that without their LEAP loan they would not be able to finance their studies. Nearly half of all LEAP Fellows are the first in their family to attend tertiary education, and 28% are from a household where neither parent/guardian completed secondary school, greatly enhancing their social mobility prospects. PADILEIA which designs and delivers a bespoke Foundation Certificate course to facilitate access to higher education for Syrian refugees and marginalised host community students in Lebanon and Jordan, has supported 57 students (25 men, 32 women) from its target groups to progress into HE, with a further 29 students currently awaiting confirmation from scholarship or funding applications to support their studies. Six Syrian graduates (four male and two female) have been offered employment based on their certificate.

212. **Preliminary findings show other SPHEIR initiatives are directly and indirectly working to enhance access through student support services.** For example, the AQ-HESL partnership, through one of its partners, the 50/50 group, has made strides in pushing gender on the university agenda. Faculty members working with the partnership have been appointed as gender champions to advocate for more social inclusion and diversity policies at their universities including how to boost female enrolment rates and mobility access for physically disabled students with practical suggestions such as ensuring classes with any such students are moved to the ground floor of university buildings. For TESCEA, Gulu University established a Gender Desk after the Vice-Chancellor attended a project workshop highlighting the lack of support for students experiencing sexual harassment.

213. **Distance education students from TIDE and those taking blended learning courses under PEBL, PedaL and PADILEIA welcomed the widened access and flexibility this gave them.** For those who are juggling work and family responsibilities along with their studies, online modules offer the flexibility they need to obtain credits under difficult schedules. Speaking from Uganda, a student from PEBL highlights:

"Currently am doing my transport business, where I deliver cargo and transport people. Now I will be able to complete my studies as well"

214. **Equality of treatment:** Students and educators responding to our stories, generally thought there was equal treatment for all students, regardless of gender, disability, or background. This held true whether the respondent was male or female. These findings are similar to those found at the baseline. However, we note that these views are in contrast with evidence in our PEAs (Section 5.9 and Annexes – Vol. II) which documents some disparities between men and women (both teachers and students) in the HEI sector in SPHEIR countries. EQ7 (Section 6.3.3) specifically explores the impact of SPHEIR on gender equality and social inclusion and provides a more in-depth discussion.

215. **Financial support: Family support remains the main source of financing for students in their education.** Whilst students felt their universities were supportive in general, financial support from their universities was inadequate (supporting findings in our PEA) and yet financial support was repeatedly mentioned by student as a huge challenge further emphasising the need for initiatives like LEAP. A caveat here is that we do not expect SPHEIR to have any direct impact on student financing from universities as this goes beyond the mandate of the programme.

Challenges and Impact of COVID-19 on Student Learning

216. The timing of our MTE activities provided an opportunity to gather first-hand accounts of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students enrolled in SPHEIR HEIs. Using our student stories, students were asked to provide qualitative statements on how COVID-19 had impacted their study. Figure 6.1 provides a summary of codes developed against the data capturing some popular themes. We touch on a few below with our case study on access to online learning in times of COVID-19 (Section A8.2) providing a deeper dive.

217. **The most expressed negative impact for students was the challenge with access to technology arising from the shift to purely online learning.** All SPHEIR HEIs had to shut down face to face lectures at some point during the pandemic. As noted earlier, in many of these countries the internet infrastructure was already weak with poor connectivity. Students name difficulty joining online classes due to unstable and poor internet connection, finding a quiet place at home (as all the family is home) and the high costs of buying data. For some students, they had to join online lessons using their phones due to not having laptops or having to share computers as a family. For some students without phones, they had to borrow from family members.

218. **Students felt COVID-19 had resulted in lowering the quality of their teaching experience due to the shift to online learning**. This was especially so for the teaching of practical elements of their lessons. Other factors mentioned in the low quality of teaching include the late arrival and absence of educators as they themselves struggled with connectivity issues and adjusting to the pandemic.

219. There is learning here for SPHEIR partners and HEIs, as more online content is incorporated into delivery of teaching. A wider concerted effort needs to be made and a structured approach minimise the impact of these significant barriers to online access and to reflect on ways of improving the teaching of practical elements online.

220. **Over half of students submitting their stories mention some sense of feelings of isolation, negative impact on their mental health and a general fear of their health.** Narrating the experience from Uganda, a student shares:

"[...] I have also faced a challenge of isolation during lockdown, difficulties in getting basic needs like food and water. Anxiety from the closure of my business".

We see this finding of negative impact on jobs for student workers in a few other cases.

221. **On the rather positive side, students felt COVID-19 had necessitated them to learn new ways of learning in order to adapt to their new circumstances.** Students have also sharpened their

IT skills and become more adept at some of the IT applications used in online learning. Students were positively surprised by their own resilience, determination to continue to learn under the circumstances, and how quickly they were able to adapt to the situation. A student from Somaliland shares:

"From the technological view, we learned more about studying online and using the electronic study programs better than the past. And we can focus more on the lessons and we can record it so we have the ability to attend the lessons more than once to understand some ideas".

222. **The flexibility in use and allocation of students' time presented by online learning was also a recurrent theme.** A student from Jordan shares:

"As for its positive impact, I saved time and effort in studying, as I attended lessons while I was at home, and at any time I can find the lectures available on the Classroom website. In particular, I have been using technology better or, more precisely, I have used it for important purposes such as studying and communicating with teachers through the use of email and communication sites in general, and access to them has become faster"

Figure 6.1: Positive and Negative Themes on the Impact of COVID-19 on Students
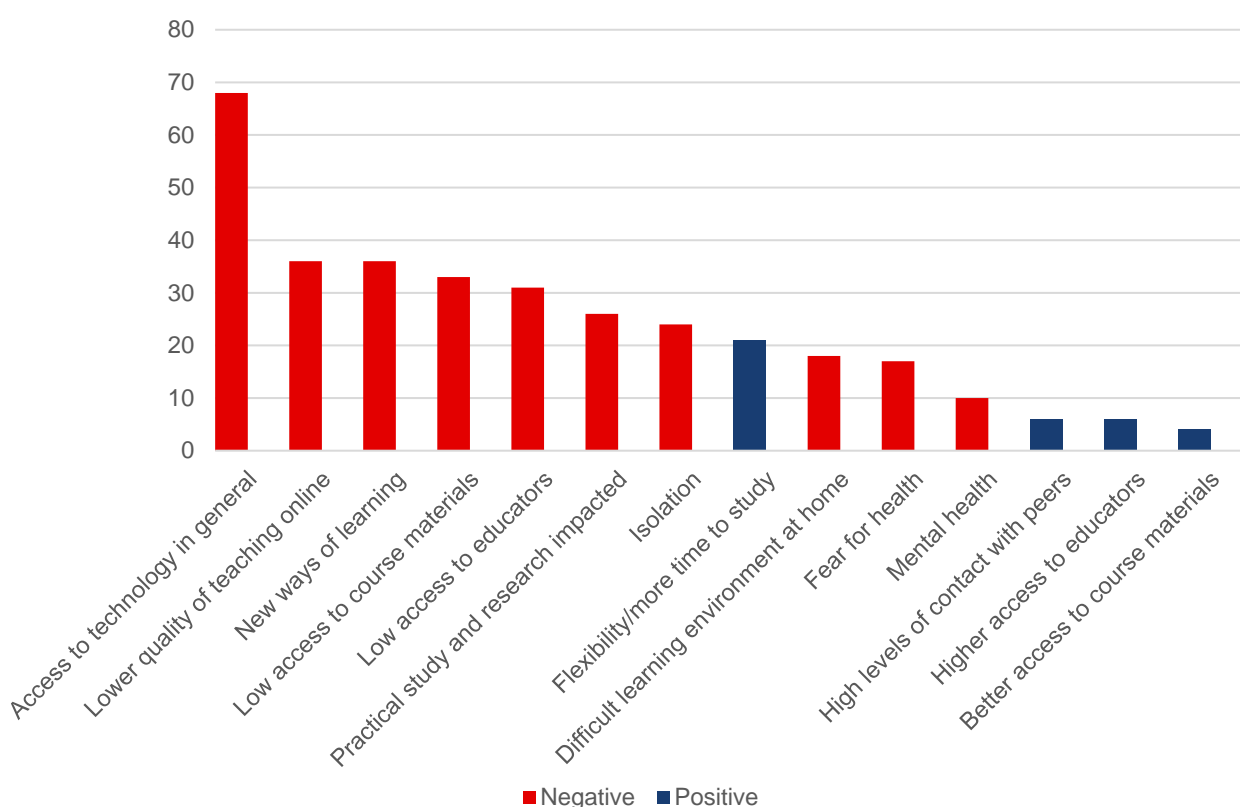
Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

223. Primary data collection at the student level will be key to answering this EQ. We will be repeating our baseline quantitative survey as well as student focus group discussions to enable us measure changes on key predictors of students' learning especially around students 21st century skills. We will also be undertaking a graduate tracer study for a selected partnership to measure graduate outcomes. Our data on the impact of COVID-19 on students learning will also be incorporated in our summative evaluation as possible moderators of any impact of the partnership on student learning. Finally, we will be more equipped to look at which activities have had the most impact. A framework will be developed to match implementation activities with the realised impact at the partnership level.

6.3.3 EQ7: Impact of SPHEIR on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Higher Education Across Assessment Levels

Box 6.8: EQ7: Summary of Mid-Term Findings

- **There is clear progress on integrating GESI into project implementation, and leadership on GESI within some partnerships stands out.**
- **The SPHEIR portfolio provides some very good examples of best practice strategies and tactics to drive forward GESI in HE.**
- **There is some evidence of progress towards impact on GESI at institutional, lecturer and student levels. Taken with our assessment of how GESI has been integrated into SPHEIR, it seems that SPHEIR is likely to achieve good impact in this area.**
- **GESI problem analysis at fund level and for some partnerships could be strengthened to better understand issues and opportunities; likewise, the ToC and results framework could both better integrate GESI.**

224. **This evaluation question examines the contribution the SPHEIR partnerships have made to gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) at all five assessment levels**. It reflects the fact that mainstreaming GESI is implicit in SPHEIR's aims to deliver systemic and sustainable change within higher education systems, enabling institutions to meet graduate and labour market needs to support inclusive development and economic growth. A key requirement for integrating GESI is that the complexities of inequality are understood and that different needs are recognised and addressed. These issues are explored in Section 5.9. Gender inequality is embedded in, and reproduced by social norms and traditions, behaviours and stereotypes which can be mirrored and reproduced by key institutions including HE. Integrating GESI in HEI is not therefore just a matter of widening student access and increasing the number of women teaching classes. It concerns seeing subjects with a gendered lens, transforming pedagogy to remove unconscious bias, uncovering the processes and systems that institutionalise inequality at every level.

225. **To pave the way for an assessment of outcomes at the endline, the MTE has examined how and to what extent GESI has been integrated into SPHEIR against best practice benchmarks. Entry points for further progress are identified, recognising that GESI mainstreaming, although flagged in the business case and enacted in UK law,[50] was not a sufficiently explicit requirement of partnerships at the outset but has since been strongly encouraged by FCDO and the FM.[51]** Integrating or mainstreaming GESI means taking into account gender, social-economic disadvantage and disability in all aspects of a programme – design, implementation, monitoring and results reporting, adaptive learning and so on – to ensure its visibility throughout. It also means addressing GESI in the way that organisations (in this case HEIs) work, through workplace policies and practices that promote GESI in partnership organisations, e.g., women in leadership positions, HR policies that support equal recruitment, equal pay and so on, safeguarding arrangements and gender balanced teams.[52]

226. **Progress towards impact has also been assessed as far as possible.** This section of the MTE has used evidence drawn from the perspectives of key informants from the partnership organisations, review of partnership and fund manager reports, student and lecturer stories, the institutional assessments and contextual information from the PEAs and the benchmarking report. Progress has

---

[50] UK International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014

[51] SPHEIR Evaluation Baseline report p.56; feedback from FM and FCDO

[52] The SEQs proposed at baseline focused on HEI policies and practice; the link between these and increased percentages of disadvantaged faculty members, students and graduates; and continuing barriers to inclusion.

been assessed against baseline evidence at the institutional level (BL report Section 5.3.3) and at the student level, where equity and access were discussed in focus groups (BL report Section 5.5.4).[53]

GESI in Programme Design – SPHEIR Business Case and Stated Intentions

227. **SPHEIR's business case (BC) flags gender equity and 'underrepresented groups' as issues of importance.[54] However, terms are not defined and some GESI issues in HE are overlooked. Nevertheless, stated intentions that SPHEIR should address 'gender and equity' are visible.** Most funds supported by the FCDO have clear intentions to integrate GESI and there are robust policy imperatives to do so.[55] Stated intentions to address 'gender and equity' are visible and integrated into the Business Case (see Annex 11), in partnership agreements and in the Evaluation Questions. However, while the BC does include some key markers it does not problematise GESI in HE in any detail and overlooks some important issues (see Table 6.6). This gap has been addressed to some extent by the FM putting increased emphasis on GESI, in particular through the equity aspect of its VFM strategy. The FM has also developed guidance on gender and equity which is to be finalised and shared with partnerships in the coming months.

Table 6.6: Visibility of GESI in the SPHEIR Business Case

GESI Issues Highlighted in the SPHEIR Business Case	GESI Issues Overlooked in the SPHEIR Business Case
- Women's disadvantage in accessing higher education (barriers/affordability). - Women's underrepresentation in STEM subjects and in HEI governance and management systems. - Lack of gender balance in teaching staff, of women in leadership/mentoring roles. - Lack of an enabling environment for female staff to progress their careers. - Safety issues at universities in relation to gender-based violence.	- Reference to systemic gender inequality in all countries eligible for SPHEIR funding, drawing on Gender Inequality Index. - Power, unconscious bias, and discrimination in teaching and learning. - Underrepresentation of women teachers and students in faculties of finance and business.[56] - Gender inequality in staff pay and progression. - Differences in student earnings post HE. - Graduate women's disadvantage in the labour market. - Lack of policies, regulation and practices to ensure equal opportunities and safeguarding amongst employers who seek to employ graduates, particularly those with STEM subjects (energy, engineering, science, pharmaceuticals etc.,). - Systemic sexual harassment in HE campus/workplace and in the labour market. - Potential gender disadvantage in project engagement processes

---

[53] In the absence of a complete baseline survey, there is no baseline material about lecturers pertinent to this EQ. The political economy analysis of the policy environment for GESI is provided in Section 5.9 of this report.

[54] FCDO - SPHEIR Business Case. Page 7.

[55] 2030 Agenda, and specifically Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Education, including equal access to affordable technical, vocational and higher education) and Goal 5 (Gender equality and empower women and girls). The UK International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014; DFID's Strategic Vision for Gender Equality: Her Potential, Our Future.

[56] See for example, Linda Scott. 2020. The double X Economy. Faber & Faber. Pages 42-54.

228. **At the fund level, the Business Case problem analysis was deepened during the evaluation inception period but on re-examination this could have gone further.** The external evaluator's Evaluation and Research Plan highlights inequality of access and provides a strong analysis of the contextual problems but it doesn't always identify all HE issues from a GESI perspective or link them to consequences for those who are disadvantaged.[57] Annex 11 provides further insights for lesson learning.

229. **At the project level, there are some good examples of both formative and operational research to deepen the GESI problem analysis within the SPHEIR portfolio of projects but also some missed opportunities.**

- **TESCEA** is a notable example of best practice in conducting both formative research to inform strategy and operational research to deepen their approach. They are now exploring employability and gender as well as conducting an analysis of gender policy across the four partner universities.
- **PedaL** has drawn on the expertise of the quality assurance partner, the Institute of Development Studies, who produce a wealth of analysis on gender inequality in HE and whose approaches to developing gender sensitive pedagogy and subject matter embed analysis and critical thinking.
- **PADILEIA, PfP, LEAP and PEBL** may have conducted formative GESI research to understand the problems they are addressing, but it is not visible from the documents reviewed and was not identified in the interviews. Further, for **PEBL** the narrative of responses of MTE interviewees to the question on GESI suggests a need to assess of core capabilities in knowledge and skills around GESI across the partnership as a first step in understanding the problems.
- **LEAP** is now conducting operational research to understand the barriers women face in accessing loans. A review of the literature on the barriers women face at an earlier stage might have avoided the sharp gender imbalance in their portfolio.
- **PADILEIA** acknowledge gender imbalances in widening access to digital learning but it is not clear if they have conducted operational research to understand this issue in more depth.
- **PfP** have addressed safeguarding policies and practices but the problem analysis that informs their strategy is not visible. Formative research could have assisted PfP in identifying ways in which the medical curriculum and pedagogy reproduces gender inequality in Somaliland, as well as opportunities and entry points to overcome systemic gender inequality and inequality by ethnicity. It seems that PfP missed an opportunity to explore how reform to medical curricula could contribute to reducing gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation. There is some research on the experience of female academics in medical schools however.

230. Section A11.2 provides an overview of whether a problem analysis is visible in the partnership documentation and whether interviewees in the MTE KIIs feel they are taking into account GESI. It also highlights important opportunities for a tailored GESI problem analysis that takes context into consideration.

231. **The SPHEIR portfolio level TOC in the SPHEIR Baseline Evaluation makes GESI visible in four out seven results areas (to some extent) but this could be strengthened further.** Best practice is to make GESI visible in the TOC, explicitly mapping out the pathways to change for this issue and the underlying assumptions. Section A11.3 provides analysis and recommendations for strengthening.

GESI in Programme and Project Implementation – Leadership, Champions, and Action

232. **There is clear progress on integrating GESI into project implementation, and leadership on GESI within some partnerships stands out.** The Fund Manager has required partners to report on

---

[57] SPHEIR Evaluation and Research Plan (April 2018) Theory of Change pp38-44

action and progress on gender in monitoring reports. Each project has a lead partner who promotes gender, and there are three partnerships that demonstrate clear progress in this area: PedaL, TESCEA, and AQHEDSL. Strategies and tactics to promote GESI are less visible in other partnerships, namely PADILEIA, PEBL, PfP and LEAP more generally, and TIDE. Looking beyond gender equality, there are SPHEIR partnerships who actively promote inclusion of other disadvantaged groups. PADILEIA is a prominent example because it focuses on the inclusion of Syrian refugees in HE in Jordan and Lebanon, and LEAP directly supports the inclusion of young people from low and middle-income backgrounds. The results of these initiatives are highlighted in paragraph 211.

- For **PedaL**, the leadership provided by PASGR and individual partners, including the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex University, renowned for its pioneering work on gender and inequality, has clearly made a difference in unique ways. MTE respondents see gender as integral to improving the quality of HE and outcomes for students. The MTE case study on women's leadership in PedaL at Section A8.3 identifies eight leadership attributes that lead to systemic change in scaling up gender sensitive pedagogy in HEIs, in contexts where there are sharp gender inequalities in academic decision-making. These attributes can be seen in Box 6.9.

- **TESCEA** also demonstrates strong leadership. INASP play a lead role in influencing partners through dialogue: 'we talk about it so much that it is being talked about by our partners.' They set up a **gender working group** with representation across the partnership. As a result, gendered perspectives are increasingly being integrated into transformative teaching and learning. Female students have responded positively with notable insights on how their confidence has grown.

- **AQHEDSL** have championed gender and disability by including a 50:50 group in the partnership who have provided training to all partners, appointed gender champions and are routinely training them on equity and social inclusion and on how to advocate on this issue. Gender training was provided as part of the curriculum review process and teacher training workshops.

Box 6.9: Eight Leadership Attributes Which Lead to Systemic Change (from the Case Study)

- **Leaders Pursue a Vision Selflessly and Inspire the Same from Team Members**
- **Eliciting Team Buy-In**
- **Carrying People Along in an Evolving Process**
- **Prompting Subtlety of Thought**
- **Problem-Solving Through Inclusive Discussion**
- **A Nurturing Approach to Build Leadership Skills**
- **Availability**
- **Diffuse Leadership that Negotiates and Influences**

GESI in Programme and Project Implementation – Integration into Core Interventions Including Policies and Processes

233. **The SPHEIR portfolio provides some very good examples of best practice strategies and tactics to drive forward gender equality and social inclusion in HEIs.** Efforts are not just being made to widen access and achieve gender balance, but to transform teaching practice, to address inequalities reproduced in subject matter and to help teachers and students alike apply a gender lens.[58] This includes policy related processes to institutionalise transformative change for GESI. These gender transformative actions are leading to changes not only in the ways in which academic leaders, lecturers and students think about gender and inequality but also in the way in which they act, i.e., the relational aspects of gender. Section A11.3, Annex Table 29 provides examples of recognised best practices

---

[58] Applying a 'gender lens' is the act of acknowledging and making explicit the ways in which gender affects (and is affected by) issues, processes, institutions etc., and then using this understanding to improve policies, research and outcomes for women, men and others. (UNCTAD 2011)

either found in MEL documents or highlighted in interviews. Findings from the SPHEIR mid-term review echo the good practice on GESI identified by the benchmarking exercise as set out in Box 6.10.

Box 6.10: Good Practice on GESI from SPHEIR Benchmark Comparators[59]

- **To achieve meaningful and sustainable results requires engagement with practices and policies at the institutional and HE system level and a better understanding of the underlying causes of gender inequality in HEIs among the implementing organisation. Increasing women's access needs to look beyond the individual and work towards female participation targets in activities and enrolment.**

- **For gender mainstreaming to be effective across project portfolios, it needs to be accompanied by a well-articulated, practical gender mainstreaming strategy that programme management staff and individual projects can work towards. Setting out clear expectations for gender mainstreaming in project documents and calls for grant applications in itself is not sufficient. It needs to be embedded in individual strategies. ACE Impact II provides a good example: it incorporated gender-based risk and mitigation measures into its programme and also used positive discrimination to ensure female directors of their Impact Centres.**

- **The benchmarking also revealed a lack of focus on other socio-economically excluded groups.**

GESI in Defining and Measuring Achievements – Results Framework and Monitoring

234. **GESI is integrated to some extent in the results framework but more could be done.** Best practice makes GESI visible in the impact, outcome and output statements and in the indicators of success. (It is also noted that indicators are only quantitative which undermines insight into the more qualitative contributions that this fund has to offer.) Key areas where gender and inclusion are overlooked is in HE teaching, learner experience and HE governance and management. Adjusting the outcome statement to include the word 'inclusive' would indicate sensitivity to GESI. Adding indicators to capture learner feedback by gender would also help. Both process outputs statements have potential to make GESI visible by adding a statement definition that indicators that effective approaches to achieving system and system level change in HE includes action on GESI. Likewise – cost efficient and effective execution of SPHEIR includes action to integrate GESI. Detailed analysis of the visibility of GESI in the results framework can be found at Section A11.3, Annex Table 30.

235. **Gender disaggregated data is critical to making gender visible. The 6 monthly monitoring reports present gender disaggregated data.** Some partnerships (PADILEIA, PEBL and PfP) are less confident and consistent in reporting disaggregated data and in places don't apply good practice of reporting figures for both genders rather than overall figures with figures for women in brackets. LEAP aggregates the bottom three wealth quintiles in their monitoring reports. The FM has provided FCDO with an analysis of progress on GESI which provides a better level of detail than other routine reports.

236. **Very positively, the FM's inclusion of equity as one of the 4 E's in the MEL reporting templates has resulted in every SPHEIR partnership providing a summary of achievements for GESI.** Some partnerships have also included a learning question. Some partners are stronger in reporting than others, namely PedaL, AQHEDSL, and TESCEA. These partnerships have integrated gender into new pedagogic approaches, but they have also ensured female leadership, participation, and inclusive processes that give voice to men and women.

237. **There are examples of some partnerships using disaggregated data and gender analysis to strengthen implementation.** PedaL, AQHEDSL and TESCEA have done this, and also provided insights on wider reform for GESI and for institutionalising change for sustainability. In other cases, where data usefully highlights marked inequalities – for example in student access to online courses

---

[59] See Annex 7.

(PADILEIA), or access to loans (LEAP) – partnerships have taken actions to understand the reasons for the disparity with a view to addressing the causes, even if they have not followed a full, gender analysis approach.

Evidence for Early Progress Towards Impact on GESI Across Assessment Levels

238. **Impact of SPHEIR on GESI at system level and sector level (world of work) will be assessed at the summative evaluation as it is too early to expect to see results at these levels at MTE.** Section 5.9 examines GESI at the national or system level, in terms of the policy framework, diversity in academic and student bodies and initiatives to address GESI in curriculum, context which is highly relevant to SPHEIR partnerships' work on GESI. Likewise, at the sector level (world of work), Section 5.11 and the baseline report presents available (but limited) evidence on the gendered dimension of country labour markets and different experiences of male and female graduates, information highly relevant for preparing students for the workplace.

239. **A range of measures are being taken by institutions to support inclusion but it is not clear if this is ad hoc or part of a concerted and documented strategy.** Almost half of lecturers referred in their 'stories' to raising awareness of the issues/needs (11 mentions), physical adjustments (8), financial support, often for online access (6); and specialised support (4). Over half the 53 lecturers did not provide any such information. 11 of the 14 institutions who completed an assessment said that they offered support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and 8 provided bursaries or scholarships. The majority indicated that they are in a better position than at baseline to support students in different ways. Whilst only 6 have any policies or strategies in place on widening participation of students, 12 have policies to promote gender equality.[60]

240. **Of students giving their views through 'stories' on the supportiveness of their HE environment in relation to inclusion (54/126), almost all were positive (23M; 25F).** Proportionally more women than men chose to answer this question. Only two respondents (both men) said that the HE environment was not supportive and four expressed caveats. The student survey will provide stronger evidence of the trend over time, and thereby potential attribution to SPHEIR.

241. **Qualitative stories gathered from lecturers indicated fairly good awareness of sources of inequality (mentioned by one third) and provided generally favourable responses about inclusion.** When asked about equity and inclusion, just over a third of all lecturers who supplied a story at all mentioned gender, disability and/or socio-economic disadvantage as a source of inequality in their response.[61] Two thirds of the 46 respondents who expressed an opinion felt that students were treated equally, men responding slightly more favourably than women. Only 20% felt that they were not, with most highlighting the issue of disability. A higher proportion of men than women answered positively. Only one lecturer (PADILEIA. F) mentioned women's safety, when it is well documented[62] that sexual harassment and assault are widespread in HE. It is only one example, but a (male) lecturer from Sierra Leone showed how he had changed his perspective as a result of SPHEIR:

> 'Before we had the programme ... I believed that [students] were receiving equal opportunities to learn ... but after the program ... I assess whether students receive the session objectives.'

242. **Just over a quarter of students expressed a view on gender and inclusion but those who did gave a favourable response.** 25 students out of a total of 126 respondents, almost equal proportions of men and women, expressed a view about how their gender affected their studies and life at university. The majority (men and women) were positive about their experience and only two were

---

[60] This compares unfavourably to baseline but this is most likely due to discontinuity in the institutions completing assessments – see [cross-ref methodology].

[61] A similar proportion of respondents did not specifically mention any; few respondents mentioned all three.

[62] Fredrik Bondestam & Maja Lundqvist (2020) Sexual harassment in higher education – a systematic review, **European Journal of Higher Education,** DOI: 10.1080/21568235.2020.1729833

negative (1M, 1F). This mirrors the baseline findings where there was near consensus on equality of treatment regardless of gender, disability, economic background, ethnicity and home areas. Whilst half of FGD discussions at baseline indicated that women received adequate support to study, there was more nuance and discussion of barriers than in our stories.

243. **Many students - 35 (17M, 18F) of the 44 expressing a view - were also positive about their sense of being equal and treatment as such.** There were a few dissenting voices (5M, 4F) but more typical was 'In my university, students are treated equally. You have your rights and it does not matter who you are, male or female, handicapped or not.' (PfP, M). Three quarters of the 16 respondents who expressed a view on being a student with a disability or socio-economic disadvantage, mostly it seems on the basis of personal experience, felt that the associated experience of HE was either positive or neutral, rather than negative.

244. **Lack of financial support was a recurring theme for students at baseline and remains so at mid-term:** of the 9 students commenting on disability or disadvantage, 7 (6M and 1F) mention lack of financial support.

Assessment of Fund Potential for Impact on GESI

245. **The SPHEIR partnership offers a mixed picture when it comes to integrating analysis and action to address gender inequality and social disadvantage, but our overall assessment is that SPHEIR is likely to achieve good impact for gender equality and social inclusion and there are positive signs of progress at this stage. This is particularly the case for the stronger partnerships, but there is still scope for the slower progress and missed opportunities in others to be addressed.** AQHEDSL, PedaL, and TESCEA are changing the way teachers and students think about gender in teaching and learning but also in social science subject content. This means that there will be a body of graduates (men and women) who will enter the labour market with skills in analysing inequality and communication practices that promote equality. Their knowledge and skills will be invaluable for government ministries and departments but also academia and research institutions. There are also increasing numbers of HEIs who want gender sensitive pedagogy and social science subject content. This is significant progress, as evidence from the PEA suggests this is not available in many institutions. Many of these achievements have been championed by women, including women leaders in individual universities as well as men and a woman in vice chancellor positions. The partnership that leads PedaL, on the basis of demands from senior university staff, is now adapting the approach to include STEM subjects which means that the private sector and scientific research will benefit from graduates who understand why STEM matters for gender equality and social inclusion. PADILEIA and PEBL are also likely to have impact by widening access to blended learning, with PADILEIA also widening access to digital learning and labour market skills. LEAP is widening access for poorer students who find it difficult accessing finance from mainstream sources: 85% of LEAP Fellows come from the bottom three wealth quintiles in Kenya (66% from the bottom two quintiles and 37% from the poorest quintile.)[63]

Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

246. **Whilst the overarching EQ remains relevant, we propose revised sub-evaluation questions for the summative evaluation** to anchor the evaluation more firmly to what SPHEIR partnerships are doing and how they are addressing GESI and seeking higher level impact that is inclusive:

- 7.1: To what extent have SPHEIR partners mainstreamed GESI to secure results at outcome levels which improve gender equality and social inclusion?

---

[63] Wealth quintile data from the Equity Tool survey, using the urban distinction of wealth. https://www.equitytool.org/. In Kenya, students from the top quintile enrol in HEI at a rate 13 times higher.

- 7.2: To what extent has the SPHEIR partnership improved lecturer capacity to address gender equality and social inclusion in their teaching?
- 7.3: To what extent has the SPHEIR partnership led to greater gender equality and inclusion for students?

6.3.4 EQ10: Unintended Outcomes and Impacts of the Programme at the Level of Individuals, Institutions, and Systems

Box 6.11: EQ10: Summary of Mid-Term Findings

- **So far, the EE has found only limited evidence on unintended outcomes (positive or negative) of SPHEIR and these were mostly observed at the institutional level (and limited to the SPHEIR partnerships).**
- **Although adaptive management applied by the partnerships in response to the COVID-19 cannot be considered an unintended outcome per se, the partnerships' responses to the pandemic have led to true unintended outcomes.**
- **SPHEIR has enabled the SPHEIR partner organisations to drive the institutional change and skill development necessary to respond to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the effects have gone beyond SPHEIR.**
- **The other unintended outcomes included the wide reach of the PedaL innovative pedagogical approaches and the positive contribution of SPHEIR to the SDGs delivery to the internationalisation of HE.**

247. In this section we assess the unintended outcomes and impacts of the SPHEIR programme, as observed at the mid-term stage. This is an important area of evaluation because interventions do not always produce only the outcomes intended (and documented in the theory of change, for example) and sometimes lead to unforeseen effects, because of both external and internal factors. These unintended outcomes can be both positive and negative. Positive outcomes, if attributable to the intervention, should be documented, analysed and reported upon, and a judgment should be made as to whether the unintended outcomes materialise systematically, or whether they tend to appear randomly. Negative outcomes must be studied too because they could potentially negatively contribute to the overall results of the programme and/or have negative consequences for programme's beneficiaries, funders, stakeholders and/or other actors.

248. The main data sources used in this section were the key informant interviews with SPHEIR partner organisations and with wider stakeholders, the impact case studies and a review of the secondary data.

249. **At this stage, there is only limited evidence on unintended outcomes of SPHEIR**. Just around half of interviewees provided comments on the issue of unintended outcomes of SPHEIR. Of these, three could not identify any specific outcomes. As they mentioned, it is still too early to assess impact of the programme, and this applies to unintended outcomes too. **Where they occur, unintended outcomes were usually observed at the institutional level**. Those who were able to identify specific unintended outcomes, mentioned mostly effects at the institutional level, i.e., those outcomes materialising at the level of SPHEIR partner organisations. If there were unintended outcomes identified at the system level and at the level of individuals, these were mostly related to the institutional-level ones.

250. **True unintended outcomes have to be distinguished from the results of adaptive management, which has been encouraged within the programme in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.** The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic could not be, naturally, foreseen, in the partnership plans. In some cases, the partnerships' responses to the pandemic, however, have gone beyond adaptive management, and true unintended outcomes have emerged.

251. **SPHEIR has enabled the partner organisations of PEBL, TESCEA, TIDE and PADILEIA to drive the institutional change and skill development necessary to respond to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.** The probably most significant observed unintended outcomes concern online learning, redesign of curricula allowing online delivery and the related skills of teachers necessary for this new type of delivery. In the period pre-COVID-19, there had generally been individual SPHEIR teams at each partner organisation who had been designing and delivering the SPHEIR activities around online teaching and learning. This was often limited to one or few university departments and the partnerships had only slowly been working towards dissemination of their results to the other parts of their university, even less so to other universities in the country. However, the COVID-19 pandemic brought about a swift end to the in-person teaching and learning at university campuses, and with it, a very urgent need to shift online. The SPHEIR teams were often the only, and most prepared set of staff for this shift. Their role within their universities, therefore, became crucial for the successful online transition of the whole institution. The interview evidence shows that the SPHEIR teams were asked, often early in spring 2020, to assist other university departments with rapid course redesign so that teaching could happen online and remotely. The experience of PEBL, TESCEA, TIDE and PADILEIA, in particular, shows that the SPHEIR teams were able to provide this assistance successfully, building on the results of their partnerships produced to date, and they used guidance and methodologies developed within SPHEIR for expansion across the whole university.

252. **The outcomes around online learning have gone beyond the SPHEIR partner organisations.** All four above partnerships have gradually gained additional visibility either in the higher education sector in their respective countries or at the national level, and therefore played a role in assisting the shift online beyond their alma mater. PEBL partners, for example, organised trainings of educators in several universities, focusing on large scale online teaching. The PADILEIA online approach has become good practice to be shared across the whole HE system in Jordan and has gained visibility at the national level in Lebanon. Furthermore, the Office of the Prime Minister of Tanzania has expressed interest in expanding the TESCEA approach to other organisations. During the pandemic, TIDE has had an influence on the whole national education sector (i.e., beyond higher education). The partnership has supported the Ministry of Education of Myanmar with establishing an online platform for primary and secondary education. The case study at Annex 8 explores SPHEIR partnership support for the COVID-19 response.

253. **We identified other unintended outcomes, which did not directly relate to the COVID-19 pandemic.** For example, **the innovative pedagogical approaches developed by PedaL have been applied to more courses than originally planned**. Across the PedaL partner organisations, some teachers involved in the partnerships decided to apply the PedaL pedagogy to more courses than originally envisaged. As most of them teach in multiple courses, they have taken the time to redesign the other courses too. This means that the multiplier effect of PedaL has been considerably higher than officially reported. Furthermore, PedaL has now reached 60 universities in 10 African countries, which goes well beyond its initial target.

254. SPHEIR seems to also have had positive impact on the **universities' success in delivering the SDGs**. The Times Higher Education impact rankings measured and ranked for the first time in 2019 contributions of HEIs to the SDGs. Two SPHEIR institutions featured on the list, King's College London (8) and the University of Manchester (9), as the only two UK universities in the top ten for 2020. King's College London confirmed that their submission to the rankings in 2019 had highlighted their work on three SPHEIR partnerships as evidence under SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals. King's College London has reported that it overhauled its international safeguarding policy at an institutional level, prompted by FCDO guidance and led by the teams involved in SPHEIR.

255. Greater collaboration between university staff and the top-level leadership, improved administrative procedures at universities, and better adaption to changes were among the other

identified positive unintended outcomes. Furthermore, there is evidence of strengthened inter-institutional working and cross-institutional networks, as well as their internationalisation (see Section 6.4.1).

256. **The EE has identified only one unintended negative outcome of SPHEIR to date and these seem to be localised to specific SPHEIR partner organisations only.** The interviews with the AQ-HESL partners pointed to the perceived marginalisation of university staff that has not been involved in the implementation of SPHEIR.

Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

257. **The EE will keep identifying unintended outcomes on an ongoing basis and will take further stock of the collected data in the summative evaluation.** It is likely that as the partnerships work their ways through the challenging environment brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, more unintended results of SPHEIR will appear, often in reaction to and/or as collateral effects of the partnerships' necessity to adapt to the new conditions.

6.4 Progress Towards Efficiency: the Partnership Model

6.4.1 EQ14: Evidence of the Added Value of the Partnership Arrangement to Delivery of the Selected Higher Education Interventions

Box 6.12: EQ14: Summary of Mid-Term Findings

- **SPHEIR partnerships include a high proportion of diverse non-traditional actors, unlike other programmes.**
- **Partnerships provide the diversity needed to drive complex change but diversity itself brings complexity and implementation challenges.**
- **There are real strengths in a Southern-led model, where locally led approaches have value and resonance with HEIs; Northern partners and leadership are also effective and valued.**
- **Partnerships have catalysed inter-institutional working and strengthen wider networks.**

258. **Partnerships are a fundamental feature of SPHEIR.** Within HE, partnerships have historically been associated with research endeavours in a sustained upward trend and have more recently become a common mechanism for transnational education provision. They are a growing part of international higher education delivery and the focus of considerable research interest.[64] Partnerships are also used as a mechanism for delivering donor-funded interventions in HE, as evidenced by the evaluation benchmarking exercise which examined six such programmes, plus two where partnerships were an outcome, rather than an input.[65] However, they are just one of a number of models for HE reform and innovation[66] and in some circumstances, alternative models for collaborative working may be more appropriate.[67]

259. **This EQ therefore explores the added value of the partnership model to SPHEIR** in delivering its planned intervention, and thereby tests assumption 6 of the SPHEIR theory of change, that partnerships offer an effective model for change and provide incentives for engagement. Partnerships were in the 'forming' stage of team development[68] at baseline. While the Kenya-Nottingham partnership

---

[64] SPHEIR External Evaluator, (April 2018) *SPHEIR Evaluation and Research Plan* pp 26-28

[65] These were Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence (ACE) and ACE Impact II which strengthened centres of excellence for post-graduate education (training and applied research) through regional collaboration.

[66] Other models are examined in External Evaluator's *SPHEIR Evaluation and Research Plan* (April 2018) pp 23-26.

[67] SPHEIR External Evaluator, (December 2019) *SPHEIR Formative Process Evaluation* p33

[68] Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (2013) Bruce Tuckman's Team Development Model – Tuckman 1965 accessed at www.lfhe.ac.uk downloads

did not make it to mid-term, the others have been progressing through the 'storming, norming and performing' stages with now only 12-21 months of funding remaining until 'adjourning'. This section uses evidence from secondary sources (evaluation reports, articles and blogs), responses to several questions in the KIIs, the benchmarking report and update and the composition analysis, and compared to baseline evidence in the formative process evaluation report (rather than the baseline report).

Findings

260. **SPHEIR partnerships include a high proportion of non-traditional players and are diverse, in contrast to comparator programmes.** HEI partners are both public and private universities and all SPHEIR partnerships include a range of non-university organisations, who between them make up 38% of all SPHEIR partners. Non-HEI partners comprise university associations and training or professional development organisations (e.g. Association of Commonwealth Universities - PEBL, Association for Faculty Enrichment in Learning and Teaching - TESCEA, Kiron - PADILEIA); NGOs, often education or subject-focused organisations, (e.g. Tropical Health and Education Trust - PfP), think-tank or research focused organisations (e.g. Partnership for African Social and Governance Research - PedaL Irrawaddy Policy Exchange - TIDE), regulators (Tertiary Education Commission – Sierra Leone); and the private sector (Volta Capital - LEAP). Three of the 8 partnerships are not led by HEIs (INASP – TESCEA, PASGR – PedaL, ACU - PEBL). Annex 1 contains further details. By contrast, although all comparator programmes except one, OpenMed, involve non-traditional actors in some form, the intensity and scope of this engagement varies greatly[69] and partnerships seem dominated by HEIs.

261. **Partnerships provide the diversity needed to drive complex change but diversity itself brings complexity and implementation challenges.** The Process Evaluation found that the 'new players' in SPHEIR bring experience, knowledge and/or networks that enhance the partnerships' ability to achieve outcomes of increased and more equitable access, increased quality and relevance of teaching and learning and/or improved quality and efficiency of HE Sector and that the inclusion of new players had led to innovative approaches.[70] Reflecting on their partnership, TESCEA observe[71] that 'partnerships, whilst not easy, bring together the different skills, perspectives and experiences needed to drive a complex change process successfully' and the non-HEIs are vital to this mix, demonstrated by the range of organisations outlined above. Implementation challenges arising included different systems and approaches, and differing levels of digital literacy, IT infrastructure and English language across universities; practical difficulties around budget management across partners absorbing considerable time and effort; and the need to overcome 'siloes', share learning points and move together. Relationships sometimes cannot be fixed (LIWA left TESCEA) but several lead partners spoke of efforts to improve partnership working strategic direction and almost all partners spoke positively about communications within the partnership.

262. **There are real strengths in a Southern-led model; Northern partners and leadership are also effective and valued**. Three comparator partnership programmes could be southern-led, although two of these had to include a northern partner.[72] Two SPHEIR partnerships are southern-led and PedaL demonstrates the real value of this, with African leadership avoiding 'looking from the outside in'[73] and has created an African pedagogy model which has resonated with and drawn in large numbers of

---

[69] ALFA III and ACE involve non-HEIs most strongly: NGOs play and important role and private sector and Government are involved; the ACE centres of excellence are required to establish partnerships with industry actors; Exceed and DelPHE did not prioritise non-HEI engagement, although does involve some NGOs; only HEIs could apply for grant from NORHED.

[70] SPHEIR External Evaluators (Dec 2019) *SPHEIR Formative Process Evaluation* EQ2.1 conclusion

[71] Jon Harle, TESCEA (May 2019) *Change in East African higher education: reflections on the first year of the TESCEA partnership*

[72] DelPHE, with NORHED and ALFA III requiring the northern partner.

[73] PedaL partner KII

African universities. Enabling effective and intentional leadership at the institutional level and creation of locally led and appropriate approaches has been a key to success for TESCEA, which has worked hard at instilling a devolved structure and been very aware of power imbalances in the relationship. Those in other partnerships spoke of how they valued the expertise and experience of northern partners and their support for project management (finances, MEL), and that international partners had increased project credibility and influence within partner institutions.[74]

263. **Partnerships have catalysed inter-institutional working** where this was previously ad hoc, communication rare and points of contact few. In Sierra Leone, this has resulted in seven partner HEIs developing standardised curriculum review templates and in the process understanding each other's strengths and weaknesses. Overall, all SPHEIR partnerships have a lead partner with a strong role in coordination.

264. **Partnerships strengthen wider networks.** 11 interviewees across four partnerships cited SPHEIR's positive influence on their wider relationships, such co-operation bringing additional and wider benefits as well as raising the profile of the partnership. Examples include relationships with national councils, Ministries, UN agencies as well as other universities.

Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

265. The EE's second SPHEIR research project will take place in 2021 and is intended to explore partnership networks and relationships and how this can bring about effective and sustainable change. It will provide very useful evidence and insights for the summative evaluation and proposals will be put to FCDO shortly. By the time the summative evaluation takes place, SPHEIR funding will have ended and partnerships will have disbanded, unless they have secured further grants. Alongside reflections on the value of partnerships in delivering SPHEIR, interviews will explore the form of any remaining relationship to provide useful insights to partnerships' longer-term value.

