Accelerated Funding Grant Completion Report Template

Status: Accepted

Country	Name of project this grant is contributing to	GPE Grant ID	Project ID
Zambia	Zambia - STG AF	GPE0000882	84009596

Grant Agent	Grant Type	Approval Date	Grant Effectiveness / Start Date
Save the Children US	STG	10/02/2024	10/08/2024

Actual Closing Date	Grant Amount	Date of Report Submission
01/31/2026	6,310,000 (USD)	07/22/2026

Project Implementation

Assessment of Project Implementation: Relevance

Overall relevance

Relevance 1

Substantial

Detailed Description

The project was very relevant, as it responded directly to the urgent needs of learners during a period of severe drought and widespread food insecurity across Zambia. The 2023/24 drought affected most regions, significantly worsening household food security and increasing vulnerability among school-age children. This evolving crisis contributed to poor school attendance and heightened dropout risk, as many learners struggled to consistently attend classes without adequate access to food.

The project strategically complemented the national school feeding program, which covered only 42 of the 84 districts prioritized for feeding support. In response to the scale and severity of the drought, the GPE Accelerated Funding (School Feeding) Project expanded school feeding districts from 42 to 57, achieving 67 per cent coverage of the targeted districts. The project reached 1,666 schools in 15 districts, benefiting 948,759 learners in the most drought-affected areas. The targeting approach was guided by the Disaster Management Unit's food security classification, ensuring that resources were directed to areas with the greatest need.

Despite operational constraints because of the evolving context, the intervention enabled learners to have at least one meal a day and ensured learners attended school more regularly, contributing to a marked reduction in absenteeism. Average daily school attendance across the target districts improved from approximately 60 percent to 80 percent during the project period. Over the full project cycle, including the No-Cost Extension, a total of 948,759 learners against a target of 895,346 were reached with school feeding, representing 106 percent of the original target and reflecting the project's responsiveness to emerging needs.

According to the Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) data and Ministry of Education (MoE) monitoring reports, the GPE School Feeding Project demonstrated strong relevance and positive impacts on learners' nutritional well-being, school attendance, and participation in education during a humanitarian and climate-induced crisis. The intervention highlighted the role of school feeding as a critical education safeguard

and social protection mechanism in emergency contexts. With sustained investment and increased government ownership, such programs can generate lasting educational and social returns for vulnerable learners.

As operating conditions continued to evolve, the project adopted adaptive implementation measures to sustain service delivery. These included revision targets, diversification of transportation modalities, and procurement of maize from the FRA when available at a reasonable cost.

During the final phase of implementation under the No-Cost Extension, the project further demonstrated adaptability in response to supply-side challenges. When suppliers faced difficulties sourcing maize—resulting in delayed deliveries and the non-delivery of 1,200 metric tons (MT) by one supplier—Save the Children (SC) leveraged internal resources to cover the shortfall while pursuing legal processes to recover the loss. To bridge the resulting gap, the project adjusted its procurement strategy by sourcing maize from FRA at a favorable cost, with support from the MoE. The MoE played a facilitative role by issuing an introductory letter and holding discussions with Food Reserve Agency (FRA) management which enabled SC to access and procure maize through the Government's community sales programme. These adjustments enabled the project to maintain continuity despite rapidly changing market and supply conditions.

As part of this adapted approach, SC procured an additional 2,319.47 MT of maize, distributed across nine districts in the Southern Province (Pemba, Choma, Kalomo, and Livingstone) and the Western Province (Nkeyema, Kaoma, Luampa, Lukulu, and Mitete). Overall, the total quantity of maize procured over the project cycle reached 10,157.97 MT-a recalibrated outcome relative to the original target of 12,892.98 MT set at project inception, which was revised to 8,860.2 MT in line with prevailing market prices.

