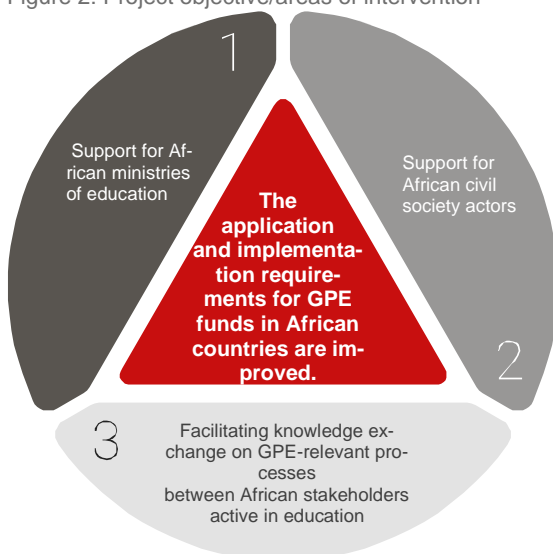


Brief description of the project

The project built on two predecessor projects:¹ the German BACKUP Initiative – Education in Africa I (PN 2010.2258.1) and the German BACKUP Initiative – Education in Africa II (PN 2013.2260.1). The first project ran from January 2011 to March 2015 and the second project ran from October 2014 to March 2018.²

The **objective** in this commissioning period was to improve application and implementation requirements for international funding (namely GPE) to achieve international education goals in African countries. BACKUP Education worked with a three-fold approach: financial support (funding), financial and technical advice, and support for networking. Operationally, the project's activities were divided into three outputs: **Output A** focused on the project's support for African ministries of education (MoE) to improve the context in which MoE applies for and implements GPE funds. **Output B** utilised the same activities as Output A but focused on supporting civil society actors to increase their participation in the application and implementation of GPE funds. **Output C** entailed the same activities as Outputs A and B but further included activities to facilitate knowledge exchange on GPE-relevant processes between African stakeholders active in education, particularly those in countries affected by crisis and conflict.

Figure 2: Project objective/areas of intervention



¹ Although the project title suggests that the project constitutes a first follow-on project (Phase II), it should be considered as a second follow-on (Phase III).

² First project term with a total commissioning value of EUR 6,647,181.13. Second project term with a total value of EUR 7,838,000.00, including

Assessment according to Development Assistance Committee criteria

Relevance

The relevance of the project is rated as **highly successful** with 93 out of 100 points.

The project is relevant and contributes to **several national and international policies and priorities**. At global level, the project aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 – Quality education of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Additionally, the project aligns with global strategic objectives for achieving quality education, formulated by stakeholders such as GPE and the Global Campaign for Education (GCE). BACKUP Education aligns with African continental strategies such as the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016–2025). Together, these international agendas outline a vision for basic education in Africa, to which BACKUP Education is committed.

The project is relevant to **German policies and priorities** for education on the African continent, such as the BMZ Education Strategy and the 2015 Marshall Plan with Africa. As a bilateral pledge to the multilateral processes of GPE, BACKUP Education and its activities are part of BMZ's efforts to strengthen quality education.

The **project addresses the overall needs and capacities of its direct target group and final beneficiaries**. It addresses the direct target group's challenge that preconditions for applying for and using GPE funding are often lacking. BACKUP Education meets African partners' needs through its flexible approach, strong demand orientation and dual approach to support both state institutions and civil society organisations. To ensure relevance for **the indirect target group's needs** in the given context, the project developed various safeguards so that applications addressed specific challenges in the educational sector for the country's population.

EUR 1,838,000.00 cofinancing from the Swiss *Direktion für Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit der schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft (DEZA)*.

The project's design is appropriate and relevant. It successfully combined fund management with advisory services and knowledge sharing. One weakness is that BACKUP Education's contributions to Output C are not fully reflected in the output indicators.

Finally, BACKUP Education could adapt and respond to changing contextual factors that required a reaction. These include the Covid-19 pandemic, changing BMZ priorities and political factors in the partner countries.

Coherence

The coherence of the project is rated as **highly successful** with 95 out of 100 points.

Overall, the evaluation results show that **internal coherence has been achieved** as the project is designed and implemented complementarily within the German development sphere. At global scale, the project complemented the sector project Education as it informed and advised the BMZ on GPE processes and partner needs. This enabled the sector project to consult the BMZ in a more 'holistic manner' on GPE developments. At national scale, BACKUP Education ensured internal coherence and complemented bilateral projects on basic education, for example in Malawi and Niger. It achieved synergies up to outcome level. Consultation of bilateral projects in the country whenever an application for BACKUP funding was in the pipeline was an important safeguard to ensure the complementarity of activities in the national education sector and avoid possible negative interactions between GIZ activities. Coherence with the portfolio was further safeguarded by having each mode individually approved by the BMZ country/regional unit.