6.5 Progress Towards Sustainability

6.5.1 EQ15: Key Considerations for Scale-Up

Box 6.13: EQ15: Summary of Mid-Term Findings

- **Scalability and sustainability are closely inter-linked. Some SPHEIR partnerships have been already discussing internally and systematically the potential for scalability, the others have commenced these internal discussions. The FM has recently included scalability in the partnership MEL reporting, which will further facilitate a more structured approach to integrating scalability into the partnerships' activities**
- **The partnerships realise that in the future, looking for funding opportunities and setting some form fund-raising strategy will be necessary for scaling up**
- **Community building in a broad sense is also important. Approaches will likely differ across the partnerships as to what "a community" is. They could involve other universities, employers, public authorities, and also the general public.**
- **Finally, the importance of the external environment is not to be underestimated either. A stable regulatory environment, free of shocks is a conducive factor enabling scaling up.**

---

[74] NORHED moved from a northern only to a potentially southern-led partnership once capacity within the southern institutions was sufficiently developed. This strengthened the partnerships, with positive spillover effects of being able to access additional international funding for their projects

266. **Scalability of effects and results is a very important attribute of a successful international aid intervention**. With relation to the achievement of SDGs, Hartmann and Linn[75] define scalability as an *"expanding, adapting and sustaining impactful policies, programs or projects in different places and over time to reach a greater number of people"*.

267. The main data sources used in this section were key informant interviews with SPHEIR partner organisations and with wider stakeholders; the impact case studies, SPHEIR partnership monitoring data and results framework and an additional secondary data review.

268. **Scalability is closely linked to the sustainability (see Section 6.5.2) and a number of findings which relate to the sustainability apply to the scalability as well.** Overall, at this stage of evaluation, our evidence shows that the partnerships have not yet formed a clear idea about the scalability of their results, and under what conditions scalability would be possible. Whilst some partnerships have already started this discussion internally in a systematic way, such as TESCEA, the majority of them have yet to do so. Even fewer partnerships have already started to engage external stakeholders in this discussion, again TESCEA being an exception. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant delays have made the team somewhat less optimistic about what partnerships results could be scaled up in the future. In spite of the lack of attention on scalability to date, there seems to be appetite across the whole SPHEIR portfolio to engage in talks about scalability (and sustainability in the near future).

269. **Those partnerships which have been discussing the scalability are in consensus it requires the following: additional resources, community building and a conducive external environment.** Among the resources, funding and personnel are the most prominent. This does not necessarily mean continued FCDO funding (although this would be generally welcome by the partnerships). On the contrary, the partnerships realise that looking for funding opportunities and putting in place some form of fund-raising strategy (either from university budgets, from national authorities, or from other international donors) will be necessary for scaling up. The PADILEIA partners, for example, referred to the importance of their ability to retain the current staff whom they have trained (their facilitators) and to bring new ones, as one of the main conditions for the scalability.

270. **The second condition for scalability is the need to focus more on building a community around the current SPHEIR partner organisations** and bring them together with a common goal. This can involve bringing other parts of the same organisations (other faculties and departments), of which currently only one team is involved in SPHEIR, and bringing other organisations from the sector, employers and public authorities. For example, the Tanzania Committee of Vice-Chancellors has already expressed the idea of scaling TESCEA to the whole of East Africa with the assistance of the East African Inter-University Council. Another example is AQ-HESL, for whom the awareness of the public in Sierra Leone is crucial for scalability.

271. **The conducive external environment is the third condition for scalability**. This relates to the need to secure political buy-in (this is perceived across the whole portfolio). For a few partnerships this also links to having the right wider institutional policies in place (our analysis of the development of the institutional policies in Section A9.3 suggests that there is some variation in the degree to which policies are in place at different universities. Of particular issue are policies on staff training, ICT, curriculum quality, effects of digital learning and new teaching/learning techniques. Most of the institutions also do not have any policies or strategies in place on widening participation of students). An additional issue is the need for a supportive and committed university leadership. Outside of the institutions, stability of the overall regulatory environment and the general absence of shocks is paramount for effective scale-up. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic is seen as a shock which could negatively affect the prospects

---

[75] Hartmann, A. and J. F. Linn (2008) *Scaling Up: A Framework and Lessons for Development Effectiveness from Literature and Practice*. Wolfensohn Centre Working Paper No. 5. Washington, DC. Brookings.

of scalability (see Section 5.1.1 where we write about effects of the pandemic on the various aspects of higher education in the Global South).

272. **There are already examples of scale-up happening across the partnerships**. PedaL, for example, is exploring the possibility of partnering with the Commission for University Education (CUE) in Kenya to secure support of the Kenyan Ministry of Education to scale up the partnership's pedagogical innovation across Kenyan HE. TESCEA has been putting effort into engagement with Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice-Chancellors. Examples from the University of Dodoma and Gulu University have shown that the involvement of the leadership significantly facilitates the university-wide scale-up.

Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

273. **At mid-term there is still significant uncertainty among the SPHEIR portfolio about the scalability of the results, partially due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but also because the partnerships are still delivering outputs.** The issue of scalability will be more prominent at the summative stage of the evaluation. Our primary data collection (including through site visits) will be crucial in this respect.

274. **The FM has already made changes in the MEL reporting templates in order to commence a dialogue with the partnerships about scaling-up and to encourage them to build the scalability into their activities in a more structured way.** We will, therefore, want to work closely with the FM in the coming year, as it is likely that this issue will start to be explored more in-depth by the partnerships themselves in the coming months, as part of their regular monitoring and reporting, their own evaluations, and/or through dedicated meetings, events etc. organised by the FM on this matter.

6.5.2 EQ16: Sustainability and Catalysis of Other Long-Term Change

Box 6.14: EQ16: Summary of Mid-Term Findings

- **At this stage, it is still too early to fully assess the sustainability of SPHEIR because the programme is still ongoing and partnerships are subject to extensions. However, all SPHEIR partnerships have been already discussing the issue of sustainability and sustainability is now included in the regular MEL reporting.**
- **The SPHEIR results around the newly designed online and/or blended courses and the newly designed curricula are among those where the sustainability seems most likely to be assured after the end of the programme.**
- **In order to ensure a wider sustainability of SPHEIR results, additional effort is likely to be necessary, such as a good level of institutional and stakeholder buy-in and new systematic**

275. **Sustainability is among the key evaluation criteria**. OECD DAC defines sustainability as "the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue."[76] It is, therefore, important to evaluate the SPHEIR programme from this perspective as well. The sustainability of international aid programmes, and interventions in general, as recognised by OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC),[77] has various dimensions, such as financial, economic, social and environmental. These all have to be taken into account. Further, the OECD DAC also advises that it "may be useful to evaluate sustainability even while funding or activities are ongoing".

---

[76] OECD (2019) *Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use: OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation*

[77] OECD (2019) *Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use: OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation*

276. This section of the reports presents the findings, building on the evidence coming both from our primary data (mostly key informant interviews with the SPHEIR partners) and secondary data review (e.g. partnership monitoring data and reporting).

277. **It is still too early to assess the sustainability of SPHEIR. However, there is evidence suggesting that practically all SPHEIR partnerships have already been discussing and thinking about the sustainability of their results.** These discussions seem to have been happening both within the lead partner organisations, as well as at the other partner organisations, albeit often without clear conclusions yet.

278. **The FM has already started the dialogue with the partnerships on the sustainability of their activities results. Sustainability is now part of regular MEL at the partnership level.** Six partnerships have adjusted their results frameworks so that they now contain explicit links to sustainability. In the table below, we provide an overview of the partnerships' output and outcome indicators with links to sustainability, together with other steps that the partnerships have taken, or will take, towards ensuring the sustainability. Further assistance of the FM to the partnerships will be crucial in the months coming.

Table 6.7: Overview of partnerships' result indicators in relation to sustainability (from partnerships' MEL reporting)

Partnership	Output indicator(s)	Outcome indicator(s)	Further actions towards sustainability
TESCEA	Output 2.2 Mechanisms to support scale up and sustainability established	No indicator	• Engaging university multipliers, including Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice-Chancellors • Mainstreaming JAGs into the university budget
PfP	No indicator	Outcome 1: Sustained quality teaching and assessment Outcome 3: Enabling policy environment that is sustained	• Engaging volunteers to support the delivery of the HPE module • The Ministry of Health Development (MoHD) of Somaliland will contribute $250 per supervisor per month at Amoud University and the University of Hargeisa
PedaL	Output 1: Universities institutionalise PedaL and mainstream it for social science programmes	Outcome 1: Sustained improvements in higher education teaching and learning that are attributable to PedaL	• Organising independent university driven cascade workshops facilitated by PedaL-trained trainers • Institutionalisation of PedaL within universities through teaching centres (e.g. Centre of Teaching Excellence at the University of Ibadan; and Centre of Continuing Education at the University of Dar es Salaam
PEBL	No indicator	No indicator	• Benefitting from the Train the trainer model (accredited training that can be taken up and cascaded by partner and participant universities beyond the project life)
PADILEIA	No indicator	No indicator	• Launching the Jordan PADILEIA Campus

AQHEDSL	Output 1: Skills Development Network functioning effectively and sustainable Output 3: Established, functional and sustainable IQA systems	Outcome 1: Sustainable, productive relationships between HEIs and stakeholders	● Encouraging HEIs and stakeholders to commit to funding future collaborative activities ● Increasing the project visibility to garner more interest with the national and international community
LEAP	Output 1 Indicator 1: LEAP operations set up for scale and sustainability		● Engaging with SPHEIR universities outside LEAP ● Reaching a minimum viable size ● Ensuring default rates of less than 5%
TIDE	Outputs 1, 2 and 3 encompass actions towards sustainability	No indicator	● Working with a range of academics and support staff from the 2018 and 2019 cohorts ● Placing emphasis on a 'Training of Trainers' model, the Master Trainer Programme and a Change Academy ● Seeking support from public and commercial providers in country to provide training / support where relevant

279. **Some SPHEIR results are more likely to be sustained after the end of the programme than other results**. Clearly at this stage end results are not known and sustainability too remains largely unknown and/or questionable at the moment. Furthermore, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic will certainly keep affecting the whole programme, at least, in 2021.

280. **The SPHEIR results around the newly designed online and/or blended courses and the newly designed curricula are among those where the sustainability seems most likely to be assured after the end of the programme.** There is a good level of confidence within PEBL, TESCEA, PfP, TIDE and PADILEIA about the sustainability of some of the results achieved by their partnerships. This related to two areas of results: blended/online courses developed and delivered within SPHEIR and curricula reform / redesign implemented within SPHEIR. As one PEBL interviewee put it:

> "[There is] absolutely no doubt that what we are setting will last a lifetime. There is no turning back now and the PEBL project will be at the centre".

281. The main reason for this optimism was the fact that once the courses have been developed and the curricula (re)designed, they are available for any further use within and even outside of the original SPHEIR partner organisations. Furthermore, as the interviewees indicated, this will come only with marginal additional costs and perhaps with a need for adaption and/or contextualisation (for a different discipline or country). For all five partnerships mentioned above, courses development and curricular reform are significant parts of their activities, and therefore their sustainability is also crucial for the assessment of the whole partnership.

282. There were also some more niche approaches towards the sustainability discussed within the SPHEIR partnerships. In PADILEIA, for example, some of the partners have been discussing the option of offering some support in the form of in-kind contribution after the end of the programme. The experience from the NORHED programme (by Norad) and from ALFA III also shows that the exposure

to international funding gained through the initial interventions opens windows of opportunities for other international funding, which in turn, could help further sustain some of the SPHEIR results.

283. **In order to ensure a wider sustainability of SPHEIR results, additional effort is likely to be necessary, such as a good level of institutional and stakeholder buy-in and new systematic investment, funding and/or fundraising.** Across the whole SPHEIR portfolio (i.e., those five partnerships above, but also the other three partnerships), the interviewees believed that whilst some elements can be sustained without any additional cost (or with marginal cost), more effort is necessary in order to ensure the sustainability of a wider range of results achieved by the partnerships to date. The most prominent seems to be a need for financial resources, either in the form of continuous direct donor funding and investment (e.g. "SPHEIR 2"), funding from HEIs themselves (or from national governments), and/or coming as a result of a fundraising strategy. LEAP is a specific case because it requires a good degree of the repayment of student loans in order to ensure its sustainability.

284. To a lesser extent, although still an important factor, there is a need to secure buy-in in the future. This, naturally, varies across the partnerships. For AQ-HESL, for example, the buy-in from the HE regulators and the ministry is key for the long-term viability of the results. AQ-HESL is currently facing challenges because reaching a political consensus at the national level on quality assurance is necessary for the partnership to achieve a sustained impact. For TESCEA and PEBL, the buy-in from HEIs will be particularly crucial for the sustainability (although buy-in from other sector stakeholders is important too). Some partnerships have been already signing Memoranda of Understanding which are forward-looking (beyond the SPHEIR funding period) and which outline the ways forward in terms of sustainability and building on the SPHEIR results.

285. **Sustainability has been a challenge for SPHEIR comparator programmes, therefore more effort is needed for the remainder of SPHEIR funding in order to enhance the programme's sustainability.** From a wider international perspective, sustainability is subject to assessment to other donors' international aid interventions. Looking closer at two SPHEIR comparators, the NORHED programme and the ALFA III programme, it appears that the sustainability is very often a challenge. The mid-term evaluation of NORHED, for example, concluded that:

> "The attention on sustainability was very low in the design of the programme. Very few projects consider the future of their project activities, generally expecting that Norway will continue to provide funding that will enable training those who now obtained qualifications through the NORHED-funded projects, to turn Masters into PhDs, PhDs into postdocs, and to continue the research activities and work started" .[78]

The evaluation of ALFA III: "identified mixed results concerning the sustainability of the networks and platforms established".[79] The uncertainties around the sustainability of SPHEIR are therefore, not unusual in the wider international aid context. This only reinforces the need for more effort to be taken during the remainder of the SPHEIR funding the in order to ensure the highest degree of its sustainability.

Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

286. The considerations for the summative evaluation are very similar to those about the scalability (see Section 6.5.1). The EE will revisit this issue again in our primary data collection (site visits), but we will also work with the FM to better understand any programme-level effort made across the portfolio

---

[78] Technopolis Group (2018) *Mid-term Review of the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED).*

[79] European Commission (2019) *Evaluation of the European Union's Regional Development Cooperation with Latin America (2009-2017): Final report: Volume 1: May 2019.*

about the sustainability of the results, potentially resulting in a more systematic support to partnerships in the remainder of the programme.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

287. The mid-term evaluation of the SPHEIR programme provides an opportunity to review the progress to date of the programme and to plan for the endline summative evaluation.

288. The evaluation report covers a significant number of evaluation questions from interrogating the theory of change through to the emerging outcomes in relation to the higher education system level, the higher education institution level, on teaching and learning and on the students. This covers four out of five levels of the assessment, the only one that is partially missing is related to the world of work. This will be a focus of the summative evaluation as it will bring in evidence from a graduate tracer study, testing the effects of the new ways of teaching and learning on the skills and competences of the students as they enter the labour market.

289. In addition, the mid-term evaluation refreshed information on the PEA of higher education systems, something which provides an external lens on the factors which can inhibit or stimulate change, scale-up and the sustainability of the outcomes and impacts of the programme, as well as providing evidence on how well SPHEIR is addressing the current challenges of the higher education systems. The mid-term evaluation took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, and as such the evaluation findings have shed a particular light on how higher education is responding, as well as how the partnerships have adapted and been affected by this situation.

290. COVID-19 also impacted on the evaluation itself. Partnerships were already under pressure and were less able to engage with the EE, causing a more protracted fieldwork phase and some methodological changes. The evidence used relied more heavily on the data provided by partnerships to the fund manager and the EE collected less evidence from the partnerships (generally only contacting the main contact in each institution) and a smaller number of inputs from educators and students.

291. This section sets out the conclusions of the mid-term evaluation, and recommendations for the partnerships, fund manager for the FCDO.

7.1 Conclusions

292. At the mid-term evaluation, the SPHEIR programme is on **track to achieve the programme objectives**. Good progress is being made in relation to the intended outputs and emerging outcomes of the programme, although there has been some revision of targets, in light of COVID-19. A key strength of SPHEIR is the partnership model.

293. **The findings from the PEA highlight the ongoing importance of higher education as a way of supporting national economic and social prosperity.** The systems in most countries are still expanding at a pace, and so quality and relevance are high priorities for governments to ensure that graduates are fit for the labour market (including entrepreneurship). The PEAs also show where there are areas of weakness in the system which are being addressed through the SPHEIR programme, or will impact on its sustainability. This in particular includes the issues of the working environment for academics, which is not conducive for rewarding new innovation and change, the traditional approaches to teaching and learning which are common in the FCDO priority countries, the important and ongoing focus of gender equity and social inclusion, in a system which is still fairly male dominated, especially within STEM subjects, staff, and the lack of support services around higher education which hampers the student experience (something which is strongly addressed in the SPHEIR partnerships).

294. **The Theory of Change remains valid, with all project results to date clearly on track to contribute to programme level outcomes.** The mapping of the outputs and intermediate outcomes of each partnership are clearly aligned with those depicted in the programme level theory of change. There are however some discrepancies in relation to the way the partnerships are aligned through the

theory of change and the logframe at the outcome level. This would suggest that the Theory of Change would benefit from a refresh in the final stages of the programme, in conjunction with the log frame.

295. **Most partnerships indicate good progress in relation to their intended outputs and emerging outcomes.** Five partnerships appear to be making stronger progress (PedaL, TESCEA, AQ-HESL, PADILEIA, PfP). There are concerns about LEAP, both its model in the current climate and the lack of formative research which is limiting its ability to address equity (and could even have exacerbated contextual inequality) particularly in relation to gender. It is too early to indicate whether some partnerships are more successful than others in terms of their achievements to date. There has been some revision of targets, both downwards and upwards, some in light of COVID-19. The funding reductions and the no-cost extension has introduced an element of uncertainty, but also allows them to mitigate against any delays in 2020.

296. **At the mid-term evaluation, it has not been possible to find detailed evidence of factors associated with the success of the partnerships to date.** There is emerging evidence of the importance of the model of partnership itself, with factors such as good internal communication and trusted relationships being cited as key contributors to success. With these internal mechanisms working well, it is much easier to tackle external challenges such as COVID-19 and policy and regulatory conditions, for example. The case study on female attributes of leadership provides additional insights into what leadership approaches drives a successful partnership.

297. **There is good evidence of increasing that SPHEIR is improving quality of teaching and learning.** Four main approaches are being taken by the partnerships to varying degrees. These are pedagogical training, curriculum design or enhancements, enhancing quality assurance (QA) practices in universities and the use of blended and/or distance learning. Across all of these approaches, there are emerging positive outcomes. There is evidence of a shift from teacher-centred didactic approaches to a more student-centred approach involving more interactions, such as class discussion and role play. In addition, there has been an upward trend in the use of ICT and technology in classroom teaching, accelerated by COVID-19. However, access and connectivity remain an ongoing issue, which requires government and institutional level solutions.

298. **The partnerships have exceeded on their outcome indicators for the number of reforms in targeted higher education institutions where institutionalisation of those reforms have taken place.** There is good evidence of partnerships working with governance, leadership and institutional management to further enhance the effect of SPHEIR. The framework conditions are favourable for partnerships, with the majority reporting that their university leadership is greatly or moderately open to change. There is good evidence that when university leadership is involved that there is wider uptake and implementation of the SPHEIR activities. This is particularly the case in relation to COVID-19 and the interest in leadership to implement wholescale online learning and using the SPHEIR teams to drive this agenda. All partnerships indicate that the scale up of teaching and learning is contingent on further buy-in of the university management, and additional resources and time.

299. **At the systems level, there is only limited observable impact to date and this is to be expected because many of the partnerships concentrate on institutional level change in the first instance**. Emerging impact at the system level relates to pedagogy including gender-sensitivity, relevance for the labour market, and access to higher education. Achieving substantial system-level impact is rarely found among the objectives of higher education interventions of other international donors, highlighting how challenging this is, and how much time is needed for system level effect to take place.

300. **The mid-term evaluation results find some positive indications that student learning experiences are improving, for most SPHEIR partnerships.** However, as students are the final beneficiaries of SPHEIR, it is still too early to expect a high level of evidence, which is not anecdotal. Nonetheless, student reports suggest improvements in their interactions with staff, in teaching activities

used in classrooms, range and quality of resources made available to them and the use of technology in their classrooms. There are positive developments in the provision and learning of 21st Century competences, mostly in critical thinking and problem solving. Students largely feel positive about their career prospects and considered that their university was adequately preparing them for work. COVID-19 has negatively impacted on students in this academic year, with reports of challenges in internet connectivity and access to online learning, feelings of isolation and negative mental health effects, absence of teachers online and difficulty in teaching practical elements of courses. On the positive side, students report learning new ways of learning and building their IT skills.

301. **SPHEIR is achieving progress in the areas of gender equity and social inclusion (GESI).** There is clear progress on integrating GESI into project implementation, and leadership on GESI within some partnerships stands out. The SPHEIR portfolio provides some very good examples of best practice strategies and tactics to drive forward GESI in HE. There is some evidence of progress towards impact on GESI at institutional, lecturer and student levels. GESI problem analysis at fund level and for some partnerships (PfP, LEAP) could be strengthened to better understand issues and opportunities. Likewise, the ToC and results framework could both better integrate GESI. Two case studies provide good insights on GESI in relation to the digital divide and online learning and on female leadership attributes.

302. **So far, the EE has found only limited evidence on unintended outcomes (positive or negative) of SPHEIR and these were mostly observed at the institutional level.** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the partnerships have adapted their management, which meant adapting some activities and outputs. However, the online learning experience of some partnerships has enabled the partner organisations of PEBL, TESCEA, TIDE and PADILEIA to drive the institutional-wide change and skill development necessary to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and the outcomes around online learning have gone beyond the SPHEIR partner organisations. PedaL have created demand amongst partnership/non-partnership universities to extend their gender-sensitive approach to STEM subjects where gender inequalities are known to be rife, not only in subject context but in who teaches and learns.

303. **Scalability and sustainability are closely inter-linked. In both cases it is too early to assess the sustainability of results and the opportunity for scale-up.** Partnerships have been thinking about sustainability at least since 2017 (when sustainability was addressed in their plans of work and budget and in the value for money guidance). However, it was only over the past year that partnerships have started to discuss sustainability systematically and emphasise it as part of the project management. The FM has modified the MEL reporting template in order to include sustainability and scalability. This will further facilitate the internal dialogue across the partnerships. There are three main conditions for scalability, these are: additional resources (financial and human), community building, and conducive external environment. For sustainability, most of the focus is around the newly designed online and/or blended courses and the newly designed curricula. These are areas where sustainability seems most likely to be assured after the end of the programme. In order to ensure a wider sustainability of SPHEIR results, additional effort is likely to be necessary, such new systematic investment, funding and/or fundraising, and a good level of institutional and stakeholder buy-in, similar to the conditions for scalability.

304. Change in higher education systems takes years, and for long term impact to be achieved at scale, there is a need for the sustained involvement of higher education institutions, in cooperation with its leadership, alongside the wider stakeholder community who have a central role to play in embedding change more sustainably within the system. The portfolio of SPHEIR partnerships include a wide range of approaches in a small number of partnerships. For the future, the FCDO might look at how to create clear sets of common themes under its programme, learning from SPHEIR and concentrating efforts on

a few strands of activity and facilitating the emergence of communities of practice which have a shared vision of change.

7.2 Recommendations

7.2.1 Recommendations for the Operations of the Programme and Partnerships

305. There is a refresh of the theory of change in the final stages of the programme, in conjunction with the log frames (at project and programme level). This should be undertaken by the FM in cooperation with the EE and FCDO

306. GESI problem analysis at fund level and for some partnerships could be strengthened to better understand issues and opportunities (PADILEIA and PEBL: formative research to understand the gendered labour market and leverage their influence on employers to reduce bias and discrimination in the workplace; LEAP: improved understanding of why women are disadvantaged in their loan making processes so they can reconfigure their approach and demonstrate greater impact; PfP: identification of entry points to strengthen gender in curricula, teaching and learning; PEBL: capacity strengthening on core knowledge and skills). Likewise, the ToC and results framework could both better integrate GESI.

307. The response to COVID-19 and the experiences of the higher education institutions in changing their teaching and learning models is an area where SPHEIR could capitalise further on its results, through additional cross fertilisation of practices across the portfolio of SPHEIR and outside the partnerships. The FM could ensure that continued opportunities are made for this cross fertilisation and partnership can consider this aspect in their strategies for scale-up.

7.2.2 Recommendations for Sustainability and Scale Up

308. The FM and the partnerships should keep discussing the sustainability and scalability of the results and the resources and conditions necessary for this to happen.

309. During the final stages of the partnerships, as more system level impact, or potential impact arises, the time and effort devoted to communication, dissemination and take up of good practice should include a consideration of the stakeholder landscape and key influencers in the system who the evaluation confirms are vital to effecting change. There is a role for both the FM and the individual partnerships in further engagement with wider stakeholders.

310. University leadership involvement and endorsement is highly important for the SPHEIR partnerships and a key factor supporting success. Encouraging further involvement of leadership should be included in the FM dissemination plans, and partnerships should reflect on how this engagement can be further stimulated by demonstrating its success. This could usefully be included within partnership evaluation plans.

311. As the programme effects start to emerge in relation to student skills acquisition, and eventually their employability, there is a role for the partnerships to embed lessons learned into their ongoing teaching practices and support scale-up and sustainability. In addition, the FCDO has a role to ensure that the ultimate impacts on students is understood and used for future programme design, if it continues to support higher education in the area of skills and competence development.

7.2.3 Recommendations for the Summative Evaluation

312. The mid-term evaluation highlights the importance of the contextual information for higher education systems, for which official data is often scarce. It is therefore recommended that for the PEAs in the summative evaluation, there are additional interviews with policy makers as well as councils for higher education, employer organisations and quality assurance bodies. More specifically, it will be crucial, to assess the extent to which higher education funding has been affected by the current COVID-19 pandemic, and the responses from governments.

313. At the summative evaluation, a set of success criteria extending out from the key indicators reported by the partnerships should be put in place so that a more nuanced assessment of success can be reported on, including aspects of GESI, positive spill over effects, plans for sustainability and, where relevant, graduate impact

314. We propose to develop a methodological framework for assessing which factors have contributed to success. We will set out the principal factors which appear to have influenced success, informed by the MTE analysis and further analysis at endline, and correlate each factor against the successful partnerships, possibly using scoring criteria, to uncover patterns or common themes.

315. The summative evaluation should review more fully the changes in the log frame over time as well as probe deeper into the unintended outcomes, especially if they positively or negatively affect scale up and sustainability.

316. Further exploration of the partnership model will help to reveal how it plays a part in the success of the SPHEIR programme. The EE's second SPHEIR research project will take place in 2021 and is intended to explore partnership networks and relationships and how this can bring about effective and sustainable change. It will provide very useful evidence and insights for the summative evaluation and proposals will be put to FCDO shortly.

7.3 Next Steps

7.3.1 Communications Activities

317. Following feedback from both FCDO and the FM and approval from the former, it is expected that the report will be distributed to partnerships and published on FCDO's devtracker website but other options for dissemination with SPHEIR partners, within FCDO and potentially more widely will be discussed.

7.3.2 Looking Ahead to the Endline Evaluation

318. Following the mid-term evaluation, a concept note for the summative evaluation will be submitted, setting out and updating the methodology (including the proposed framework for evaluating value for money of the programme) and responding to the recommendations from this report. A number of the recommendations highlight where emphasis is needed to be able to understand why the identified outcomes and impacts are emerging. As well as the recommendations provided, we propose some revisions to evaluation questions. The concept note will be re-validated at the start of data collection for the final evaluation and will take into account how the MTE findings have been used and the intentions for use of the final report.

319. A revised evaluation question is suggested for the final evaluation to EQ1: to what extent has the SPHEIR Theory of Change held true? At summative, we propose to examine whether outputs have led to intermediate outcomes as anticipated in the ToC, and in turn to longer-term outcomes and impacts (insofar as there has been time for change at this level to occur). The answer to this revised evaluation question can also highlight weaker ToC assumptions underpinning the change pathway, which might have undermined progress

320. For the impact of SPHEIR on gender equality and social inclusion, whilst the overarching evaluation question (EQ7) remains relevant, we propose revised sub-evaluation questions for the summative evaluation to anchor the evaluation more firmly to what SPHEIR partnerships are doing and how they are addressing GESI and seeking higher level impact that is inclusive:

● To what extent have SPHEIR partners mainstreamed GESI to secure results at outcome levels which improve gender equality and social inclusion?

● To what extent has the SPHEIR partnership improved lecturer capacity to address gender equality and social inclusion in their teaching?

- To what extent has the SPHEIR partnership led to greater gender equality and inclusion for students?

Annex 1   Portfolio of Projects and Composition Analysis

1. This updated portfolio analysis aims to support the design, implementation and adaptation of the evaluation through providing critical information on the key characteristics of the SPHEIR portfolio. It has been and will used for both the summative and formative parts of the evaluation. During the Inception and Baseline phases, it informed the development of the evaluation methodology and the sampling strategies for the quantitative and qualitative data collection. Going forward, it will continue to be used to triangulate findings from other data sources and to inform the identification of trends across the portfolio.

2. The analysis covers the following breakdowns:

- Countries benefiting from SPHEIR partnership interventions
- Base of operation of SPHEIR partners
- Distribution of grants between Southern and Northern Partners
- Type of institutions involved in SPHEIR on a portfolio level and by partnership
- Distribution of SPHEIR grants by type of institution
- Budget breakdown by type of expenditure and match funding
- Target population by partnership
- Gender and social inclusion related indicator in partnership results frameworks

3. The current review is an update to the composition analysis conducted during the Inception and Baseline phases of the evaluation. The most significant change to the SPHEIR portfolio since baseline has been the closure of the Kenya-Notts project.

A1.1   Overview of the Partnerships

4. SPHEIR is currently providing funding to a portfolio of eight partnerships. The projects were commissioned in two rounds. An 'Initial Call' was launched in May 2016, prior to the completion of the Fund Manager's inception phase, and led to the selection of three partnership projects: PADILEIA, PEBL and PfP. A second 'Open Call' was launched in October 2016 leading to the selection of a further six projects: AQ-HESL, LEAP, PedaL, TESCEA, TIDE and Kenya-Notts (now discontinued). All eight current projects passed their Grant Stage (GS) 1 review, and are now in GS2.

5. A brief summary of the partnerships is included in Annex Table 1.

Annex Table 1: Overview of SPHEIR Partnerships

Project Name and SPHEIR Grant[80]	Summary	Implementing Organisations	Countries
Initial Funding Round			
PfP - Prepared for Practice **£3,139,443**	Focuses on building health capacity in Somaliland through technology enhanced learning for students and faculty training in interactive teaching.	Lead Partner: ● King's College London (*UK*) Other Partners: ● Amoud University (*Somaliland*) ● Edna Adan University (*Somaliland*) ● MedicineAfrica (*UK*) ● Tropical Health and Education Trust (*UK*) ● University of Hargeisa (*Somaliland*)	● Somaliland
PEBL - Partnerships for Enhanced and Blended Learning **£2,114,559**	Promotes technology enhanced, blended learning that would allow the sharing of teaching resources among universities through credit bearing degree modules. The project also focuses on developing the pedagogical and curriculum design skills of teaching staff related to blended learning, and on building capacity of QA staff in universities and national QA agencies.	Lead Partner: ● Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) *(UK)* Other Partners: ● Commonwealth of Learning (*Canada*) ● Kenyatta University (*Kenya*) ● Makerere University (*Uganda*) ● Open University of Tanzania (*Tanzania*) ● Staff and Educational Development Association (*UK*) ● State University of Zanzibar (*Tanzania*) ● Strathmore University (*Kenya*) ● University of Edinburgh (*UK*) ● University of Rwanda (*Rwanda*) ● Commission for University Education (CUE) *(Kenya)*	● Tanzania ● Kenya ● Uganda ● Rwanda
PADILEIA - Partnership for Digital Learning & Increased Access **£4,961,508**	Technology-enhanced education to enable Syrian refugees and disadvantaged people in host communities to access HE and	Lead Partner: ● King's College London (*UK*) Other Partners: ● Al Al-Bayt University (*Jordan*) ● American University of Beirut (*Lebanon*) ● FutureLearn (*UK*)	● Jordan ● Lebanon

---

[80] Budgets are subject to change in the light of reductions to the overall programme budget following cuts in UK Overseas Development Assistance.

Project Name and SPHEIR Grant[80]	Summary	Implementing Organisations	Countries
	address labour market needs in Jordan and Lebanon.	• Kiron Open Higher Education (*Germany*)	

Open Call

Project Name and SPHEIR Grant[80]	Summary	Implementing Organisations	Countries
TIDE - Transformation by Innovation in Distance Education **£4,278,349**	Aims to improve the quality, relevance, and governance of environmental sciences disciplines in HE, through distance learning and development of an Open University in Myanmar.	Lead Partner: • The Open University (*UK*) Other Partners: • Irrawaddy Policy Exchange (*Myanmar*) • University of Manchester (*UK*) • University of Oxford (*UK*) • University of Yangon (*Myanmar*) • Yadanabon University (*Myanmar*) • Yangon University of Distance Education (*Myanmar*)	• Myanmar
AQ-HESL - Assuring Quality Higher Education in Sierra Leone **£3,898,806**	Supports the establishment of a national Quality Assurance system centred on improved quality management, outcome-based education and labour market informed curricula.	Lead Partner: • University of Sierra Leone (*Sierra Leone*) Grant Holder: • King's College London (*UK*) Other Partners: • 50/50 Group (*Sierra Leone*) • INASP (*UK*) • Njala University (*Sierra Leone*) • Sierra Leone Institute of Engineers (*Sierra Leone*) • Tertiary Education Commission (*Sierra Leone*) • University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (*USA*) • University of Makeni (*Sierra Leone*) • Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology (*Sierra Leone*) • Eastern Polytechnic (*Sierra Leone*) • Freetown Teachers' College (*Sierra Leone*) • Milton Margai College of Education and Technology (*Sierra Leone*)	• Sierra Leone

Project Name and SPHEIR Grant[80]	Summary	Implementing Organisations	Countries
LEAP - Lending for Education in Africa Partnership **£2,755,684 (excl. the capital grant of £1,500,000)**	Aims to pilot and scale a non-profit social lending fund to provide affordable loans to youth who are unable to access existing forms of student funding.	Lead Partner ● Volta Capital (*UK*) Other Partners: ● Equity Group Foundation (*Kenya*) ● inHive [formerly Future First Global] (*UK*) ● Lundin Foundation (*Canada*) ● Mandela Institute for Development Studies (*South Africa*)	● Kenya ● (scale-up in Uganda being discussed)
PedaL - Partnership for Pedagogical Leadership in Africa **£3,541,909**	Innovative pedagogy in graduate social science programmes through integrated teaching, learning and training interventions and institutional policy strengthening.	Lead Partner: ● Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (*Kenya*) Other Partners: ● African Research Universities Alliance (*Ghana*) ● Egerton University (*Kenya*) ● Institute of Development Studies (*UK*) ● Uganda Martyrs University (*Uganda*) ● University of Dar es Salaam (*Tanzania*) ● University of Ghana (*Ghana*) ● University of Ibadan (*Nigeria*)	● Ghana ● Nigeria ● Uganda ● Kenya ● Tanzania
TESCEA - Transforming Employability for Social Change in East Africa **£3,849,150**	Brings together universities, industry and government to develop and embed new content and pedagogies in existing degree programmes, which enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills.	Lead Partner: ● INASP (UK) Other Partners: ● Ashoka East Africa (Kenya) ● Association for Faculty Enrichment in Learning and Teaching (*Kenya*) ● Gulu University (*Uganda*) ● Mzumbe University (*Tanzania*) ● Uganda Martyrs University (*Uganda*) ● University of Dodoma (*Tanzania*)	● Tanzania ● Uganda ● Kenya (limited)

6. Six out of the eight partnerships in the current portfolio are focused on Africa. Three target a single African country: PfP (Somaliland), AQ-HESL (Sierra Leone) and LEAP (Kenya). Three work across multiple countries - two in East Africa (PEBL and TESCEA) and one in both East and West Africa (PedaL). One project (PADILEIA) is located in the Middle East (Jordan and Lebanon) and one (TIDE) in Southeast Asia (Myanmar). Grant sizes range from £2m to £5m.

7. Overall, 58 organisations implement SPHEIR. One organisation, King's College London is part of three partnership (AQ-HESL, PADILEIA and PfP). Two organisations are part of two partnerships: INASP (AQ-HESL and TESCEA) and Uganda Martyrs University (TESCEA and PedaL).

8. The size of the partnerships varies. LEAP is the smallest with five partners, and AQ-HESL is the largest with 13 organisations. Six partnerships are led by a UK organisation (LEAP, PADILEIA, PEBL, PfP, TESCEA and TIDE), one is co-led by a UK and a Sierra Leonean organisation (AQ-HESL) and one is led by a Kenyan organisation (PedaL). In addition to the formal partners named in the grant agreements, other institutions also benefit from the projects.

A1.2   Countries Benefiting from SPHEIR Partnership Interventions

9. Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda benefit from the most SPHEIR interventions, with four out of the eight partnerships working in these countries.; Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somaliland, Jordan. Lebanon and Myanmar are each benefiting from one SPHEIR project.

Annex Figure 1: SPHEIR Partnership Countries (No. of Projects)
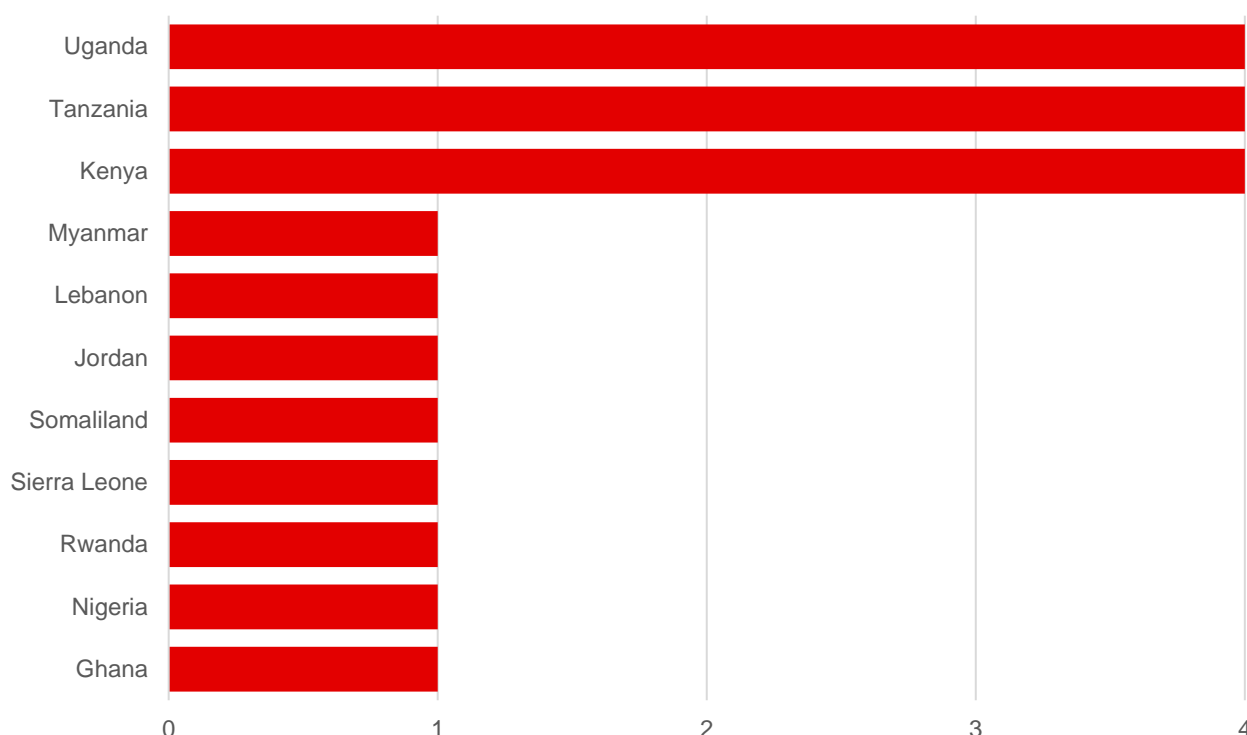
A1.3   Base of Operation of SPHEIR Partners

10. The country breakdown highlights the prevalence of UK-based organisations (17) among SPHEIR partners, with Sierra Leone having the most beneficiary country-based partners (10).

Annex Figure 2: Countries of SPHEIR Partners
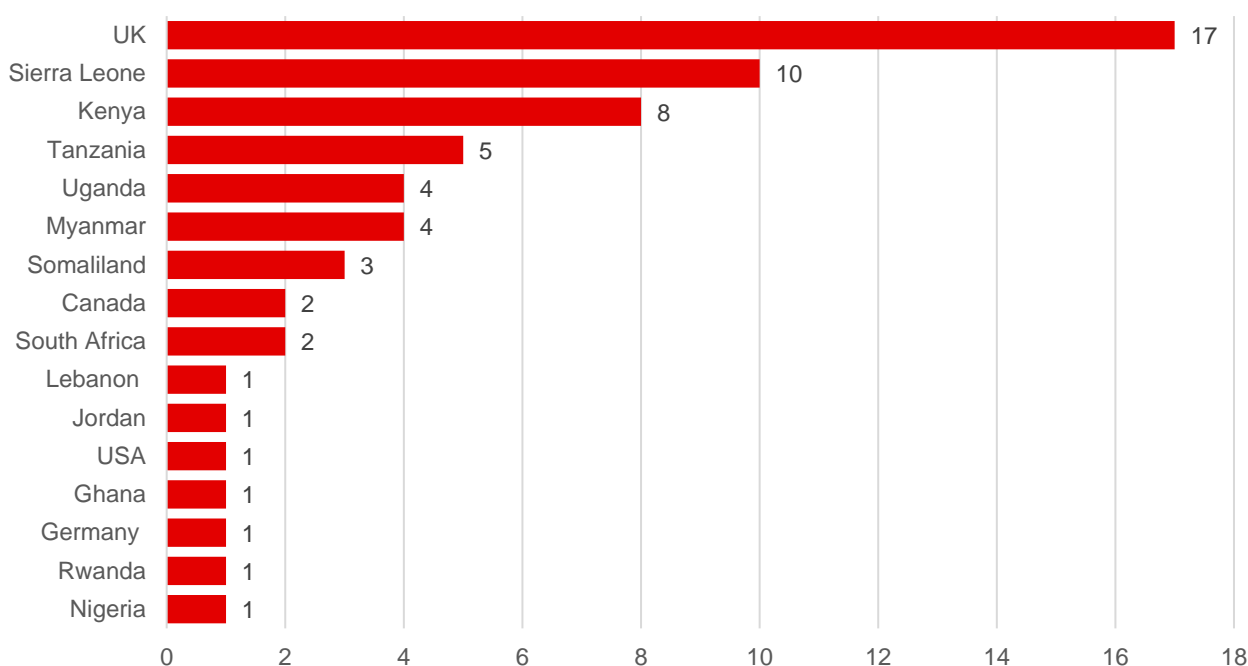
A1.4   Distribution of Grants Between Southern and Northern Partners

11. The larger share, 62 per cent (£17.3 million) of the SPHEIR grants is going to North-based organisations. Southern-based organisations receive 38 percent (£10.4 million) of SPHEIR funds.[81]

---

[81] The amounts used for this calculation are based on the original budget allocation and so do not take internal project redistributions since baseline stage into account. The partners for the Kenya-Notts partnership have however been removed.
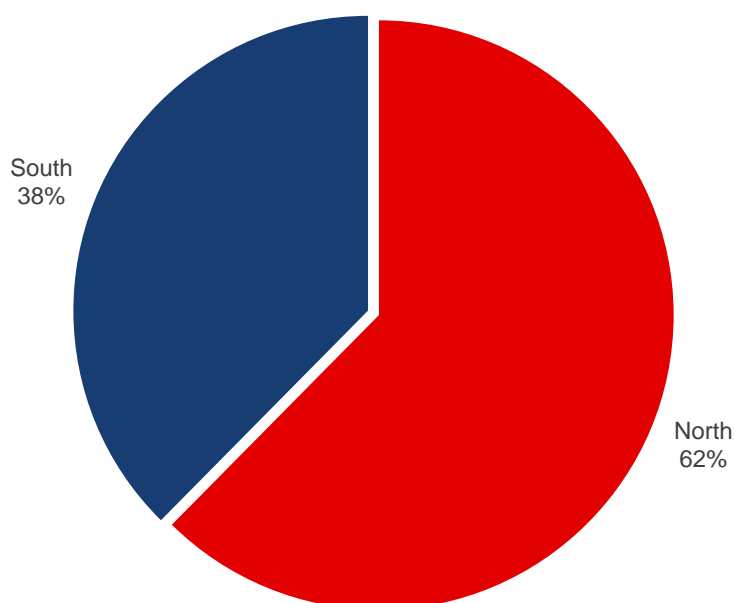
A1.5   SPHEIR Partners – Institutional Types

12. Over half of the SPHEIR partners (52%) are public universities, and together with private universities HEIs account for 62% per cent all partners. The second biggest group is NGOs, constituting 21% of all partners. They are followed by professional associations and private sector organisations (both 5%).