Beneficiaries' views on relevance

Detailed Description

A PDM survey was conducted after the first phase of the project, indicating a high level of beneficiary satisfaction. Findings showed that 97% (n=388) of learners were satisfied with the appropriateness of the school feeding response, while 92% (n=368) expressed satisfaction with the quality of the meals provided. According to schoolteachers and management, the school feeding program led to increased learner attendance and improved concentration in class, which contributed to better learner performance. Learners were spending more time at school and actively participating in school activities.

During focus groups discussions, parents reported that the burden of providing meals at home was reduced, as most children were receiving meals at school. It was also noticed that learners were also arriving at school earlier, further improving school attendance. This increased and more consistent attendance made teaching easier for teachers, as it enabled more effective lesson planning and classroom management.

Learners reported improved concentration in class, as they no longer needed to leave school in search of food before returning for other academic activities. They added that they were able to remain at school until all classwork and extracurricular activities for the day were completed. The school feeding also enabled the learners in upper grades to participate in afternoon study sessions. However, while school feeding was appreciated, some parents noted the need to provide a more diversified menu. Other parents also expressed a desire to be compensated for the cooking services they were providing on a voluntary basis. Overall, the project was highly appreciated by all beneficiary groups and was widely recommended for continuation. The project exceeded its planned output for school feeding coverage by 106 per cent.

Assessment of Project Implementation: Efficacy

Overall efficacy

Efficacy 2

High

Detailed Description

(i) Reaching crisis affected populations, especially girls and the hardest-to-reach children

The project demonstrated success in reaching crisis affected populations in districts severely impacted by the 2023/24 drought, where household ability to provide adequate food for children was significantly compromised. The targeted districts and schools were among the most drought affected and were largely excluded from the Government's school feeding program. Many are in hard-to-reach areas, such as Mitete and Lukulu, where access is primarily by water transport, further compounding vulnerability. School absenteeism increased sharply during the drought period, particularly among girls, who were often required to support household coping strategies such as sourcing food. The project reached the hardest-to-reach and crisis affected populations, with a strong gender focus. By project closeout, a total of 948,759 learners (446,052 boys and 502,707 girls) were reached with school meals. Notably, 203,359 girls were from the most remote parts of Southern, Western, and Central Provinces.

(ii) Ensuring continuity of education to prevent learning loss and dropout

The project played a critical role in ensuring continuity of education during the drought crisis and in preventing learning loss and school dropout. Its primary objective was to improve learner nourishment, health, attendance, retention, and progression across Early Childhood Education (ECE), primary, and secondary levels in 15 districts across Western, Central, Southern, and Lusaka Provinces by 2026.

Through the procurement and distribution of food commodities (maize, beans, cooking oil, and salt) and essential non-food items to 1,666 schools, the project provided a strong incentive for learners—both boys and girls—to remain in school. Prior to the intervention, average school attendance—particularly in rural areas—ranged between 50 and 60 percent. Following the introduction of the school feeding program, attendance increased significantly to approximately 90 percent. This improvement was confirmed through the PDM and school records reviewed during monitoring visits at the close of the project. Learner absenteeism declined, as school meals became a reliable safety net during the crisis.

In addition, the project incorporated hygiene, safeguarding, and protection measures to support safe learning environments. School Health and Nutrition (SHN) committees received orientation and on-the-job support to ensure hygienic food preparation. The distribution of hand-washing facilities and soap further strengthened disease prevention. No disease outbreaks were recorded in project schools, contributing to uninterrupted learning during the intervention period. Further, awareness sessions were conducted in collaboration with District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) offices in Southern and Western provinces, involving SHN Coordinators and parents with 1,583 participants (624 male, 959 female) oriented on safeguarding, inclusion, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH), and complaints and feedback mechanisms, strengthening community capacity for safe and accountable programme implementation.

Overall, the project contributed to stabilizing school participation during a prolonged climate shock, protecting learning outcomes for vulnerable learners, and reinforcing the role of school feeding as a key strategy for building education system resilience in crisis settings.