BACKUP Education's concept is based on **achieving external coherence**. By 'filling the gaps' between GPE funding requirements and African partner countries' needs, BACKUP Education contributes to successful application for and implementation of GPE funds (the most important vehicle for multilateral DC efforts in basic education). Assessing external coherence with other donors' interventions in partner countries was complex due to the regional character of the project. BACKUP Education did not systematically review other

development agencies' activities in each of the partner countries, apart from consulting the local education groups (LEG) that have been set up to coordinate the GPE process. There are limitations to consider regarding LEGs' functionality and their coordinating and informative capacity, depending on the national context. LEGs cannot always serve as an effective platform for donor coordination. In sum, the evaluation could not identify any indication of conflicts or duplications with international donors' efforts.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the project is rated as **highly successful**, with 95 out of 100 points.

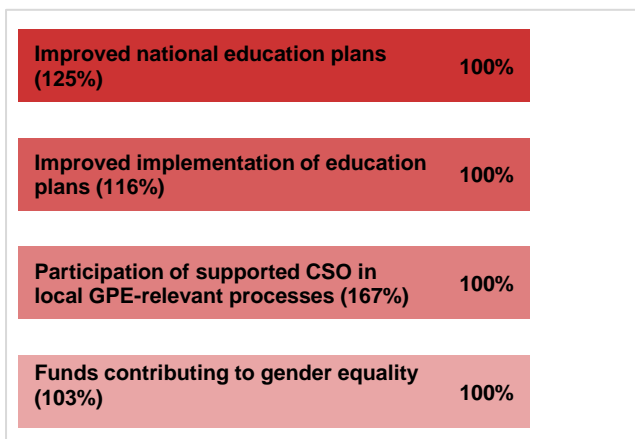
The project achieved its intended outcome. All four outcome indicators and all output indicators were fulfilled or overfulfilled. Therefore, the project implementation can be considered effective. The project's contribution to the achievement of its objectives **seems overall plausible**. The hypotheses linking the project's outputs and activities to its module objective were largely realistic and reasonable.

The evaluation deems it plausible that Output A and its corresponding activities contribute to the module objective. African partners confirmed the effective support of BACKUP Education. The project's financial and technical assistance provided MoEs with support and improved capacities for education planning and management, mostly referring to the implementation of ESPs. Output B and its corresponding activities are connected with the outcome. By applying the same project activities, civil society organisations (CSOs) were supported by BACKUP Education in their organisational capacity building and in enabling them to fulfil their checks and balances. Better cooperation between national stakeholders active in education was confirmed. However, there were limitations in the effectiveness of LEGs. LEGs are not the most effective vehicle for CSOs to fulfil their advocacy role in every country context. Activities in Output C on the promotion of regional exchange between African educationalists contributed to some extent to the module objective. There was evidence of the exchange of good practices and the plausible contribution by BACKUP Education as a precondition for

the hypothesis. However, interviewees were vague about whether the exchanged good practices were implemented or institutionalised in other countries. As the evaluation team could not identify evidence for this uptake, hypothesis 3 is only partly confirmed.

BACKUP Education was aided by the interplay of communication and long-standing close relationships between the project and its partners, and its effective, target-oriented steering. This helped it to achieve the above contributions to the hypotheses. The project's communication was adequate in terms of frequency, timeliness, accuracy and its problem-solving orientation. The project was effective and responsive to challenges in an open, flexible manner, given its formal and informal 'consultation modality'. BACKUP Education's effective monitoring and evaluation tool and steering enabled the project to implement its activities in a target-oriented manner. Consequently, the project could conduct its activities with partners and stakeholders based on a foundation of trust and mutual appreciation and it showed high-quality implementation.

Figure 3: Achievement of the project's objective indicators



The project achieved positive but no negative unintended results during implementation. The combination of perspectives between the sector project Education and BACKUP Education was an unintended opportunity for its commissioning party BMZ beyond the intended effects. For example, it provided complementary advisory services on GPE. This enabled BMZ to better understand the linkages between global GPE processes and national/regional level, so that well-informed, holistic

decisions could be made on GPE and GPE partner countries.

Impact

The impact of the project is rated as **highly successful**, with 94 out of 100 points.

It is plausible that the project contributes to a set of overarching impacts. The causal chain between the project, consisting of small-scale funds and overarching development results, is very long. However, the project contributed to a set of overarching impacts, such as high-quality basic education in line with SDG 4 Quality education of the 2030 Agenda.