Annex Figure 4: Types of Partner Institutions
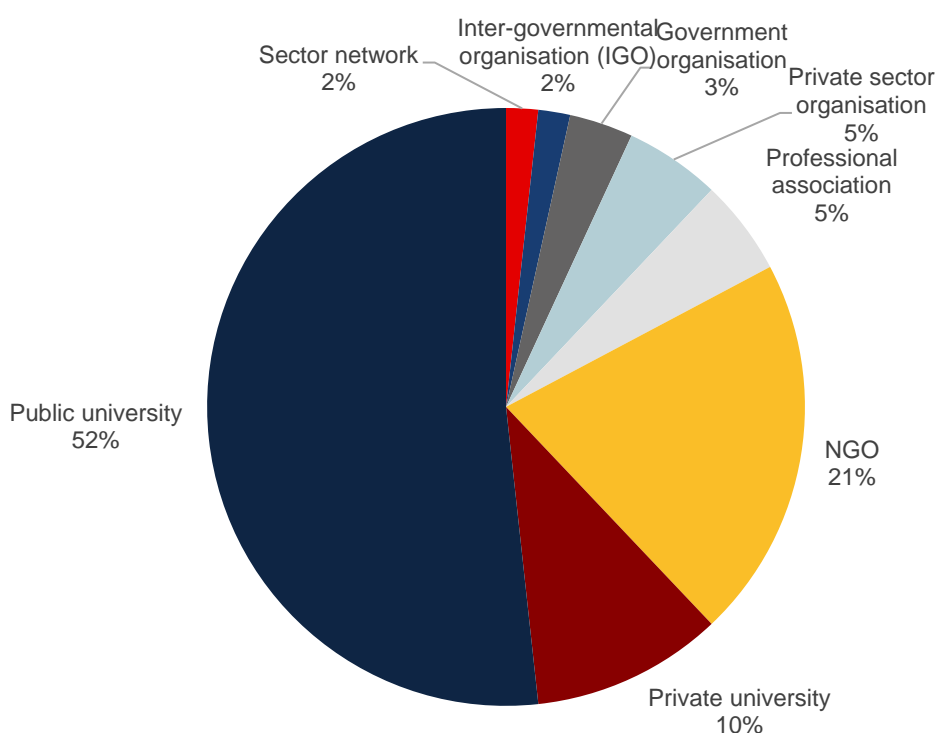
13. The extent to which partnerships include non-traditional actors varies. For example, PEBL appears to include mostly traditional HE sector stakeholders: six HEIs, one university association and two training/professional development organisation. Similarly, TIDE involves six HEIs and one think thank; and PedaL includes six HEIs, one sector network and one NGO. The other end of the spectrum is LEAP which does not include any HEIs in its partnerships. In general, partnerships include a mix of HEI and other actors, with a majority of partners being HEIs[82].

Annex Table 2: Types of Institutions by Partnerships

Partnership	Type of Institutions
AQ-HESL	- Public university: 7 - Private university: 2 - NGO: 2 - Professional association: 1 - Government organisation: 1
LEAP	- NGO: 4 - Private sector company: 1
PADILEIA	- Public university: 2 - Private university: 1 - NGO: 1 - Private sector company: 1
PEBL	- Public university: 6 - Private university: 1 - Professional association: 1 - NGO: 1 - Inter-governmental organisation: 1 - Government organisation: 1
PedaL	- Public university: 5 - Private university: 1 - Sector network: 1 - NGO: 1
PfP	- Public university: 3 - Private university: 1 - NGO: 1 - Private sector company: 1
TESCEA	- Public university: 3 - Private university: 1 - NGO: 2 - Professional association: 1
TIDE	Public university: 6

---

[82] Three partnerships actively reach a much larger group of HEIs than their formal partner universities (PedaL, PEBL and TIDE).

Partnership	Type of Institutions
	● NGO: 1

A1.6   Budget Distribution

14. The total value of the current portfolio of SPHEIR grants is £30.05 million while the total value (SPHEIR grant and match funding) of partnerships is £39.37 million.

15. The grants are supplemented with match funding, with PfP contributing the largest share of match funding (45% of the total project budget), followed by AQ-HESL (31% of the total budget). The smallest contribution is from PEBL and TESCEA, with 9% of their total budget deriving from match funding. The LEAP partnership also raises additional investment (to date over £3 million), which does not technically fall under the normal definition of match funding.

Annex Figure 5: Match Funding as Percentage of Partnership Total Budget
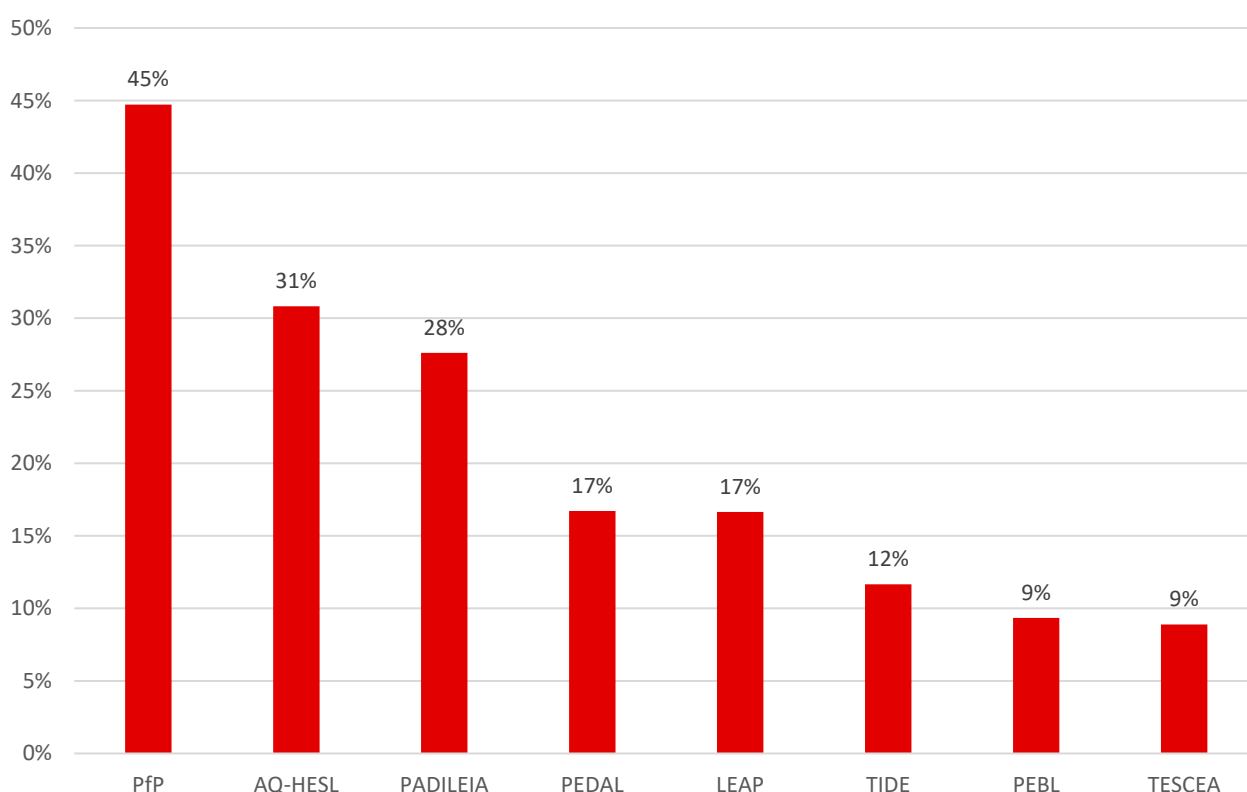
16. The largest share of current SPHEIR grants (79%) is spent on project delivery. Central administration and MEL take up 15% and 4% per cent of the SPHEIR grants respectively.

Annex Figure 6: Breakdown of Total SPHEIR Budget by Type of Expenditure

Central Administration, 15%

Monitoring & Evaluation, 6%

Project Delivery, 79%
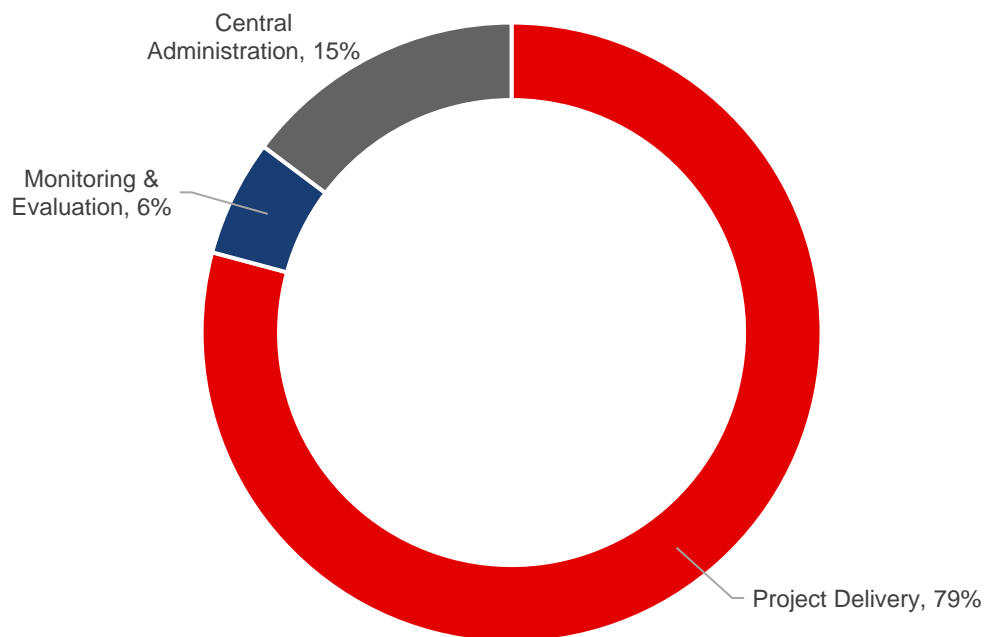
17. Among the current portfolio of eight partnerships, AQ-HESL spends the most of its SPHEIR grant on central administration (20%) and PfP the least (6%). MEL spending averages at 7% across the projects. LEAP has no dedicated MEL cost category lines in its budget, but it has a specific output in the budget which focuses on conducting monitoring and evaluation of the LEAP pilot. According to the GS1 review, a portion of personnel costs will also be used to support MEL.

Annex Figure 7: Breakdown of Partnership Budgets by Type of Expenditure

	PfP	PADILEA	PEBL	LEAP	TIDE	TESCEA	PEDAL	AQHESL
Central Administration	6%	10%	20%	14%	17%	12%	12%	29%
Monitoring & Evaluation	6%	5%	8%		11%	5%	6%	6%
Project Delivery	88%	85%	73%	86%	72%	83%	83%	65%

Project Delivery ■ Monitoring & Evaluation ■ Central Administration
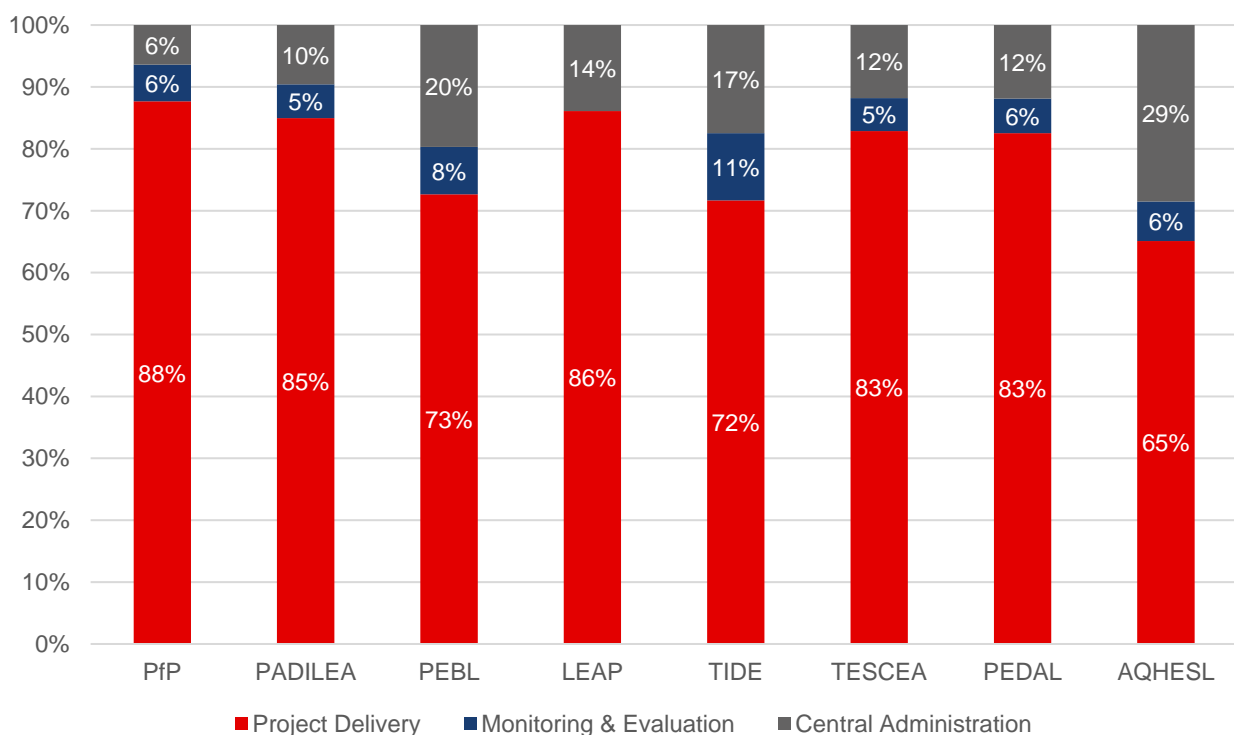
A1.7 Target Population

18. All eight partnerships intend to deliver outputs that benefit students, and all but one (LEAP) has outputs directed at faculty. Six partnerships (AQ-HESL, PEBL, PedaL, PfP, TESCEA and TIDE) also have outputs that aim to benefit HE institutions. On the other hand, only four partnerships (AQ-HESL, PADILEIA, TESCEA and TIDE) have outputs that intend to deliver HE sector wide benefits in target countries, through direct interventions at the sector level and/or through replication of partnership interventions in non-partner HE institutions.

Annex Figure 8: Target Beneficiaries of SPHEIR Partnerships
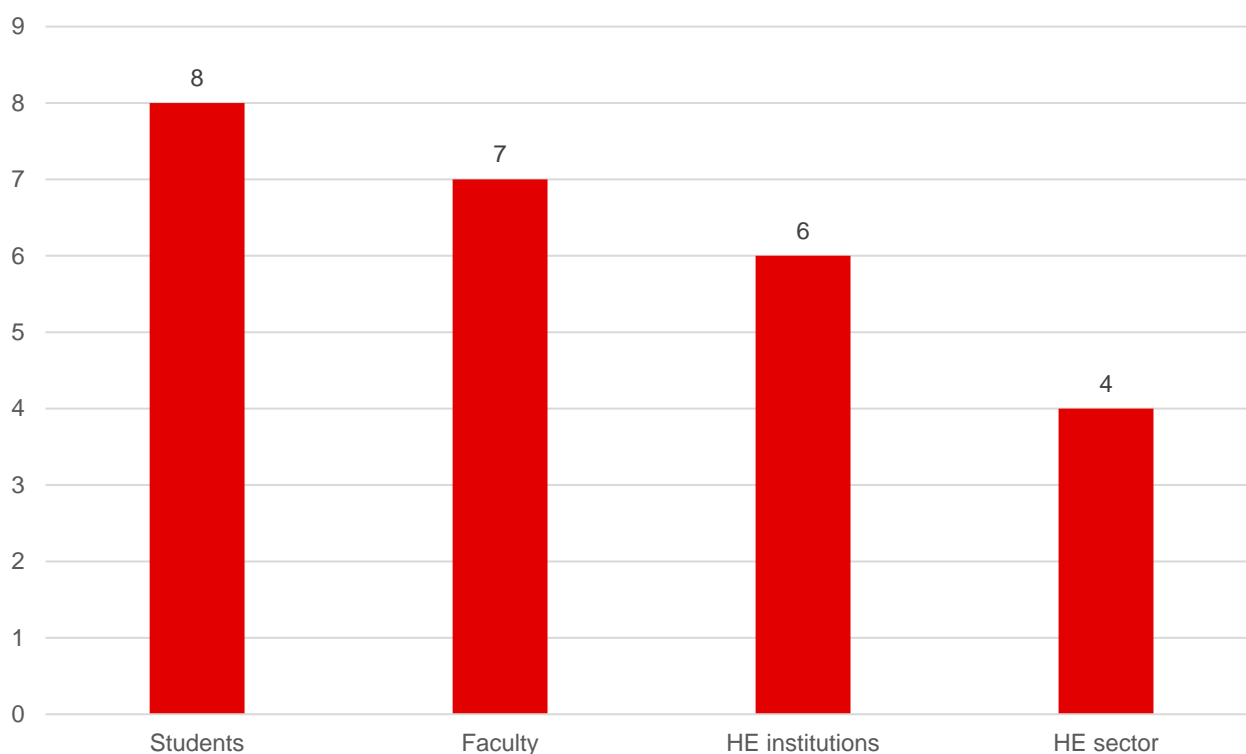
A1.8 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

19. Six (LEAP, PADILEIA, PEBL, PedaL, PfP and TIDE) out of the eight partnerships have gender disaggregated indicators in their results frameworks at outcome and output level. However, none of the partners formally collects this data on all indicators where gender disaggregation would be possible.[83]

20. Partners also generally do not formally disaggregate their results indicators by social disadvantaged groups; an exception is LEAP, which distinguishes the wealth quintile of their Student Fellow beneficiaries and collects data on other aspects of social inclusion. TESCEA is the only partner with outcome indicators dedicated specifically to measuring gender outcomes.

---

[83] It should be noted that some partners may in practice be collecting data disaggregated by gender and social inclusion, without this being formalised into their revised results frameworks (which this analysis is based on).

Annex Table 3: Breakdown of Number of Indicators Disaggregated by Gender and Social Inclusion by Partnership

Partnership	Result Level	Total No. of Indicators	No. That Could Be Disaggregated by Gender	No. of Gender Disaggregated Indicators	No. That Could Be Disaggregated by Other Socially Disadvantaged Groups	No. of Indicators Disaggregated by Other Socially Disadvantaged Groups	No. of Gender Specific Indicators	No. of Indicators Specific to Others Socially Disadvantaged Groups
AQ-HESL	Outcome	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Output	10	2	0	0	0	0	0
LEAP	Outcome	5	3	2	3	2	0	0
	Output	12	6	3	6	2	0	0
PADILEIA	Outcome	8	3	3	N/A	N/A	0	0
	Output	14	8	6	N/A	N/A	0	0
PEBL	Outcome	3	1	1	1	0	0	0
	Output	13	5	4	1	0	0	0
PedaL	Outcome	8	7	5	2	0	0	0
	Output	11	2	1	0	0	0	0
PfP	Outcome	10	4	4	3	0	0	0
	Output	12	3	3	1	0	0	0
TESCEA	Outcome	9	2	0	2	0	4	0
	Output	16	3	0	3	0	2	0
TIDE	Outcome	6	4	1	2	0	0	0
	Output	15	7	6	4	0	0	0

Annex Figure 9: Number of Possible Indicators Disaggregated by Gender (Across the SPHEIR Portfolio)

Not disaggregated, 21, 35%

Disaggregated, 39, 65%
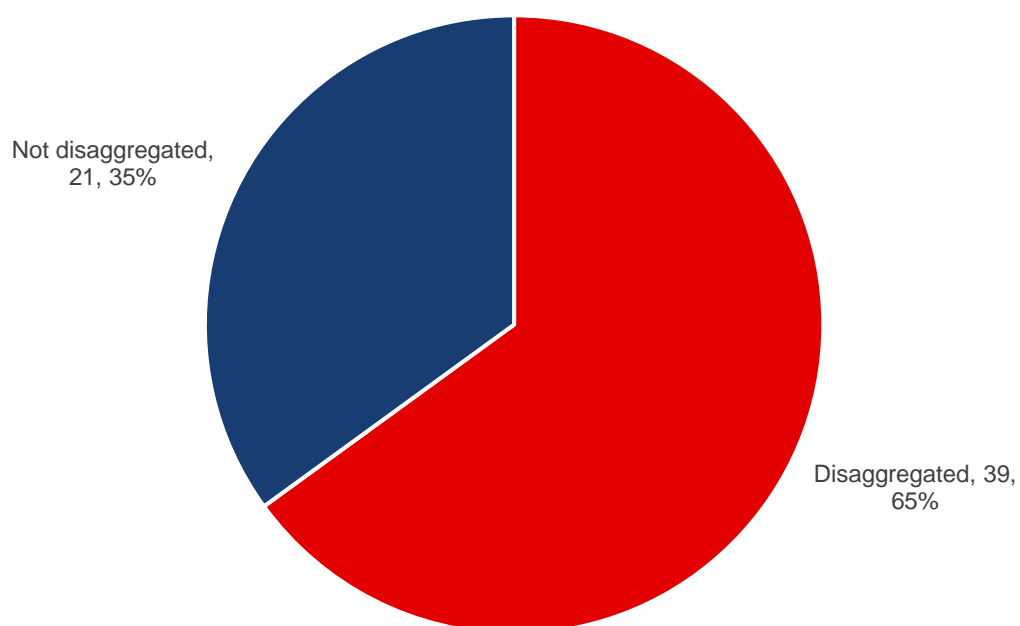
Annex Figure 10: Number of Possible Indicators Disaggregated by Disadvantaged Group (Across the SPHEIR Portfolio)

Disaggregated, 4, 14%

Not disaggregated, 24, 86%
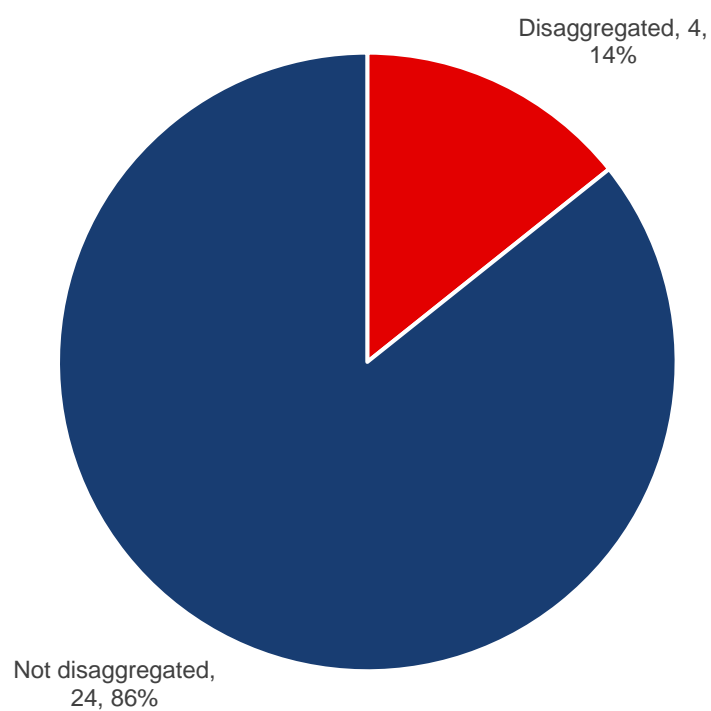
Annex 2   Evaluation Matrices

Annex Table 4: Data Sources for Each Evaluation Question[84]

Evaluation Questions Answered at MTE	MID-TERM									
	Desk Research	System Level	Sector Level	Department / Partnership Level		Faculty Level	Student Level	All Levels		
	Partnership and Programme Data	PEAs	Employer Focus Groups	Institutional Questionnaire	Partner Interview Topic Guide	Statement Stories	Statement Stories	Secondary Data – Formal	Benchmarking Reports (Counterfactual / Comparator)	Case Studies
Effectiveness										
EQ1: To what extent are the outputs of the partnerships in line with the programme Theory of change?	X							XXX		
EQ2: Which of the partnerships has been most effective in delivering the programme's intended outputs and outcomes?	XXX							XXX		XX
EQ3: What have been the factors associated with a higher level of success of the partnerships in driving positive changes and achieving successful outcomes?	XXX	X		X	Q2 (challenges)			XXX		
Effectiveness / Impact										
EQ4: What have been the outcomes of the programme (and its different partnerships) at the level of institutions?		XXX			Q9, Q8 Q10, Q11, Q16			XXX		XXXX
EQ4.1: What have been the outcomes of the programme on quality in delivery of teaching and learning in higher education institutions?					Q10, Q11	XXX	XXX			
EQ4.2: What have been the outcomes of the programme on governance, leadership and institutional management?				XXX	Q9, Q10, Q16					X?
Impact										
EQ5: What have been the intermediate outcomes and longer-term outputs of the programme (and its different partnerships) at the higher education system (national) level?									XX	
EQ5.1 to what extent has the programme delivered improvements in equity in access and affordability of higher education?						X				
EQ5.2 To what extent has the programme delivered improvements in quality and efficiency of higher education?										
EQ5.3 To what extent has the programme delivered improvements in the relevance of higher education?						X				

---

[84] EQs 9, 11 and 12 will only be answered at summative. EQ8 is subsumed within EQ7)

Evaluation Questions Answered at MTE	MID-TERM									
	Desk Research	System Level	Sector Level	Department / Partnership Level		Faculty Level	Student Level	All Levels		
	Partnership and Programme Data	PEAs	Employer Focus Groups	Institutional Questionnaire	Partner Interview Topic Guide	Statement Stories	Statement Stories	Secondary Data – Formal	Benchmarking Reports (Counterfactual / Comparator)	Case Studies
EQ6: What have been the longer-term outcomes and impact of the programme (and its different partnerships) at the level of individuals?					Q12 (10,11)		XXX	XXX		
EQ6.1: What has been the impact on student learning?					Q12 (11, 6)		XXX			
EQ6.2: What activities of the programme have had the most impact?					Q12 (many)					
EQ7: What impact has SPHEIR had on gender equality and social inclusion in higher education across the assessment levels?	XXX			XX	Q13	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	XXX
EQ10: What have been the unintended outcomes and impacts of the programme?					All Q (COVID-19)					
EQ10.1: Have there been any unintended outcomes and impacts at the level of individuals?					All Q (COVID-19)					
EQ10.2: Have there been any unintended outcomes and impacts at the level of institutions?		X			All Q (COVID-19)					XXX
EQ10.3: Have there been any unintended outcomes and impacts at the system (national) level?					All Q (COVID-19)					
Efficiency										
EQ13: To what extent has the programme (and its interventions) delivered value of money?					Q9, (Q22)				X	
EQ14: Is there any evidence of the added value of the partnership arrangement to delivery of the selected higher education interventions?					Q3, Q4, Q13, Q15, Q17, Q19, Q21, Q24			XX	XX	
Sustainability										
EQ15: What are the key considerations for a scaled-up programme to deliver wider higher education transformation?					Q20, Q21 (17, 18)					
EQ16: To what extent are positive changes driven by the programme likely to be sustained beyond the life of the current programme and/or to catalyse other long-term changes?					Q18, Q19 (17, 18)					

Annex Table 5: Data Sources for Each Overall Line of Enquiry (Indicators in Results Framework and Evaluation Questions)

Note: Focus group discussions were replaced with statement stories due to COVID-19

Line of Enquiry / Checklist for Data Collection Tool Development	Mapping of Project Documentation	Partners (I)	Lecturers (FG)	Students (FG)	Employers (I)	Benchmarking (DR / I)	Institutional Self-Assessment Questionnaire	PEAs
Higher Education System								
Political, economic and/or societal in general development in countries affecting higher education	X	X	X					X
Higher education challenges (system level)		X						X
Higher education strategies (system level)								X
Equity in access, success and progression (system level)		X						X
Higher education reforms in process (system level)								X
Higher education landscape (system level)								X
Higher education quality assurance (system level)								X
Higher education funding (system level)								X
Academic staff (system level)		X	X					X
Students (system level)		X	X					X
Innovative pedagogies (system level)		X						X
University-business cooperation (system level)								X
Higher education donors (system level)		X						X
Graduate employment and jobs (system level)		X			X			X
Hard-to-fill vacancies (system level)					X			X
Impact of SPHEIR at system level	X	X			X	X		X
Implementation of SPHEIR Programme								
Value for Money assessment (comparative)	X	X			X			
Openness of the university department/management to change		X	X				X	

Line of Enquiry / Checklist for Data Collection Tool Development	Mapping of Project Documentation	Partners (I)	Lecturers (FG)	Students (FG)	Employers (I)	Benchmarking (DR / I)	Institutional Self-Assessment Questionnaire	PEAs
Main mechanisms of cooperation/communication among SPHEIR partners	X	X				X		
Challenges to implementation of SPHEIR faced by the SPHEIR partners	X	X				X		
Institutional endorsement for SPHEIR	X	X				X	X	
Activities implemented so far	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Outputs produced so far	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Levels of support and assistance required by SPHEIR partners to implement SPHEIR	X	X						
Understanding and expectations of sustainability of SPHEIR	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Drivers and barriers to scaling up of SPHEIR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Dissemination of SPHEIR results in wider environment	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Satisfaction with the work of FM	X	X						
Higher Education Institutions								
Institutional change so far		X	X				X	
Impact on institutional strategies and policies		X	X				X	
Impact on spheres of influence and/or networks of stakeholders		X	X		X	X	X	
Alignment of SPHEIR with strategic direction of the institution	X	X					X	
Academics								
Relevance of SPHEIR to the needs to academic / faculty staff		X						
What does SPHEIR allow you to do in teaching (that you would not have been able to do otherwise)?			X					
Training provided by SPHEIR to academics (relevance for the career, usefulness, focus, frequency, access to it etc.)			X					

Line of Enquiry / Checklist for Data Collection Tool Development	Mapping of Project Documentation	Partners (I)	Lecturers (FG)	Students (FG)	Employers (I)	Benchmarking (DR / I)	Institutional Self-Assessment Questionnaire	PEAs
Gender equality among the faculty staff targeted by SPHEIR							X	
Impact on skills of academics								
Levels of engagement of academics with employers			X		X			
Modes of cooperation between employers and universities			X		X			
Classroom, Pedagogy, Facilities at University, and Support for Students								
Interaction in the classroom			X	X				
Use of innovative teaching methods			X	X				
Use of online materials			X	X				
Use of technology in the classroom			X	X				
Access to computers and internet		X	X	X				
Support for socio-economically disadvantaged students			X	X				
Support for students with disability			X	X				
Support provided to students by university			X	X				
Services and facilities at university		X	X	X				
Students and Graduates								
Outcomes and expected outcomes of SPHEIR in the area of gender equality		X	X	X				
Outcomes and expected outcomes of SPHEIR in the area of socio-economically disadvantaged students		X	X	X				
Outcomes and expected outcomes of SPHEIR in the area of students with disabilities		X	X	X				
Relevance of courses at university for future career			X	X	X			
Career plans and aspirations of students				X				

Line of Enquiry / Checklist for Data Collection Tool Development	Mapping of Project Documentation	Partners (I)	Lecturers (FG)	Students (FG)	Employers (I)	Benchmarking (DR / I)	Institutional Self-Assessment Questionnaire	PEAs
Employers								
Graduate employment (numbers, frequency of employing graduates etc.)					X			
Qualities of graduates		X	X		X			
Employing graduates who are disadvantaged				X	X			
Gender equality in graduate employment		X	X	X	X			
Most important skills in graduates		X	X	X	X			
New skills required in the future				X	X			
Importance of 21st Century skills		X	X	X	X			
Skills most lacking in graduates		X	X	X	X			
Jobs difficult to fill in					X			
Impact on graduate skills			X	X	X			
Impact on employers					X			
Other Topics								
Drivers and barriers to impact	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Other impact	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Unexpected (positive / negative) impact	X	X	X	X	X		X	

Note: DR – desk research, I – interviews, FG – focus groups, S – survey

Annex 3   Documentary Sources

Name	URL (If Online)
Programme Level Document	
AR Annex 1 - SPHEIR theory of change	
COVID-19 Monitoring DFID Final 01.08.20	
COVID-19 Monitoring DFID Final 30.09.20	
Final SPHEIR 2019 Annual Review	
FM Mid-point reviews Sept 19-Feb 20	
FM SPHEIR Q report Jul-Sept 20	
SPHEIR 2020 Annual Review draft 02.11.20	
SPHEIR key achievements 30.06.20	
SPHEIR logframe revised 30.04.20	
SPHEIR project evaluations summary 24.06.20	
SPHEIR project evaluations summary 24.06.20 (1)	
SPHEIR updates for Baroness Sugg commission (Gender)27.04.20	
Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform: Fourth Annual Review	https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwj4uY2Lro7sAhX3ShUIHbdaCcE4ChAWMAh6BAgIEAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fiati.dfid.gov.uk%2Fiati_documents%2F44143812.odt&usg=AOvVaw0HeNARuqYVsF84oSXqm5uW
Partnership Reports	
1. FINAL DFID MPR report KN-SL 06.02.20 (2)	
AQ-HESL MEL annual report - Year 2 (1)	
LEAP - July 2020 SPHEIR MEL Mid-Year Report_vF	
LEAP MEL annual report Y2 2019	
LEAP midpoint review 07.02.20	
PADILEIA midpoint review 011019	
PADI -SPHEIR Year 3 MEL annual report	
PEBL midpoint review final 10.10.19 (1)	
PEBL_MEL mid-year report_March 2020	
PEBL_MEL_FindingsCOVID-19	

Name	URL (If Online)
PedaL MEL Annual Report - Year 2	
PedaL midpoint review 011019	
PfP midpoint review 011019	
PfP Y3 MEL Annual Report_Submitte	
PfP-SPHEIR MEL Mid-Year Report Year 4	
TESCEA MEL Annual Report FINAL 15 MAY 2020	
TESCEA midpoint review 011019	
TIDE annual MEL report Y2 28.10.2019	
TIDE MEL Mid-Year Report May 20	
TIDE MPR Final 011019	

Secondary Documentation

Accessing higher education: Online mentoring for Syrian students	https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/accessing-higher-education-online-mentoring-syrian-students
Adapting for sustainability: taking training of trainers online to continue higher education support	http://blog.inasp.info/adapting-sustainability-multipliers/
Adapting to continue higher education support amidst a pandemic	http://blog.inasp.info/adapting-continue-higher-education-support-pandemic/
Adaptive Project Design: Early insights from working on the transformation of the Distance Education System in Myanmar	http://dspace.col.org/bitstream/handle/11599/3328/PCF9_Papers_paper_121.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
African Scholars Explore New Learning Methods For Sector's Growth	https://www.pasgr.org/african-scholars-explore-new-learning-methods-for-sectors-growth/
Blended learning network to overcome faculty shortages	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20171215130011397
Breaking down barriers to higher education for Syrian refugees	https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/breaking-down-barriers-higher-education-syrian-refugees
Building employability into a traditional curriculum: partnerships and frameworks to help transform distance education in Myanmar	https://oro.open.ac.uk/66720/3/66720.pdf
Call for Africa to generate its own knowledge and be free	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=2019112608553030
Can aid bring innovation to higher education systems?	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20161216234013155

Name	URL (If Online)
Change in East African higher education: Reflections on the first year of the TESCEA partnership	https://www.inasp.info/publications/first-year-tescea-partnership
Change in East African higher education: Reflections on the first year of the TESCEA partnership	https://www.inasp.info/publications/first-year-tescea-partnership
Concept Note on Pedagogical Leadership in Africa (PedaL)	https://www.pasgr.org/wp-content/uploads/Concept-Note_PedaL-Ibadan-Cascade.pdf
Concept Note on Pedagogical Leadership in Africa (PedaL)/African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA)	https://www.pasgr.org/wp-content/uploads/Concept-Note_PedaL-ARUA-Convening_August.pdf
Delivering multi-level health system reform in Somaliland	https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/delivering-multi-level-health-system-reform-somaliland
Designing online courses for refugees	https://wonkhe.com/blogs/designing-online-courses-for-refugees/?doing_wp_cron=1601375133.4392669200897216796875
Developing a digital strategy for Distanced Education in Myanmar	https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339788617_Developing_a_Digital_Strategy_for_Distance_Education_in_Myanmar
DFID project attempts to catalyse change in HE systems	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20161022005407984
Digital programme gives Syrian refugees access to HE	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20181201064758739
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education, 26 June 2020	https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-higher-education--event-26-june-2020
East African context is important for appropriate higher-education frameworks in the region	http://blog.inasp.info/east-african-context-important-higher-education-frameworks-region/
Egerton University PedaL Hub Training	https://www.pasgr.org/publications/egerton-university-pedal-hub-training/
eLearning - Can it improve graduate employability?	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20191112105047543
eLearning – Can it improve graduate employability?	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20191112105047543
Employer engagement and its role in higher-education course redesign	http://blog.inasp.info/employer-engagement-tescea/
Enabling social change from changes in higher education	http://blog.inasp.info/enabling-social-change-higher-education/

Name	URL (If Online)
Excellence in engaging Africa's governance problems: 2019 Annual report	https://www.pasgr.org/wp-content/uploads/PASGR-AR-2019.pdf
Experience of implementing course redesign to help students gain critical thinking skills	http://blog.inasp.info/course-redesign-critical-thinking-skills/
For effective change, all stakeholders need to recognize the importance of critical thinking	http://blog.inasp.info/for-effective-change-all-stakeholders-need-to-recognize-the-importance-of-critical-thinking/
Fostering innovations in pedagogical practices: transforming distance education through a professional development programme using OER's	http://oro.open.ac.uk/66721/
Fresh thinking in East Africa: Helping graduates develop skills for the workplace and society	https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/fresh-thinking-east-africa-helping-graduates-develop-skills-employers-and-society-need
Gender responsive programming: the global gender gap in the context of East African higher education	http://blog.inasp.info/gender-gaps-tescea/
Gender-responsive pedagogy in higher education: How we are approaching it in TESCEA	http://blog.inasp.info/gender-responsive-pedagogy-tescea/
Graduate skills for employability in East Africa: Evolution of a skills matrix for course redesign	https://www.inasp.info/publications/skills-matrix-TESCEA
Grant scheme targets partners in bid to boost universities	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20161007063552101
Harnessing the potential of 4IR through research	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20191127104253650
Helping young Syrian refugees to access university and support their communities	https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/PADILEIAaccessHE
Higher education partnerships and delivering the Sustainable Development Goals	https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/higher-education-partnerships-and-delivering-sustainable-development-goals-sdgs
High-Level Poverty Killing Education in Africa - UNILORIN VC	https://www.pasgr.org/high-level-poverty-killing-education-in-africa-unilorin-vc/
How a higher education reform partnership in Sierra Leone is adapting to Covid-19 restrictions	https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/how-higher-education-reform-partnership-sierra-leone-adapting-covid-19-restrictions
How Could The learning And Teaching Experience Transformed?	https://www.pasgr.org/how-could-the-learning-and-teaching-experience-transformed/
How social entrepreneurs are contributing to HE change	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=2020090110554356

Name	URL (If Online)
How technology is helping to educate Syrian refugees	https://blog.thepienews.com/2018/08/how-technology-is-helping-to-education-syrian-refugees/
Inclusive higher education in Sub Saharan Africa	https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/inclusive-higher-education-sub-saharan-africa
International maternity care: My work in Somaliland	https://www.kcl.ac.uk/international-maternity-care-my-work-in-somaliland
It's Time For African Researchers To Incorporate Pedagogical Skills In Teaching To Catalyze Exceptional Learning - Expert	https://newnigeriannewspaper.com/2018/12/19/its-time-for-african-researchers-to-incorporate-pedagogical-skills-in-teaching-to-catalyze-exceptional-learning-expert/
Key Learnings from teaching English to refugees online	https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/key-learnings-teaching-english-refugees-online
Launching online learning in East Africa	https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/launching-online-learning-east-africa
Learning from Somaliland? Transferability of learning from volunteering to national health service practice in the UK	https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27000835/
Learning from Somaliland? Transferability of learning from volunteering to national health service practice in the UK	https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27000835/
Moving face-to-face workshops for higher education staff online	https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/how-move-face-face-workshops-higher-education-staff-online
My stewardship as Vice-Chancelor (2015-2020): Partial listing of fundamental achievements	https://www.pasgr.org/wp-content/uploads/ACCOUNT-OF-STEWARDSHIP-AS-VC-16-JULY-2020-1.pdf
N/A	https://www.linkedin.com/posts/dr-rhoda-gitonga-30a72340_seda-commonwealthoflearning-spheir-activity-6711389116505833472-jQ7d
New area of work supports critical thinking skills in East Africa	
New programme aims to help Somaliland health workforce	https://www.kcl.ac.uk/lsm/newsevents/newsrecords/2017/april/New-programme-aims-to-help-Somaliland-health-workforce
Partnership aims to produce problem-solving graduates	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=2018091910344435
PASGR Convenes 170 Experts In Kenya To Brainstorm On Pedagogical Innovations For African Universities	https://www.pasgr.org/pasgr-convenes-170-experts-in-kenya-to-brainstorm-on-pedagogical-innovations-for-african-universities/
Pedagogy- Insights from the The PedaL program	https://enezaeducation.com/pedagogy-pedal-program/