Other effects

Detailed Description

Building on the improvements in attendance, retention, and learner well-being described earlier, the project generated several additional results, both intended and unintended, that were directly linked to the provision of school meals during the drought crisis.

One notable positive and unintended effect was the re enrolment of children who had previously dropped out of school. The introduction of regular school meals served as a strong incentive for learners to return to school, particularly in households that were experiencing acute food insecurity All targeted schools reported increased enrolment during the project period, reversing earlier declines attributed to the drought. According to the PDM survey conducted in July 2025 in sampled schools, enrolment rose consistently across ECE, Primary, and Secondary levels between Term 3 of 2024 and Term 2 of 2025. ECE

recorded the highest growth, increasing by 42% between Term 3 (2024) and Term 1 (2025), with a further 29% rise by Term 2 (2025). Primary enrolment increased by 22%, while Secondary enrolment grew by 10% over the same period.

Overall, these trends demonstrate the effectiveness of the school feeding program in improving access, attracting new learners, and supporting retention, particularly at the ECE level.

The project also had protective effects for girls, particularly those enrolled as weekly boarders. Access to meals at school reduced their need to source food elsewhere, thereby reducing their exposure to exploitation and abuse within surrounding communities. The girls were also less likely to engage in transactional relationships for food or financial support. This outcome was observed notably in Mbabala area of Choma District, where girls testified during monitoring visits that school feeding reduced experiences of abuse, as they no longer depended on external sources for food.

Another positive effect was the promotion of school level ownership and sustainability through the establishment of production units. Although this indicator was not formally tracked during reporting, monitoring visits indicated that at least 20 per cent of schools established vegetable gardens to supplement the feeding program. This contributed to improved dietary diversity while strengthening community participation and school engagement. These initiatives enhanced local ownership and laid the groundwork for longer term resilience and self reliance beyond the project lifespan.

Overall, these additional effects reinforce the project's broader contribution to child protection, gender equality, and community resilience. They further demonstrate how school feeding, when implemented in crisis affected and hard to reach contexts, can generate wide ranging educational and social benefits beyond its core nutrition and attendance objectives.

Conditions which affected the project

Detailed Description

The project was implemented in a complex and evolving operating environment shaped by both external and internal factors that influenced its design, implementation, and achievement of objectives.

(i) Status and evolution of the crisis:
For most of the implementation period, the context was dominated by a persistent food security crisis characterized by widespread shortages and high commodity prices, particularly during 2024 and much of 2025. These conditions reinforced the relevance of the intervention but also came with significant operational constraints. A notable shift occurred during the 2024/25 agricultural season when normal to above-normal rainfall resulted in increased maize production and a gradual decline in food prices. However, this improvement came after prolonged periods of scarcity and did not fully offset earlier implementation challenges.

(ii) External factors beyond implementer control:
Macroeconomic instability, including high inflation and exchange rate fluctuations, significantly affected project performance. The appreciation of the Zambian Kwacha against the US Dollar increased procurement costs, necessitating budget reallocations within the approved envelope and resulting in reduced quantities of some food commodities. In addition, suppliers faced difficulties sourcing maize locally, leading to cross-border procurement from countries such as Tanzania, which contributed to delays, particularly in the early phases. Environmental factors also played a role; heavy rainfall during the time of distribution, damaged road infrastructure in some areas, limiting access to certain communities and disrupting delivery schedules.

(iii) Internal grant conditions and management factors:
Internal challenges related to fiduciary oversight and procurement management by the Grant Agent (SC), particularly in contract management and supplier performance monitoring, affected implementation during the initial stage. For instance, one contracted supplier failed to deliver 1.4 MT of maize as stipulated in the contract, citing sourcing constraints. This exposed gaps in supplier due diligence, performance tracking, and enforcement of contractual obligations. In response, SC strengthened its risk mitigation measures, including enhanced supervision, contract management, and supplier monitoring systems, in line

with grant fiduciary requirements. SC also absorbed the associated loss by procuring the deficit to ensure continuity of program delivery. The project further demonstrated adaptive management in a constrained operating environment by employing flexible and context-appropriate logistics approaches, including the use of trucks, tractors, oxcarts, and other locally available transport options.
Strong coordination with government institutions further supported implementation, including the successful procurement of 2,319.45 metric tons of maize from the FRA at community price rates, which helped stabilize procurement and delivery of maize to schools.