The evaluation results confirmed a clear link between improved individual, organisational and national capacities and GPE requirements. This resulted in better-quality applications and implementation of GPE funds, which helped African countries to reach their national education goals. Thus, the first impact hypothesis was confirmed. The second impact hypothesis was partly confirmed. BACKUP Education's outcomes gave the African partners' voices more weight in the GPE constituencies. However, the evaluation could not find evidence of structural change on the side of GPE beyond a growing recognition of African partners' needs. After GPE integrated preparatory constituency meetings introduced by BACKUP Education into its own structures, partners observed some setbacks in the sense that there has been less scope for discussion and influence in recent years.

Given the large volume of multilateral GPE funds and their likely impact on the national education sector, it is very plausible that African partner countries are enabled to come closer to achieving their national education goals, thereby contributing to SDG 4. Higher-level unintended development results were not identified.

Efficiency

The efficiency of the project is rated as **highly successful**, with 92 out of 100 points.

The project is assessed to be **highly successful** in its production and allocation efficiency. No major shortcomings could be identified regarding production efficiency. All the outcome and output indicators were at least fully met, if not exceeded, with the available project resources. The overarching costs seem low. However, they can be explained by the allocation in line with the new guidelines on GIZ cost-output monitoring and prognosis (KOMP), which prevented effective interpretation of the data.

Overall, it can be concluded that the distribution of costs between the outputs was in line with the project's foci. This means that fund dispersion and management constituted the core of BACKUP Education's approach (represented in Outputs A and B). The dual approach is reflected in a similar allocation of personnel resources towards supporting MoEs (Output A) and CSOs (Output B).

The project effectively adhered to the principle of yield minimisation by a clear division of tasks, efficient collaboration within the project team, and utilising the project's Wiki for fund management and steering. The efficiency of the project and its methods was also evident during the Covid-19 pandemic, as the team managed to successfully adapt to changing conditions in a short time and to reallocate funds in an appropriate, needs-based manner.

The project effectively steered its activities and resource allocation into its targeted outcomes and achieved all objectives at outcome level. It explicitly encouraged and, in some cases, required co-funding, thereby leveraging further funding. However, there was no systematic approach to seek out outcome synergies with other international partners. Accordingly, only minor shortcomings were identified in terms of the project's allocation efficiency.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the project is rated as **successful**, with 86 out of 100 points.

The direct target group developed capacities in line with BACKUP Education's objectives. As such, several African project partners and training recipients indicated increased capacities at individual, organisational and national level, regarding more

effective educational sector planning, advocacy work and professionalisation.

BACKUP Education's activities aimed to encourage sustainability at various levels and therefore provided several safeguards. Moreover, the sustainability of the measures was enhanced by the project's demand-orientation and the participatory, multi-stakeholder approach, the technical advice, and by encouraging exchange common to the measures. The evaluation team found examples of sustainable anchoring of project results and training outcomes. It also identified hurdles to the sustainability of results. Although the project contributed to increased capacity among its direct target group, their anchorage in partner structures remains dependent on the context, given the insufficient (financial) capacities of national structures and systematic knowledge management.

In interpreting the results, it is important to consider that the sustainability of BACKUP Education's activities and small-scale funds is connected with the GPE funds they aim to unlock. The sustainability of the predecessor projects' modes has become evident. Consequently, it is plausible that similar sustainable effects can be expected for this current project term that have not yet materialised.

Overall rating

Overall, the project is rated as **highly successful** (93 out of 100 points).

The evaluation deemed the project and its activities highly successful. The project was well aligned and coherent with the policies, priorities, needs and capacities of beneficiaries and stakeholders. The African partners confirmed the success of BACKUP Education's approach, which builds on the innovative set-up and positioning of the fund and effective tools that have been put in place to steer and implement the project. Moreover, the alignment and coherence of the project and its activities led to positive outcome-level results and plausible impact-level hypotheses. Except for inherent systemic issues in partner organisations concerning sustainable institutionalisation of acquired capacities, the project's results are mostly estimated to be sustainable – also considering the sustainability of the predecessor projects' results.

Table 1: Rating of OECD DAC evaluation criteria

Criteria	Score (Max. 100)	Rating 1 (highly successful) to 6 (highly unsuccessful)
Relevance	93	Level 1: highly successful
Coherence	95	Level 1: highly successful
Effectiveness	95	Level 1: highly successful
Impact	94	Level 1: highly successful
Efficiency	92	Level 1: highly successful
Sustainability	86	Level 2: successful
Overall	93	Level 1: highly successful

Conclusions and factors of success and failure

A key **success factor** for the project is its unique position as an interface between bilateral and multilateral DC. Through bilaterally leveraging multilateral funds, it proved to be and remains highly relevant, particularly given the paradigm shift of German DC towards multilateral aid. BACKUP Education's close partner dialogue and its resulting position close to the African partners' needs and capacities is a further key success factor. This radical demand orientation is the project's key success factor when it comes to implementation. BACKUP Education's consistent efforts throughout the project terms allowed for long-term cooperation instead of one-off funding. BACKUP Education was able to support multidimensional, targeted capacity building due to its multi-level, systemic and holistic approach and its clear, strategic reference framework (namely GPE). The combination of high-quality financial and technical advice and the funding mechanism resulted in good applications to BACKUP Education. Through the project's flexibility, best practice monitoring and evaluation and steering tool, responsiveness to change, and established personal networks, the project responded in a timely and appropriate way to challenges such as changing political and security situations and the Covid-19 pandemic.