Name	URL (If Online)
Pedagogy On The Move: PedaL Turns One	https://www.pasgr.org/pedagogy-on-the-move-pedal-turns-one/
PedaL transforming teaching and learning	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190918130200403
Protecting the environment in Myanmar - advancing environmental science via distance learning	https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/protecting-environment-myanmar
Quality assurance is key to sustainable blended learning	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20200618085512381
Redesigning university curricula to boost employability	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20200504054918797
Reflecting on a year of partnership to boost higher education in East Africa	http://blog.inasp.info/reflecting-year-partnership-boost-higher-education-east-africa/
Reflecting on a year of partnership to boost higher education in East Africa	http://blog.inasp.info/reflecting-year-partnership-boost-higher-education-east-africa/
Rethinking how university courses are taught to help meet the needs of students and community	http://blog.inasp.info/rethinking-university-courses-taught-meet-students-community/
Strengthening pedagogy through partnerships in Africa	https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/strengthening-pedagogy-through-partnerships-africa
Teaching in universities won't be the same again	https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001311864/teaching-in-universities-won-t-be-the-same-again
Technological innovations - A key to reaching students	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190712091742200
The role of MOOCs in humanitarian affairs	https://www.futurelearn.com/info/press/research-insights/the-role-of-moocs-in-humanitarian-affairs
The SPHEIR Portfolio Workshop in Nairobi, Kenya	https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/International/news/Pages/the-spheir-portfolio-workshop-in-nairobi,-kenya.aspx
Transferring skills and knowledge for scale-up and sustainability	http://blog.inasp.info/tescea-multipliers/
Transforming core skills in university curricula	https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=202001130818072
Transforming Employability for Social Change in East Africa: the first eight months	http://blog.inasp.info/tescea-first-eight-months/
Transforming Employability for Social Change in East Africa: the first eight months	http://blog.inasp.info/tescea-first-eight-months/
Transforming learning and connecting communities to support higher education	http://blog.inasp.info/transforming-learning-connecting-communities-support-higher-education/

Name	URL (If Online)
Transforming teachers for transformed students	http://blog.inasp.info/transforming-teachers-for-transformed-students/
Understanding the skills gaps between higher education and the workplace in East Africa	http://blog.inasp.info/understanding-skills-gaps-higher-education-workplace-east-africa/
Universities are failing refugees. They must do more to prevent a 'lost generation'	https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/nov/26/universities-are-failing-refugees-they-must-do-more-to-prevent-a-lost-generation
University course re-design could solve high unemployment rate	https://www.monitor.co.ug/News/Education/University-course-redesign-solve-high-unemployment-rate/688336-5458492-vif2ki/index.html
University courses should support critical thinking skills to help address national needs	http://blog.inasp.info/university-courses-support-critical-thinking-skills-address-national/
We Need To Professionalise Teaching At Universities - Muganda	https://www.mrppafrica.org/we-need-to-professionalise-teaching-at-universities-muganda/
Widening access to higher education through affordable finance	https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/widening-access-higher-education-through-affordable-finance

Annex 4   List of Interviewees

SPHEIR Partnership(s)	Interviewee	Organisation	Position	Interviewer	Date of Interview
AQ-HESL	Alhaji Sankoh	MMCET		JR	14/07/2020
AQ-HESL	Badamasi Savage	Sierra Leone Institute of Engineers and University of Sierra Leone	Retired; speaking from experience as a member of SLIE	James Handley	13/07/2020
AQ-HESL	Dr Fatou Jenny King	50/50 Group	Director and founder of 50/50 Group (gender lead for partnership)	Mona Iddrisu	17/07/2020
AQ-HESL	Hannah Lewis	University of Makeni	Cluster lead	Mona Iddrisu	24/07/2020
AQ-HESL	Joseph Edem-Hotah	College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences University of Sierra Leone	HOD - Community Health Faculty of Nursing Coordinator - Degree Programme Faculty of Nursing	Binh T Tran	22/07/2020
AQ-HESL	Karim Koroma	EBKUST	Program coordinator for EBKUST	Mona Iddrisu	29/07/2020
AQ-HESL	Laura Hucks Alyson Lush Suzanne Thomas	Kings College London	Lead partners	Mona Iddrisu	04/08/2020
AQ-HESL	Prince Brainard	Freetown Teacher College	Planning & Quality Assurance Officer	Binh T Tran	17/07/2020
AQ-HESL	Prof Jonas Redwood-Sawyerr	University of Sierra Leone	Professor	Mona Iddrisu	13/07/2020
AQ-HESL	Prof Paul McNamara Dr Anna Snider Amber Martin	University of Illinois	(Field coordinator) (Project administrator) (lead at Uni of Illinois)	Mona Iddrisu	10/07/2020

SPHEIR Partnership(s)	Interviewee	Organisation	Position	Interviewer	Date of Interview
	Prof Richard Cooke				
AQ-HESL	Prof Sullayman G. Mansaray Saffa Barbee Massaquoi	Eastern Polytechnic	Coordinators for Eastern Polytechnic	Mona Iddrisu	17/07/2020
AQ-HESL	Ronnie Frazer-Williams	University of Sierra Leone/ Tertiary Education Commission		Mona Iddrisu	15/07/2020
AQ-HESL	Samuel Weekes	University of Sierra Leone (Lead Partner)	Partnership Project Director (employed by USL who is co-lead of the partnership)	Mona Iddrisu	16/07/2020
AQ-HESL	Veronika Schaeffler	INASP	Program Manager	Mona Iddrisu	29/07/2020
LEAP	Abigail Nokes	InHive Global/formerly First Future		Binh T Tran	24/08/2020
LEAP	Eva Kigo	Lundin Foundation	Strategic advisor of partnership	Binh T Tran	06/07/2020
LEAP	Hilda Moraa	Pezesha	CEO	Jim	19/07/2020
LEAP	Joseph DiSilvio	Volta Capital (Lead partner)	Impact and Performance Manager	Mona Iddrisu	25/082020
LEAP	Lucy Waruguru	Strathmore University	Financial Aid Administrator Students Financial Aid Office	Binh T Tran	07/07/2020
LEAP	Margret Sirima	Cicely McDonell College of Health Sciences (Nairobi Hospital).	Principal	Binh T Tran	09/07/2020

SPHEIR Partnership(s)	Interviewee	Organisation	Position	Interviewer	Date of Interview
LEAP	Patrick Kigathi	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT)	working in the Dean of Students Office as administrator	Binh T Tran	10/07/2020
PADILEIA	Anna Miller	Kiron		Adam Krcal	30/07/2020
PADILEIA	David Avery Draego Zubiri	FutureLearn Ltd.	Project manager	Adam Krcal	08/06/2020
PADILEIA	Hajera Begum	KCL (Lead Partner)	Programme manager	Adam Krcal	04/08/2020
PADILEIA	Melissa Matar	American University Beirut	Project manager	Adam Krcal	08/06/2020
PADILEIA	Saad Bani-Mohammad, PhD Prof. Ismail Ababneh	Al al-Bayt University	Ismail Ababneh, Professor of Computer Science Pro-Vice Chancellor for Administration and Student Affairs	Adam Krcal	11/06/2020
PEBL	Dr Lawi Yohana	OUT	Lecturer and coordinator of university teaching and learning services	Billy Bryan	03/07/2020
PEBL	Dr Paul Birevu Muyinda	Makerere University	Deputy Principal, College of Education and External Studies, Associate Professor of Open, Distance and eLearning (ODeL)	Billy Bryan	08/07/2020
PEBL	Fiona Khandoker	ACU (Lead Partner)	Programme manager	Rebecca Allinson	26/08/2020
PEBL	George Onyanga Elizabeth Mwaniki Rhoda Gitonga	Kenyatta University	Digital School for open and blended learning	Rebecca Allinson	01/07/2020
PEBL	Ian Wairua	Strathmore University	Lecturer SHSS	Rebecca Allinson	25/08/2020

SPHEIR Partnership(s)	Interviewee	Organisation	Position	Interviewer	Date of Interview
PEBL	Maryam Ishmail	SUZA - State University of Tanzania	Senior Lecturer	Rebecca Allinson	08/09/2020
PedaL	Beatrice Muganda	PASGR (Lead Partner)	Partnership Lead	Clarissa	18/06/2020
PedaL	Harriet Mutonyi	Uganda Martyrs University	M&E Officer	JR	14/07/2020
PedaL	Jethro Pettit	IDS	QA provider to PedaL partnership	Clarissa	29/06/2020
PedaL	Peter Olapegba Jide Akanji Ndidi Ofole	University of Ibadan	Steering Committee Lead M&E Officer M&E Officer	JR	30/06/2020
PfP	Chris Tan Stephen Thomas	Medicine Africa	Director	Rebecca Allinson	17/06/2020
PfP	Deria Ereg	Hargeisa University	Dean of Medical School	Rebecca Allinson	19/06/2020
PfP	Mustafe Hassan Dahir	Edna Adan		Rebecca Allinson	15/06/2020
PfP	Nura Ibrahim	THET		Rebecca Allinson	21/06/2020
PfP	Walhad	Amoud	Principal	Rebecca Allinson	01/09/2020
TESCEA	David Monk	Gulu University		Adam Krcal	22/09/2020
TESCEA	Jon Harle Mai Skovgaard	INASP (Lead Partner)	Project manager	Adam Krcal	06/08/2020
TESCEA	Mary Kiguru	AFELT		Adam Krcal	25/09/2020

SPHEIR Partnership(s)	Interviewee	Organisation	Position	Interviewer	Date of Interview
TESCEA	Perpetua Kalimasi	University of Mzumbe		Adam Krcal	02/10/2020
TESCEA	Vincent Odhiambo	ASHOKA	Regional Director, Ashoka East Africa	Adam Krcal	01/10/2020
TIDE	(Michael) Jon Gregson	OU (Lead Partner)		Diana Pritchard	06/08/2020
TIDE	Chioma Obi	OU (Lead Partner)	-	Diana Pritchard	N/A
TIDE	Dr Chit Sein	Department of Higher Education	Deputy Director General	Anneloes de Ruiter	27/08/2020
TIDE	Dr Nilar Aung	Yangon University	Pro-rector	Anneloes de Ruiter	28/08/2020
TIDE	Dr Omar Kyaw	Yangon University of Distance Education	Pro-rector	Anneloes de Ruiter	28/08/2020
TIDE	Dr Thant Zin Aung	Irrawaddy Policy Exchange	Programme manager	Anneloes de Ruiter	27/08/2020
TIDE	Dr Tint Moe Thu Zar	Yadanabon University	Pro-rector	Anneloes de Ruiter	31/08/2020

Case Study Interviews

	Interviewee	Organisation	Position	Interviewer	
	Idraku Felix	Uganda Martyrs University	Business and Finance Coach, MBA	Mona Iddrisu	
	Joseph Hoffman	British Council		Mona Iddrisu	
	Musabila Albogast	Mzumbe University		Mona Iddrisu	
	Prof Flora Fabian	University of Dodoma	Professor of Biomedical Science	Mona Iddrisu	

SPHEIR Partnership(s)	Interviewee	Organisation	Position	Interviewer	Date of Interview
	Ubena John, LL.M., LL.D.	Mzumbe University	Senior Lecturer and Dean of the Faculty of Law	Mona Iddrisu	
PedaL	Beatrice Muganda	PASGR (Lead Partner)	Partnership Lead	Juliette Seibold	
PedaL	Linda Waldman	Institute for Development Studies		Juliette Seibold	
TESCEA	Jon Harle	INASP	Director of Programmes	Mona Iddrisu	
TESCEA	Mai Skovgaard	INASP	Project Manager	Mona Iddrisu	

Annex 5   Student and Lecturer Story Respondents

Partnership	Lecturer Testimonies			Student Testimonies		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
PfP: Somaliland	13	9	22	61	36	97
PADILEIA: Lebanon, Jordan	9	6	15	4	12	16
PedaL: Kenya	4	3	7	2	1	3
PEBL: Tanzania, Uganda	2	1	3	5	3	8
TIDE: Myanmar	1	4	5	2	0	2
AQ-HESL: Sierra Leone	1	0	1	0	0	0
Totals	**30**	**23**	**53**	**74**	**52**	**126**

(Note: gender was not indicated by 20 PfP student respondents. These respondents were assumed to be male as men are much more likely than women not to indicate gender.)

Annex 6   The Higher Education System in SPHEIR Partner Countries: The Political Economy Context

1. This annex of the mid-term evaluation of SPHEIR provides a synthesis update of the Political Economy Context for Higher Education over the SPHEIR countries and three additional comparator countries (PEAs).[85] The objective of providing information at the country level is to understand the higher education landscape in the SPHEIR countries (and the comparators) as a whole and any changes which are taking place during the lifetime of the programme. This is to provide context for the evaluation results, particularly at the summative stage. The PEAs provide system level information on the status of higher education policy and its implications at the institutional level.

A6.1   The Most Significant Challenges in SPHEIR and the Comparator Countries

2. SPHEIR is being implemented in 11 countries and the most significant relevant challenges for all these countries are:

- COVID-19: The need to reconfigure teaching and learning; as well as contend with reduced funding in the face of the global economic downturn
- National framework conditions for HE (funding, regulation, governance, quality assurance) which hinder wider scale adoption of reforms
- Capacity and infrastructure constraints at HEIs (staff and qualification, infrastructure)
- Access, success, progression and outcomes from HE (equity, dropouts, employability)

In Annex Table 6, we provide a summary overview of challenges identified via the PEAs and the extent to which the PEA countries are affected (low, medium, high). The colour of the arrows highlight change from the baseline.

---

[85] In this chapter, when referring to PEA countries, it means the SPHEIR countries covered and comparator countries. If the countries are referred to as SPHEIR countries, this excludes the comparators. Jordan and Lebanon are not included.

Annex Table 6: HE Challenges in 2020 in SPHEIR and Benchmarking Countries[86]

Geographic Area	Country	Public Funding	Regulatory Framework	Qualified Academic Staff	Up-to-Date Pedagogies, Relevant Curricula	Infrastructure, Facilities, Equipment	Research Outputs	Equitable Access	Employability of Graduates[87]
Asia	Myanmar	Low →	Medium →	Low PhD ratio →	Very low →	Low →	Low →	N/A	Low
East Africa	Rwanda	Low →	Medium →	PhD 20.3% ↑	Low / medium, ↑	Low →	Low / medium →	N/A	Low
	Uganda	Low →	Low / medium ↑	17.7% PhD ↑	Low / medium →	Low →	N/A	Low / medium ↑	Low
	Kenya	Low ↓	Medium →	36% PhD ↑	Low / medium ↑	Low →	Low →	Medium →	Low
	Tanzania	Low ↓	Medium →	49% PhD →	Low →	Low →	Low →	Low →	Low
	Somaliland	Very low →	Poor →	3% PhD →	Very low /	Low ↑	Low →	N/A	Low
	Malawi	*N/A*	*Poor →*	*Very low PhD ratio →*	*Low →*	*Low →*	*Very low →*	*Low →*	*Low*
West Africa	Sierra Leone	Low →	Low →	8% PhD →	N/A	Low / medium ↑	Low →	Low →	Low
	Ghana	Low →	Poor →	31% PhD →	Low →	Low →	Low / medium →	Low / medium →	N/A

---

[86] Source: The External Evaluator (non-SPHEIR counterfactual countries are in italics). Note: the colours of the arrows denote change from the baseline.

[87] Was not included in the previous summary table.

Geographic Area	Country	Public Funding	Regulatory Framework	Qualified Academic Staff	Up-to-Date Pedagogies, Relevant Curricula	Infrastructure, Facilities, Equipment	Research Outputs	Equitable Access	Employability of Graduates[87]
	Nigeria	*Low / increasing* ➡	*N/A*	*43% PhD* ➡	*N/A*	*Low* ➡	*N/A*	*Low / medium,* ➡	*Low*
	The Gambia	*Low* ➡	*Poor* ➡	*N/A*	*Very low*	*Low* ➡	*N/A*	*Very low* ➡	*N/A*

3. Overall, our research for the mid-term review suggests that most challenges identified and reported to FCDO in 2019 remain prevalent. In the individual PEAs, in 2019, we reported on the short-to medium-term plans of governments to address some of the challenges. However, in most cases, the COVID-19 pandemic (a new challenge) has put these reforms on hold.

4. Countries are also making progress in tackling these challenges. Examples include:

- Somaliland: the progress achieved towards introducing **high-speed Internet connectivity across the country** has facilitated institutions in offering online courses although connectivity remains an issue for students and lecturers as indicated in our case study
- Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya: the share of academic staff with PhDs has increased by an average of 2.4 percentage points[88]
- Sierra Leone: mobile operators have started to provide free of charge mobile data packages to students which could be used for e-learning on selected e-learning platforms

5. Alongside the main common higher education challenges, there are country-specific higher education challenges summarised below and discussed in more detail later in this section. COVID-19 related challenges are dealt with separately in Section A6.1.1. In addition, we report two major natural disasters:

Annex Figure 11: Spread of Locusts in East Africa in 2020

- Flooding affecting mainly Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda between March and May 2020
- Plague of locusts affecting mainly Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Somaliland earlier in 2020 (Annex Figure 11).[89]

Annex Table 7 provides a summary of selected country level challenges identified in the PEA countries (SPHEIR countries and benchmarks).

Annex Table 7: Summary of Some Selected Country-Specific Challenges Affecting HE in 2020 in the PEA Countries[90]

Country	Main Challenges
Myanmar	Lack of qualified academic staff, lack of innovative pedagogies, cultural traditions, skills gap / employability of graduates, resources and infrastructure, ongoing effort towards decentralisation of HE, students having caring commitments, poor level of English, low participation of women in research, disciplines being siloed
Rwanda	Quality assurance, employability, funding, lack of qualified academic staff, innovative pedagogies
Uganda	Massification, quality of education, resources and infrastructure, particularly ICT, funding, risk of drop-outs, strikes, floods, plague of locusts

---

[88] Rwanda: the share of academic staff with PhD has increased from 19% to 20.3%; Uganda: the share of academic staff with PhD has increased from 13% to 17.7% since the baseline figure; Kenya: the share of academic staff with PhD has increased from 34% to 36% since the baseline figure

[89] Source: National Geographic, available online at: https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/02/locust-plague-climate-science-east-africa/

[90] Non-SPHEIR counterfactual countries are in italics.

Country	Main Challenges
Kenya	Massification, overproduction of graduates, skills gap / employability, lack of qualified academic staff, lack of STEM courses at universities, resources and infrastructure, failing loan scheme, inadequate data, low enrolment among females, poor linkages with the industry, floods, plague of locusts
Tanzania	Limited autonomy of HEIs in academic appointments, insufficient funding, lack of qualified academic staff, high staff turnover, low enrolment among females and students with disabilities, services for students are sub-optimal, failing loan scheme, teacher-centred pedagogies, HIV/AIDS mortality, employability of graduates, floods, locusts
Somaliland	Lack of infrastructure, financial constraints, lack of qualified staff, quality assurance, employability, systemic gender inequality, locusts
Malawi	*Low intake of students, low enrolment among females, limited student services, shortage of qualified lecturers), lack of quality assurance, lack of 21st Century skills in students, employability, poor staff remuneration*
Sierra Leone	Lack of basic facility, research underperformance, lack of technology, employability, governance, quality assurance, underfunding, lack of linkages between universities and industry
Ghana	Lack of university places, funding, failing loan scheme, accreditation, shortage of STEM programmes and STEM graduates, low technology integration, limited research capacity
Nigeria	*Underfunding of universities, strikes, tuition increases, deterioration of basic infrastructure, shortages in electricity and water supplies, quality assurance, employability*
The Gambia	*Lack of standardised curricula*

A6.1.1 The COVID-19 Pandemic and its Effects on Higher Education Systems in the Global South

6. **The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges for the higher education sector across the globe.** HEIs have been severely affected both in the Global North and the Global South. According to the IAU survey in May 2020 on the COVID-19 Impact on Higher Education,[91] 77% of African Universities closed in spite of the region being less badly affected than Europe or America.

7. At the **system level**, HEIs in the middle- and lower-income countries have been hit by the pandemic particularly hard, with competing demands for funding across different government priorities. This has negative implications in those countries where SPHEIR has an ambition to achieve impact on the system level. Supra-national efforts are underway to help to support higher education. UNESCO has called for higher support for scientific research and for young researchers, which is seen as one of the ways out of the crisis,[92] and the African Union (AU) has announced further support for its Virtual Pan-African University E-University (PAVEU),[93] an initiative contributing to meeting the needs of AU's Agenda 2063. PAVEU's activities are around online and blended teaching and learning and they promote open online educational resources.

---

[91] https://www.iau-aiu.net/IAU-releases-Global-Survey-Report-on-Impact-of-COVID-19-in-Higher-Education

[92] UNESCO (2020) The response of Higher Education to COVID-19 - Higher Education in Africa: challenges and solutions through ICT, online training, distance education and digital inclusion, available at: https://en.unesco.org/news/response-higher-education-COVID-19-higher-education-africa-challenges-and-solutions-through-ict

[93] The official website at: https://paveu.africa-union.org/

8. At the **institutional level**, all types of HEIs are significantly affected, to varying extents. This has not, as yet, been monitored in any systematic way. Many institutions were ill-prepared to shift learning online. MTE evidence shows that even before the pandemic hit, HEIs in middle- to lower-income countries in the Global South, lacked sufficient infrastructure for online teaching and learning (e.g. lack of reliable, stable and sufficient internet bandwidth, lack of computers and laptops available to academic staff and students etc.). According to the IAU survey on the COVID-19 Impact on Higher Education,[94] one third of the universities in Africa reported they had no communications infrastructure in place at the time of closure. The move to online environment has only made this lack of infrastructure more pressing, particularly in rural areas. The effect is seen on public and private HEIs alike.

9. For **academic staff and faculty across the Global South**, there are also multiple challenges linked to COVID-19. Academics engaged in research have lost opportunities to collaborate across institutions and across countries, regardless of scientific discipline. There has also been a negative effect of the pandemic on the staff mobility, both internally within countries, but also internationally.[95] Academic staff are also working longer hours with higher workloads. Even though some countries, such as Tanzania, have shortened the academic semester, governments still require higher education institutions to deliver the courses to the same extent (as measured by workload) as before the pandemic.

10. The effects of COVID-19 are also evident on **students** across countries in the Global South. There are serious concerns around worsening in equity in access and participation in higher education. For many students, especially for those coming from difficult socio-economic backgrounds, the higher education campus is regarded as their home, providing them with access to accommodation, food, libraries, and other services to students. It remains unclear how many of those students who were forced to leave campuses will be able to return and when, and how many will be able to successfully continue in their studies. To solve the issues affecting students, government action will be required, amending policies to allow re-engagement with studies, additional funding and changes to study durations.

11. Even when the immediate threats posed by the COVID-19 pandemic have disappeared, its negative effects on equity in access and participation are likely to continue. In the context of SPHEIR, this has implications across all partnerships because students are meant to be the ultimate beneficiaries of the SPHEIR interventions, and if they find impossible to progress and succeed in higher education, these benefits cannot be realised for them. In addition, there are more immediate negative effects of COVID-19 on those SPHEIR partnerships which directly work with students, such as LEAP, TESCEA, TIDE and PADILEIA.

12. The following sections provide an overview of these challenges as set out in the PEAs.

A6.2   Contribution of HE to National Development

A6.2.1   Relevant Evaluation Issues

13. This section links HE to national development. This relationship is an important one for the evaluation because it situates higher education, research and development within the strategic priorities of governments in the countries where SPHEIR is being implemented, alongside the benchmark countries, and shows its importance.

14. Evidence for this section draws on secondary data (quantitative and qualitative) such as country level data and documents, the academic and grey literature, and primary data in the form of key informant interviews with national stakeholders and SPHEIR partnerships, conducted at baseline, mid-term and summative stages

---

[94] https://www.iau-aiu.net/IAU-releases-Global-Survey-Report-on-Impact-of-COVID-19-in-Higher-Education

[95] World Bank Group (2020) The COVID-19 Crisis Response: Supporting tertiary education for continuity, adaptation, and innovation

A6.2.2   Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

15. Overall, the importance of the role of HE in the national (economic) development of countries examined by the PEA has either increased or remained stable since the baseline report. There is little guidance in the wider literature on how the contribution of higher education to national development, in particular in the Global South, could be monitored and measured in a harmonised and sustainable way. Understanding developments in government priorities in higher education helps to assess the extent to which the outcomes and impacts of the SPHEIR partnerships can be scaled up and/or are sustainable. In the summative phase, we will update this research and analysis based on new data.

A6.2.3   Snapshot from the Literature on HE's Contribution to National Development

16. There is clear evidence in the literature of the crucial contribution of higher education to the national development.[96] Evidence highlights that for education to enhance economic growth, children must be both in school (education) and learning. Looking closer at countries in the Global South, higher education is generally considered to have a direct and important impact on economic and social development. However, despite progress, the challenge of how to fully release the developmental potential of universities remains. Global higher education has been characterised by trends in commercialisation and internationalisation. However, the process of internationalisation in higher education has been more beneficial in the short-term to established universities in high-income countries than to more fragile institutions in middle- to lower-income countries. In parallel with the internationalisation of the public higher education sector, access to higher education has grown significantly, providing more opportunities for young people. This has been driven by the private sector and it has implications for equity in that only more wealthy students can afford the fees.

17. In many African countries (including SPHEIR countries), the lack of coherent development models and the impact of internal and external power struggles has contributed to an insufficient promotion of the development role of universities. Cloete et al.,[97] note that this has resulted in a lack of trust and scepticism from many governments, other stakeholders and academics. As it has been hard to see what universities can offer to development, higher education can be viewed by policy makers as a luxury ancillary, rather than necessary for development. This suggests that a good governance framework and political reforms are still needed in a number of countries in the Global South to create an enabling environment for HEIs to play their role in national development.

18. Although there is a general consensus on higher education being crucial for building a nation's intellectual capital required for poverty reduction, sustainable development and positive engagement in the global knowledge economy, there is a significant lack of evidence (including research and evaluation) into the impact of higher education on development. Those studies that do provide some evidence suggest that the returns to higher education might have been underestimated, as compared to the returns to lower levels of education.[98] Hawkes and Ugur[99] support this need by further evidencing investment in human capital to boost the economic growth in countries.

19. In Section A6.2.4, we provide an analysis of the importance of HE in the national priorities of countries where SPHEIR is being implemented, as well as comparator countries.

---

[96] For example, Hanushek, E., and Woessmann, L (2008) The Role of Cognitive Skills in Economic Development In Journal of Economic Literature 46 (3)

[97] Cloete, N., Bailey, T., Pillay, P. Bunting, I. and Maassen, P. (2011) Universities and Economic Development in Africa

[98] Oketch, M., McCowan, T. and Schendel, R. (2014) The Impact of Tertiary Education on Development

[99] Hawkes, D., & Ugur, M. (2012) Evidence on the Relationship Between Education, Skills and Economic Growth in Low-income Countries

A6.2.4   Importance of HE in National Development Strategies in SPHEIR and Comparator Countries

20. Annex Table 8 provides a synopsis of national-level strategic goals related to HE in the SPHEIR and comparator countries. Whilst some countries have adopted strategies specifically for higher education, for other countries, higher education remains to be part of wider policy areas, such as education in general and/or strategies for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Annex Table 8: National-Level Strategic Goals Related to HE (Synopsis) in 2020[100]

Geographic Area	Country	National-Level Strategic Goals Related to HE																Assessment of the Importance of the Role of HE in National (Economic) Development, Change from the Baseline
Asia	Myanmar	X			X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X			High →
East Africa	Rwanda	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X					High ↑
	Uganda	X				X				X								Medium →
	Kenya	X						X	X	X	X	X						High →
	Tanzania						X			X			X					High →
	Somaliland					X												Low →
	Malawi	X				X			X	X			X					High →
West Africa	Sierra Leone		X											X	X			Low/medium ↑
	Ghana	X			X					X				X		X		High →
	Nigeria	X				X		X		X				X	X		X	High →
	The Gambia												X					Medium →

---

[100] Source: national strategic documents, analysis by the External Evaluator. Note: the coloured arrows denote change from the baseline.

Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform (SPHEIR)
Mid-Term Evaluation Report

Geographic Area	Country	National-Level Strategic Goals Related to HE														Assessment of the Importance of the Role of HE in National (Economic) Development, Change from the Baseline
TOTAL		7	2	1	3	6	5	4	5	6	1	5	3	3	2	1

21. For seven of the eleven countries reviewed, higher education access to underrepresented groups is a strategic priority. This includes girls and women, socio-economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities. Rwanda, for example, mentions in their National Strategy for Transformation 2017– 2024: "ensure that people with disabilities can start and complete all levels of education".

22. For six countries linking higher education to societal challenges and the needs of the communities more broadly is a strategic priority. This includes emphasis on providing graduate skills which support employability, and in particular to 21st Century skills,[101] a priority of the SPHEIR programme. For example, in Somaliland, through the Somali Higher Education Development Support, a project funded by the European Union, is assisting the Higher Education Directorate at the Ministry of Education to carry out a wide range of projects linking the HE sector to the country's development needs.

23. For six countries, the quality of higher education is a strategic issue, and this includes accreditation and reviews of academic programmes. In Kenya, the National Education Section Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022[102] contains ambitious goals, among which is to "review all academic programmes". The Tanzania Development Vision 2025 emphasises quality education at all levels and the need for public universities to produce graduates that are globally competitive.

24. For five countries, research and development (R&D) is linked closely both to HE and the national development. Malawi, for example, has set itself a goal in its Growth and Development Strategy "to raise the status of research". Kenya would like to increase the number of research personnel by 5% and develop ST&I infrastructure in priority areas by 2022.

25. For five countries, employability of graduates is a goal. Myanmar, for example, aims at achieving a "Transformational Shift". Students should "have equitable access to a world-class higher education system, leading to better opportunities for employment and significant contributions to a knowledge-based economy."[103]

26. Five countries mention the importance of strengthening governance in higher education. For example, Ghana includes capacity building workshops on governance and management for 500 heads of departments at HEIs.

27. For four countries, developing higher education infrastructure is important, and three countries set an explicit goal of increasing general enrolment into higher education even though many have already witnessed a rapid massification process in HE. Kenya, for example, aims at improving gross enrolment from 15% to 20%, and increasing gender parity from 0.71 to 0.9 by 2022.

28. Only one country explicitly sets a strategic goal for online learning. For the summative stage of evaluation, it will be very important to review whether national strategic priorities have been updated to address digital access to higher education.

A6.3   The Higher Education Landscape in 2020

A6.3.1   Relevant Evaluation Issues

29. The higher education landscape in each country is important for SPHEIR. The growth of the sector can positively and negatively affect issues such as the quality of graduate learning, the quality and

---

[101] There are many definitions of "21st Century skills". All definitions, however, recognise that the 21st Century skills are those skills which are becoming more important at a workplace in the 21st century. The British Council, for example, defines the 21st Century skills as decision-making, critical analysis, communication skills, problem solving and imagination (see: https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading/intermediate-b1-reading/skills-21st-century-workplace). In 2018, the SPHEIR External Evaluator organised an academic workshop where the 21st Century skills were discussed in the context of SPHEIR, and the outcomes of this workshop informed the evaluation tools, such as the survey and interview topic guides.

[102] part of the documents forming the overall Vision 2030 strategy

[103] Myanmar: National Education Strategic Plan 2016 – 21.

accreditation of the degrees, the funding of the institutions, equity and access and other aspects central to the SPHEIR programme.

30. **Evidence** for this context section of the PEA comes from country level data and documents as well as key informant interviews with national stakeholders and SPHEIR partnerships.

A6.3.2   Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

31. PEA countries have seen a rapid increase in the number of HEIs over the last decade. This trend largely continues in 2020, with some exceptions. Increasing numbers of HEIs has implications on the SPHEIR programme, in particular on the potential for scaling up of the results of the interventions.

A6.3.3 Mid-Term Indicators

Annex Table 9: Summary Characteristics of HE Systems (as of October 2020), Updated from the 2019 Baseline[104]

Country	Trend in Numbers (Compared to the Baseline)	Total	Public (Federal and State)	Private	Other	Geography	Age	Size
Ghana	⬆	200	17	86	97	Urban centres	Public HEIs (first 1957) are the oldest, private are newer	Large number of small HEIs. Private are the smallest - 60% have less than 1k students
Kenya	⬆	74	37	23	14	Urban centres with satellite campuses	First public was 1970. Private HEIs are oldest	N/A
Malawi	⬆	*29*	*4*	*25*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*Public HEIs are older (first: 1964)*	*N/A*
Myanmar	⬆	174	N/A	N/A	N/A	More spread out but still concentrated in cities	Public HEIs are older (first: 1878)	N/A
Nigeria	⬆	*606*	*89*	*79*	*438*	*More spread out but still concentrated in cities*	*Public HEIs are older (first: 1948); private in 1990s*	*N/A*
Rwanda	⬇	40	2	28	10	More spread out but still concentrated in cities	N/A	N/A
Sierra Leone	➡	33	3	1	29	Capital and western area	Public HEIs are older (first: 1827)	N/A
Somaliland	N/A	30	N/A	N/A	N/A	Urban centres	Young - first HEI in 1997	Low number of large universities

---

[104] Source: PEAs, synthesis by External Evaluator; Note: the colours of the arrows denote change from the baseline. Some countries have large non-university HE sectors, Nigeria for example has a large number of these: 107 polytechnics, 27 monotechnic schools and 220 colleges, 84 non-university teacher training schools. Although there is little data on the size of all these HEIs, there is some consensus that a small number of older and more established public and private universities have large student numbers with a far larger number of providers with small student populations.

Country	Trend in Numbers (Compared to the Baseline)	Total	Public (Federal and State)	Private	Other	Geography	Age	Size
Tanzania	→	63	43	20	N/A	N/A	Public HEIs are older (first: 1961)	N/A
The Gambia	↑	*8*	*2*	*6*	*N/A*	*Urban centres*	*Young - first HEI in 1999*	*All are large HEIs*
Uganda	→	256	18	9	229	Central and western - Urban	Public HEIs are older (first: 1922)	Low number of large universities

32. The higher education sector across the SPHEIR and comparator countries is still expanding (measured by the number of HEIs). This increase can be largely attributed to a growth of private higher education sector in countries.

33. The continuing increase in numbers of HEIs from the 2019 baseline is documented for six out of 11 countries (Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Myanmar and the Gambia). In Kenya, the Government aims to accredit 50 more new campuses by 2021. In the Gambia, a new university of science and technology is being set up. In Ghana, the government announced its intention to establish an open university. In Myanmar, the newly established Open University of Myanmar is the first 100% online university in Myanmar to offer internationally recognised degree programmes.

34. In two countries (Nigeria and Malawi), the expansion of the HEIs was brought about by foreign higher education providers opening campuses. In Nigeria, a new system has been put in place to enable universities based in other countries to establish courses and campuses, something which was previously prohibited. Our PEA interviewees believed that this would lead to an increased access to high quality higher education in Nigeria. In Malawi, UNICAF (a private company founded in 2012, which partners with universities in the Global North) opened a new campus in April 2020 offering locally accredited degrees to African students who want to study online while continuing to work. In three countries (Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Uganda), the 2020 update does not point to any significant change.

35. In Rwanda, there has been a slight drop in the number of institutions. The reason behind the reduction is the merging of eight public HEIs (in TVET) into one public institution. The reduction of private HEIs was due to more strict external audits that led to three closures.

36. The other characteristics of the higher education landscape in the countries remain largely unchanged from the baseline in relation to the geographical concentration of HE provision (typically clustered around urban areas) and the expansion of private higher education.

A6.4   The Funding of Higher Education in 2020

A6.4.1   Relevant Evaluation Issues

37. Higher education funding is a universal challenge including for the vast majority of countries in the Global South (including the SPHEIR countries and its comparators). The COVID-19 pandemic places additional pressures on funding needs. Governments in the Global South find it difficult to allocate sufficient public resources into higher education. This is part of a wider funding issue that includes the whole education and social services sector.

38. For SPHEIR to "contribute more effectively to economic development and growth, public institutions and civil society"[105] a key assumption is that governments commit resources.

39. Evidence for this section of the PEA comes from World Bank and Country level statistics, the academic literature and key informant interviews with national councils and other national stakeholders, where available conducted at baseline, mid-term and summative evaluation stages

A6.4.2   Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

40. Higher education funding systems and the amounts of public funding available are unlikely to be affected directly by SPHEIR interventions. Funding decisions are subject to political priorities. LEAP is perhaps the only exception as it is introducing an additional source of available funding into the funding mix rather than aspiring to change the current funding systems in Kenya and Tanzania.

41. For the summative evaluation, it will be crucial, to assess the extent to which higher education funding has been affected by the current COVID-19 pandemic. As shown below, in some countries,

---

[105] ToC impact level result.

immediate government responses have been to divert funding for higher education to other policy areas deemed to be more important in the fight against the pandemic.

A6.4.3   Mid-Term Indicators

42. The amount of public spending on HE, expressed as a share of the total national budget, across the SPHEIR and comparator countries has increased since the baseline (2.8% reported in 2019) to 3.53% reported in 2020

43. National governments in the PEA countries show weak commitment to higher education. Furthermore, in the short- to mid-term, public funding in some countries, such as in Malawi, is likely to decrease because of the pandemic.

44. Annex Table 10 provides the mid-term indicators (and their update from the baseline in 2019) and the status of HE funding in the PEA countries. These numbers are data captured from a variety of sources and are referenced in the PEA country cases studies (most of the figures on the higher education funding as a percentage of national budget are sources from the World Bank).

Annex Table 10: Mid-Term Indicators on the State of Funding in the SPHEIR and Comparator Countries in 2020[106]

Country	Level of Funding	Higher Education Spending (% of National Budget)	Block Grant?	Performance-Based Funding?	Can HEIs Obtain Private Funding and Use it Freely?	Income from Private Resources / Tuition Fees?[107]	Student Loan Scheme?
Myanmar	Low	4.60% →	N/a	No	No	Two thirds from all private sources	No - prefer scholarships
Rwanda	Low	2.2% ↑	Yes	No - Student numbers and subject level costs	N/a	N/a	Yes - preference for STEM
Uganda	Low	1.80% →	Yes	No - HEIs submit proposed budgets	Yes	Very large proportion	Yes
Kenya	Low	2.20% →	Yes	No - Based on courses offered	Yes	Tuition - Public - 42%; Private - 81%	Yes - public and private
Tanzania	Low	N/a	Yes	No - student unit cost x total students	Yes	Very large proportion	Yes
Somaliland	Very low	0.40% →	No	No	Yes	Very large proportion	No
Sierra Leone	Low	10.1% ↑	Yes	No	Yes	N/a	Incoming
Ghana	Low	3.80% →	Yes, but not private HEIs	No - HEIs submit proposed budgets	Yes	Private donations (10%) and tuition fees (10%)	Yes - public accredited courses only

---

[106] Source: PEAs, synthesis by External Evaluator. Note: the colours of the arrows denote change from the baseline

[107] Specific percentages are not available for all countries. The sources vary and some are reported verbally during interview. As far as possible, as data becomes available from official sources, this table will be updated.

Country	Level of Funding	Higher Education Spending (% of National Budget)	Block Grant?	Performance-Based Funding?	Can HEIs Obtain Private Funding and Use it Freely?	Income from Private Resources / Tuition Fees?[107]	Student Loan Scheme?
Nigeria	Low	N/a	Yes, but not private HEIs	No	Yes	N/a	No - previous attempt failed
Malawi	Low	3.65% ↓	Yes	Negotiated allocation system	Yes	Yes	Yes – as a way of facilitating equity
The Gambia	Low	3% →	Yes (small)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

45. The broader characteristics of the funding systems in the SPHEIR and comparator countries have largely remained the same since the baseline. National governments continue to be the largest public funders of higher education although new financing sources have been introduced in the past two decades.

46. To summarise the conclusions in the baseline which still hold true in the mid-term:

- In all countries, governments provide block grants to HEIs, apart from Somaliland which does not provide funds at all.

- In most cases, government funding is not enough to cover the actual costs of delivering HE. Furthermore, in some countries, such as in Sierra Leone, governments are planning to reduce the block grants which existed before the pandemic, further. The Kenyan government has already made plans to significantly reduce HE for the next financial year.

- Discussion of the balance of HE mission statements (e.g., between teaching, research, third mission) happens rarely. This is due to the following facts: research funding is almost non-existent, capacity for non-teaching activities is vanishingly small and university-business cooperation is low.

47. Looking more closely at the development in the funding systems in the past 12 months some countries, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Somaliland, to take a few examples, have been facing increasing challenges around private funding of higher education, especially around student tuition fees.

48. Proposing and implementing radical reforms of higher education funding systems in the Global South is difficult politically and financially, and therefore happens only rarely. Kenya is the only SPHEIR country where a serious debate has been happening, and even there, the plans are likely to be put on hold (see Annex Box 1).

Annex Box 1: Discussions About Performance-Based Higher Education Funding in Kenya in 2020[108]

> **The Kenyan government has recently started a dialogue with stakeholders at the national and international level about how to introduce a performance-based funding system in higher education. Last year, the government asked the World Bank to prepare a report on performance-based funding with case studies from other countries.**
>
> **This was following widespread complaints from the private sector and from students about the quality and relevance of the courses on offer. The report has triggered an ongoing dialogue on reform.**
>
> **The government has realised that introducing a performance-based system would involve a complete overhaul of the existing regulatory system and the changing of existing laws, which, would be highly politically controversial with groups that have a stake in the status quo, such as lecturers' unions.**
>
> **In June 2020, following economic contraction brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kenyan government has revised its plans for the next financial year for higher education. If the plans go ahead, higher education is predicted to lose $400 million. Long-term evidence from European higher education systems shows that reforms of funding systems require an additional financial boost (even if only temporarily) and that cutting public spending on HE is not conducive to implementation of reform steps.**

---

[108] Source: PEA interview

A6.5 The Higher Education Regulatory Environment and Quality Assurance in 2020

A6.5.1 Relevant Evaluation Issues

49. The improvement of the quality and efficiency of the higher education sector relies on good quality assurance (QA) processes and procedures either at the national or institutional level. This is a key longer-term outcome within the programme theory of change.

50. **Evidence** used includes country level policy documents, key informant interviews with national stakeholders, and qualitative data collected from the partnership-level interviews.

A6.5.2 Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

51. Our research for the mid-term review shows that **robust higher education QA systems have not yet been established in any of the SPHEIR and comparator countries**. All countries acknowledge the need to tackle this issue and have varying degrees of development of QA procedures.

52. In relation to the summative evaluation of the SPHEIR programme, the data will be revisited to see if there are positive or negative changes which may affect the results of the partnerships. It will be important to collect additional reflections of how governments and HEIs have been tackling QA during the COVID-19 pandemic in the SPHEIR and comparator countries.

A6.5.3 Mid-Term Indicators

53. Annex Table 11 groups those countries where QA mechanisms are in operation (albeit partially), those countries where QA mechanisms are currently under development, and lastly, countries where QA is absent or covers only isolated aspects of HE provision.

54. QA mechanisms seem to be more developed in East Africa, where QA is usually provided by a governmental Higher Education Council, Committee or Commission. This compares to West Africa, where QA is generally less developed and is regulated by an Accreditation Board or Authority. Nigeria has seen some positive change since the baseline. However, more comparative work, perhaps across the whole Africa (presently inconsistent), would be required to confirm this pattern.

Annex Table 11: Mid-Term Indicators on the State of Quality Assurance in SPHEIR and Comparator Countries in 2020 (with Indication of the Difference from the Baseline)[109]

Geographic Area	Country	QA Mostly Present	Work in Progress QA	QA Mostly Absent or Partially Present
Asia	Myanmar		x (slow) ⟵	
East Africa	Rwanda	X		
	Uganda	X		
	Kenya	X		
	Tanzania	X		
	Somaliland		X	
	Malawi		*X*	
West Africa	Sierra Leone			X
	Ghana			X
	Nigeria		*X* ⟵	

---

[109] Source: PEAs, synthesis by External Evaluator;

Geographic Area	Country	QA Mostly Present	Work in Progress QA	QA Mostly Absent or Partially Present
	The Gambia		X	

55. In four countries (Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania), QA mechanisms are mostly present, which tend to consist of minimum standards for student-staff ratios, examinations, internal quality assurance procedures, and academic staff appointments. These QA mechanisms were already in place at the baseline. Although QA guidelines apply to both public and private (including international) universities, harmonisation across the institutions within a nation is not consistent. This results in poor consistency and poor compliance to QA procedures.