(iv) Assessment of risks and mitigation measures:
In hindsight, many of the risks identified during the project design stage—including supply chain disruptions, price volatility, and access challenges—proved to be accurate and materialized during implementation. The mitigation measures put in place, including adaptive procurement approaches, strengthened coordination mechanisms, and ongoing monitoring, helped to reduce their impact and enabled the project to continue delivering results. However, the scale and duration of the drought crisis, coupled with broader macroeconomic instability, exceeded initial projections, limiting the effectiveness of some mitigation measures.

Several risks were also not fully anticipated at the design stage. These included sustained exchange rate depreciation, prolonged procurement and supply chain constraints, and the extent of infrastructure damage caused by heavy rainfall in some target areas. These emerging risks required continuous adaptive management, budget adjustments, and implementation flexibility throughout the project period.

Overall, while both anticipated and unforeseen challenges constrained implementation efficiency, the project demonstrated resilience. Through adaptive management, strengthened risk mitigation measures, and effective coordination with government and partners, it was able to largely achieve its intended objectives under difficult operating conditions.

Standout practices, lessons, and recommendations, and products

Detailed Description
The project recorded several successful practices that contributed to effective implementation, particularly in reaching girls and other vulnerable learners in crisis affected and hard to reach settings. One notable practice was the mobilization of parents and community members to support school meal preparation. This approach strengthened community ownership and reduced implementation costs especially in the rural schools. However, in some locations—particularly in urban settings—parental participation proved challenging, as some parents expected cash incentives in exchange for their involvement in food preparation. This highlights an important lesson for future program design: community engagement strategies should be clearly defined from the outset, with consistent messaging on roles, responsibilities, and non monetary incentives.

Another key lesson relates to the reliance on firewood for meal preparation. In areas with limited tree cover, communities experienced difficulties sourcing sufficient firewood, which at times affected the regularity of meal preparation. Future school feeding program should explore and integrate alternative, environmentally sustainable energy sources, such as energy efficient cookstoves or other clean energy solutions, to reduce pressure on local resources and contribute to efforts around climate resilience.

The project also demonstrated the value of streamlining procurement arrangements. Delays linked to procurement processes and administrative procedures underscored the importance of establishing longer term framework agreements between the MoE, implementing partners, and the FRA. Such agreements would improve predictability, reduce delays, and enhance responsiveness during crisis situations.

Strong partnerships also emerged as a critical success factor. Schools that actively collaborated with traditional leaders, Parent–Teacher Associations (PTAs), and local business actors experienced higher levels of parental engagement and community support. In several cases, parents and community members were able to supplement school meals with additional food items, such as vegetables, improving dietary diversity. These partnership models offer valuable lessons for future grant and project planning cycles.

Gender responsive practices were deliberately promoted with both male and female parents participating in meal preparation activities. The boys and girls received the same meals, reinforcing equality and

inclusion. These practices contributed to safer learning environments and supported girls' continued attendance, particularly for those from highly vulnerable households.

Stories of Impact

The project generated compelling stories of impact that illustrate its broader social and educational benefits. In highly vulnerable communities, girls reported feeling safer and more supported because of access to regular school meals. Improved food availability at school reduced their reliance on negative coping mechanisms, including exposure to exploitation. Schools and communities observed reductions in teenage pregnancies and early marriages, as girls were able to remain in school longer and participate more fully in learning and school activities. These stories highlight the transformative role of school feeding as not only an education intervention but also a protective and gender responsive safety net during times of crisis. Selected beneficiary testimonies and case studies are attached as annexes and are suitable for use in GPE communications materials, with appropriate attribution.