In terms of uptake, there is **missed potential** for German DC and regional learning and exchange to

further use the insights collected by BACKUP Education and to potentially build on the results of the measures in partner countries. One conceptual limitation is the project's reliance on LEGs as an efficient means for coordinating GPE processes among donors, state institutions and CSOs in the respective countries. As LEGs vary greatly between partner countries, BACKUP Education's reliance on this mechanism can impact safeguards for relevance, coherence and effectiveness.

Recommendations

For the current project term

- Given the long-standing and trusted relationship with its partners, the project team should communicate the end of BACKUP Education's funding in its current form in a timely, transparent, appreciative manner.

To conceptualise the 'follow-on' project

- The project team should continue to fund state institutions and CSOs to achieve broad, systemic impacts and maintain its different grant modalities accounting for a variety of the partners' needs.
- The project team should continue to use a tool that is similar to the existing Wiki as an effective instrument to steer a complex fund in a results-oriented manner.

To conceptualise DC funds in general

- The GIZ sectoral division and the officers responsible for the commission should allow for appropriate project term(s) and follow-on funding. To maximise its impact and sustainability, funding should not be limited to one-off grants, but should allow for multiple funding on the partners' timeline.
- The GIZ sectoral division and the officers responsible for the commission need to strike an appropriate balance between a suitable strategic framework for selecting projects with a high potential of generating tangible impact in an impact-oriented manner, while allowing partners to apply with their most relevant needs (strong demand orientation).
- The GIZ sectoral division and the officers responsible for the commission need to allow for an appropriate amount of financial and technical advice to complement fund management.

Additional points

- GIZ sectoral projects and divisions should better harness the multitude of experiences from piloting innovative approaches. GIZ sectoral entities should approach projects such as BACKUP Education more actively for further uptake.

Approach and methods of the evaluation

The project was evaluated using a **theory-based evaluation** design that relied on the theory of change as a basis for analysis. The evaluation team, among others, implemented a contribution analysis in which the extent of observed (positive or negative) results can be related to a given intervention (in this case a project). Data were collected in a **primarily qualitative way** through a strategic analysis of the project's documents and qualitative interviews. The collected data were documented using the evaluation questions in the evaluation matrix. Researcher, data and method triangulation took place during data collection and analysis.

The evaluation team consisted of **three international evaluators**. Their profiles complemented each other, providing methodological evaluation expertise and background knowledge on the specific requirements of German development cooperation. They have sectoral expertise in the field of basic education DC. The evaluators interviewed 50 interview partners and interacted regularly with the project team. Interviews were conducted in September/October 2021 (inception mission) and March/April 2021 (evaluation mission). Owing to Covid-19 regulations, the evaluation took place remotely.

It followed a participatory approach that included sharing the purpose of the evaluation with the interviewees and considering the questions that key project stakeholders wanted to see addressed. The evaluators were transparent on how the evaluation results were derived from the data. The preliminary findings of the evaluation were shared and discussed with GIZ project staff.

Rating system

Projects are rated based on the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and efficiency. Each of the six criteria is rated on a scale of 1 to 100 (percentage system).

The project's overall score is derived from the average points awarded for the individual DAC criteria. The average value for the overall score is rounded according to mathematical convention. All DAC criteria are equally weighted for the overall score. Compared with the predecessor systems (6-point scale, 16-point scale), a 100-point scale has a number of advantages in that it allows differentiation, is commonly used internationally, is easy to understand and can readily be converted into other assessment systems. Both the assessment dimensions within the OECD DAC criteria and the determination of the overall score using a points system serve to increase the transparency of ratings while enabling better comparability between individual projects.

Table 2: Rating and score scales

100-point scale (score)	6-level scale (rating)
92–100	Level 1: highly successful
81–91	Level 2: successful
67–80	Level 3: moderately successful
50–66	Level 4: moderately unsuccessful
30–49	Level 5: unsuccessful
0–29	Level 6: highly unsuccessful

Overall rating: The criteria of effectiveness, impact and sustainability are knock-out criteria: if one of the criteria is rated at level 4 or lower, the overall rating cannot go beyond level 4 although the mean score may be higher.

Both the assessment dimensions within the OECD DAC criteria and the determination of the overall score using a points system serve to increase the transparency of ratings while enabling better comparability between individual projects.

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