56. In Rwanda, the issue of the quality of HE was included in this year's (2020) high-level leadership retreat. The Higher Education Council (HEC) has expressed commitment to conducting an assessment of over 20 universities and has been considering further mergers where there is duplication in the functions of the universities. In June 2020 a number of private universities closed due to administrative irregularities that were said to compromise the quality of education.

57. In Uganda, in 2014 the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) developed a comprehensive QA Framework made of two components: a regulatory component (consisting of the accreditation of institutions and programmes, admissions and examinations, teaching quality, the condition of infrastructures, non-academic collaborations, cross border HE etc) and an institutional component (consisting of quality procedure to be carried out internally, in each institution). In 2019, the NCHE focused on regulating private universities, of which two were closed. In February 2020, the NCHE closed three medical schools following joint inspection with East African Community.

58. In Kenya, QA mechanisms have been in place since 2014. The Commission for University Education (CUE), the government agency mandated to regulate HE in Kenya, is also in charge of the accreditation system and gives institutions and programmes either a full or a provisional accreditation. In 2019, CUE adopted a directive making it mandatory for all assistant lecturers to acquire a PhD degree. The CUE was taken to court by the Universities Academic Staff Union who claimed they had not been consulted before the regulations were crafted. In December 2019, a labour court ruled that the CUE directive was null and void and that academic staff "ought to have been given an opportunity to voice their views before the commission came up with the regulations."

59. Malawi, Somaliland, Nigeria and The Gambia are still working towards establishing Quality Assurance Agencies, often working in collaboration with international NGOs.

60. In Malawi and in The Gambia, the governance of accreditation and quality assurance are weak and are currently being strengthened by UNESCO (through the UNESCO-Shenzhen programme 2017-2020). By April 2019, Malawi had only nine out of 18 private universities fully accredited to charter status. Many have raised concerns about the ability of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) to ensure the quality in private HEIs.

61. In Somaliland, a Commission for HE was established in 2011 to provide a regulatory framework within which quality standards could be managed. QA mechanisms have only recently started to be developed, given that there is a very limited state-funded HE provision and private institutions have a high level of autonomy. QA and accreditation mechanisms are not yet operational, which means that no existing university has been accredited. At the moment there is ongoing curriculum reform. The Medical Schools Assessment and the development of the National Medical Education curriculum has engaged a number of stakeholders and institutions are taking forward the recommendations from the individual assessments.

62. In Nigeria, the government started conducting institutional accreditations of HEIs (in 2019). There are conditions specifying which HEIs are eligible to apply for institutional accreditation (the HEIs has to have existed for at least ten years and at least 70% of its study programmes have to have a full accreditation status). In addition, the National Universities Commission's new Guidelines for Cross-Border Provision of University Education in Nigeria provide a new regulatory framework for providers of transnational higher education in Nigeria.

63. Until 2016, there was no independent quality assurance body for HEIs in Myanmar. The National Institute for Higher Education Development (NIHED) and the Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency (HEQAA) were created. The focus of the quality assurance is to introduce greater quality and to diversify the curriculum to meet local needs. Reforms have been recently introduced and it will take a significant period of time to see how successful they have been and to what extent the government relinquishes control over curricula and allows quality assurance mechanisms to bed in.

64. Sierra Leone and Ghana have not yet developed functioning QA mechanisms. In Sierra Leone, there is little capacity to carry out QA processes and to help with this, the World Bank has supported the improvement of HE by publishing policy notes on QA. After gaining accreditation, however, universities are not subject to any further QA monitoring, paying fees to keep their accreditation status. Many study programmes are still suffering the consequences of the Ebola outbreak with overcrowded classes taught at an accelerated pace, making a quality assessment of the educational offer unfeasible and problematic. The AQ-HESL partnership is aiming an introduction and implementation of outcome-based higher education and of a country-wide QA system.

65. QA systems in this selection of countries have yet to develop a formal mechanism to ensure that educational standards are based on student interactions, extracurricular activities, non-academic collaborations and students' assessments of academic staff, as well as ensuring that HE students learn in an environment conducive to critical thinking. This level of quality could improve HE outcomes and contribute to provide graduate students with skills that can match more closely the needs of the labour market, thus help contribute towards expected outcomes of the SPHEIR programme.

A6.6 Higher Education Regulatory Environment and Governance in the SPHEIR and Comparator Countries in 2020

A6.6.1 Relevant Evaluation Issues

66. The issue of higher education governance is directly related to these summative evaluation questions relating to the outcomes in terms of governance, leadership, and institutional management and improvements in the quality and efficiency of HE. It also relates to an assumption on the capacity for change in HE and the political system set out in the theory of change.

67. Evidence for the PEAs comes from country-level policy documents as well as key informant interviews with national stakeholders and qualitative collected from the partnership level interviews conducted at baseline, mid-term and summative evaluation stages

A6.6.2 Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

68. With the exception of Malawi, Sierra Leone and Ghana, there have been no major changes in the area of HE systems level governance in the SPHEIR and comparator countries since the baseline report was prepared. A good understanding of the governance models, and the influence of governance on other areas of HE, both at the system and institutional levels, across the SPHEIR countries is a crucial piece of contextual information.

A6.6.3 Mid-Term Indicators

69. Higher education governance goes hand in hand with the autonomy of higher education institutions, which is their ability to operate independently of the government, in particular in the area of designing, running and awarding degrees. In most of the studied countries, autonomy is low, in particular in

comparison with the OECD countries. Autonomy relates to: funding, rights to design and run own study programmes, rights to elect their own academic bodies, and to conduct research in areas of their own choice etc.

70. Traditionally, the concept of higher education institutional autonomy has been challenged in the countries of the Global South. Although there have been significant improvements in these areas in recent years, governments still exercise significant power over higher education systems and over individual HEIs and their management, appointments and internal processes. The legal requirements for compliance across the countries often make it more difficult for HEIs to be able to arrange their internal structure and management so that they would be able to flexibly respond to societal challenges and also to labour market needs.[110]

Table 7.1: Mid-Term Indicators on the State of Higher Education Governance in SPHEIR and Comparator Countries in 2020 (with Indication of the Difference from the Baseline)[111]

Geographic Area	Country	Level of Autonomy (High/Medium/Low)	Changes Since the Baseline
Asia	Myanmar	Low ➡️	No major changes
East Africa	Rwanda	Low ➡️	No major changes
	Uganda	Low ⬆️	Yes, since 2019, better representation of employers in university governance
	Kenya	Low ➡️	No major changes
	Tanzania	Low ➡️	No major changes
	Somaliland	Low ➡️	No major changes
	Malawi	*Low* ⬆️	*Yes, concerted effort since 2019 (Government + World Bank) to build more capacity in the university management*
West Africa	Sierra Leone	Low ⬆️	A separate Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) to focus solely on the improvement of HE. An autonomous National Curriculum Research and Development Centre established. However, individual universities still remain largely non-autonomous
	Ghana	Medium (potentially ⬇️)	Yes, a new bill on public universities (not approved yet); critics say that it is attempting to curb academic freedom. A sensitive topic in the national elections.
	Nigeria	*Medium/low* ➡️	*No major changes*
	The Gambia	*Low* ➡️	*No major changes*

---

[110] Wangenge-Ouma, G. and Lucky Kgosithebe (2018) Autonomy and Accountability in Higher Education, Africa In Encyclopedia of International Higher Education Systems and Institutions: Living Edition.

[111] Source: The External Evaluator; Note: the colours of the arrows denote change from the baseline

71. In Malawi, there has been a concerted effort from the Government of Malawi since 2019 to build capacity in the university governance system. In particular through funding from the World Bank Skills Development Project, the NCHE has been developing a web-based HE Management Information System (HEMIS).[112] As of 2019, administrators at HEIs have received training, and NCHE staff members and universities have started inputting data to the system. This provides information on enrolments, staff numbers, student numbers etc.

72. In Sierra Leone, significant changes have been made to the governance model of HE since 2019. The new government has established a separate Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) to focus solely on the improvement of HE.[113] This ministry will oversee the actions laid out in the Medium-Term Development Plan 2019-2023. An autonomous National Curriculum Research and Development Centre has been established to deal with curriculum research, development, and evaluation, as well as with the development of materials and textbook production.

73. In Ghana, there are indications that the recent changes (from 2019 onwards) at the national level may lead to deterioration of (the already low) HE autonomy. In June 2019 the Minister for Education announced that the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) and National Accreditation Board (NAB) will be merged due to the overlapping functions of the two regulatory bodies.[114] This will be called the "Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC)". In addition, the Public University Bill has been drafted with sections on: establishing public universities; aims of public universities; governance arrangements; administration and, financial provisions. The Bill has drawn criticism from many in the academic community for being an attempt to curb academic freedom. The controversy is ongoing as the Bill makes its way through the parliament. If it is approved, there is a chance it will not last long in the statute books because the opposition NDC leader has pledged to repeal the Bill if he is successful in the national elections in December 2020.[115]

A6.7   Working Environment for Academic Staff

A6.7.1   Relevant Evaluation Issues

74. The quality of teaching within higher education is linked to a number of different variables including access to training and the skills and competences of those who are employed in faculties and departments. As a programme, SPHEIR has a number of partnerships which are directly intervening at the level of academic staff to increase training in relation to curriculum design, teaching skills and new ways of course delivery. The wider environment in which academics work may impact on the extent to which these interventions lead to the desired outcomes relating to the increased quality of teaching, and thus ultimately the employability of graduates. The issues on gender equality and academic staffing is discussed in more detail in Section 5.9.

75. **Evidence** is drawn from country level policy documents and key informant interviews with national stakeholders.

A6.7.2   Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

76. It remains challenging to source up to date publish statistics on all of the countries covered by the PEAs. However, there is a richness of qualitative data. The analysis shows the key issues that continue to plague the academic environment are the low level of autonomy, the poor pay, the number of PhDs

---

[112] Official website at: https://hemis.nche.ac.mw/.

[113] Government of Sierra Leone - Ministry of Economic Development and Planning (2019) Medium-Term Development Plan 2019-2023.

[114] Modern Ghana (2019) NCTE, NAB to merge, available at: https://wwdernghana.com/news/939353/ncte-nab-to-merge.html

[115] GhanaWeb (2020) Withdraw Public Universities Bill from parliament now – Mahama, available at: https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Withdraw-Public-Universities-Bill-from-parliament-now-Mahama-979579

and the access to training and opportunities for research (as well as the gender gap). For the summative evaluation, the evaluators will continue to source official statistics but remain mindful of the data lags and the methodologies used to collect the data, which do not allow for easy cross comparison.

77. **Career progression will be a focus of the summative evaluation** in order to look more closely at the impact of the partnerships on the staff who have been involved. Many staff have been instrumental in preparing their institutions to deal with the COVID-19.

A6.7.3   Mid-Term Indicators

78. Annex Table 12 gives an overview of the main indicators which shed light on the working environment for academics relating to their access to training and remuneration as well as career progression.

Annex Table 12: Mid-Term Indicators Supporting a Conducive Working Environment – 2020[116]

Geographic Area	Country	PhD Ratio Against Other Qualifications	Standardised Grade Structure	Level of Performance-Based Career Progression	Level of Research Activities	Provision of Staff Training	Level of Remuneration
Asia	Myanmar	Low PhD ratio	Medium / high	Medium	Low but increasing	Low	N/A
East Africa	Rwanda	20.3% PhD ⬆	Medium	Low / medium	Low / medium	Low / medium	N/A
	Uganda	17.7% PhD ⬆	N/A	Medium	N/A	Low	Low
	Kenya	36% PhD ⬆	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low
	Tanzania	49% PhD ➡	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Low
	Somaliland	3% PhD ➡	Very low	Very low	Low	Low	Low (85% p/t)
	Malawi	*Very low PhD ratio* ➡	*Very low*	*Very low*	*Very low*	*Low*	*Low*
West Africa	Sierra Leone	10% PhD ⬆	N/A	Low	Low	N/A	Low
	Ghana	31% ➡	Low / medium	Medium	Low / medium	Low	Medium
	Nigeria	*43% PhD*	*N/A*	*Low*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*Low*
	The Gambia	*N/A*	*Medium*	*Low*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*

---

[116] Source: The External Evaluator

79. The **general working conditions have not changed** since the baseline and remain poor in terms of autonomy, remuneration and career progression opportunities. The issue of pay means that a number of lecturers look to supplement their income externally. This increases existing pressures, reported by academics in interview, which relate to higher levels of workload caused by the requirements of the university in relation to curriculum, teaching and learning. This is prevalent in Sierra Leone, Somaliland and Rwanda. The lack of regulation allows this to prevail, but in turn does not help to strengthen performance and quality of education.[117] Pay cuts have been seen in response to COVID-19 in Somaliland. In Kenya, some universities attempted to introduce pay cuts but this led to a legal dispute. In Rwanda, the University of Rwanda cut pay and a small number of private universities followed suit.

80. **The number of staff with PhDs is increasing in some countries, albeit it slowly.** At the policy level, increasing PhDs is seen as important in the majority of countries covered by the PEAs, in some cases calling for it to be mandatory (especially for career progression). What is missing is the critical mass of opportunities for PhD training, a lack of quality of provision and an over reliance on importing PhDs. South Africa is a particularly important source of PhDs in Sub Saharan Africa. Kenya has particular challenges in relation to staffing STEM courses and research. Somaliland and Sierra Leone have particularly low levels of PhDs. Somaliland lost many of its academic staff who left the country during the war and did not return. In addition, there is inadequate funding in the system to attract many international applicants. For Sierra Leone, war also caused qualified staff to leave the country and they continue to struggle with the migration of young academics to western nations. In Myanmar, in the 1980s, the PhDs mostly came from the UK and the US. Since then, PhDs tended to be homegrown and there is a perception that the quality has fallen. This is acknowledged in the NESP (National Education Strategic Plan) which indicates that priority be given to staff trained outside of Myanmar.

81. In most cases the **progression within a career happens as a consequence of tenure and qualification**. In Rwanda for example, promotions are linked to academic attainment and can be automatic on receiving a PhD. In Tanzania, basic guidelines for performance reviews are being introduced by the TCU (Tanzania Commission for Universities) but are not yet effective due to lack of funding. In Myanmar, there has been an official revision of promotion policy for professors in 2019. The new rules look at academic advancement in light of publications, level of degree and also international exposure (as well as no criminal record). In Sierra Leone, research and publication is a career progression benchmark for faculty members within the university system. However, the lack of active research and publication within the HE system has led to limited growth in career development.

82. **The provision of staff training, remains low**, and where it is provided, it is generally in relation to international projects. This is a problem right now as links with universities within partnerships are facing a number of access challenges.

A6.8   Operational Delivery of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

A6.8.1   Relevant Evaluation Issues

83. The delivery of high-quality teaching and learning experiences is central to the SPHEIR programme and is explicitly addressed in the theory of change in relation to "increasing the quality and relevance". All partnerships but LEAP provide teaching and learning support as part of their activity.

84. In Section 5.7, it is evident that training is very rarely available for academics and this in turn affects their ability to deliver high quality teaching and learning to students in higher education (either online or offline).

---

[117] Glob Health Action. 2018; 11(1): 1491119.

85. This section gives the wider perspective of the status quo in relation to the delivery of teaching and learning at the national level in the PEA countries, with particular attention given to the impact of COVID-19 and the delivery during the lockdown.

86. **Evidence** is provided from the academic literature and key informant interviews with national stakeholders.

A6.8.2   Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

87. The response to COVID-19 has seen an **upturn in the delivery of online teaching and learning** in all PEA countries.

88. At the summative evaluation, it will be important to further assess the extent to which the changes brought about by COVID-19 have affected the long-term institutional approach to teaching and learning. In addition, the extent to which there has been a mainstreaming of good practice and reflection on the positive and negative implications of wide-scale online teaching and learning.

A6.8.3   Mid-Term Indicators

89. Following lockdown (partial or complete) of African countries in particular, most universities closed in March 2020 with little notice. One third of the universities in Africa reported they had no communications infrastructure in place at the time of closure.[118]

90. Looking more specifically at the individual countries covered by the PEAs, **the pandemic has revealed weaknesses in open and distance learning provision**, both where it was already delivered, and for institutions using it for the first time.

91. The pandemic has also **pushed 'open and distance learning' up the policy agenda.** For example, Myanmar has launched a national response and recovery plan which provides a roadmap for reopening. From October 2020, a safe environment is planned with effective transition of learning, in particular for marginalised students. The "higher level universities" (namely, YUDE, Yangon and Mandalay) represent those where the MoE will aim to trial new methods/approaches. A country wide E-learning management system has been launched through which materials can be shared and courses followed via video conference.

92. In Malawi the universities have called for the government, and in particular the National Council for Higher Education, to review the experiences of remote learning during the pandemic (and assessment) and consider how to integrate them into the study programmes going forward. Tanzania already had a well-established Open University (which is a partner in the PEBL project). Nigeria also has a well-established Open University but calls for a better regulatory environment, something which is echoed in other countries. In the Gambia, in April 2020, the government launched an online education project with 5.9 million dalasi (circa £90,000). The project is supporting the move to using Google classroom for courses at institutions including the University of The Gambia, Gambia College, Gambia Technical Training Institute, and Medical Development Institute. It will be used to support online provision for six months by purchasing equipment, paying for access to the internet for students and paying assistant lecturers.

93. There is an important distinction to be made between **remote teaching and online teaching,** particularly in response to COVID-19.[119] Remote teaching can be described as one where the lecturers make notes and video recordings available, whereas online teaching is prepared by instructional designers and online pedagogy is employed for the design and delivery of courses. Some of the universities involved in SPHEIR were able to use the experience of the lecturers involved in projects like PEBL to offer blended learning.

---

[118] The impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education around the world: IAU Global Survey Report 2020

[119] https://er.educause.edu/articles/2020/3/the-difference-between-emergency-remote-teaching-and-online-learning

94. Looking at the approach pre-COVID-19, the baseline findings remain valid with the majority of countries following a tradition-based didactic pedagogy, with crowded classrooms, a rather passive role of the students, the use of memorisation and repetition and a lack of training in skills, such as critical thinking.

> "The predominant mode of teaching is the lecture. Even when demonstration and small group/individual work are more potent alternatives, many teachers settle for the lecture. This can be explained by a combination of large classes, inadequacy of equipment and materials, and lack of training of the teacher in the use of methods other than the lecture."[120]

This largely sums up the situation for Sierra Leone, Malawi, Tanzania and Somaliland (pre-COVID-19).

95. There are some changes afoot. As well as SPHEIR, there are examples of national support for changes to the curriculum to make it more innovative. Nigeria has revised its national curriculum to ensure good content, pedagogy and student learning achievement. Rwanda started introducing widespread changes as far back as 2010 where the government reformed higher education switching from teacher centred to student centred learning at the decree of the President. In Uganda the virtual university of Uganda is a fully licensed post graduate institution (recognised by the NCHE) and institutions, such as Makerere University, have begun to institute pedagogical changes. There is a growing recognition amongst Uganda HEIs that changes are needed to information delivery to ensure that universities remain competitive as well as relevant to the changing needs of both domestic and international industry. There is a general discourse in the literature in relation to the "relevance of higher education", particularly in Africa, where it is considered that a shift in didactic model will also allow for incorporating identity building and reorientation of the higher education philosophy to one which support the needs and values of the continent (in terms of content, goals, methods, research etc).[121]

A6.8.4 Challenges in the Delivery of New Methods and Approaches – Teaching and Learning

96. At the baseline, a number of key challenges were identified which hamper the delivery of teaching and learning, and ultimately the quality of education and the employability of graduates. These were:

- Lack of ICT infrastructure
- Lack of teaching materials
- Scepticism among academics to introducing new methods
- Quality of secondary education
- Cultural context not fully considered
- Language of delivery

Annex Table 13: Overview of the Main Challenges Linked to Higher Education Delivery Identified in the SPHEIR and Counterfactual Countries MTE 2020

Country	Lack of ICT Infrastructure	Lack of Teaching Materials	Scepticism Amongst Academics Towards New Methods	Major Issues with Quality In Secondary Education	Cultural Context not Fully Considered	Language of Delivery
Ghana	X					

---

[120] Nigeria, "Blueprint on the Rapid Revitalization of University Education in Nigeria 2018-2023

[121] Ndofirepi A, Mngomezulu B, Cross M. Internationalization, globalization and Africanization. In regionalization of African higher education. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers; 2017. pp. 47-65; Higgs P, van Wyk B. African philosophy and knowledge production in higher education. Journal of Educational Studies. 2007;6(2):40-49

Country	Lack of ICT Infrastructure	Lack of Teaching Materials	Scepticism Amongst Academics Towards New Methods	Major Issues with Quality in Secondary Education	Cultural Context not Fully Considered	Language of Delivery
Kenya	X		X			
Malawi	X	X				
Myanmar	X		X		X	X
Nigeria	X					
Rwanda	X		X			
Sierra Leone	X	X	X	X		
Somaliland	X		X			X
Tanzania	X					

97. Taking each one in turn, some of these have changed, either because of COVID-19 or due to other changes in the system.

1. **Lack of ICT infrastructure:** This remains, as identified, a significant problem in the majority of PEA countries. In addition, the affordability of access is a problem. During COVID-19 there has been some support from government and / or the private sector to improve access.

2. **Lack of teaching materials**: There was nothing additional to report in relation to lack of teaching materials.

3. **Scepticism among academics to introducing new methods:** The issue of encouraging teachers to change the way they teach is generally best served by training, something which is in short supply for academics in the PEA countries.[122]

4. **Quality of secondary education:** The quality of secondary education did not arise in the updated PEAs as any more or less of a challenge than before.

5. **Cultural context is not fully considered:** The delivery of culturally relevant higher education is highlighted as a challenge in Myanmar, but is also a big topic of debate in Africa, with many articles being written on the decolonisation of the curriculum.[123] The curriculum reform and new pedagogies introduced as part of SPHEIR have a role to play in pursuit of the delivery of highly relevant teaching methods and content for those countries involved in the partnerships.

A6.9 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

A6.9.1 Relevant Evaluation Issues

98. SPHEIR is expected to contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 5: **Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.** SDG 5 aims to provide women and girls with equal access to education, including higher education, decent work on an equal footing with men and equal rights in economic and political decision-making processes. UK legislation requires that gender equality is built

---

[122] The results of SPHEIR, in particular of the PedaL partnership, show signs of a change in attitude of senior academic staff, however, this is currently limited to a small number of institutions across the countries

[123] Nyoni, J., 2019, 'Decolonising the higher education curriculum: An analysis of African intellectual readiness to break the chains of a colonial caged mentality', Transformation in Higher Education 4(0), a69. https://doi.org/10.4102/the.v4i0.69

into international development interventions.[124] Addressing gender and social inclusion in SPHEIR is important because institutions, including HEIs, can exacerbate disadvantages facing women and girls in all countries and perpetuate inequality and poverty unless they purposefully address inequalities. Gender inequality is exacerbated by other intersecting characteristics such as disability, religion, class, ethnicity and socio-economic status, which can also negatively affect men and boys.

99. **Social inclusion** is equally important for the FCDO and the SPHEIR partnerships. The exclusion of people living with disability from education (formal and informal) is a global phenomenon. Poverty reduction and education for all cannot be achieved without addressing the rights of 600 million people who live with disability. Social Inclusion and empowerment are central to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). FCDO has a disability inclusive development strategy to double the proportion of disability inclusive education programmes by 2023.

100. **Evidence** for this context analysis of GESI in SPHEIR countries draws on secondary data (quantitative and qualitative), such as UN report, national statistics (including Councils for Higher Education and Ministry of Education statistics), UNESCO and World Bank statistics and academic literature and primary data from interviews and institutional self-assessments. There are no global indicators on social inclusion.

A6.9.2   Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

101. Overall, the PEA countries score poorly on UNDP's indexes that measure gender equality, gender inequality and human development (see Annexes – Vol. II). The majority of the countries covered have policy commitments in national development plans to gender equality and social inclusion but they are less explicit about disability.

102. In HEIs in PEA countries, male academics outnumber female academics and there is little change since the baseline. More female academics are seen in the social sciences in general, but far less in STEM subjects. At the student level, there are more signs of increasing numbers of females entering higher education, but no system which has reached parity. There is very little available data on disability and inclusion. There is little evidence collected in the PEAs on gender responsiveness in the curriculum as a key concern at the national or institutional level.

103. For the summative evaluation, looking at the progress made in the partnerships in the national contexts will shed light on the extent to which interventions can help to accelerate progress in this area.

A6.9.3   Mid-Term Indicators

104. Overall, the PEA countries score very poorly on gender development and inequality and are below the world average, with only Rwanda and Myanmar coming close to average. The UNDP reports on gender in its Human Development Reports through the Gender Development Index which is a composite indicator including aspects of health, knowledge and living standards.[125] The Gender Inequality Index provides a very broad-brush measure of gender inequalities in three important aspects of human development.[126]

---

[124] UK International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014

[125] http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-development-index-gdi

[126] The **Gender Inequality Index** looks at reproductive health; empowerment (measured by proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by females and the proportion of adult females and males aged 25 and older with at least some secondary education); and economic status (expressed as labour market participation and measured by labour force participation rate of female and male populations aged 15 and older). http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii

Annex Table 14: UNDP Gender Development Index, Gender Inequality Index, and Human Development Index Rank 2019

Country	UNDP Gender Development Index (2019)	UNDP Gender Inequality Index (2019)	Human Development Index Rank (2019)
Uganda	0.863	0.531	159
Rwanda	0.943	0.412	157
The Gambia	*0.832*	*0.620*	*174*
Kenya	0.933	0.545	147
Tanzania	0.936	0.539	159
Ghana	0.912	0.541	142
Myanmar	0.953	0.459	145
Malawi	*0.930*	*0.615*	*172*
Sierra Leone	0.882	0.644	181
Nigeria	*0.868*	*N/A*	*158*
Somaliland	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sub Saharan Africa	0.891	0.572	-
East Asia and the Pacific	0.962	0.276	-
Europe and Central Asia	0.953	0.276	-
World	0.941	0.439	-

The Policy Environment

105. In 2020 out of the 11 countries covered in the PEA, the majority have **policy commitments to gender equality and social inclusion**. Gender is covered more overtly than disabilities. Little information is available on how these policies then become enacted. At the baseline, the evaluation reported on student gender quotas for Ghana, Kenya and Uganda. The NCTE (National Council for Tertiary Education in Ghana) has specified a norm of 50:50 ratio regarding enrolment of male and students. In the 2017 World Bank publication on Sharing Higher Education's Promise,[127] Ghana is quoted as one of the few countries in the region where students from households in the bottom quintiles of income distribution take a good share of tertiary enrolment. In Sierra Leone it is reported that there is a positive bias towards awarding government scholarships to women, but men still receive more. A quota system is being considered there. Malawi is abolishing its district-based quota system for students and has replaced it with a merit-based system with affirmative action on gender, disability and albinism. Rwanda appears to take a more multi-pronged approach to encouraging female participation in higher education, with a particular emphasis on STEM. One notable initiative is run by the Imbuto Foundation which is headed by the First Lady of Rwanda Jeannette Kagame. Since 2004, the foundation has supported vulnerable girls through school, rewarding those who do best. Many will study STEM subjects at university. STEM is also highlighted in Sierra Leone's Education Sector Plan as a focus for female enrolment. Tanzania appears to have very little information on policy instruments, along with Somaliland. In Tanzania, inclusion is a significant challenge, but not only in higher education;

---

[127] https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/abs/10.1596/978-1-4648-1050-3

it starts with primary school education. Likewise, in Rwanda, the government recognises that the issues start earlier and its commitment to gender is focused more on primary and secondary education.

Annex Table 15: MTE Selected Countries – HE Equity Policy Overview

Country	Main Documents	Equity Objectives	Equity Target groups	Policy Instruments
Uganda	● Higher Education Law: The Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, ● 2001 ● Gender in Education Sector Policy, 2016 ● Second National Development Plan 2015/16-2019/20	● Increase the number of scholarships for disadvantaged areas ● The Admission Committee of a Public University - affirmative action in favour of marginalised groups ● Achieve gender equitable and quality higher education in Uganda. ● Prioritise gender responsive teaching and learning of science-based disciplines and subjects which are critical for national development ● Gender parity by 2030	● Low income students ● Gender groups ● Disabilities	● Student loans ● Sponsorship ● Affirmative action of public universities ● District quota system ● Awareness raising ● Gender mainstreaming ● Reformed admissions
Kenya	● Strategic Plan ● Gender and Education policy	● To expand access and equity in university education ● Expanding the number of higher education and widening accreditation. ● Address disparities for students with disabilities, students from marginalized areas, and vulnerable groups. ● Increasing the number of women in STEM courses ● Improve gross enrolment from 15% to 20%, increase gender parity from 0.71 to 0.9, decrease staff to student ratio from 1:36 to 1:29 and enhance management and governance across universities	● Gender groups ● Minority groups ● Disabilities ● Vulnerable groups	● No or low tuition fees for certain groups ● Scholarships ● Reformed admission for women
Malawi	● *National education sector plan*	● *Double enrolment over the next 5 to 10 years focusing on critical academic areas* ● *Mainstream special needs in all programmes, train teachers for special needs education and establish a special needs unit to monitor related programmes,*	● *Low-income students* ● *Gender groups* ● *Minority groups, based on geographical location*	● *Loans* ● *Specialised institutions for underrepresented* ● *Outreach programmes* ● *Gender based reform of admissions*

Country	Main Documents	Equity Objectives	Equity Target groups	Policy Instruments
		Mainstream mitigation of HIV/AIDS among students and staff *Increase access for females and students with special needs where applicable.*	*Students with disability*	*Specialised facilities* *Special needs instructors*
Nigeria	*Nigeria Economic Recovery and Growth Plan - 2017-2030* *Ministerial Strategic Plan - 2016-2019* *National Policy on Education* *National Policy on Special Needs Education in Nigeria* *Blueprint on the Rapid Revitalization of University Education in Nigeria*	*Provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians* *Flexible learning modes, scholarships and loans, and dedicated services to the community, among other strategies.* *Open and Distance education as a way of supporting equity goals.*	*Gender* *Disabilities*	*Quotas* *Reformed admission for women* *Open and distance learning* *Open educational resources* *Student welfare*
Ghana	Education strategic plan	Inclusive, equitable and mass tertiary education opportunities provided for all eligible persons Increase equitable access to high quality tertiary education that provides relevant courses to young adults within Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities, and for research and intellectual stimulus To promote professionalism, equity, excellence, autonomy and academic freedom in the tertiary subsector 50:50 gender target set by regulator for HE.	Gender groups Students with disabilities Students from remote or hard-to-reach areas	Facilities, tuition and amenities that enable students with disabilities Boarding and travel grants sensitivity training and data collection Affirmative action Reformed admissions Quotas

Country	Main Documents	Equity Objectives	Equity Target groups	Policy Instruments
Myanmar	• National Education Strategic Plan 2016-21 • University Education Law	• Issues of affordability and accessibility both impact access to higher education. Support programs are needed to help students to overcome cost barriers for higher education • Expand equitable access to higher education. • Create a good teaching and learning environment at HEIs	• Disadvantaged background	• Loans • Student support programmes
Rwanda	• University of Rwanda 10-year Gender Equity Plan • Special needs and inclusive education policy	• Gender parity by 2028 increase Female academic staff recruitment to 50% • Gender responsive curriculum	• Gender • Disabilities	• Mentoring • Scholarships, Flexible learning options, • Better infrastructure and accommodation
Sierra Leone	• Education sector plan 2018-2020 • Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019-2023	• More females and 3% more disabled students in HE by 2020. • By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university • STEM focus for gender	• Gender • Disabilities	N/A
Somaliland	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tanzania	• Education sector plan	• Learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development, by 2030	• Gender	N/A

Country	Main Documents	Equity Objectives	Equity Target groups	Policy Instruments
The Gambia	● *General Education Policy of Gambia (2016-2030)*	● *Gender inequality, general equity and lack of female access to education at all stages has been identified by The Gambian government as a priority issue*	● *Gender*	*N/A*

106. **Disability is less well addressed at the policy level for higher education than social inclusion. Only in Uganda, Ghana, Rwanda and Sierra Leone is disability mentioned explicitly.** Uganda has a number of important infrastructures for social inclusion including a department of special needs education at the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports, a special needs education section at the Uganda National Examinations Board, a department at the National Curriculum Development Centre, a section at the Education Standards Agency, representation of persons with disabilities at the National Council for Higher Education Board, Public Universities Councils and training of teachers for special needs education. Equitable access is a major priority of the government (NDP II, the University Act). There are also legal and non-legal frameworks which have been adopted to ensure the rights of disabled people across all levels of education.

107. In Ghana, the Education Sector Medium-Term Development Plan 2018-2021 sets a target of 100% of qualified disadvantaged (disabled and poor socioeconomic background) applicants being admitted to universities by 2019/2020. In Sierra Leone, the government aims to have 3% more disabled students in HE by 2020. The Rwandan 2018 special needs and inclusive education policy is being implemented in the University of Rwanda with provision for training, the creation of a unit for special needs education and a centre which links with schools and the community. In Kenya, KUCCPS (Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement System) has a clear statement on access on their landing page: "the Placement Board seeks to promote equity and access to university and college education, by among other things, developing criteria for affirmative action, for the marginalised, the minorities and persons with disabilities."

108. Due to the expense of Higher Education in Myanmar access for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds is poor. The government has provided for bursaries for those from poorer socio-economic backgrounds and scholarships for top performing students. However, it is unclear whether these have come into effect and whether there has been wide-ranging take up at this time or whether this has been systematically enacted. The NESP (National Education Strategic Plan) document does make reference to the fact that "issues of affordability and accessibility both impact access to higher education", but its support programmes are mainly targeted on aiding economically disadvantaged people, with less focus on gender and disability related equity issues. Inclusion of people with a disability is more complex as it is seen as a punishment for former life and so much of it remains completely hidden.

109. The general lack of data on disabled students (and the various ways of reporting) suggests a need for more focus in this area.[128]

Academic and Student Numbers

110. **There are significantly more men than women academics across most countries**. Although the sources vary (and some are not updated), there has been little change since the baseline. Both in East and West Africa, the percentages are low. This varies across discipline, with even fewer female academics in STEM subjects than in the social sciences and humanities. Where there is disaggregated data by level of qualification, more differences can be seen. In Rwanda the majority of female staff hold Masters or Bachelors qualifications. In total in Rwanda 20% of staff overall hold PhDs and 12% of the total are female. In the Kenyan public university system, 38% of staff hold PhDs of which 29% (of the 38%) are female. Again, in the Kenyan public university system 482 staff in total are Professors, of which 71 are female (15%).

---

[128] Higher Education and Inclusion, Salmi, 2020: "'data providing insights into access to higher education of students with disabilities are scare and available sources tend to be more fragmented and unreliable than data describing educational access and attainment of disabled children and youths at lower levels of education." https://unesdoc.unesco.org/notice?id=p%3A%3Ausmarcdef_0000373689&posInSet=2&queryId=2d19b7e8-32ca-41ae-a6fc-28bd34bd9d5b

111. The policies at national level however focus more on increasing gender parity in the student body rather than in the composition of academic staff. Only in the case of Uganda does the PEA find evidence of plans to increase female academic staff recruitment to 50% through a range of measures.

112. **At the student level, there is more gender parity than within the academic staff**, although no country reaches 50:50. Although there are signs of increasing female participation, this does not happen across all countries, and is often limited to certain disciplines only. In Uganda, although the proportion of male to female students has remained unchanged from the baseline, there is a strong male bias in agriculture, forestry, the sciences, veterinary medicine and education. In Rwanda, where 43% of students are female, only 32% follow STEM subjects and only 20% study engineering, manufacturing and construction. The majority of female students' study business, administration and law, services and social sciences. In Kenya the CUE (Council for University Education) statistics report indicates that the gaps in male and female enrolment are narrowing and are smaller in private institutions, and similar evidence is available in Rwanda.

113. **In terms of achievement, there are indications that women students are outperforming men.** In Somaliland, interviews indicated that the women coming through higher education tended to outperform the men. Looking at the most recent graduation rates from Kenyan's public universities, first class honours are awarded to 53% male and 47% female graduates, showing only a small gap between the genders in attainment, in spite of the lower levels of female enrolment.

114. In Myanmar women outperform men in most HE outcomes measures. Of 1.9 million with an HE qualification in Myanmar just over half, 1.1 million, were women. Of the 116,000 people with a postgraduate qualification nearly two thirds were women. Unsurprisingly, this situation is mirrored at primary and secondary levels, suggesting that differences between participation and attainment between men and women are entrenched early.

115. Important to note, however, that, at this stage, the evidence on female student achievement remains anecdotal and is based on limited evidence that the EE was able to collect via the PEAs.

Annex Table 16: Percentages of Female Undergraduate and Academic Staff in PEA Countries[129]

Country	% Female Academic Staff	% Female Undergraduates
Ghana	23%	40%
Kenya	33%	41%
Malawi	*30%*	*38.7%*
Myanmar	85%	55%
Nigeria	*24%*	*44%*
Rwanda	19 % (stable)	43.1%
Sierra Leone	N/A	39.5%
Somaliland	N/A	30%-50% (various reports)
Tanzania	25%	35%
Uganda	30%	44%
The Gambia	-	-

---

[129] Source: The External Evaluator data from the PEA reports, accumulated sources from national Councils for Higher Education and other national statistics

Gender Responsiveness in the Curriculum

116. The Gender Equality Strategy within the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 16-25 developed by the African Union and the Forum for African Women Educationalists includes gender responsiveness. Uganda also has a clear statement of intent in this regard, and for providing a safe and secure environment in which to study[130]. Malawi has key indicators on promoting the development and use of gender responsive curriculum and education materials at all levels, with a desired target of 100%.

A6.10 Services and Facilities for Students

A6.10.1 Relevant Evaluation Issues

117. For students to have an enjoyable, supported experience at HEIs, a variety of student services should be available. These include support for: physical and emotional well-being, learning enrichment and also careers advice. Support services are important as a means for ensuring students have a solid foundation on which to base their academic activities, as well as providing opportunities to explore and practice skills and competences, particularly when related to some of the cross cutting 21st century skills and competences which are valuable for every part of the journey from academic studies to the world of work.

118. **Evidence** is provided from interviews with key stakeholders and the institutional self-assessments undertaken as part of the evaluation.

A6.10.2 Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

119. Student support services are generally not well developed in the PEA countries. The policy level support is poor, and the implementation is varied. Furthermore, the services are often not designed to deal with the different levels of demand among different groups of students and their ability/propensity to use and benefit from these services. The full positive impact of good student services on inclusion can only appear when the services become customisable.

120. Only in the case of career services is support provided systematically (although there is no indication of quality). There is little evidence of support for mental health and well-being, although more services are being considered as a consequence of COVID-19.

121. Availability of student services is a key assumption in the theory of change which supports the intermediate outcome of "increased and more equitable access and retention". At the summative evaluation, the evaluation will explore the extent to which provision, of lack of provision hinders the educational experience of those undergraduates benefitting from the SPHEIR intervention and also their future employability.

A6.10.3 Mid-Term Indicators

122. **Specific policies which support student services are found in only 2 countries**, Rwanda and Ghana. In Rwanda, the national student support and guidance policy is a guidance document to institutions that sets the standard for what support students are entitled to at university. It covers induction, academic support, career education, personal development planning and equality and diversity. The academic support includes a designated academic advisor for each student across the duration of study who is their first point of contact for support. The personal development planning element is designed for students to record their progress towards enhancing their employability, which is formally assessed at the end of the programme. There is no information about accommodation, facilities or welfare support. Ghana has a Ghana Education Trust (GET) Fund set up by an Act of Parliament in 2000 with a core mandate to provide funding for educational infrastructure and facilities.

---

[130] Gender in education sector policy, 2016.

123. **There are career guidance services throughout the PEA countries**, although understanding the quality of service is a challenge. In many cases, it is reported that the services are piecemeal. There are specific university examples. The University of Nairobi in Kenya, Makerere in Uganda, University of Ghana in Ghana all have dedicated careers support services available to all students. The University of Rwanda has a college-based system of careers guidance, but little information is available on how this is implemented.

124. **In general, access to adequate facilities remains poor.** In Myanmar, the government acknowledges that significant upgrades are required to university campuses. This includes physical infrastructure, accommodation and learning and teaching resources, including libraries. Overall, the quality of services provided to students are of a low quality, although measures are being taken to address this, with new university funding explicitly allocated to upgrade outdated and inadequate university infrastructure. Kenya has similar issues with facilities that tend to be old and in need of updating.

125. Ghana reports to have expanded its support services with financial aid from the Ghana Education Trust. Fund. There is a serious shortage of accommodation. In the Gambia, there is very limited information about services on campus for students. None of the major Gambian institutions have detailed websites or information about lab or library facilities on their campuses.

126. Kenya's universities approach student services as a set of discrete functions for students to use when needed as opposed to holistic services, which are less reactive. There is much less motivation to engage with students to resolve issues collaboratively due to a history of student riots. The main challenge for student support services is funds, particularly due to having to deal with an increasing number of students with no corresponding increase in funding or specific policy instruction to support them at the time of writing.[131]

127. Public private partnerships are increasingly being used to supply housing infrastructure for students. In 2014, Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology, Egerton, Maseno, Kenya School of Government and South Eastern Kenya University were approved by the government to finance construction of student accommodation through these partnerships. Such projects have had a high success rate in solving student accommodation deficits in universities across the globe, especially in Egypt, Belgium, South Africa and India.[132]

128. There is little systematic information on access to student wellbeing services in the PEA countries. In Rwanda and Uganda there are examples of counselling and guidance services. During COVID-19. The University of Rwanda staff have been supporting people affected by raising funds for food and commodities.

A6.11 Labour Market Opportunities

A6.11.1 Relevant Evaluation Issues

129. Employability is a key expected impact of SPHEIR with the theory of change looking for contribute to economic development and growth at impact level through graduates (m/f) having the right skills and competences to gain access to the labour market. Understanding the labour market for graduates is therefore very important to assessing the successful of implementation, and to answering evaluation questions on success factors (EQ3), HE relevance (EQ4.3) and employer satisfaction with graduate quality (EQ 11). The labour market is gendered, and an appreciation of this is also central to achieving results for both men and women, and effective integration of gender and social inclusion (EQ7).

---

[131] T. Yakaboski and M. Birnbaum (2013) Ibid.

[132] Construction Kenya (3rd April 2017) Happy times ahead for student housing developers in Kenya. Available at: https://www.constructionkenya.com/2887/student-housing-boom-kenya/

A6.11.2 Mid-Term Findings and Considerations for the Summative Evaluation

130. The statistical data available on labour market opportunities is still patchy for the majority of the PEA countries, and outdated. There is no standard source on graduate employment and no new data available since the baseline, therefore it is not repeated for the MTE. From the qualitative data, it is easy to discern the ongoing issues with the graduate labour market in the PEA countries. There is an increasing focus on entrepreneurship as a means of employment.

131. For the summative evaluation, it will be important to link these challenges to the tracer study on SPHEIR graduates.

A6.11.3 Mid-Term Indicators

132. The statistical data available is still patchy for the majority of the PEA countries, and outdated. There is no new data available since the baseline. From the qualitative data, it is easy to discern the ongoing issues with the graduate labour market in the PEA countries. For the summative evaluation, it will be important to link these challenges to the tracer study on SPHEIR graduates.

Annex Table 17: Overview of the Availability of Formal jobs and Labour Market Skills Deficit – Evidence from the PEAs

Country	Lack of Formal Jobs	Labour Market Skills Deficit
The Gambia	*Yes*	*Yes*
Rwanda	Yes	Yes
Kenya	Yes	
Myanmar	-	-
Ghana	-	Yes
Nigeria	*Yes*	*Yes*
Uganda	Yes	-
Malawi	*Yes*	-
Tanzania	Yes	Yes
Sierra Leone	-	Yes
Somaliland	Yes	Yes

133. **There is still a lack of formal jobs available on the labour market but often a vibrant informal economy.** This particularly relates to formal graduate jobs which are reported in Kenya, Myanmar, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Somaliland and the Gambia.

134. **There are, however, new industry sectors opening up for graduates.** Kenya, for example, is one of the fastest growing digital economies in Africa and around 25% of digital start-ups on the continent are based there highlighting a growth in entrepreneurship. Uganda also reports on a growing number of graduates in ICT related subjects. In Nigeria a new directorate on skills development and entrepreneurship has been created to monitor the expertise content of jobs and liaise with the private sector. Similarly, in Sierra Leone, there has been considerable promotion of entrepreneurial education geared at reducing youth unemployment. Rwanda is also focusing on enterprise and entrepreneurship.

135. **Industry is calling out for graduates with better employability skills**. This is specifically referenced in relation to Ghana, Tanzania, Nigeria, Rwanda. Gambia, Uganda and Sierra Leone. Ghana also has a specific issue in relation to the production of STEM graduates, with a larger proportion in the arts and humanities.

136. **The labour market is gendered**. ILO data[133] shows that for both the 15-24 age (which includes recent graduates) and the 25+ age range (the population taken to be in the productive / working age group), and across different levels of education, the unemployment rate of men is lower than the rate for women in most SPHEIR and comparable countries for which there is data. As noted at baseline, female labour market participation is particularly low in Jordan given their high educational outcomes.

137. **Graduate tracer studies are few and far between**. There are very few graduate tracer studies that shed light on what happens to male and female graduates after they leave HEIs to demonstrate differences in employment outcomes by gender. In Uganda in 2019, NCHE undertook a tracer study, reaching out to 4,037 graduates. A total of 2,439 graduates (just over 60%) were in formal employment at the time of the study, 940 graduates (23%) were self-employed and 604 were not employed (of which 248 had never been employed). More than a half of the graduates found a job in less than a year. Around two thirds of the graduates were employed in areas related to their field of training. One third of the graduates earned between UGX 500,000 and UGX 1,000,000 a month (between £105 and £210). In Rwanda, a 2015 tracer study by the HEC included a sample of 2298 HLI graduates and 239 employers. It found that graduates from economics and business, education and arts and social sciences are over-produced compared to other fields like medicine, engineering, and ICT. Eighty percent were employed by the public sector with a heavy concentration (70%) in the service industry. Two thirds were working full time and 15% were unemployed. Forty percent were employed within six months. The main cause of unemployment was lack of experience but 70% of graduates reported that skills gained at university were being applied at work.

---

[133] International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT database (indicator: "Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate)"); data accessed via the World Bank database, data.worldbank.org.

Annex 7   Benchmarking Report

A7.1   Background

1. As part of the baseline summative and formative (process) evaluations, the EE team undertook a benchmarking exercise to inform the assessment of SPHEIR's partnership model, value for money (VfM) and expected results. The benchmarking had three purposes:

● To provide an insight into the particular strengths and weaknesses of SPHEIR, in terms of both delivery and outcomes, and provide evidence informed recommendations for improvement where needed;

● To help test some of the key assumptions underlying the SPHEIR theory of change, particularly around the partnership model;

● To contribute to the counter-factual strategy for the summative evaluation at the department/partnership level.

2. The benchmarking took place in March-April 2019, and involved the review of six development programmes with similar scope to SPHEIR: Development Partnerships in Higher Education (DelPHE); Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED); ALFA III; OpenMed; Higher Education Excellence in Development Cooperation (Exceed); and The Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence (ACE I) – West Africa Regional component.

Annex Table 18: Overview of Programmes Reviewed as Part of the Benchmarking Report Update Note

Title	Duration	Budget	Description
NORHED II	2021-2026	1 billion NOK (about GBP 82.9 million)	NORHED II is the second phase of NORHED, and aims to strengthen the capacity of higher education institutions in developing countries to produce higher-quality graduates, more and higher-quality research, and more inclusive higher education. It will provide grants from 2021 to North-South-South university partnerships.
The Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence (ACE) – West Africa Regional component	2014-2020	USD 165 million (IDA component)	The Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence (ACE) Project financed by the World Bank promoted - through the provision of loans and grants - regional specialisation among participating universities in West Africa in areas that address regional challenges and strengthen the capacities of these universities to deliver quality training and applied research. The programme's main focus was on strengthening 22 competitively selected centres of excellence across 8 West African countries. ACE I was completed in September 2020.
Second Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence for Development Impact (ACE Impact II)	2020-		The Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence for Development Impact (ACE Impact) projects target West and Central African countries, and consist of two projects with the same technical design but different implementation timeframe and focus countries. ACE Impact II reviewed here focuses on six countries, Benin, Cote d'Ivoir, the Gambia, Niger, Nigeria and Togo. It aimed to improve the quality, quantity and development impact of postgraduate education in selected universities through regional specialisation and

Title	Duration	Budget	Description
			collaboration. ACE Impact II builds on lessons learned from ACE I, and 18 out of the 22 ACEs supported under ACE I have been selected for renewal under an ACE Impact Project.

3. For the mid-term evaluation, the EE team has prepared this update note to the Benchmarking Report based on a research exercise which had two aims:

● To review any **further project documents** that might have been published for programmes originally reviewed for the benchmarking. At the time of the original study, only three programmes were still ongoing: NORHED, Exceed and ACE I. **The update exercise could not find any new information on NORHED and Exceed, but additional findings on ACE I are included in this update note.**

● To identify any **new higher education programmes** that might have started since the original benchmarking exercise. After reviewing all major donors (FCDO, World Bank, Norad, Sida, CIDA, EuropeAid, GiZ, ADB, AfDB, IADB, USAID, Danida, Australian Aid**), we identified two relevant programmes, both follow-ups to previously reviewed programmes: NORHED II and ACE Impact II** and include information about them in this update note.

4. The update exercises were conducted through document reviews, and assessed the programmes against the same evaluation questions as the original benchmarking.

5. The mapping of findings of the benchmarking update against the SPHEIR mid-term review evaluation questions is presented in .

Annex Table 19: Findings by Relevant SPHEIR Mid-Term Review Evaluation Questions

SPHEIR Evaluation Question	Benchmarking Report Update Note	
	Section	Page Number
SPHEIR EQ5: What have been the intermediate outcomes and longer-term outcomes of the programme (and its different partnerships) at the higher education system (national) level?	1.1.1 System level change	12-13
SPHEIR EQ5.1: To what extent has the programme delivered improvements in equity in access and affordability of higher education?	1.1.2 Equity in access to higher education	13
SPHEIR EQ5.2: To what extent has the programme delivered improvements in quality and efficiency of higher education?	1.1.3 Quality and effectiveness of higher education	13
SPHEIR EQ5.3: To what extent has the programme delivered improvements in relevance of higher education?	1.1.4 Relevance of higher education	13-14
SPHEIR EQ7.1: To what extent have SPHEIR partners influenced / worked with HEIs to develop, implement and monitor policies and practices that promote gender equality and social inclusion? What has been the impact of the programme on gender equality at faculty staff level?	2.2.4 Gender and social inclusion	11-12
SPHEIR EQ7.2: Is there a link between the existence of HEI policies on gender equality and social inclusion (or diversity) and an increase in the percentage of those who are disadvantaged in a) employment as a faculty member; b) gaining access as a student and c) qualifying as a	2.2.4 Gender and social inclusion	11-12

SPHEIR Evaluation Question	Benchmarking Report Update Note	
	Section	Page Number
graduate? What has been the impact of the programme on gender equality at student/graduate level?		
SPHEIR EQ7.3: What are the barriers that continue to prevent those who are disadvantaged from being a faculty member / student / graduate and, for students, accessing learning? What has been the impact of the programme on institutional policies on gender equality?	2.2.4 Gender and social inclusion	11-12
SPHEIR EQ 13: To what extent has the programme (and its interventions) delivered value of money?	2.2 Value for Money	10-11
SPHEIR EQ 14: Is there any evidence of the added value of the partnership arrangement to delivery of the selected higher education interventions?	2.1 Added value of the partnership arrangement	3-10
	2.2 Value for Money	10-11

A7.2   Findings

A7.2.1   Added Value of the Partnership Arrangement

> **SPHEIR EQ 14:** Is there any evidence of the added value of the partnership arrangement to delivery of the selected higher education interventions?

Programme Delivery Model

NORHED II

6. Like its predecessor, NORHED II is a grant-making facility, designed to support long-lasting mutual North-South-South academic collaboration. Grants have to be implemented by a partnership of minimum one registered/accredited higher education institution in a NORAD priority country or Least Developed Country in Sub-Saharan Africa, and minimum one Norwegian accredited higher education institution. NORHED II encourages partnerships with more than one developing country institutions (North-South-South partnerships), in order to promote South-South academic networks.

7. The grant agreement partner in NORHED II projects needs to be the Norwegian institution, who will assume overall responsibility for the planning, implementation, reporting and monitoring. Interventions should be based on a needs assessment at the relevant partner institution, and challenges and opportunities jointly identified by partners.

ACE I

8. There has been no change to the programme delivery model of the ACE I programme since the Benchmarking Report (2019). It continues to provide a combination of loans and grants to eight West African countries and the Association of African Universities (AAU). In case of ACE I, partnerships between ACE centres, and industry actors and other HEIs in the country, region or globally are expected outcomes rather than the main delivery model. As of 18 September 2020, 447 partnership agreements were signed between ACEs and engaged partner institutions.

ACE Impact II

9. The delivery model of ACE Impact II is very similar to ACE I. The programme is funded through a combination of grants, French Development Agency (AFD) and International Development Assistance (IDA) credits, and government funding, and covers ACE Impact centres in six West African countries (Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Niger, Nigeria and Togo). Partnerships here too are outcomes rather than the main delivery method of the programme. Supported centres are expected to establish

partnerships with national, regional and global sectoral actors to ensure that their activities on education and research solve specific problems associated with development challenges. Furthermore, under component two, the programme is supporting emerging centres to establish regional institutional partnerships with ACE Impact centres and other relevant international partners to strengthen the capacity of their higher education institutions. The success of partnership building in the programme is measured through intermediate result indicator "Number of well-functioning regional networks established by the project."

10. Furthermore, according to the Project Appraisal Document of ACE Impact II, additional support for academic partnerships with international collaborators is expected from leading research funding agencies and research organisations. They might include the French National Research Agency (Agence Nationale de la Recherche, ANR) (France), the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) and BMBF/DLR (Germany), United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the United States National Science Foundation, USA (NSF) who have committed to workshops with ACE Impact centres on research topics of common interest and anticipate supporting research collaborations between their national researchers and ACE Impact centres.

Management

Programme Level Management

ACE Impact II

11. The management and implementation model of ACE Impact II has been heavily influenced by the successful ACE I and II programmes. The Regional Facilitation Unit (RFU), hosted at the Association of African Universities (AAU), is responsible for the regional coordination, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities of ACE Impact II. National level facilitation support is provided in two countries: Nigeria and the Gambia.

12. ACE Impact II also has a Project Steering Committee (PSC), which is responsible for overall guidance and oversight, including that the expected outcomes of the programme are achieved. The PSC has two levels. The Ministerial-level PSC is comprised of the Ministers in charge of higher education in the benefiting countries and is the highest decision-making body within the institutional structure of the programme. The representative-level PSC includes representatives (senior advisors) appointed by the Ministers, as well as representatives from the ECOWAS Commission and UEMOA, other relevant regional bodies where necessary, recognised African and international academicians, vice chancellors (2), sector representatives, and key private sector stakeholders. The representative level PSC is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the decisions of the Ministerial level PSC. The organogram of ACE Impact II is included in Annex Figure 12.

Annex Figure 12: ACE Impact II Programme Level Organogram
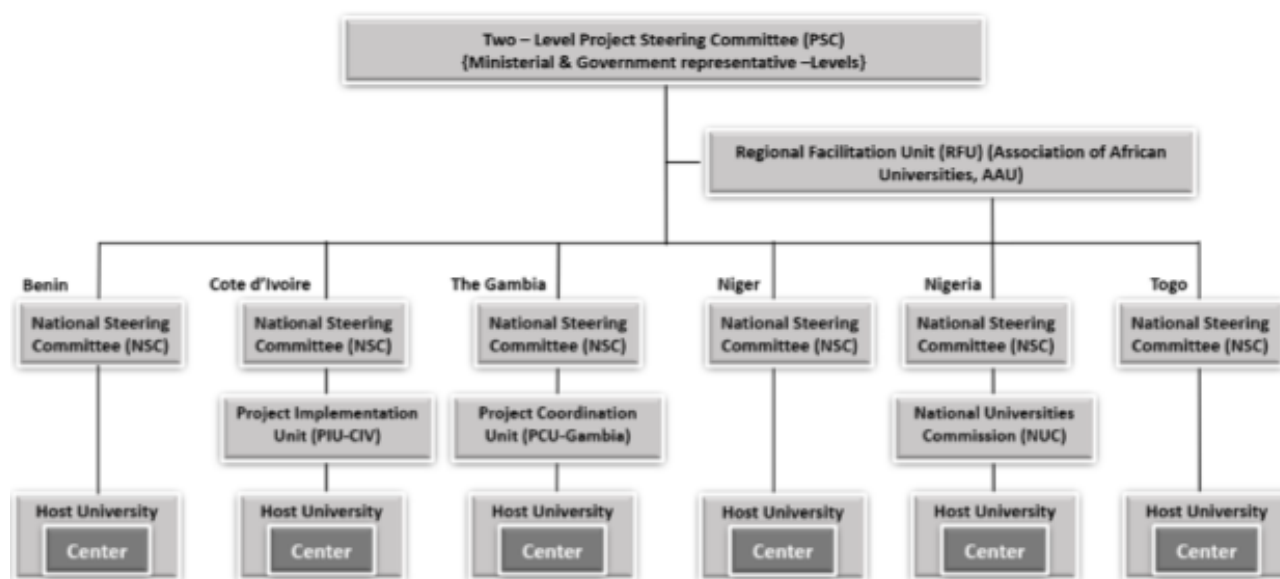
Note: Solid lines represent reporting lines; For Nigeria, NUC will coordinate at the national level.

Project Level Management

NORHED II

13. The NORHED II Programme Document does not specify the expected management model of grants. However, it does stipulate that grants should be embedded within the regular management structure of the partner institutions, and that each partner should identify a project coordinator to handle the day-to-day running of the project as well as the contact and collaboration with the other project partners. A Gender Focal person shall also be identified in each partner to ensure that gender equity is adequately integrated in the project components.

14. Additionally, for each partnership, one joint plan will need to be developed that specifies commitments, roles and responsibilities of each participating institution with regards to expectations, deliverables and budget needs. A Partnership Committee will also need to be established with representation from all institutions to ensure partner dialogue, monitoring and adjustment of implementation.

ACE Impact II

15. For ACE II, the World Bank design documents specify that each ACE Impact centre should be led by a Centre Director and have an implementation team established to manage the project on a day-to-day basis. Each centre is responsible for its own strategic and implementation plans, fiduciary and M&E activities. The host university provides administrative support to the centre, and assistance on the safeguards and tools to be developed by the centres. National Steering Committees (NSC) are also in place, facilitated by the Ministry or agency responsible for higher education in the given country. The NSC is responsible for conducting a semi-annual review of implementation performance, implementation planning and support.

Approach to Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Monitoring at the Programme Level

NORHED II

16. The NORHED II Programme Document includes a theory of change (ToC), which describes how the programme is expected to achieve its intended results and includes relevant assumptions (see Annex Figure 13). The Document suggests that this ToC was developed based on experience and learning from the first phase of the NORHED programme.

Annex Figure 13: NORHED II Theory of Change
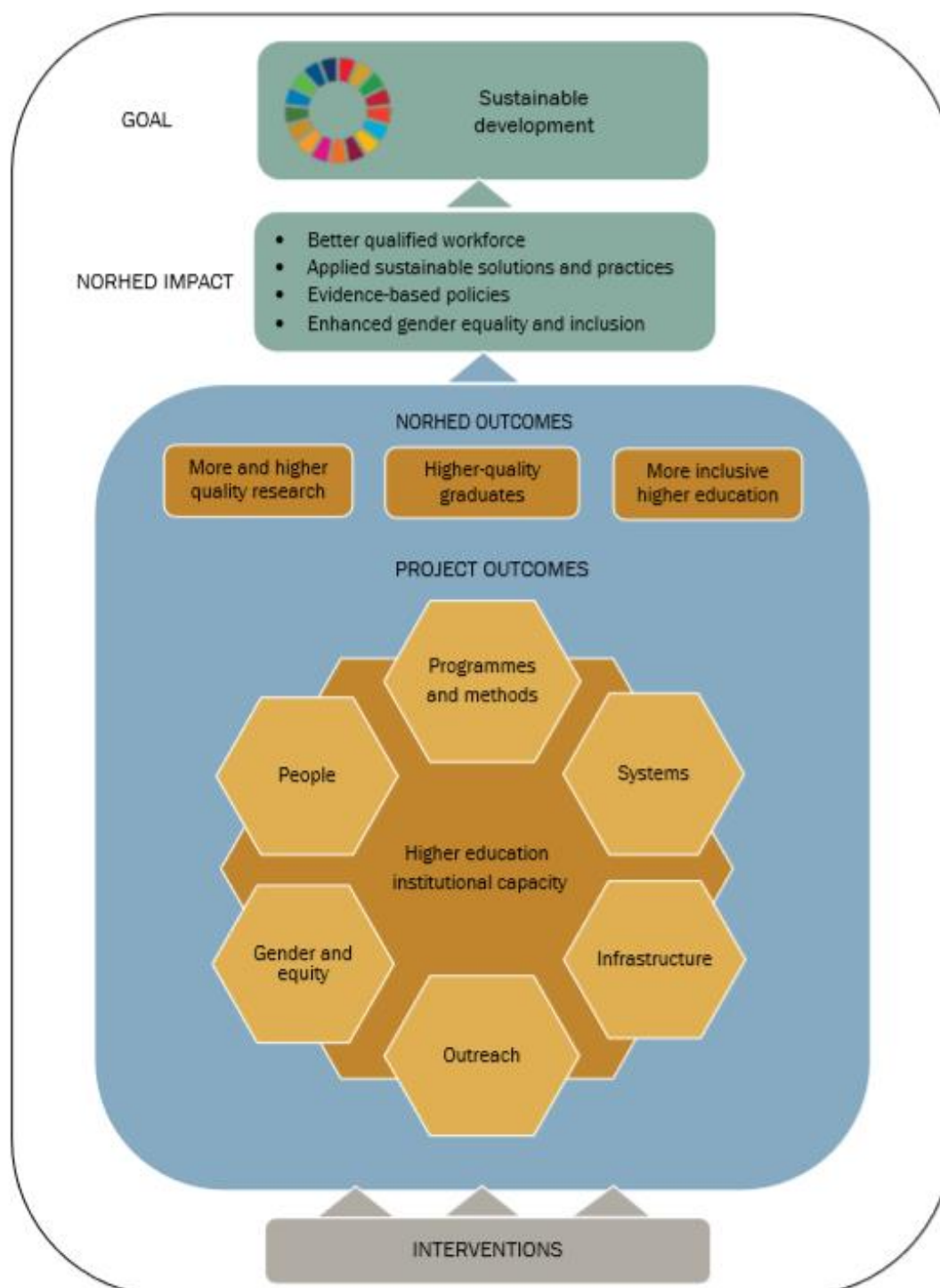
ACE I

17. The official implementation completion and results report is expected to be published by 30th May 2021 and should be reviewed for the Benchmarking Report update for the summative evaluation of SPHEIR.

ACE Impact II

18. The Project Appraisal Document of ACE Impact II includes a programme level ToC (see Annex Figure 14); results framework with baseline, intermediate target and end-line target; a Monitoring & Evaluation Plan with indicator definitions, frequency of data collection, data sources, methodology and data collection responsibilities; and Third-Party Verification Protocol for disbursement linked indicators. The Document also specifies a range of review mechanisms for the ACE Impact centres' results frameworks and tracking tools, including: (a) institutional progress reports and internal quality and efficiency audit reports; (b) external verification of DLR achievements by an independent third party; (c) information regarding research publications and accreditations from internationally recognised bibliometric databases and the accreditation agencies themselves; and (d) interactions with stakeholders, including students. It also specifies that results need to be submitted online to avoid discrepancies and to ensure efficiency in the verification process.
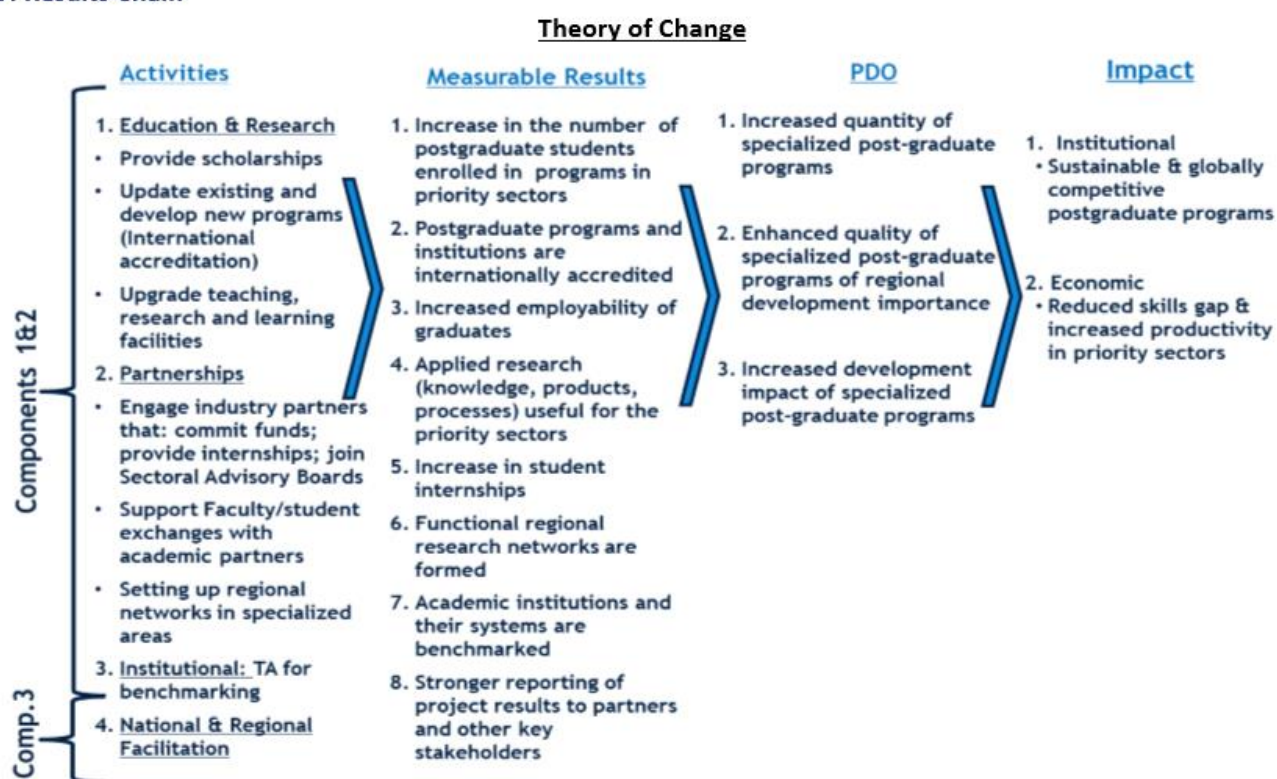
Annex Figure 14: ACE Impact II Theory of Change

19. At the programme level, the RFU holds responsibility for monitoring and evaluation (M&E). It ensures that a robust M&E database system is developed and institutionalised both at centre and regional levels, and that all data are publicly available online. The ACE Impact II programme is also providing capacity building support through technical assistance and consultancies for both the centres and the RFU. Finally, ACE Impact II is continuing to support M&E Peer-to-Peer Learning, in which well-performing M&E specialists from the ACE I programme are asked to share good practices and strategies for addressing challenges and bottlenecks with new M&E specialists. This peer-to-peer learning mechanism has been found to be highly effective in ACE I.

Annex Box 2: Lessons from ACE I Are Informing M&E Arrangements in ACE Impact II

> **According to the ACE Impact II Project Appraisal Document, learnings from ACE I have informed a number improvements in the M&E arrangements of the programme. These include:**
>
> - **A closer review by the RFU of data submitted by centres for the reporting;**
> - **Institutionalising a Call and Email Test by the centres prior to the submission of results for verification;**
> - **Maintaining strong and regular communication with the M&E officers at the centres throughout the verification process;**
> - **Deepening the disbursement-linked indicators definitions, expectations and scope of measurement (setting up a list of Frequently Asked Questions);**
> - **The RFU undertaking regular communication and coordination with the third-party verifiers;**
> - **Shortening the process for the verification of short-term students (a protocol and guidance for this is proposed);**
> - **Institutionalising M&E help desks and clinics for specific M&E challenges faced by centres;**
> - **Breaking down language barriers by financing regional university collaboration and a flow of students assisted by scaling-up language course;**
> - **Redefining the process for research publication verification; and**
> - **Setting up an online M&E database platform with features for data submission, analysis and reporting.**

Monitoring at the Project Level

NORHED II

20. In NORHED II, grantees will be expected to have a project-specific ToC, results framework with baseline and targets for the duration of the project, and a plan for monitoring and evaluation of results against planned objectives. ToCs should be supported by existing knowledge or evidence, such as research, evaluations or previous experience. The results framework should be closely aligned to the ToC and needs to include NORHED II's eleven standard indicators (see Figure 4). This is to allow for programme level overview of progress and results, and to inform learning and results-based management of the programme. Recognising that not all projects will achieve their intended impact in their lifetime, standard impact indicators only need to be reported by projects that are able to document impact-level results by the end of the project period. Additionally, partnerships will also need to include project-specific indicators in their results framework. These can be chosen from NORHED II's list of optional indicators or defined by the grantees. Progress towards results will be reported annually.

21. In addition to the regular monitoring, the NORHED II Programme document also stipulates that partnerships will be expected to carry out mid-term and/or final reviews to assess the outcomes and possibly impact of the project.

Annex Table 20: NORHED II Standard Indicators

Impact level
To document impact, projects that are likely to see results at impact level during the project period are asked to track/log and report on any evidence of such achievements. The following are standard indicators at impact level:
• Uptake/influence of NORHED-supported research in public policies • Uptake/influence of NORHED-supported research findings, new technologies/innovations/solutions by local communities/civil society/private sector • Graduate employment rate by education programme in relevant labour market, dissaggregated by gender • Employers' rating of quality and relevance of graduates
Outcome level
To document effects of the NORHED projects at the outcome-level, grant recipients will be asked to report on the following standard outcome indicators:
• Number of peer reviewed scientific publications by NORHED project • Graduation rate in NORHED supported study programmes, disaggregated by gender • Number of academic staff with strengthened qualifications (Master/PhD/Post-Doc) by relevant institutional level (department/faculty) supported by NORHED • Evidence of inclusion and diversity in education and research by relevant institutional level supported by NORHED
Output level
For the programme to trace deliverables and progress annually, grant recipients will be asked to report on the following standard output indicators:
• Number and type of dissemination activities • Number of new, and number of revised Bachelor/Master/PhD programmes/modules supported by NORHED • Number and type of NORHED scholarships for staff and students, disaggregated by gender

ACE Impact II

22. Each ACE Impact centre needs to undertake M&E of its activities, and report against a standard set of indicators. Capacity building for data collection, monitoring and analysis (including on-the job training) will be provided by the programme where needed, based on the assessment of M&E capacity and an action plan developed by the RFU.

Involvement of Non-Traditional Actors

NORHED II

23. In NORHED II grants, non-higher education institutions, both from Norway and developing countries, can be included as project partners, but only in partnership with an accredited higher education institution. Generally, the Programme Document encourages partnerships with relevant industrial companies, government institutions and civil society actors in the country or region of intervention, in order to strengthen the employability of graduates.

ACE I

24. In ACE I, the centres of excellence are required to establish partnerships with industry actors, including companies and service delivery institutions that work to address the same development challenges, in order to maximise the impact and relevance of the centres. The results of these university-industry linkages were captured by outcome indicator "No. of students and faculty with at least 1-month internship in companies or institutions relevant to their field." Progress on this indicator was slow for most of the implementation of ACE I, but by September 2020, it managed to exceed its end-line target of 5,900 and reported 6,257 students and faculty with relevant internships.

ACE Impact II

25. Similarly, to ACE I, ACE Impact centres are also expected to establish partnerships with sectoral and industry actors to ensure that they have a significant impact on development. Specifically, the Project Appraisal Document stipulates that centres are expected to identify upfront: i) a Sectoral Advisory Board to help guide the academic and applied research programs; and ii) industry/sectoral partners, who will collaborate on applied research, provide internships for students, hire program graduates, and contribute financially to the sustainability of the centre.

26. As with ACE I, the Project Appraisal Document also suggests that the diaspora will be heavily integrated into the implementation of ACE Impact II in the form of proposal evaluators, partnerships, visiting professorships, consultancies, and advisory bodies.

Innovation

27. Supporting innovation is not a significant focus of NORHED II, ACE I or ACE Impact II. However, NORHED II encourages the development of digital solutions, especially when aimed at improving inclusion and increasing access to higher education are especially encouraged.

Adaptive and Flexible Delivery

28. None of the programmes reviewed have been using an adaptive management approach.

A7.2.2   Value for Money

> **SPHEIR EQ13:** To what extent has the programme (and its interventions) delivered value of money?
>
> **SPHEIR EQ14:** Is there any evidence of the added value of the partnership arrangement to delivery of the selected higher education interventions?

Data Availability

NORHED II

29. NORHED II has a tentative total budget frame of 1 billion NOK (about GBP 82.9 million) for the 2021-2026 programme period, but it is subject to annual Parliamentary allocations. Projects will have a tentative total budget frame of 10-20 million NOK (about GBP 829,000-1,658,000).

ACE Impact II

30. The budget of ACE Impact II is USD 330.2 million, with the following component breakdown:

1.   Component 1 – Establishing New and Scaling up Well-performing existing Africa Centres of Excellence for Development Impact: USD 260 million
2.   Component 2 – Fostering Regional Partnerships and Scholarships: USD 42 million
3.   Component 3 – Enhancing National and Regional Level Project Facilitation, and Monitoring and Evaluation: USD 12.50 million
4.   Unallocated: USD 15.70 million

31. Budget breakdown is also available for each country by component and subcomponent, and for the different financing mechanisms (i.e., grant, credit and government financing).

32. The Economic and Financial Analysis of ACE Impact II is part of its Project Appraisal Document, and it covers: i) rationale for investment; ii) rates of returns to higher education in Africa; and iii) cost benefit analysis.

Cost Drivers

NORHED II

33. Information on cost drivers is not available for NORHED II or its prospective grants.

ACE Impact II

34. The largest component of ACE Impact II is Component 1: Establishing New and Scaling up Well-performing existing Africa Centres of Excellence for Development Impact, which comprises 79 per cent of the total budget.

Drivers of Value for Money

35. Information on drivers of Value for Money is not available for NORHED II, ACE I or ACE Impact II.

A7.2.3 Gender and Social Inclusion

SPHEIR EQ7.1: To what extent have SPHEIR partners influenced / worked with HEIs to develop, implement and monitor policies and practices that promote gender equality and social inclusion? What has been the impact of the programme on gender equality at faculty staff level?

SPHEIR EQ7.2: Is there a link between the existence of HEI policies on gender equality and social inclusion (or diversity) and an increase in the percentage of those who are disadvantaged in a) employment as a faculty member; b) gaining access as a student and c) qualifying as a graduate? What has been the impact of the programme on gender equality at student/graduate level?

SPHEIR EQ7.3: What are the barriers that continue to prevent those who are disadvantaged from being a faculty member / student / graduate and, for students, accessing learning? What has been the impact of the programme on institutional policies on gender equality?

NORHED II

36. In NORHED II, gender and social inclusion is an expected result – 'Enhanced gender equality and inclusion' at impact level, 'More inclusive higher education' at the programme outcome level, and 'Improved gender equality and inclusion of marginalised groups in education and research' at project level.

37. 'Women's rights and gender equality', and 'Human rights' are also cross-cutting issues for the programme. Including a gender and inclusion perspective into interventions around the 'Programmes and methods', 'People', and 'Systems' project-level outcome areas is emphasised by the NORHED II Programme Document. Participating higher education institutions will also be required to identify a Gender Focal person to ensure that gender equity is adequately integrated in the project components.

38. NORHED II also requires disaggregation by gender for all monitoring data on target groups. For other groups disaggregation is optional, but number of students with disabilities should be identified if possible. Disaggregation by groups (underrepresented/less privileged/marginalised) relevant to the project contexts should also be explored. If this is not possible, narratives or case stories may be used as an alternative in reporting to NORHED II.

ACE I

39. ACE I continued to promote gender parity by increasing females' access to science programs/courses of study. Under the programme, the number of females enrolled in the sciences grew from a baseline of 311 to over 4,500 females enrolled in Masters, PhD and short-term courses in June 2019.

40. By September 2020, ACE I trained 185 female regional faculty, and 741 national faculty. Of the 47,391 direct programme beneficiaries, 11,479 were female (24 per cent).

ACE Impact II

41. The Project Appraisal Document of ACE Impact II acknowledges that progress on gender balance in predecessor programmes such as ACE I was slower than expected. Targets for female postgraduate students under the ACE I Project were not fully achieved, and there were no female directors of ACE I centres, and female faculty members were rare participants in ACE activities. To remedy this, ACE Impact projects introduced an explicit selection criterion that promoted selection of centres with female directors or deputy directors, and at the time of writing the Appraisal Document, there were four female ACE Impact centre directors or deputy directors across ACE Impact I and II. Addressing gender imbalances has been an explicit part of the design of the Call for Proposals template and implementation plans for ACE Impact II, and the selection of disbursement-linked indicators is also meant to provide incentives to encourage greater female participation in all aspects of the centres.

42. As part of the Appraisal, a social safeguards assessment was conducted for ACE Impact II, which identified gender-based risks associated with the programme. These include: public harassment, including verbal insults, sexual harassment and physical abuse of female students. To address these, the programme requires centres to: i) make public their policy to counter student and staff abuse, including sexual harassment; ii) report to the PSC semi-annually any related complaints and how it adequately resolved or is resolving the complaint; and ii) make resources and/or information available that survivors of gender-based violence/sexual exploitation and abuse can be referred to either within the university or an external agency with expertise and mandate to handle such cases.

43. As ACE I, ACE Impact II also has gender-specific indicators in its results framework. At the outcome level it is 'Number of female students enrolled in specialized programs at ACEs,' and at the intermediate results level it is 'Number of female centre directors or deputy directors.'

A7.2.4   Results

System Level Change

> **SPHEIR EQ5:** What have been the intermediate outcomes and longer-term outcomes of the programme (and its different partnerships) at the higher education system (national) level?

NORHED II

44. Similarly, to its predecessor programme, NORHED II interventions will be predominantly targeted at the institutional level.[134] While on the impact level, NORHED II is expected to see system-level changes, including better qualified workforce, applied sustainable solutions and practices, evidence-based policies and enhanced gender equality and inclusion, there is typically a long-results chain linking its interventions to these high-level results. Where NORHED II has evolved compared to NORHED I, is measuring its impact. In NORHED I, indicators measuring its progress towards its objectives were all related to the individual and institutional levels. In NORHED II, standard indicators at impact level are now appropriately measuring system level change (see Figure 4).

ACE Impact II

45. As in NORHED II, one of the impact areas of ACE Impact II is at the system level: 'Reduced skills gap and increased productivity in priority sectors'. However, both of its interventions and expected outcome of 'improving quality, quantity and development impact of postgraduate education in selected universities' are at the institutional level, making it a long-results chain linking interventions to system-level change.

Equity in Access to Higher Education

> **SPHEIR EQ5.1:** To what extent has the programme delivered improvements in equity in access and affordability of higher education?

NORHED II

46. Increasing gender equality and inclusion are strongly articulated aims of NORHED II at impact, programme outcome and project outcome level:

- **Impact level:** 'Enhanced gender equality and inclusion'. There is no specific standard indicator to measure this, but data collected on graduate employment by projects need to be disaggregated by gender.

---

[134] One of the project outcome areas in NORHED II ToC is 'Systems'. However, from the description of this outcome area in the Programme Document it is clear that 'systems' here refer to education and research systems within partner higher education institutions.

- **Programme outcome level:** 'More inclusive higher education' measured by standard indicator 'Evidence of inclusion and diversity in education and research by relevant institutional level supported by NORHED.'
- **Project level outcome:** 'Improved gender equality and inclusion of marginalised groups in education and research.' The Programme Document lists a range of examples of activities and outputs that projects might implement under this outcome area, including: mainstreaming of gender and inclusion perspectives in the design of curricula and research projects as well as in recruitment, teaching and monitoring and evaluation, provision of scholarships for disadvantaged groups, digital tools to reach students off campus, special teaching material/equipment/personal assistance for students with disabilities, assessments and institutional policy development on gender equality and inclusion, workshops or specific courses on inclusion and rights, measures to include women in formal and informal research networks, gender studies, development of inclusive recruitment strategies, career mentoring schemes for female students, secure working environments, incentives targeted at female students etc.

ACE Impact II

47. Increasing equity in access is not a specifically stated objective of ACE Impact II.

Quality and Effectiveness of Higher Education

EQ5.2: To what extent has the programme delivered improvements in quality and efficiency of higher education?

48. Although both NORHED II and ACE Impact II aims to contribute to improved quality of higher education, it is at the institutional not system level.

Relevance of Higher Education

EQ5.3: To what extent has the programme delivered improvements in relevance of higher education?

NORHED II

49. One of the expected impacts of NORHED II at programme level is better qualified workforce, measured through standard indicators 'Employers' rating of quality and relevance of graduates' and 'Graduate employment rate by education programme in relevant labour market.' The Programme Document also specifies that NORHED II seeks to strengthen students' employability by addressing gaps between graduates' competence and skills, and demand in the 'world of work', and encourages partnership with relevant industrial companies, government institutions and civil society actors to this end.

50. Increasing the relevance of higher education is also a key objective at project level, with one of the project level outcomes specified in the Programme Document being 'Strengthened quality and relevance of education and research programmes and methods.' Furthermore, project-level outcome 'Increased engagement with relevant stakeholders, and dissemination of knowledge' is also expected to contribute to this objective, as collaboration with stakeholders will provide universities with access to updated information about challenges and opportunities that can increase the relevance and quality of education and research.

ACE I

51. As noted in the SPHEIR Benchmarking Report (2019), ACE I does not have system level aspirations with regards to increasing the relevance of higher education, but it does put a strong emphasis on improving the relevance of the supported centres of excellence to the labour market. By

September 2020, 6,257 students and faculty undertook internships under the programme, and graduate tracer studies confirmed high employability of ACE students graduates within 6 months of graduation.

ACE Impact II

52. ACE Impact II appears to have a stronger focus than ACE I on increasing the relevance of higher education; albeit still at the institutional level. It has three related intermediate results: i) increased employability of graduates; ii) applied research (knowledge, products and processes) useful for the priority sector; and ii) increase in student internships. These are measured through indicators 'Share of master's and PhD graduates employed within 6 months of graduation' and 'Share of undergraduate and master's graduates of emerging centres employed within 6 months of graduating'

53. Furthermore, at the outcome level two indicators measure relevant results: i) 'Number of ACEs that have had substantial development impact' which captures the development impact that the ACEs are having both nationally and regionally in terms of the extent of their contribution to their sector/industries; and ii) 'Number of students and faculty participating in internships in relevant institutions.'

A7.3   Documents Reviewed

NORHED II

NORAD. 2020. The Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development – Programme Document and Annexes 1 & 2. Available at https://norad.no/en/toolspublications/publications/2020/norhed-ii-programme-document/

NORHED II website. Available at: https://norad.no/NORHED#:~:text=NORHED%20is%20the%20Norwegian%20Programme,and%20more%20inclusive%20higher%20education

ACE I

The World Bank. 2019. Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence Project - Implementation Status & Results Report, June 2019. Available at: https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/234111561750935007/disclosable-version-of-the-isr-africa-higher-education-centers-of-excellence-project-p126974-sequence-no-11

The World Bank. 2019. Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence Project - Implementation Status & Results Report, December 2019. Available at: https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/265001577628608886/disclosable-version-of-the-isr-africa-higher-education-centers-of-excellence-project-p126974-sequence-no-12

The World Bank. 2020. Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence Project - Implementation Status & Results Report, April 2020. Available at: https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/521471585963830006/disclosable-version-of-the-isr-africa-higher-education-centers-of-excellence-project-p126974-sequence-no-13

The World Bank. 2020. Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence Project - Implementation Status & Results Report, October 2020. Available at: https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/553281602114838764/disclosable-version-of-the-isr-africa-higher-education-centers-of-excellence-project-p126974-sequence-no-14

ACE Impact II

The World Bank. 2019. Second Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence for Development Impact Project – Project Appraisal Document. Available at: https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/803471575082860585/benin-niger-nigeria-the-gambia-togo-and-association-of-african-universities-second-africa-higher-education-centers-of-excellence-for-development-impact-project

The World Bank. 2019. Second Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence for Development Impact Project Combined Project Information Documents / Integrated Safeguards Datasheet (PID/ISDS). Available at: https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/304581567652638407/project-information-document-integrated-safeguards-data-sheet-second-africa-higher-education-centers-of-excellence-for-development-impact-p169064

The World Bank. 2020. Second Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence for Development Impact Project - Implementation Status & Results Report, May 2020. Available at: https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/369071589451034446/disclosable-version-of-the-isr-second-africa-higher-education-centers-of-excellence-for-development-impact-p169064-sequence-no-01

Annex 8   Case Studies

A8.1   Case Study 1: Unhappy Serendipity or Right Place, Right Time: How SPHEIR Partners Supported Higher Education to Respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic

A8.1.1   Summary

1. SPHEIR partners and their higher education institutions (HEIs) found themselves in a unique situation as the global COVID-19 pandemic took hold and Governments the world over imposed lock downs and restrictions on an unprecedented scale. As well as adapting their own work to the COVID-19 pandemic, SPHEIR partnerships supported their higher education institutions and wider stakeholders to do the same. This case study explores how they responded and provides examples. By demonstrating the pivotal role which partnerships were able to play the case study surfaces unexpected and positive outcomes of SPHEIR which could be of longer-term benefit. The case study focuses on the experience of the PEBL, PedaL, PfP, PADILEIA and TESCEA partnerships.[135]

A8.1.2   Introduction

2. What was to become the COVID-19 pandemic was breaking news at the start of 2020. By late March, Universities were ceasing face-to-face teaching, often closing down their campuses., Students and lecturers were dispersing to their homes, and prospects for normalcy were uncertain. Annex Table 21 sets out the situation faced by HEIs in case study partnerships in the different SPHEIR countries.

Annex Table 21: Government Response to COVID-19 in the HE Sector in SPHEIR Partner Countries

Country	Partnerships	COVID-19 Response
Ghana	PedaL	Wholescale closure of universities.
Jordan	PADILEIA	Swift closure of universities (closed on 17th March 2020). In October 2020, the Minister of Higher Education announced that all university students in public and private universities will resume their education through distance learning.
Kenya	PEBL, PedaL	Swift closure of universities (re-opening Jan 2021?); no systematic Government support to shift teaching and learning online.
Lebanon	PADILEIA	Swift closure of universities in March 2020. Most HEIs transitioned to distance learning since then.
Nigeria	PedaL	Swift closure of universities March 2020; teaching largely shut down.
Rwanda	PEBL	Ministry response plan April 2020 - some Govt support for infrastructure and e-learning platforms; Private universities most vulnerable.
Somaliland	PfP	Partial lockdown of universities April 2020.
Tanzania	PEBL, PedaL, TESCEA	Swift closure of universities March 2020; re-opening instructed in June/July but HEIs ill-prepared

---

[135] TIDE, LEAP and AQ-HESL were not included in the case study. LEAP is providing finance to increase access rather than addressing curricula or teaching; AQ-HESL is supporting the establishment of a national level quality assurance system rather than delivering teaching; and for TIDE, although one example pertinent to this case study was identified, Myanmar Government restrictions have since closed down all TIDE activity and universities remain closed so there was insufficient material to draw upon.

Country	Partnerships	COVID-19 Response
Uganda	PEBL, PedaL, TESCEA	Swift closure of universities March 2020; very little undergraduate teaching since; National Council for Higher Education guidelines on adoption of e-learning June 2020 and QA of e-learning delivery and QA mechanisms

3. In common with universities the world over, SPHEIR partner HEIs turned to online teaching as an obvious resource for delivering teaching. Of the eight SPHEIR partnerships, most included activities to introduce or strengthen online teaching as part of their aim to improve student learning and access to HE to a greater or lesser degree, as set out in Annex Table 22. This proved to be exactly what was needed in response to COVID-19.

Annex Table 22: Elements of SPHEIR Partnerships Relevant to COVID-19 Response

Partnership	Main aim	Online Aspects of Relevance to COVID-19 Response
PADILEIA	To use technology-enhanced education to enable Syrian refugees and disadvantaged people in host communities to access HE and address future labour market needs.	Formats include MOOCs (massive online open courses), and bespoke, tailored courses delivered online.
PEBL	To address critical academic staff shortages by enabling universities to share teaching resources through credit-bearing courses delivered through blended learning.	The blended learning courses designed, QA'd and delivered through PEBL include online teaching and delivery through a learning management system.
PedaL	To enhance teaching and learning on social science graduate programmes, improving design, context, processes and content.	Includes communities of practice on virtual learning platforms for lecturers to support delivery and improvements.
PfP	To reform health education and build health capacity in Somaliland, putting practice-oriented learning, teaching and assessment at its centre.	Uses technology-enhanced learning and interactive teaching as elements of its blended learning approach.
TESCEA	To support universities to better prepare graduates to secure employment, act entrepreneurially, or meet community needs as social entrepreneurs.	Approach to course redesign included agility and adaptiveness but mostly redesigned courses not intended for online delivery.
TIDE	To improve the quality, relevance and governance of environmental science disciplines in HE through distance learning and development of an Open University.	Focus is on distance learning including through online teaching.

4. The fact that partnership programmes were adaptive and on-going uniquely positioned partners not only to respond to the crisis in their own faculties but also, and very significantly, support others in their institutions to do so, at a faculty and institution level.

5. At the same time, the sudden and wholescale shift to online learning also continues to present very real difficulties for both teaching and learning. Annex Table 23 identifies some of the key challenges.[136]

---

[136] A separate MTE case study explores the potential impact of COVID-19 in entrenching inequalities.

Annex Table 23: Challenges of Online Learning Identified by SPHEIR Partnerships for Both Students and Lecturers

Access	Technical	Pedagogical
• **Connectivity** • **Bandwidth** • **Limited or no devices** • **Costs of data** • **No email/phone no, needed to access some platforms e.g. Google Classrooms** • **Intermittent, unreliable or limited electricity to charge devices** • **English language operating systems**	• Limited familiarity, skills and capacity in use of equipment and platforms • Little or no IT support or training available	• No or little experience in how to teach effectively using online tools • No resources to assist with online learning ('A Tik Tok user does not necessarily make a good online student.' PADILEIA) • Distractions/drop out due to loss of income and hardship (students); reduced fee income for universities impacting provision

A8.1.3 Case Study Themes

6. Insights from the partnerships suggest several important emerging themes in dealing effectively with COVID-19.

Partners' Familiarity with Delivering Online Learning Enabled Them to Adapt Quickly

7. The higher education institutions involved in SPHIER have quite limited capacity for delivering teaching online. One partner said their university had 'only been playing with it' and many cited a lack of facilities, resources, skills and expertise. Students too had varying degrees of access to online provision, due to variations in internet availability and strength, available devices with which to receive content, and the cost of internet amongst other factors (see Figure 1).

8. However, partner teams introducing online teaching to the HEIs through their SPHEIR projects were familiar with these constraints and had begun to address them. Examples include developing training courses for academics on the design and delivery of blended learning including online learning (PEBL) and designing content suitable to the evolving and strengthening technology landscape, moving from purely text and image based at the outset to inclusion of some elements of audio, whilst continuing to avoid band-width demanding video content (PfP).

9. When COVID-19 lock-downs began, SPHEIR partnerships were able to respond. PedaL implemented its large-scale training event, which would have brought together educators from several countries, as an entirely online event with both synchronous and asynchronous content, run over three weeks in June 2020. The course maintained good attendance levels and had positive participant feedback. However more significantly, as well as delivering this online as a response COVID-19, PedaL drew on the skills of their Resource People (implementers across their HEIs), to create content for their 'online courses, including delivery and assessment' A key aspect of the approach was building the capacity of attendees (academics) to use online teaching themselves.

10. PfP's online courses, co-designed by UK health workers and faculty from Somaliland medical institutions, continued, making use of pre-recorded videos and the inputs of a local doctor when UK health workers could no longer travel to Somaliland, having been diverted into the frontline UK COVID-19 response. This had the added and unanticipated benefits of using national skills. This partnership observed that COVID-19 has 'moved educational technology centre stage and changed the power relationship in the partnership to one that is more equal.'

11. In the face of the pandemic, PADILEIA, who operate a blended learning model for its different courses were able to apply its learning about online provision to transition fully to online. The PEBL partnership noted that it is easier to transition a blended learning course to a fully online one, than to transition a fully face to face, traditional course. This because tools, such as online discussion boards, are in place, and course content is more ready to be adapted.

12. Some partner HEIs took steps to increase online access: PEBL partner Makerere University had mobilised all major internet providers to provide free access to education programmes for students and teachers while Strathmore University had bought data packages for all students.

Lecturers Already Trained by SPHEIR are Open to Change, Have New Skills, and Could More Readily Adapt

13. Several SPHEIR partnerships are working towards improved pedagogy by training and supporting lecturers to reduce over-reliance on 'chalk and talk' and use alternative, innovative and student-centred teaching methods to which lecturers had not been previously exposed. Exposure to alternative teaching approaches, including online delivery within wider blended learning approaches meant lecturers were in a better position to respond to the COVID-19 crisis

14. . A PADILEIA partner said they knew what issues to expect in preparing for online content and so could prepare in advance a COVID-19 response. They felt that they were better prepared than most other universities. A PEBL partner said that without SPHEIR, there would never have been the wide scale implementation of training which allowed their university to respond so effectively to COVID-19. This partnership noted that most of their lecturers were very receptive to switching to online learning. Even lecturers on technical courses who had initially found a blended learning approach challenging saw the advantages of interactive modules online.

15. Courses redesigned through the TESCEA partnership had not in most cases encompassed online delivery, but faculty members say that the training they received helped them to adapt to the challenge and support students through this new approach. The reflection and learning built into new approaches has supported the use of online platforms such as google classrooms and led to innovative learning strategies for students in areas with weak or no internet connections. As one partner said, 'Resilience has been built. The need to do things differently has not been such a shock thanks to TESCEA.'

Tools and Approaches Introduced by Partnerships Have Enabled Adaptation to the Challenges of COVID-19 and Been Adopted Across Institutions

16. At the same time as creating openness to alternative ways of working, SPHEIR partnerships have positioned HEIs to respond to the pandemic by providing key tools and approaches. PedaL's Learning Management System and associated Community of Practice, which lecturers are trained to use enables them to engage with their training and resources. It has become a critical support by enabling them to communicate and discuss. Within PADILEIA, Kiron have made blended learning approaches available on their online platform. The American University of Beirut (AUB) have trained other departments in online and blended learning which has in turn widened their outreach and impact within the university: 'When COVID-19 hit we were able to react very quickly – we already knew how to implement online teaching and learning.'

17. When all face to face teaching was suspended in Somaliland, PfP partner Medicine Africa provided valuable support in helping medical colleagues convert their courses to online, and provided advice to universities about online teaching and assessment. TESCEA has worked with the University of Dodoma to develop and test an online platform in response to the crisis, after previous attempts to do so had been less successful. The university noted that the crisis has 'generated a lot of energy among multipliers that, if harnessed constructively, can be a great source of innovation'.

HEIs Approached SPHEIR Trained Lecturers to Support for Adaption to COVID-19

18. In many institutions management and other departments realised that critical expertise resided within the SPHEIR partner teams and they asked for assistance in responding to the pandemic. For many partners, this has deepened their collaboration within their HEI. The PfP team at Amoud University were asked to help with understanding the challenges that faculty members were facing with the transition to online learning. The partnership survey of 80 lecturers helped to identify problems and developed a package of resources to address them which was shared across partner institutions.

19. The TESCEA teams have been at the forefront of training other staff in their institutions in using online platforms for teaching and learning, for example creating a staff support platform, which has resulted in greater visibility and recognition. Similarly, departments in AABU and AUB asked PADILEIA for support and teams have trained departments and supported university on digital learning.

20. The Strathmore University team which works with PEBL have noted that they were 'pushed centre stage' to support the rapid switch to Zoom teaching. At Kenyatta University, the PEBL team trained more than 1,000 academics on developing online content, applying the knowledge gained through PEBL. At Makerere University, PEBL leads were tasked with moving all course materials into a blended mode and were soon running training for academic staff in rapid development and facilitation of online courses, producing guides on designing blended learning courses and teaching online, and running training workshops for students in how to learn effectively through online courses. PedaL has strong support from university vice-chancellors, pre-dating the COVID-19 crisis, who have turned to PedaL for support throughout the crisis.

Partnerships Have Actively Shared Learning About Tools and Approaches with Actors Outside Their HEIs

21. Partnerships have willingly shared their expertise with other HEIs and stakeholders in the HE sector. PADILEIA worked with an NGO wanting to move their entrepreneurship project online. Having signed an MoU with Kiron pre-COVID-19, the Lebanon American University (LAU) reached out to ask whether their refugee and vulnerable Lebanese students on USAID scholarships could have access to core online courses proposed as matching courses. The AUB PADILEIA team provided guidance to the Government of Lebanon, who is now allowing up to 50% of course content to be delivered online. AUB observed that 'COVID-19 sped things up' and feel that their response to COVID-19 has enhanced AUB's reputation nationally.

22. Webinars have proved an effective platform for sharing learning and influencing more widely. PEBL partners ACU and SEDA organised and led two webinars focused on blended learning pedagogies and rapid shifts to virtual learning, intended to support universities and share ideas and strategies. PEBL partners took part and shared their experiences of moving teaching and course materials online, and the webinars reached over 200 participants from the PEBL network and beyond. Similarly, PedaL's work in improving the quality of teaching and learning in its HEIs through the COVID-19 response was shared through panel membership in webinars on the COVID-19 crisis, organised and hosted by the Education Management Society of Kenya and the Association of African Universities.[137]

Conclusion

23. SPHEIR partnerships have used their experience to help their HEIs and others to respond to the disruption and dislocation caused to higher education by the COVID-19 pandemic in varied and effective ways. In the long run it might prove to have catalysed a permanent and positive shift in higher education practice.

---

[137] Education Management Society of Kenya webinar: 'Impact of COVID-19 in the Management of Education in Kenya' held 08/04/20; and Association of African Universities webinar: 'Teaching, Learning and Student Support Services in African Universities during COVID-19' held 14/05/20.

A8.1.4   Methodology

24. Data for the case study was collected through:

- Document review of:
    - Partnership reports covering months since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic
    - Fund Manager reports on the implications for SPHEIR partners of COVID-19
    - The PEA country studies completed for the SPHEIR mid-term evaluation by the external evaluation team
- A webinar, 'Varieties of online higher education in SPHEIR' hosted by the Fund Manager on 24/09/20 and featuring three SPHEIR partnerships (PfP, PEBL and PADILEIA). This was accessed at https://www.spheir.org.uk/blog/webinar-varieties-online-higher-education-spheir-access-recording-now
- Targeted review of key informant interviews undertaken during the main phase of MTE data collection (where the case study topic was first identified);

25. Data was synthesised against the case study's lines of enquiry: the context due to COVID-19, original plans for online learning, adaption in the face of COVID-19 and influence within the wider institution and how this came about - and analysed across partnerships to identify emerging themes and build up a picture across the programme.

26. It was hoped that the enquiry could include a gender lens, to ensure that the differential experiences of men and women were reflected as far as possible, but in practice evidence was not well disaggregated.

A8.2   Case Study 2: Pandemic Response: The Shift to Online Teaching Learning by SPHEIR HEIs – Implications for Equality and Inclusion

A8.2.1   Summary

27. **The key elements are unequal access to internet access and devices; extra demands on lecturers to move teaching online; extra pressures on students who feel isolated; a perception among both lecturers and teachers that online teaching is of lower quality; and widening inequalities of teaching and learning**

28. This case study explores the lived experience of the move to online learning by lecturer and student beneficiaries of SPHEIR,[138] instigated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the implications for **equality and inclusion.** The case study draws on qualitative testimonies provided by 53 lecturers (23 women; 30 men) and 122 students (52 women and 70 men) from Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in Somaliland, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Lebanon, Jordan and Myanmar. Although the sample is not representative, it offers important insights, including the significance of the digital divide in widening inequalities of teaching and learning in countries with SPHEIR projects, even though SPHEIR funded HEIs fared better than others in how they were able to respond to COVID-19, particularly across Africa. The case study sheds light on: unequal access to the internet, particularly for students; the effect of poor internet connections for both lecturers and students on the quality of teaching and learning; technical challenges; the extra pressures on students, particularly men who feel isolated; and a perception among both lectures and students that online teaching is of lower quality. Implications for both gender and geography are explored.

29. The case study begins with an analysis of the context in which SPHEIR HEIs are operating, highlighting factors that inhibit online learning. It then presents findings from lecturer testimonies from

---

[138] Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education (SPHEIR), funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

an equality and inclusion perspective, before considering the experiences of students. Where the analysis identified recurring themes in the lecturer and student testimonies, a quantitative analysis was applied.

Annex Box 3: Case Study Methodology

- **Literature Review**
- **Qualitative Analysis**
- **Quantitative analysis of key themes**

A8.2.2   Context

30. In Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) where lecturers and students provided testimonies, SPHEIR partnerships have been working to strengthen pedagogy and curricula, often introducing an element of online learning. The COVID-19 pandemic led to SPHEIR activities and all teaching and learning across partner HEIs switching to almost wholescale online delivery. Annex Table 24 provides an overview of the types of online learning offered by partnership and country, and the sample of students and lectures who provided testimony by location. Testimonies will have been about their experience of online learning in general in recent months, not necessarily only in relation to SPHEIR interventions.

Annex Table 24: Sources of Lecturer and Student Testimonies

Partnership	Online Courses	Lecturer Testimonies	Student Testimonies
PfP: Somaliland	Aspects of medicine, nursing, dentistry, veterinary studies	22 (9 women; 13 men)	97 (36 women; 61 men)
PADILEIA: Lebanon, Jordan,	MOOCs; & bespoke, online courses for refugees / host communities	15 (6 women; 9 men)	16 (12 women; 4 men)
PedaL: Kenya	PedaL online (Social Science pedagogy); virtual learning platforms for lecturers	7 (3 women; 4 men)	1
PEBL: Tanzania, Uganda	Online teaching through a learning management system	3 (1 woman; 2 men)	8 (3 women; 5 men)
TIDE: Myanmar	Distance learning through online teaching	5 (4 women; 1 man)	0
AQ-HESL: Sierra Leone		1 (man)	0

A8.2.3   Findings

Challenges of Teaching and Learning Online

HEIs Supported by SPHEIR Are Among the Most Successful in Their Online Response to COVID-19

31. Online course delivery in SPHEIR HEIs, whether as a response to the pandemic or as part of pedagogical reform, is taking place in a context where universities across many African countries are already disadvantaged in terms of internet access. In 2019, internet penetration across the continent averaged 39.6 percent compared to 62.7 percent in the rest of the world with significant variations in countries where SPHEIR is implemented.[139] These range from 89.7 percent of the population who use the internet in Kenya; 25 percent in Tanzania; 23 percent in Uganda; and just 2 percent in Somalia (there is no data for the jurisdiction of Somaliland, alone). In 2017 countries across Africa used only 1

---

[139] Brookings. 2020. Shoot for the Moon: An Agenda to Bridge Africa's Digital Divide; and the World Bank 2017.

percent of the world's total international internet bandwidth and spent about 1.1 percent of GDP on digital investment compared to 3.2 percent in advanced economies.[140] In the Middle East, internet penetration is higher for Lebanon and Jordan (78 percent and 66 percent respectively). The countries relevant to this case study all have poor and intermittent energy supplies which compromise internet connections.[141]

32. The International Association of Universities (IAU) Global Survey on the Impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education around the world reports that only 29 percent of HEIs were able to move online in response to the pandemic compared to 85 percent of HEIs in Europe.[142] **This suggests that HEIs supported by SPHEIR in African countries were actually among the most successful in being able to offer an online response.**

The Rapid Shift to Online Teaching Was Not an Equal Experience for All Lecturers

33. For the 53 lecturers (23 women and 30 men) who provided testimony, a majority (58 percent) express concerns that the **quality of their teaching** is negatively affected by the shift to online learning in the wake of the pandemic, with a higher proportion of men expressing this view than women. Many lecturers who voice these concerns associate them with other issues: **poor internet connectivity, and the concern that students are also affected** (49 percent); and anxieties around **poor student engagement** (41 percent).

Lecturers Feel the Quality of Online Teaching Is Affected by the Digital Divide

34. In the rapid shift to online learning as a result of the pandemic, lecturers (both men and women) are worried about a decline in the **quality of their teaching, and the learning experience** especially for students disadvantaged by poor internet connections, or an entire lack of internet access. This concern was voiced particularly by lecturers in Somaliland, Uganda, and Kenya, where internet connections appear to be very poor. Some lecturers are also concerned for students who lack technical abilities and/or adequate devices. Overall, there appears to be consensus among lecturers that online classes are a poor substitute for face-to-face contact with students, and that the presence of a teacher and a class matters for quality learning. Lectures say that online courses are less interactive and their physical presence plays an important role in motivating and monitoring students. Some lecturers note that online courses make it more difficult for them to get to know their students and to find a suitable approach that matches mixed ability classes, especially for the younger grades. Others consider online to be inadequate for student assessment and there are fears that it may have augmented opportunities to cheat.

> 'The transformation [to online] lacks the human interaction and impacts the learning process.' – *Female Lecturer, Lebanon.*

> 'Some students do not have laptops.' – *Male Lecturer, Somaliland.*

Students Experienced Poorer Quality of Teaching Online

35. Thirty percent of student testimonies (near equal numbers of men and women) also associate online learning with a **lower quality of teaching and learning**. Students in Somaliland are particularly affected. Key factors affecting the quality of online learning include: not being able to participate in face-to-face discussions; difficulty in understanding the teacher and course content; less attention paid by

---

[140] World Bank data.

[141] Evidence of energy deficiencies for Lebanon, Jordan and Kenya where internet penetration is high: https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/7/29/lebanons-electricity-problems-are-poised-to-become-much-worse; https://www.petroleum-economist.com/articles/politics-economics/middle-east/2013/energy-deficit-in-jordan-creating-problems-for-kingdom; https://east-africa.hivos.org/blog/working-from-home-coping-with-irregular-power-supply-in-kenya/.

students to the teacher during classes held on Zoom; not being able to discuss issues with lecturers or peers; and a reduction in course content.

> '[Online teaching and learning] is not good when you compare it to face-to-face teaching.' – *Female Student, Somaliland.*

> 'Before COVID-19 we were coming together to work as groups, and this discussion was (a) very important part of our learning.' – *Female Student, Somaliland*

Students Experienced Reduced Access to Lecturers and Course Materials

36. Nearly a quarter of students (and a higher proportion of men than women) miss the face-to-face contact with teachers which they consider as critical for learning. Just over a fifth cite reduced access to course materials. This is not as a result of university library closures during the pandemic but rather as a result of poor internet connectivity, bandwidth and devices to download material. These issues particularly affected students in Somaliland, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

The Digital Divide Means That a Move to Online Teaching Disadvantages Those with Poor Connectivity

37. Nearly half of lecturers (and proportionally more women than men) faced problems with internet connectivity and accessing sufficient bandwidth to hold a class without disruption, or for the class to see each other. The 40-minute limit on Zoom's free access model was an added frustration. One lecturer remarked that the rush to get online in the wake of the pandemic had allowed insufficient time for planning or reflection on the potential risks. Lecturers who are most disadvantaged by poor internet connections live in Somaliland but others in Kenya, Uganda, Jordan, Lebanon and Jordan also note problems. One lecturer in Jordan found that uploading lectures to YouTube solved the problem of low-quality internet in refugee camps but this doesn't solve problems for those who are not connected.

> 'Many students used their smart phones to access and interact with the lectures and some of them did not have fast internet available, especially in Zaatari Syrian refugee camp.' – *Male Lecturer, Jordan*

Majority of SPHEIR Students Are Disadvantaged by Poor Internet Access with More Women Affected Than Men

38. For the 122 students who provided testimonies (52 women and 70 men), the majority (nearly 60 percent) cite **poor internet connectivity including a lack of appropriate devices** as a major factor in learning online, with more women than men affected (36 versus 32). All countries in the sample are affected. Many students mentioned concern for peers who cannot afford internet connections or devices. Some also noted that insufficient bandwidth on their mobile phones held them back from engaging properly and from downloading resources. Some students also said their low levels of technical skills affected their online engagement and learning. Being able to learn effectively online requires certain digital literacy skills. As a PADILEIA partner observed: 'A TikTok user does not necessarily make a good online student.'

> 'Sad that the internet is not effective, the time period online is short, and [I] wasn't able to understand.' – *Female Student, Somaliland*

> 'There are many students who do not have mobile phones to attend online lessons.' – *Female student, Lebanon*

Online-Only Reduces Lecturers' Engagement with Students with Specific Implications for Clinical Practice

39. **Poor student engagement** is often, but not exclusively, positioned as a result of poor internet connectivity. It is also associated with a reduction in the amount of work that can be covered in class. In Somaliland and Lebanon, for example, lecturers teaching STEM subjects are concerned by having to postpone clinical practice for students preparing to be doctors, nurses, dentists and veterinary

scientists. Lecturers also mention challenges in gauging and maintaining student attention beyond the register call. Some note difficulties in reaching out to shy and unconfident students.

'I can't always tell which students are fully paying attention, or are engaged for a whole session.' – *Female Lecturer, Lebanon*

Students Studying Subjects That Require Practical/Clinical Learning Are Particularly Adversely Affected by the Move to Online Learning

40. Twenty percent of students (more men than women) in the sample, primarily those who study medical subjects in Somaliland (medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science) note that not everything can be taught online and that they had missed critical clinical and laboratory practice, halted during the pandemic.

'We've done only theory lectures; we miss all the practical.' – *Male student, dentistry, Somaliland*

'[There is a] lack of learning for the skills I study, like going to hospitals and seeing cases.' – *Female student, medicine and surgery, Somaliland*

Disadvantages by Gender in Technical Online Skills

41. Nearly a third of lecturers noted their **lack of skills in online provision** with a higher proportion of woman lecturers affected than men. Lecturer testimonies on this issue tend to associate technical skill deficits with time pressures and the need to mobilise and produce output quickly. Some lecturers noted a lack of familiarity with the technology and online platforms including, Zoom and Google Meet. They also faced difficulties in understanding how to connect, navigate online platforms and upload resources. Women lecturers with skill deficits were also concerned with the technical abilities of their students. A few lecturers (2 women; 3 men) mention insufficient support from faculty and other members.

'I am not ready, in a technical sense to teach online. I'm not sure how many of my students are tech savvy in a way that we can conduct an online class'. – *Female lecturer, Kenya*

Challenges of Studying from Home

Gendered Implications of Increased Workloads and Time Pressures Due to the Rapid Shift to Online Teaching

42. In addition to the factors above, a quarter of lecturers (near equal numbers of men and women) mention **increased workloads and time pressures**, including being 'overwhelmed' as a result of moving online in the wake of the pandemic. The accounts from women lecturers differ from men's in that women highlight the gender division of labour and women's unpaid work at home, caring for household members and elderly relatives. Unpaid time squeezed from women for extra work to prepare online courses is likely to have an additional effect on the wellbeing of children, particularly during lockdown periods when parents, particularly women, had to supervise and help children with their studies. A study conducted in the UK that examined the impact of COVID-19 on emergency remote teaching by precarious instructors also notes gender inequalities in the transformation of home/work relationships.[143]

'We didn't have enough time to prepare …and this led to great psychological pressure on us as I spend long and continuous hours working on the computer to provide the best possible information for students…even during the holidays.' – *Woman Lecturer, Jordan*

Women Students Face More Disadvantages in Working at Home Because of Their Gender

43. Fourteen percent of students (9 women and 8 men) mention difficult home working environments, including family problems, noisy family members, joint family settings, and finding a quiet space to

---

[143] The Post Pandemic University. How did COVID-19 affect emergency remote teaching by precarious instructors? https://postpandemicuniversity.net/2020/09/13/how-did-covid-19-affect-emergency-remote-teaching-by-precarious-instructors/

work. However, women, cite the additional burden of having to look after children, teach children, clean the house and cook meals.

> 'While you are in your home, you're not in an environment of study. There are many interruptions like knocking on the door. Others are using the internet and it has an influence.' – *Male student, Somaliland*

> 'The gender gap! I have to attend my child's needs […] remote school activities plus cooking and cleaning the house. Trying to get a focus is such a goal.' – *Female student, Somaliland*

Nearly a Quarter of Lecturers Are Facing Financial Strain with Some Indication of Precarious Contracting

44. Nearly a quarter of lecturers (more men than women) indicate **financial strain** including the cost of upgrading equipment and paying for higher speed internet. (There is no mention in the testimonies that universities are covering these costs). Some women lecturers indicate not being paid enough for the amount of work online preparation entails while others mention reduced pay for reduced class sizes which suggests precarious contracting arrangements.

> 'Internet connectivity is expensive for both student and teachers, especially those who come from economically challenged backgrounds.' – *Woman Lecturer, Kenya*

> '[Online teaching and learning] comes with its share of challenges, such as extra costs in [purchasing] e-learning equipment and infrastructure.' – *Male Lecturer, Kenya*

45. Overall the experiences expressed by lecturers involved in the SPHEIR partnership HEIs are similar to lecturer experiences in the UK particularly when it comes to frustrations around technical challenges and workloads.[144] The key difference is the digital divide, as lecturers from the global south are having to contend far more with the consequences of poor internet or no internet access, particularly for their students on teaching, learning and engagement.

Men, Both Lecturers and Students, Are Suffering Most from Isolation

46. Thirteen percent of lecturers (all men) speak of **isolation** during the pandemic while 11 percent (again, mainly men) express **anxieties** about their health. Sixteen percent of students, mention feeling isolated as a result of the pandemic and the shift to online learning, with men reporting this nearly twice as regularly**.** In some instances, this is combined with financial pressures.

> 'I have also faced a challenge of isolation during lockdown, difficulties in getting basic needs like food and water.' – *Male student, Uganda.*

> 'I lost it…became more isolated because of the lack of communication with people. The meeting of friends and colleagues remains better when it's face to face.' – *Female student, Jordan.*

47. A further 8 percent of students (similar numbers of men and women) mention poor mental health, depression and anxiety.

Despite All the Challenges Faced by Students, Some Express Gratitude and Show Resilience

48. Just over a quarter of students, near equal numbers of men and women, were grateful for the opportunity to increase their internet skills in learning online and in having met the challenges face on.

A8.2.4   Conclusion

49. While the rapid shift to online teaching and learning as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic is commendable on the part of SPHEIR partnership universities, and better than the alternative, it is an unhappy reality that the digital divide creates and entrenches inequality and disadvantage in terms of access to good quality teaching and learning. This is experienced more acutely in certain geographies (those with weakest infrastructure) and by gender (with men struggling with isolation, and women

---

[144] Ibid

struggling with getting access to online teaching and learning platform while facing pressures of studying while working from home, including financial hardship and domestic labour).

50. This case study provides SPHEIR partnerships with further insights to this situation as they continue to support effective online learning in their HEIs. Potential actions that could be taken include:

- Provide loans or grants to enable lecturers and students (men and women) with poor or no internet connections to get connected, upgrade connections or purchase adequate devices. **First step:** survey lecturers to assess whether they can identify and contact those in need.
- Provide hotline technical internet support to lecturers and students (men and women) with links to YouTube sites for routine support. **First step:** ensure demand merits this intervention by conducting a short online survey of lecturers (men and women) to assess their views.
- The British Medical Association provides an approach for resuming clinical placements post COVID-19 as well as guidance for students returning to clinical placements. This could be a useful resource for adaptation.[145]
- For women lecturers and students with family pressures, consider funding childcare vouchers.

A8.3 Case Study 3: Prompting Subtlety of Thought: Eight Attributes of Female Leadership Transforming Social Science Pedagogy in Higher Education Institutions Across Africa

A8.3.1 Summary

51. This study identifies eight attributes of female leadership that has contributed to the success of the Pedagogical Leadership in Africa (PedaL) partnership, one of three SPHEIR projects addressing pedagogical reform. PedaL is a partnership between higher education institutes in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and the UK. Academics from these partner institutions have trained and established a network of teachers in African universities to transform graduate education by embedding innovative pedagogy within graduate social science programmes. The partnership is led by Dr Beatrice Muganda of Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) in Nairobi, Kenya. The PedaL approach represents a systemic shift from dominant traditional teaching models to more participatory, student-centred approaches. It is gender-sensitive and subject content integrates an analytical lens on power and inequality. Dr Muganda's leadership approach reframes what it takes to be a successful leader, to manoeuvre skilfully and to bring power on side, so as to expand opportunities for students to contribute to inclusive social and economic development.

Annex Box 4: Case Study Methodology

- **Literature review**
- **Review of results**
- **Interviews with PedaL partnership staff**

A8.3.2 Introduction

52. Addressing gender and other inequalities is not just a question of collecting statistics (gender disaggregated data) and gender analysis to understand who benefits, and why and whether gender balance will happen. For transformative change women have to play a role in setting the agenda and providing leadership. This is no simple feat in academic institutions where decision-making and leadership (globally) remains predominately male. Some feminists have pointed to leadership as a

---

[145] https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/covid-19/adapting-to-covid/covid-19-returning-to-clinical-placements

gendered concept, associated with power, privilege and strength (Grint 2011).[146] When women do take on a leadership role, their style is expected to be feminine, more democratic, participatory, and collaborative. Indeed, women who have adopted a more assertive or masculine approach have been criticised and penalised for not conforming to expectations (McColough 2011).[147]

53. Leadership, as Dr Linda Waldman points out, is a socially constructed process and different manifestations of it exist in different contexts.[148] We cannot assume that women have a unique feminine style. Each individual brings a diversity of approaches. If attention is placed solely on the leader, we ignore those who surround the leader, who may work unpaid and unrecognised in pushing the agenda forward in their own domains.[149] The SPHEIR portfolio provides a useful window for exploring female leadership. What is important is to understand what attributes of leadership are transformative for gender relations and inclusive outcomes, and why. Equally important are the roles men play as co-workers, leaders and champions.

54. The case study begins by explaining what the PedaL partnership has achieved. It identifies attributes of female leadership but it also highlights the contributions of team members (women and men) who are themselves leaders, champions and mentors in their own institutions and who are expanding PedaL's outreach and maintaining its community of practice. We look at how power relations can change, what is achieved when they do change and how specific attributes of leadership can activate 'selfless' dedication which in turn produces results that go far beyond anticipated targets.

A8.3.3　Pedagogical Leadership in Africa

55. PedaL has designed and is delivering a training programme which strengthens the capacities of university teaching staff to deliver social science graduate programmes using the PedaL pedagogy. PedaL uses a cost sharing approach. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme has quickly shifted its traditional face-to-face methods of delivering a one-year 'Core PedaL' training course to 'PedaL online'.

56. PedaL introduces lecturers to a 'suite of integrated interventions' across the design, context, processes and content of teaching and learning. It familiarises them with new pedagogical tools that include case studies, flipped classrooms where students give presentations, role plays and a range of problem-based learning activities aimed at maximising learning outcomes among students (men and women).

Annex Box 5: PedaL Partners

> **The PedaL partners include:**
> - **Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR based in Nairobi, Kenya);**
> - **University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania);**
> - **Egerton University (Kenya);**
> - **University of Ibadan (Nigeria);**
> - **Uganda Martyrs University (Private)**
> - **University of Ghana**
> - **The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at Sussex University (UK)**

---

[146] Grint, Keith. 2011. A history of Leadership. In Bryman, Alan and Collinson, David and Grint, Keith and Jackson, Brad and uhl-Bien, Mary, (eds). The SAGE handbook of Leadership, London.

[147] McCullough, Laura. Forum on Public Policy Online, v 2011. Women's Leadership in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics: Barriers to Participation.

[148] GenderinSite. 2018. Pathways to Success: Bringing a Gender Lens to the Scientific Leadership of Global Challenges. Waldman, Linda, Alice Abreu, Becky Faith, Tabitha Hrynick, Inés Sánchez de Madariaga, and Lucilla Spini.

[149] Ibid.

57. IDS at Sussex University play a quality assurance role, providing technical advice to strengthen systems and processes for monitoring, evaluation and learning and the design, delivery and institutionalisation of pedagogical innovation across partnership universities.

A8.3.4   PedaL Achievements

58. In the first two years, the programme trained 55 trainers (25 female, 30 male). These trainers then enhanced the teaching capacity of 1,089 educators (647 male and 442 female) from 60 universities across 10 African countries. The Uganda Martyrs University and Egerton University have successfully accredited the PedaL model as a training programme for educators, thus sustainably embedding the model.

59. The PedaL model builds capacity at scale. It takes a 'training of trainers' approach, where core 'Resource Persons' (men and women) lead workshops and support promising participants to grow into the role of trainers. Trainers teach beyond their country of residence using on-line approaches. The original proposal only aimed to train staff at five universities but the approach has 'snowballed' and PedaL-trained teachers are voluntarily training other teachers to meet the growing demand from students in some universities to be taught the 'PedaL way'.

60. Feedback surveys from all PedaL training participants show an overwhelming level of satisfaction ranging from 95% to 99%. PedaL has also built traction for wider national and regional level reform to promote teaching excellence. Furthermore, implementation surveys conducted in October 2019 and May 2020 revealed that at least 89% of the teaching staff who responded to the surveys are using PedaL approaches in their class room delivery. Within the implementing universities, PedaL pedagogy has been replicated beyond its original targets, across programmes (PhD, MA and Bachelors) and disciplines (social sciences, Arts and Humanities and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). A benchmark of the programme's success is also the willingness of universities and individual teaching staff to cost-share in PedaL trainings.

61. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, PedaL moved key aspects of its products online, and introduced modules to help design and deliver online teaching and assessment of learning. The new online course integrates all aspects of the PedaL approach except for two modules, education philosophy and leadership. All PedaL courses integrate gender.

A8.3.5   Leadership Attributes Driving Transformative Change

62. The PedaL partnership is led by Dr Beatrice Muganda, a Black female academic, and Director of Higher Education at PASGR based in Nairobi. Her insights and those of Dr Linda Waldman from the IDS, the quality assurance partner, have facilitated an analysis of what attributes of female leadership contribute to transformative change in contexts where gender inequality is systemic, and where complex gender dynamics, and different ways of seeing gender and power relations need to be navigated at multiple levels. So, what kind of leadership attributes are required to do this? We identify eight important attributes.

Leaders Pursue a Vision Selflessly and Inspire the Same from Team Members

63. Many leaders profess to have a vision, but perhaps fewer pursue that vision, selflessly and are able to persuade team members to do the same through example. 'Money is not the object, it's the vision,' says Dr Muganda. 'They (the Resource Persons) make sacrifices; they put in a lot of pro bono work.' She notes that opportunity costs are high. The team make sacrifices. Dr Muganda adds, 'We cannot take advantage (or) take this selflessness for granted'. In this sense, selflessness implies a collective way of working, inspired by a leader to go beyond a call of duty. Selflessness in this leadership approach is acknowledged and appreciated, rather than demanded and expected.

64. The shared vision is that PedaL pedagogy 'will be a norm, a standard, synonymous with quality higher education' across Africa, says Dr Muganda. 'PedaL will be part of what universities offer and

they will allocate resources for it.' At an operational level, Dr Muganda's vision for PedaL is to ensure gender and other inequalities are seen and integrated into all teaching and learning subject contexts to effect systemic change.

65. Dr Muganda is clear on the future challenge: 'PedaL has to cut across all subjects. We will deliver a STEM product that integrates gender. University leaders are asking for it.' Gender inequalities associated with STEM subjects are well known, globally. Dr Muganda knows that if STEM pedagogy and subject matter is gender sensitive, it will 'touch' women and their disadvantage.

Eliciting Team Buy-In

66. A critical aspect of Dr Muganda's leadership is eliciting buy-in from team members and stakeholders who adopt the PedaL approach. Dr Waldman notes that Dr Muganda has 'made PedaL trendy and exciting.' People want to be part of it. At a macro level, Beatrice seeks buy-in to the concept that it's 'time for African countries to change' outdated pedagogy and subject content. Inclusive discussion is a key part of eliciting buy in. But other approaches are also required: 'I do not impose,' says Dr Muganda. 'I make connections; I harness what everyone has to bring.' Eliciting buy in within the team, and from a broader platform has, in her view, 'helped us go beyond our targets'.

67. Dr Waldman notes significant shifts in the balance of power within the partnership. It is more usual for the IDS, an institution from the Global North to take a lead technical role but in PedaL, 'we are not in control,' says Dr Waldman. 'There is this sense of power reversal. Black women are being heard, they are leading, the room is predominantly black. It's amazing'. In the UK, there are just 99 black women professors out of a total of 20,000.[150] Those involved in PedaL from the Global North now see a different reality.

Carrying People Along in an Evolving Process

68. Dr Muganda describes her leadership role as being the person who 'shares the direction, and who carries others along'. The process is complex and it requires in Dr Waldman's words a 'phenomenal level of skills.' These skills encompass in-depth subject knowledge but also programme management; skills in monitoring, evaluation and learning; establishing and maintaining communities of practice, and feedback loops; skills in policy advocacy and negotiation to secure cost sharing partnerships; rapid programme adaptation (e.g., in the light of COVID-19) and meeting demands from universities outside the partnership.

69. Other skills are well known leadership attributes - team building and complex people-management skills - but in PedaL these skills are being exercised by a woman in a context where there are systemic gender inequalities. The PedaL team of Resource Persons comprises 70% women academics and 30% men. Team cohesion is not automatic. It's a process that involves 'heated discussion' including on the fine nuances around inequality, including gendered meanings and identity, complex gender relations, power, hidden agendas and unconscious bias. Not everyone shares the same view or sees these issues in the same way. Dr Muganda says it is her role to nudge everyone along. There are members of the team, male and female who are high-level academic experts in their own right. '(Men and women) have accepted my leadership,' says Dr Muganda.

Prompting Subtlety of Thought

70. 'Prompting a subtlety of thought' is an approach Dr Muganda uses to grow the team and the trainers of trainers. She does not believe in confronting people with what they do not yet know or understand. Rather, she looks for avenues through which to deepen knowledge, making connections between people who can serendipitously and unobtrusively 'deepen' thinking. Dr Waldman highlights Dr

---

[150] Runnymede Trust March 2017. Black Female Professors in the UK.

Muganda's skills in identifying entry points to do this. 'It's done in part through feedback (as part of quality assurance), but in other ways too.' It's a delicate process that doesn't undermine.

Problem-Solving Through Inclusive Discussion

71. Feminists have long criticised the tendency of male leaders to hold critical business discussions with male colleagues, out of the office, and after work, to the exclusion of women. In contrast, inclusive discussion plays a key role in Dr Muganda's leadership approach. Dr Waldman notes that everyone is encouraged to talk, to discuss 'until all issues are resolved'. She notes that PedaL is not always 'unproblematic'. The team face problems, and the best way to solve them is in Dr Muganda's view to constantly reinforce the message that if you have a problem, 'come and talk.'

72. Inclusive discussion is also the tool that resolves differences of opinion around conceptual approaches to, for example, gender, power and inequality. Dr Waldman cautions against assuming team dissonance stems from male team members when it comes to new ways of thinking around inequality. Women too can struggle with the complexities of these concepts. What matters is discussion, the airing of views and the finding of a consensus.

73. This inclusive approach to dialogue and problem solving infuses the way gender is taught, whether in anthropology or sociology. 'We use case studies to provoke discussion,' says Dr Muganda. 'One example concerns female genital mutilation.' Discussing cases helps teachers and students find a way of seeing with a gender lens and to find solutions for gender equality and empowerment. It's also an integral shift from traditional ways of teaching and learning to participatory approaches.

A Nurturing Approach to Build Leadership Skills

74. A team leader that nurtures helps team members grow, learn, develop and act together in confidence. Dr Muganda says, 'I bring a quality of nurturing into my leadership style; it's who I am'. But in this assertion, she is also reclaiming a female stereotype as being an essential attribute for all leadership, regardless of gender. Dr Muganda's nurturing approach is directed at growing confident PedaL resource persons across partner universities. 'We identify the quick learners in the training of trainers programme; those who are enthusiastic and committed.' As the trainers gain confidence, they in turn play a lead role in their institutions, introducing new pedagogy and challenging accepted practice.

75. Most of the women leaders who have attended the training of trainers' courses have, according to Dr Muganda have 'taken PedaL to their universities in a big way. When plans are made to train 30 people, we end up training 100'. A nurturing approach does not overlook or disregard what the team has to offer. Dr Waldman observes that Dr Muganda 'instils the notion that (the team) is a family'. Those whom Dr Muganda has nurtured, are, according to Dr Waldman 'huge; they are so good; so impressive in their own right.' Good leadership nurtures good leadership.

Availability

76. Dr Muganda makes herself 'available' to team members. PedaL resource people do the same. 'The training stops and resource people remain available to answer questions, and they do this long after the training engagement. They are ever present', says Dr Muganda. 'Our boundaries are open, we work a full day, and we work after hours, if required.' The dialogue amongst the PedaL community is never ending. It goes well beyond the initial feedback loop.

Diffuse Leadership that Negotiates and Influences

77. As Dr Waldman notes, we cannot ignore those who surround the leader, who push the PedaL agenda forward in their universities. Dr Muganda reels off a handful of names, including Dr Antoinette Tsiboe-Darko a young geography academic who has facilitated the uptake of PedaL in the University of Ghana. It is the tough message that she has delivered that so impresses Dr Muganda. 'Just think about what's she done: she's gone to far older, more experienced and senior academics (men) with the

message: things can improve; you can improve; and she's packaged this in a way that gets a result.' She adds, 'You have to be prepared to go up against some real hardliners. It takes patience, negotiation and time.'

A8.3.6   Conclusion

78. This case study has identified attributes of female leadership driving forward PedaL's gender sensitive pedagogical approach for the social sciences in African universities. The approach tackles the unconscious bias and hidden agendas in teaching and learning, and it integrates a gender lens and lens on inequality more broadly into social science subject content. Female leadership attributes may look similar to standard leadership approaches but as this case study shows, they are different because they have to contend with power from a position of disadvantage. As Linda Waldman points out, female leadership is also expected to live up to gendered norms to be more inclusive, more nurturing but at the same, get the job done. This case study examines eight attributes of female leadership that yield lessons for everyone.

A8.4   Case Study 4: Going Organic: Profiling the Evolution of Employer Engagement Under TESCEA in Bridging the Gap Between University and Industry in Tanzania and Uganda

A8.4.1   Summary

79. The Joint Advisory Groups (JAGs) under SPHEIR's TESCEA partnership have provided universities an avenue to cultivate deep relationships with its ecosystem. The JAGs comprise members from academia, industry, the community, and public sector relevant to the programmes of interest. The JAGs have been engaged in a more structured way across a breadth of university activities including curriculum redesigns, teacher-employer peer network, and strengthening student placements and internships. The JAGs are being institutionalised in these universities and there is optimism these relationships will live on past the TESCEA project. The JAGs could strengthen their engagement around gender and push forward progressive gender policies for employers and the university.

A8.4.2   Introduction

80. Higher education enrolment continues to grow across a number of sub-Saharan countries, with gross tertiary enrolment up from 4% to 9%[151] in the last decade reflecting renewed commitment and policy focus on tertiary education by governments across the continent. Yet there is a gap between graduate skills and the needs of the labour market and youth (m/f) unemployment remains prevalent across African countries, including Tanzania and Uganda, where this case study is situated.

81. In Tanzania, a significant proportion of young people are failing to gain employment relevant to their qualification. A study by the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA)[152], found that lack of consultation with the private sector has led to the continued use of outdated curriculum and teaching methods and materials resulting in ill-prepared graduates. The same is true for Uganda, with the same study citing Uganda to have the worst skills gap in East Africa, highlighting that graduates lacked the soft skills such as critical thinking along with the technical skills required by the labour market.

82. Increasing the quality of graduates is one of the aims of the SPHEIR programme, which its partnerships are tackling in different ways. Inspired to bridge this skills gap and enhance graduate employability in the context of East Africa, the Transforming Employability for Social Change in East Africa (TESCEA) partnership is addressing this challenge by transforming teaching and learning for undergraduates, with employer engagement at the heart of its approach.

---

[151] World Bank, World Development Indicators: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.TER.ENRR?locations=ZG
[152] University World News 23 May 2014

Annex Box 6: The TESCEA Partnership

> **The TESCEA partnership is led by INASP (UK) working with Mzumbe University (Tanzania), University of Dodoma (Tanzania), Gulu University (Uganda), Uganda Martyrs University (Uganda), Association for Faculty Enrichment in Learning and Teaching (Kenya), and Ashoka East Africa (Kenya).**

83. Employer engagement is a leading approach for bridging graduate skill gap.[153] It involves engaging employers and key labour market stakeholders in various ways and stages within the higher educational system. Employer engagement has been shown to yield positive educational and economic outcomes for students and for employers as well and in the long run for economic growth.[154]

84. Central to TESCEA's employer engagement strategy is the use of structured stakeholder consultations using groups specially formulated to advise on employer needs and foster linkages between the universities and the world of work. These groups, officially known as the Joint Advisory Groups (JAGs), connect the universities with local and national stakeholders in the respective countries.

85. This case study chronicles the inspiration behind the formation of the JAGs, their evolution, achievements and their sustainability as well as areas for strengthening.

A8.4.3   Prior to the JAGs

86. Some form of employer engagement was not new to these universities. This was however done on ad hoc basis and in most cases as an afterthought and limited to the organisation of student placements. Employers would occasionally be invited for one-day seminars to speak to students, usually organised bilaterally by a course lecturer through their personal network. As expressed by educators from Tanzania and Uganda,

> "There wasn't a deep connection or linkages between the employer and institution on what kind of skills we need to give to students or to match how we are training our graduates and what the industry wants"

> "We engaged employers as a formality. It wasn't effective. We brought in lecturers for one-day seminars or when we needed to organise internships as part of the course. There was no process. A more structured approach has been long over-due – this is what we have been missing"

A8.4.4   Birth of the JAGs

87. There was recognition at the inception of the TESCEA project that employer engagement had to be done differently. The project identified the need to elevate the way in which employers were engaged to build deep and sustained connections between the university and industry, and move away from the status-quo. There was also recognition that effective engagement would need to involve not just employers but also key stakeholders within the university's ecosystem.

88. The idea of the JAGs brought a comprehensive and more integrated approach to ensuring the university could connect to its community and to industry. The JAGs would advise and support the institution on a range of issues relevant to producing better-skilled graduates fostering a lasting relationship, beyond TESCEA.

89. Each partner university has its own JAG. The JAGs comprise members from academia, industry, the community, and public sector relevant to the programmes of interest. From the onset, the JAGs

---

[153] Mann, A., Rehill, J., & Kashefpakdel, E. T. (2018). Employer engagement in education: Insights from international evidence for effective practice and future research. Education and Employers. Retrieved from https://www.educationandemployers.org/research/employerengagementineducation/

[154] UK's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/about-us/employer-engagement-report.pdf?sfvrsn=8ce2f581_8

were conceived to be shaped by each University. Universities formed and determined the constitution of their own JAGs and how the JAGs would be operationalised within their university. This resulted in different stakeholder groups represented in each institution's JAG, tailored to the needs of the University.

90. In Tanzania, political buy-in was crucial hence the involvement of key regulatory bodies in the higher education sector and government representatives, and representation from employer bodies and unions. They realised a platform where all these key institutions came together to engage and discuss graduate skills had been missing.

91. In Uganda, universities chose a communal approach focusing on their immediate environment and networks. Faculty members were brought together to unpack the type of support they required from the JAG and to conduct a stakeholder mapping to identify which organisations they needed to provide the required support.

92. JAGs in both Uganda and Tanzania have also included head teachers from the various high schools with the aim to begin engaging head teachers in discussion of skills development for students. The JAGs have also evolved to include student body representatives.

93. Across all four JAGs the definition of employers has included the social enterprise ecosystem, a popular upcoming employment pathway for African Youth, and other non-conventional employment pathways. Data collection for the SPHEIR baseline and MTE confirms that many students, both male and female, aspire to be entrepreneurs when they graduate from their degree programs, recognising the limited opportunities for formal employment.

94. Social entrepreneurs from Ashoka, a TESCEA partner, are part of the JAGs and have shared their learning and skill development journey with students as well as validating research on the skills needed to transform employability. JAG social entrepreneurs have included founders of Village Energy in Uganda, working to provide skilled solar technicians in every village in Africa, and Family Alliance for Development Cooperation (FADECO) in Tanzania, aimed at improving market linkages for farmers.

A8.4.5   Activities and Success of the JAGs

95. Employers and stakeholders, via the JAGs, have now been engaged across the breadth of the universities' activities. The activities of the JAGs have gone beyond the original scope of the project and are contributing university-wide:

- **Curriculum re-design:** The JAGs have engaged with teaching staff in identifying and validating skills required for the labour market for courses being redesigned under TESCEA. In 2018, at the start of the TESCEA partnership, partners conducted a review of literature in their countries and worldwide to identify the types of skills employers want to see from graduates. This literature was analysed to develop a skills matrix used to guide the course redesign process within the partnership. The JAGs served in validating the skills matrix and have engaged in the curriculum workshops, adding the voice of the industry.

- **Student placement and internships**: The JAGs have also been involved in revising student placement policies of the universities. Prior to this student placements were not effective: students went wherever they could get an offer and often did not gain much from them. Now, all four universities sign MOUs with employers in efforts to correctly match students with employers. Employers ask students to identify which skills they wish to develop from their placements and are making efforts to ensure students are placed in roles that offer the opportunity to learn and build on these skills. As expressed by a member of the JAG and an educator at University of Dodoma,

    "Our students are not going to places to make tea and run the photocopiers. They are now going on placements that matter to their development and learning"

    At UMU, an assessment of employers is now done prior to placements, as suggested by the JAG.

- **Delivery of teaching and learning:** JAG members from various employer organisations have been hosted as guest lecturers in classes and have been hosted at career fairs and departmental seminars. Open forums with students and lecturers have been moderated by JAG members.

    "TESCEA's universities have also engaged several guest speakers in classes and at campus events. It is in the process of signing agreements with different organisations and companies to secure further engagement and internship opportunities for their students" – TESCEA partner

- **Teacher-employer peer schemes**: Lecturers are also benefiting from the JAGs. Lecturer-employer buddy networks have evolved from the JAG meetings. This has led to lecturer spending a day at employer organisation (lecture placements) to give insights on the industry's changing needs and the employment destination of their students. At UDOM, informal mentorship schemes between lecturers and employers have been established.

96. The structured approach of the JAGs is leading to more lasting pay offs both for the university and employers and beyond TESCEA,

    "The JAGs have certainly widened the type and network of stakeholders we engage with as a university and has strengthened the linkages with stakeholders. Before, we did not connect with certain groups such as headteachers from high schools. But now we do. We have been provided with a structured approach to bringing different types of stakeholder to the table to discuss and advise on our graduates' skills" – JAG member at Mzumbe University

97. At Mzumbe, the JAG has garnered high level political interest with a representative from the Prime Minister's office now a JAG member. The JAG also has reps from the Tanzania Youth Coalition (TYC) – a civil society organization focusing on youth empowerment, exchange and volunteerism, National Economic Empowerment Council (NEEC), and Confederation of Tanzania Industries and Tanzania Employment Service Agency - a government agency that provides internship opportunities to graduates.

98. Inspired by work of the JAGs and in recognition of their work, a JAG member has offered community radio as a platform for Mzumbe University and stakeholders in Mzumbe's JAG. The aim is to share stories of change through the community radio and to host talk shows, highlighting the innovations and reforms as a result of TESCEA at the university level and at the class level.

99. There is evidence that JAGs are being institutionalised. At UMU, there is an ongoing process to revise the university statutes to ensure that there is more community and industry representation on relevant committees and councils across the university. UMU has also introduced a "coffee with entrepreneurs" series which hosts entrepreneurs from across the country at the university to share their insights with students. The university is now budgeting for JAG activities to incorporate this as part of its way of operating.

100. At UDOM, the JAG continues to work closely with university career support unit and the Director of undergraduate study to plan a number of key events including identifying key speakers for career seminars.

A8.4.6   Sustainability

101. There is optimism across all four university partners that the JAG structures will continue to grow and operate beyond TESCEA. Universities are mainstreaming budgets for employer engagement activities. Influential and high-level stakeholders have now been involved. Universities and employers alike feel a sense of ownership of their JAG. There is a shared passion and commitment to produced better skilled graduates. A JAG coordinator shares his input,

    "I don't think there will be any going back to the old way of engaging employers. After TESCEA, the groups may not be called JAGs and may be called differently but I am confident we will continue to

engage with these stakeholders. Both sides are seeing the benefits. The stakeholders are now our watchdogs and holding us to account. There is no going back.

"For the JAGs to continue collaborating even in times of COVID-19 is a good sign. We nicknamed it the e-JAGs as we moved our activities purely online. Despite the circumstances especially for employers who have been hit hard by the pandemic, members still made time to meet and engage on relevant issues"

A8.4.7   The Gender Gap

102. Our approach to this case study recognises gender as a cross-cutting issue. Mainstreaming gender is particularly relevant in the work of the JAGs as labour markets are gendered. Men and women do not enter or participate in the labour market on an equal footing or experience it in the same way[155]. There are significant inequalities in terms of access to the labour market, with certain professions, particularly those needing skills in science, technology engineering and maths, favouring men. Once in the workplace, women often face systemic discrimination because of their gender[156]. On the whole, women are paid less than their male counterparts in similar positions, are less likely to be considered for promotion and less likely to be nominated for training opportunities in the workplace. Policies to support women in the workplace, for example in relation to maternity leave, safety at work whilst pregnant, childcare or flexible work, are often absent. Further, women are more likely to experience sexual harassment.

103. The JAGs have engaged some women forums to try to better mainstream gender in their activities. In recognition of the gender gap, there have been key conversations on the topic within the JAG meetings facilitated by JAG members including Tanzania Women Network and the Forum for African Women, but much work is yet to be done. A female JAG member shares her thoughts on this:

"The conversation is still very much around raising awareness. We have embedded gender sessions in all JAG meetings at UDOM. We have had conversation with employers on how they engage female students. But we still have some way to go to be able to influence gender policies in the university itself and to leverage our work as the JAG to influence gender policies within partner organisations"

A8.4.8   Conclusion

104. TESCEA and the JAGs have introduced in their partner universities, a more structured approach to employer and stakeholder engagement. Partnering with universities, these advisory groups have worked together from advising on curriculum redesigns to enhancing student placements, aimed at improving graduate employability skills. The JAGs are being institutionalised with high level buy in at the institutional level and in some cases at national level. There is more work to be done in leveraging the JAG platform in tackling gender issues pertinent to the labour market.

A8.4.9   Methodology

105. Data for the case study was collected through:

- Document review of:
    - TESCEA partnership quarterly reports
    - Fund Manager reports on key achievements of SPHEIR, employer engagement strategies within SPHEIR
    - The PEA country studies completed for the SPHEIR mid-term evaluation by the external evaluation team

---

[155] Gender Equality & Decent Work, International Labour Organisation: https://www.ilo.org/moscow/areas-of-work/gender-equality/WCMS_249141/lang--en/index.htm

[156] Gender Inequality in the Labour Market: A cross-national perspective. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4194728?seq=1

- Review of key informant interviews undertaken during the main phase of MTE data collection (where the case study topic was first identified);
- Further targeted key informant interviews with members of the JAG at partner universities, the Fund Manager, and TESCEA lead partner – INASP

  - Musabila Albogast, Mzumbe University

  - Prof. Flora Fabian, Professor of Biomedical Science, College of Health Science, The University of Dodoma

  - Ubena John, LL.M., LL.D. (ICT Law), Senior Lecturer & Dean Faculty Law, Mzumbe University

  - Idraku Felix, Business and Finance Coach, MBA, Uganda Martyrs University

  - Mai Skovgaard, Project Manager, TESCEA

  - Jon Harle, Director of Programmes, INASP

  - Joseph Hoffman, British Council

  - Badamasi Savage, Sierra Leone Institute of Engineers

106. Data was synthesised against the case study's lines of enquiry and analysed to identify emerging themes and build up a picture across the partnership.

A8.4.10 Further Reading

British Council, 2014. Can higher education solve Africa's job crisis? Understanding graduate employability in Sub-Saharan Africa https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/graduate_employability_in_ssa_final-web.pdf

Harle, Jon, 2020. Transforming core skills in university curricula https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=202001130818072

Hoffman, Joseph. 2020. Varieties of employer engagement and higher education transformation in SPHEIR https://www.spheir.org.uk/sites/default/files/spheir_employer_engagement_paper.pdf

Vincent Otieno Odhiambo, 2020. How social entrepreneurs are contributing to HE change https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=2020090110554356

Wild, Joanna and Omingo, Mary, 2020. Graduate skills for employability in East Africa: Evolution of a skills matrix for course redesign. https://www.inasp.info/sites/default/files/2020-01/2020-01%20TESCEA%20skills%20matrix%20paper_0.pdf

Annex 9 Institutional Self-Assessments

A9.1 Introduction

1. The institutional self-assessments are filled it in by the participating universities and give us insight into the status of a number of policies and practices as well as perceptions and attitudes related to impact realms of the SPHEIR programme: curriculum reform, quality of teaching and training opportunities for staff, student employability and connections to the world of work and openness to change and innovation by leadership. In the baseline we received a first set of self-assessments and analysed the findings to inform the status quo on new teaching and learning. As part of the mid-term evaluation we asked the partnerships to submit the self-assessments again and added a few additional questions related to the impact of COVID-19.

2. This chapter provides a short background on the composition of the self-assessment and the way in which the data has been aggregate into one overview table (Annex Table 25). Findings from the current self-assessment are analysed in relation to those of the baseline and on the basis of the universities themselves indicating whether they have progressed, regressed or maintained the status quo on the different indicators.

A9.2 Background

3. The SPHEIR programme seeks to innovate and bring better teaching methods to improve the number, quality and diversity of graduates who better need the needs and shortages in the labour market. As part of the midterm evaluation we took stock of the status of different policies and practices across the different partnership institutions. There are roughly six categories that we inquire after:

- Presence of policies and/or strategies and if these are monitored/evaluated or not relating to quality of teaching and staff training, ICT and digital learning, curriculum and innovation, gender equality and widening participation. For this category we checked whether these policies were in place and monitored, captured in the table as a binary indicator.

- Support through financial aid such as bursaries and scholarships and support for students from a disadvantaged background. We do not ask, what type of support the latter entails but merely whether there is any sort of support in place. This is also a binary indicator on whether support is offered or not.

- New developments/opportunities. In this category we request institutions to fill in the extent to which staff has access to training opportunities, whether the university encourages new approaches and about student's access to both distance education and digital learning resources. These questions were answered on a Likert scale ranging from 'not at all' to 'to a great extent' and follow a colour coding in the table.

- In relation to the questions above on student access to digital and distance education we asked whether COVID-19 had accelerated these processes. The response is also captured in a binary scale through affirmative or negative with regards to whether the process was accelerated or not.

- Employability and the link to the world of work consists of a set of questions focusing on the involvement of industry with curriculum development and implementation, lifelong learning opportunities, student placements, joint PhDs, etc. These questions were also answered on a Likert scale ranging from 'not at all' to 'to a great extent' and follow a colour coding in the table.

- Engagement with society was answered through three separate questions pertaining to engagement with the community, sectoral organisations/industry and other local schools and universities. A Likert scale was used to capture the degree of engagement with society.

- The final set of questions related to the degree of openness from the leadership and at the level of departments and faculties to change and innovation. Here too a Likert scale was applied ranking from 'not open at all' to 'very open'.

4. Annex Table 25 uses two sets of icons to display the responses of the institutions, one scale and one binary set:

Annex Figure 15: Table Legend

		🟢	To a large extent/very important/often
		🟡	To a moderate extent/important/ most of the time
✔	Yes	🔴	To a small extent/somewhat important/sometimes
✖	No	🔴	Not at all/not important/never

The self-assessments were carried out the following partnerships, namely PfP, PEBL, TESCEA, PADILEIA and PedaL and AQ-HESL.

Annex Table 25: Institutional Self-Assessment Overview

Legend: ✔ = yes ✘ = no ● colored circle (🟢 green, 🟡 amber, 🟠 pink/salmon, 🔴 red)

Category	Institution	Amoud University	Edna adan University	University of Hargeisa	Al Al-Bayt University	American University of Beirut	Keynatta University	Open University Tanzania	Egerton University	University of Ibadan	Eastern Polytechnic College	Milton Margai College Of Education and Technology	University of Sierra Leone	University of Dodoma	Gulu University
Policies, which are monitored and evaluated present on the following topics	Staff training	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔	✔	✘
	ICT related to teaching and learning	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔	✘	✘	✘	✘	✔	✘
	Widening participation	✘	✘	✔	✔	✔	✘	✘	✔	✔	✘	✘	✘	✘	✔
	Gender equality	✔	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Monitoring quality of curriculum	✔	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔	✘
	Monitoring effects of digital learning	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘
	Monitoring effects of new teaching and learning techniques	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✘	✘	✘	✔	✘
Support	Support with bursaries or scholarships	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✘	✔	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✔
	Support disadvantaged backgrounds	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✘	✘	✘	✔
New opportunities/developments	Access to staff training opportunities	🟠	🟡	🟠	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟢	🟠	🟠	🟢	🟢
	University encourages new approaches	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢
	Student access to digital learning resources	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟠	🟠	🟠	🟠	🟠	🟡	🟡
	Distance learning opportunities	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🔴	🟠	🟠	🟠	🟠	🟠	🟢
Covid-19	Did COVID accelerate opportunities on digital learning	✔	✔	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Did COVID accelerate transitioning to DE	✔	✔	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Employability and link to industry/world of work	Importance of student employability	🟢	🟢	🟠	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
	Industry cooperation curriculum development	🟠	🔴	🟠	🔴	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟡	🟠	🟠	🔴	🟡	🟡	🟠
	Industry cooperation in curriculum delivery	🟢	🔴	🔴	🟠	🟢	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟠	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟢	🟠
	Lifelong learning opportunities for industry	🟠	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟢	🟠	🔴	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟠	🟠	🟡	🟡
	Student placements	🟢	🔴	🟡	🟠	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟠	🟠	🟠	🟡	🟡
	Collaboration in R&D	🔴	🔴	🟠	🟠	🟢	🟠	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟠	🟠	🟢	🟡	🟡
	Consulting	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟠	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟠
	Staff mobility	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟠	🟢	🟡	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟠	🟠	🔴	🟠	🟠
	Joint PhDs	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟠	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟠	🔴
Engagement	Community engagement	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟠	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟠	🟢	🟢
	Sector engagements	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟢
	Local schools and communities	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🔴	🟠	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟠	🟢	🟢
Leadership	Leadership open to change and innovation	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢
	Departments + faculties open to change and innovation	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟠	🟢	🟢	🟠	🟡	🟠	🟢	🟢

A9.3   Analysis

5. The analysis of the self-assessments is based on two data sources, the self-assessments from the baseline, and the self-assessment submitted as part of this mid-term. Where we can, we draw comparisons between the baseline findings and those of the mid-term. However, because the set of institutions who responded to the baseline request are different (only two overlap, University of Dodoma – Sierra Leone, and Al al-Bayt University – PADILEIA) we cannot attribute the observed differences to the programme or other external factors as the starting points of most of the universities were different in terms of their institutional policies and attitudes at the time of the baseline measurement.

A9.3.1   Policies and Strategies

6. There is some variation in the degree to which policies are in place and monitored by the different universities. None of the policies are implemented and evaluated by all universities who reported their self-assessment for the mid-term evaluation. Only Egerton University and the American University of Beirut report that they have in place all policies and/or strategies on topics like staff training, ICT, curriculum quality, effects of digital learning and new teaching/learning techniques. Most of the institutions does not have any policies or strategies in place on widening participation of students whereas most do have policies on gender equality.

7. Compared to the baseline, there were two policies that were in place in all of the institutions who then reported their self-assessment, namely staff training and ICT related to teaching and learning. At the time of the baseline the discrepancy between universities was also smaller. In the mid-term cohort we can see that five out of fourteen universities have less than 50% of the policies or strategies in place, compared to three out of thirteen for the baseline cohort.

A9.3.2   Support

8. Most universities offer some support to students with financial difficulties or who have a disadvantaged background. Only three universities do not offer any support, namely the University of Dodoma (TESCEA), the University of Sierra Leone and Milton Margai College, both in Sierra Leone. Out of the fourteen universities, eleven offer support for students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, whereas eight indicate that they provide scholarships or bursaries to students who need this. Only three universities indicate that offering either or both forms of support had become more difficult compared to last year. The majority indicates that they are in a better position than last year to support students in different ways.

A9.3.3   New Opportunities / Developments

9. The degree to which the institutions offer opportunities for staff training and encourage new approaches is rather mixed. Interestingly, for all institutions these two indicators have either remained the same or improved, with about a 50/50 division on that progress status. Th extent to which staff has access to training opportunities is rated slightly lower than the extent to which the university encourages new approaches. A possible explanation could be that training staff follows when a university becomes more encouraging of new approaches and therefore lags behind on this indicator.

10. With regards to the extent to which students have access to digital learning resources and can make use of distance learning opportunities there are clear differences between partnerships. Institutions part of PADILEIA and PEBL indicate that both digital resources and distance education are available to students 'to a great extent'. On the other hand, the universities in Sierra Leone report that these are only available to a small extent. PfP, PedaL and TESCEA provide a bit more of a mixed picture with the University of Ibadan in Nigeria (PedaL) indicating that both distance education and digital resources are hardly facilitated and the University of Gulu (TESCEA) reporting quite a strong position for both digital learning and distance education.

11. Compared to the baseline there are a few points that are notably different. Firstly, in the baseline there was much more variety on these indicators within each partnership. Whereas in the mid-term the status these practices and policies are more uniform within each of the partnerships. Secondly, in the baseline the degree to which universities encouraged new approaches to learning and teaching was similarly slightly bigger than the extent to which staff has access to training opportunities. Finally, opportunities for distance learning have slightly improved since the baseline, which is in line with the self-reported improvement by the mid-term institutions. However, as indicated in the introduction we are comparing an almost entirely different set of institutions, hence we cannot draw a causal effect on the basis of this yet.

12. Apart from the American University of Beirut (PADILEIA) all universities report that COVID-19 accelerated student's access to both opportunities on digital learning as well as the transition to distance education. Whilst there is some variation as to whether COVID-19 accelerated both processes moderately or greatly, the effect of the virus has impacted the policies of these institutions with regards to transitioning to different ways of teaching and learning.

A9.3.4 Employability and Link to the Private Sector

13. Twelve out of the fourteen universities indicate that the employability of their students is important to very important to them. Only the University of Hargeisa (PfP) and Al al-Bayt University (PADILEIA) indicate that this is somewhat important to them. The self-reported policies and practices concerning collaboration with the private sector are interesting because they show more advancement for universities who reported less strong on most of the previous indicators and vice versa. This is especially the case for some PEBL, PedaL and AQ-HESL universities who indicate that they collaborate on a regular basis with industry for curriculum development and/or implementation, student placement and consulting. On the other hand, for the PfP universities, cooperation with industry rarely occurs. Exceptions to this are student placements and curriculum development which regularly take place at Amoud University and sometimes at the University of Hargeisa. The American University of Beirut (PADILEIA) and Egerton University (PedaL) indicate that they have strong collaboration across the entire board of activities and practices.

14. Looking at the baseline, the picture for industry collaboration across SPHEIR has not yet shifted significantly. At the same time, in some of the partnerships it appears as though once collaboration takes place regularly via for instance student placements, other forms of collaboration like R&D and curriculum development take place more frequently as well, indicating that some forms of collaboration can act as a catalyst for other modes of working together.

A9.3.5 Engagement

15. Engagement with local communities is slightly higher than engagement with sectoral organisations and local schools and communities. TESCEA and PADILEIA have the strongest ties to their vicinity looking at how frequent they indicate they engage with their communities, sectoral organisations, and other schools. For AQ-HESL and PEBL universities this engagement is much lower, the self-assessments indicating that it rarely takes place.

A9.3.6 Leadership

16. Finally, most of the universities (eleven out of fourteen) report that the degree to which their leadership, both at university level and departmental/faculty level, is more open to change and innovation compared to a year ago. For the other three universities the degree of openness to change and innovation has remained the same. Both TESCEA universities and one university from PedaL and one from PADILEIA report that both levels of leadership are open to change and innovation to a large extent. Conversely, the University of Sierra Leone and Eastern Polytechnic College, both AQ-HESL, indicate that their leadership is only to a small or moderate extent open to change and innovation.

17. Although, compared to the baseline the overall degree of openness of leadership has not changed, zooming in more closely does reveal that there is a difference. At the time of the baseline, there was a wider discrepancy in the attitude of the leadership to change and innovation across the universities. This means that there were more universities who indicated that their leadership was very open and more universities who indicated that their leadership was only to small extent open to change and innovation. At the time of the mid-term we see that universities report slightly fewer instances of leadership being very open to change and innovation, but at the same time more universities state that their leadership is open to a moderate extent. Hence, there is a convergence towards more a more open attitude towards change and innovation among leadership across the SPHEIR partnerships.

Annex 10 Evaluation Questions Supporting Information

1. The top half of Annex Table 26 shows which outputs on the ToC each partnership is mapped against. In the lower half, each SPHEIR logframe output and its indicators is mapped against corresponding ToC outputs. Each partnership is also mapped, to show how each one contributes to achievement of outputs at the programme level.

Annex Table 26: SPHEIR ToC and Programme Logframe: Analysis of Outputs

Partnerships	1. Equitable access and diversity initiatives	2. New of transformed complementary, non-curricula based student services	3. More effective pedagogial models, practices and models of delivery, including assessments	4. Curricula which is more relevant to the desired graduate outcomes.	5. Cross-institution and cross-partnership collaboration and/or resource sharing	6. Increase in capacity of a diverse staff cohort	7. Improvements to partner HEI manage-ment and contributions to wider reform processes including QA
AQHESL			x	x	x	x	x
LEAP	x	x					
PADILEIA	x	x	x	x			
PEBL			x		x	x	x
PEDAL			x	x	x	x	
PfP			x	x	x	x	x
TESCEA			x	x	x	x	x
TIDE		x	x	x	x	x	x

SPHEIR Logframe outputs — Logframe output indicators plotted against ToC outputs (n) = number of partnerships

Statement	# indicators	# contributing projects	AQHESL	LEAP	PADILEIA	PEBL	PEDAL	PfP	TESCEA	TIDE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Improvement to partner HEI management	2	5-6	x			x	x		x	x					Ind 1.2 collaboration (6)		Ind 1.1 HEI mgt (5)
2. Improved and more relevant curricula, assessment mechanisms, teaching and learning models and related student support, including more diverse delivery channels	6	3-7	x		x		x	x	x			Indicator 2.4 (3)	Ind 2.3 assessment (4); Ind 2.6 T&L models (7 mostly PEDAL)	Ind 2.1 employer engagement (4); Ind 2.2 courses (7)	Ind 2.5 replication of innovation (7 - mostly PEDAL)		
3. Staff of targeted HEIs more competent to contribute to relevant, good quality learning	1	7	x		x	x	x	x	x	x						Ind 3.1 staff cap building (7 esp TIDE, PEDAL, AQHESL)	
4. Equitable access and other diversity initiatives	2	2		x	x						Ind 4.1 finance (LEAP); Ind 4.2 refugees (PADILEIA)						
5. Significant progress in reform processes at national or regional level supported by SPHEIR	1	4	x			x	x	x		x							Ind 5.1 nat/reg reform (4)

2. In Annex Table 27, the top half shows which partnerships are marked on the ToC as contributing to achievement of intermediate and longer-term outcomes. The bottom half shows how each partnership contributes to the outcome in the logframe. There are 9 outcome indicators which map onto the three ToC intermediate outcomes as shown. The lighter blue denotes those partnerships identified on the ToC as contributing towards intermediate outcomes, but which do not contribute to corresponding indicators on the programme logframe: this is the inconsistency identified in the EQ findings.

Annex Table 27: SPHEIR ToC and Programme Logframe: Analysis of Outcomes

Partnerships	SPHEIR ToC intermediate outcomes			SPHEIR ToC longer-term outcomes		
	1. Increased and more equitable access and retention	2. Increased quality and relevance in delivery of teaching and learning and student experiences in HE	3. Strengthened governance, leadership and institutional management in partner HEIs and beyond, respecting diversity principles	1. Number, quality and diversity of graduates better meets needs and shortages in the labour market (public and private sectors and enterprise devt)	2. Improved graduate outcomes including graduate employability	3. Improved quality and efficiency of HE sector including through strengthened regulatory framework
AQHESL		x	x	x	x	x
LEAP	x	x	x	x	x	
PADILEIA	x	x	x	x	x	
PEBL	x	x	x		x	x
PEDAL		x	x	x	x	x
PfP		x	x	x	x	x
TESCEA		x	x	x	x	
TIDE		x	x	x	x	x

SPHEIR logframe: outcomes

Statement	# indi-cators	# contri-buting projects	AQHESL	LEAP	PADILEIA	PEBL	PEDAL	PfP	TESCEA	TIDE	Logframe outcome indicators plotted against ToC outcomes. n = number of indicators.					
Sustained improvement in HE teaching, learner experience and outcomes, HE governance and management, and equitable access	9	8	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	2 (LEAP & PADILEIA)	5 (PEBL, PEDAL, PfP, TESCEA, TIDE)	2 (AQHESL, PfP)			

Annex 11 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in SPHEIR: Further Evidence

A11.1 Stated Intentions to Address GESI in the SPHEIR Business Case

1. The BC expects every HE partnership to demonstrate results for 'gender and equity issues' with suggested areas of focus being:

- The enabling environment for female students and underrepresented groups,
- Encouraging study choices in non-traditional subjects; and
- Innovative ways to increase the quality, scale and affordability of HE provision to reach these groups.

2. The BC envisages some partnerships focusing on 'gender equity'[157] within an HE institution or identified part of the system; and the integration of gender into programme management processes and evaluation.

3. The BC encourages 'transparency around reporting barriers in HE institutions for girls, women and other underrepresented groups'.

Annex Table 28: Integrating GESI into SPHEIR Partnerships: Assessment of Documented Problem Analysis and KII Evidence

Partner-ship	Documented GESI Problem Analysis that Informs Strategy and Action?	Taking into Account GESI: KII Evidence
AQ-HESL	No documented GESI problem analysis. But respondents indicate problematic issues: 'most lecturers involved are older men'; 'accessibility of facilities for the disabled, and affordability.'	GESI is 'integral to partnership activities'. 'You cannot address quality without (GESI).' One partner (50:50 Group) focus on this issue.
TESCEA	Good problem analysis drawing on the Global Gender Gap. http://blog.inasp.info/gender-gaps-tescea/ Future plans to assess University policies and their impact on gender Gender barriers to employment. FURTHER OPPORTUNIES: Potential to shed light on the gendered labour market. What barriers will m/f face and what are the differences between them? Status of equal opportunity polices/practices in businesses. Can universities leverage action on the part of employers?	'It's been an ambition in TESCEA'. Strong visibility of GESI in programme documentation.
PedaL	Problem analysis is not visible in SPHIER reporting but partners have documented problems associated with pedagogy and gender elsewhere. See for example, GenderInsight report. Walman L. Pathways to success: Bringing a Gender Lens to the Scientific Leadership of	'(GESI is) 'a strong focus, so that women and men benefit equally from the

---

[157] The BC uses the term 'equity' but the term used by DFID/FCDO and the SDGs is usually equality. Equality refers to the state of being equal, especially in status, rights or opportunities. Equity on the other hand is about by treating people differently depending on need, which is important for women's empowerment and achieving equality. (see https://social-change.co.uk/blog/2019-03-29-equality-and-equity) Language is important. Key terms need to be explained in programme documentation.

Partner-ship	Documented GESI Problem Analysis that Informs Strategy and Action?	Taking into Account GESI: KII Evidence
	Global Challenges. This report on women's leadership in science includes a robust literature review of gender imbalance and inequality in HEI globally in social science, natural science, technology and innovation in higher education. OPPORTUNITIES: Provide a summary of why pedagogy matters for GESI: what is the problem being addressed?	programme, although we recognise our limitations' PedaL is integrating gender and other associated issues into course content, including on pedagogy.
PADILEIA	No documented problem analysis for GESI. However, Fund Manager reports that the project has held focus groups with students to explore ways in which their digital platform could address gender inequality in course access. OPPORTUNITY: Analysis/understanding of the gendered labour market in Syria and Jordan and the problems young women in particular face in getting jobs. Countries in the MENA region are unique in that they have high levels of female student participation in HE but some of the lowest rates of female participation in the labour market.	Indication in interviews of fewer male students than female students.
PfP	No documented GESI problem analysis. Somalia ranks low on the Gender Inequality Index and there are likely to be a host of issues that need to be understood and addressed. OPPORTUNITY: Does the curricula include modules for medical staff on GBV/VAWG, e.g., a medical response to violence, including female genital mutilation?	MTR respondent noted ''equality of opportunity is very important…GESI is not a big focus.'
LEAP	No documented GESI problem analysis. Access to finance remains a key source of gender inequality which is well documented by the World Bank and indeed FCDO. OPPORTUNITY: LEAP is now applying a gender analysis to LEAP's own data which demonstrates very low levels of female access.	Less clear intentions. An MTR respondent said: 'We work to ensure poor students can get support too…but they have to satisfy requirements'. The same for gender
PEBL	No documented problem analysis. OPPORTUNITY: analyse the particular problems faced by women and those with disabilities in accessing blended learning. Ensure blended learning curricula and teaching approaches take GESI into account.	Some intentions but less clear. 'Equity in STEM'. 'It's about using 'they' instead of 'he'. It's about what they say'. 'We have a policy developed a long time ago. But…very little done to link this to practice.' We are committed to SDG 4. 'One of the guidelines (modules development) is to take into account those with disabilities.

A11.2   GESI in Programme Design – Problem Analysis and Theory of Change

4. **At the fund level, the Business Case problem analysis was deepened during the evaluation inception period but on re-examination this could have gone further.** SPHEIR's Evaluation and Research Plan highlights inequality of access and provides a strong analysis of the contextual problems

but it doesn't always identify all HE issues from a GESI perspective or link them to consequences for those who are disadvantaged.[158] Examples are provided here:

- The **context** in which SPHEIR countries operate is gendered as indicated in Table 6.6
- **Teaching staff and graduates** are gendered (m/f) and there are imbalances and inequalities that need to be made visible, which vary according to context, and which need to be understood by applying gender analysis and addressed during programme implementation.
- The **labour market** is gendered: women, including graduates are systemically disadvantaged and segmented into low paying sectors.
- **Women entrepreneurs** lack access to finance and other resources compared to men. These two aspects are relevant for projects where employability and employment are linked to outcomes.
- **HEI governance and leadership** involves male power and gender imbalance. This aspect is important in SPHEIR decision-making processes (steering committees etc.,)
- **Teaching and learning** processes are areas where discrimination and bias exists.

A11.3 Strengthening Visibility of GESI in the SPHEIR ToC: Assessment and Proposals

Annex Box 7: ToC Results That Make GESI Issues Visible

> **Intermediate outcomes: increased and more equitable access; strengthened governance, leadership and institutional management in partner HEIs, respecting diversity principles.**
>
> **Outputs: Equitable access and diversity initiatives; Increase in capacity of a diverse staff**

5. Annex Box 8 provides suggestions for improvements:

---

[158] SPHEIR Evaluation and Research Plan (April 2018) Theory of Change pp38-44

Annex Box 8: Recommended Changes to the TOC (Key Additions Highlighted in Bold)

Impact: HEIs contribute more effectively to inclusive development and economic growth. *(The term environmentally sustainable economic growth is more in line with the FCDO's commitment to unlock the green economy and promote low carbon growth).*

Intermediate outcomes: Increased quality and relevance in delivering unbiased, GESI-sensitive teaching and learning; strengthened GESI-sensitive governance, gender-balanced leadership and institutional management in partner HEIs.

Outputs: New or transformed complementary, GESI sensitive, non-curricula based student services; More effective student (m/f)-centred pedagogical models ...; Curricula more relevant to desired graduate (m/f) outcomes (include a footnote on capitalising on opportunities to address issues that perpetuate gender and other inequalities); Increase in capacity of a diverse, gender-balanced staff cohort; Improvements to partner HEI management ...including quality assurance systems (non-biased).

Explanation of key terms:

- **Inclusive development implies equal opportunities for women, socio-economically disadvantaged groups and those living with disability.**
- **Environmentally sustainable economic growth is economic development that attempts to satisfy the needs of humans (m/f) but in a manner that sustains natural resources and the environment for future generations.**
- **A diverse, gender balanced staff cohort means women and other underrepresented groups get recruited because gender bias is addressed and attitudes and behaviours change.**
- **Unbiased GESI sensitive teaching and learning means removing unconscious bias or deliberate bias. It means action to help people (m/f) change their attitudes and behaviours so that they are inclusive and fair.**
- **GESI-sensitive governance etc., means processes that promote these issues.**

Annex Table 29: Examples of Best Practice to Integrate GESI into SPHEIR Implementation[159]

Best Practice Strategies and Tactics That Support GESI in HEI	Partnership
GESI Problem Analysis (Formative and Operational Research to Inform Strategy Development and Tactics)	
Formative: Analysis of gender inequality in African HEI	TESCEA
Operational: Integration of GESI analysis and critical thinking in pedagogical course development processes and in course subject content.	PedaL
Operational: Analysis of university GESI policies in 4 universities	TESCEA
Operational: Assessment of gender and employability.	TESCEA
Operational: Gender gap analysis in loan uptake (LEAP). (To understand why those benefiting from loans have been overwhelmingly male (84%)).	LEAP
Operational: Focus group discussions with students using the Kiron platform to identify action to improve gender balance in student access.	PADILEIA
Capacity Strengthening for Integrating GESI	
Gender training for experts before assessing entry points for curricula design	TESCEA

---

[159] Note: evidence is from MEL documents or highlighted in interviews and is therefore not exhaustive.

Best Practice Strategies and Tactics That Support GESI in HEI	Partnership
Including outside gender experts in dialogue with employers	TESCEA
Working Processes That are Gender Sensitive and Make All Voices Count	
Enabling participants in curriculum redesign processes to bring young children and carers to decision-making sessions	TESCEA
Gender sensitive pedagogy development processes: where all voices are heard and valued; where workshops apply a gender lens to assess subject matter; where faculty members are taught to assess unconscious bias in teaching and learning activities; and classroom interactions; where issues relating to language, gender, power, campus life and space are deconstructed to examine inequality.	PedaL, TESCEA
GESI Sensitive Pedagogy Training That Embeds Analytical and Critical Thinking Approaches Is Interlinked and Mutually Reinforcing	
Gender-sensitive and inequality-aware pedagogical teacher training practice. Includes: Embedding contextual analysis of gender, inequality and marginalisation where teaching takes place.	TESCEA, PedaL, AQ-HESL
Gender sensitive subject curricula (social sciences, STEM); critical thinking, gender analysis, power and gender.	PedaL
The use of case studies for teachers and students to illustrate systemic inequality and gender-based violence in learning; reflection, discussion and debate. E-Cases that address gender issues and inclusivity.	PedaL
Developing student abilities in becoming gender responsive professionals.	TESCEA
In the digital platform Kiron: confidence building role models, word of mouth recruitment, gender sensitive classroom management, and support for female students.	PADILEIA
HEI Policies and Practices	
Advocacy for equity in HEIs: Development of equity and inclusion guidelines for HEIs.	AQ-HESL
Training for gender champions at all of the Sierra Leon higher education institutions.	AQ-HESL
Formalising recruitment and safeguarding for volunteer online tutors (DBS checks, completion of online safeguarding training and employee references for all new volunteers).[160]	PfP

Annex Table 30: Visibility of GESI in the SPHEIR Results Framework

Outcome and Outputs Statements	Indicators	Opportunity
Outcome 1: GESI is visible in terms of access **but not for** HE teaching, learner experience etc & HE governance & management.	Gender disaggregated data (GDD) required for 5 out of 9 indicators. Potential to increase to 7 out of 9 indicators.	Adjust the outcome statement so it reads: Sustained improvement in **inclusive** HE teaching etc., Indicators 4 and 7 could require GDD.
Output 1: Improvements to partner HE management	Two quantitative indicators. Gender equality can be promoted	Reword statement: Improvements to **inclusive** partner HE management.

---

[160] Further insights required to understand how 'safeguarding' is defined.

Outcome and Outputs Statements	Indicators	Opportunity
	and reinforced in HE management processes	Discuss how to capture inclusive management practices as an indicator.
Output 2: Improved and more relevant curricula etc.,	6 indicators. GESI is invisible.	Add an output definition statement that highlights GESI as part of relevance. Add an additional indicator to capture curricula that is gender sensitive or addresses issues relevant to gender.
Output 3:	GESI visible but not in satisfaction surveys	**Add GDD for satisfaction surveys**
Output 4	GESI is visible.	
Output 5	N/A	**N/A**