Tangible Outputs and Knowledge Products

The project generated tangible outputs and knowledge products that can inform future programming and advocacy. These include documented implementation experiences from hard to reach and flood prone areas, particularly in Lukulu and Mitete districts, where access depended largely on water transport. Practical lessons from these contexts provide valuable insights for future emergency education and school feeding interventions.

In addition, project documentation includes case studies, monitoring reports, and implementation photographs that demonstrate project reach, community engagement, and impact on learners. Relevant photos, beneficiary stories, and case studies have been attached as annexes and may be showcased in GPE stories, blogs, and other communications platforms.

Assessment of Project Implementation: Efficiency

Overall efficiency

Efficiency 3

Modest

Timeliness

At project start

The project was approved on October 3, 2024, and implementation commenced on October 8, 2024. There were no delays in the start of project implementation.

During implementation

Despite the project starting on time, procurement of food commodities was delayed due to food scarcity in the country caused by the drought. The initial plan was for the Ministry to procure maize from the FRA, however, the FRA was unable to supply the required quantities as it was prioritizing government programs aimed at feeding vulnerable communities.

Consequently, the MoE and SC agreed to procure maize from the open market, where prices were escalating and food availability remained limited. These procurement processes commenced around January 2025. In addition, one contractor failed to deliver maize to 420 schools. Distribution therefore took place progressively as food was sourced. In some instances, schools received pulses but had to wait for maize to be delivered. Because of these challenges, 420 schools had not yet received the full quantities of food commodities by July 30, 2025. SC requested a no-cost extension (NCE) from August 1, 2025, to

November 30, 2025, to allow for the distribution of maize to the affected schools, monitoring activities, and project closure while the matter was still being addressed.

However, this NCE could not be fully implemented due to further challenges between SC and the MoE regarding quantity variances and communication relating to changes. With the involvement of the GPE Secretariat, the issues were resolved, and a second NCE was requested, extending the project from November 30, 2025 to January 31, 2026. SC subsequently used its internal resources to procure the remaining quantities of maize which remained undelivered by one of the contracted suppliers and successfully distributed maize to all 1,666 schools as originally planned. The last batch of maize consignments was procured from FRA with the support of the MoE during the NCE of November 2025 to January 2026.

The delays inevitably affected learners, as food did not reach beneficiaries in a timely manner. Nonetheless, despite the good rains experienced during the 2024/2025 farming season, many households continued to face food insecurity and were still recovering from the effects of the drought. Therefore, the school feeding program remained highly relevant and ultimately achieved its intended objectives.

Grant costs

Detailed Description

(i) Unit costs of delivering key outputs and available benchmarks

The primary cost driver under this intervention was the procurement of food commodities, particularly maize. The unit cost of delivering this key output was significantly influenced by commodity scarcity and prevailing market prices during the implementation period. During implementation, the price of maize was approximately between USD$22 per 50kg bag, equivalent to approximately 0.49 cents per kilogram on the open market. These costs were higher than those reflected in the approved project proposal, where maize had been estimated at approximately USD $13 per 50kg bag. At the design stage, the project had planned to procure maize and beans through the FRA and local farmers in surrounding communities under the Home-Grown School Meals approach, which offered relatively lower and more stable prices. Similarly, beans were budgeted for USD $41.6 but procured at approximately USD $95 per 50kg bag, which led to reduction in quantities from 2,148 MT to 780 MT. The reduction resulted in less feeding days in the initial phase from 120 planned at design to 82 days.

Further, due to drought-related production shortfalls, both FRA and local suppliers were unable to meet the required quantities, necessitating a shift to open market procurement where prices were higher. Despite these increases, the prices paid remained broadly aligned with prevailing national benchmarks, including the Zambia Public Procurement Authority Market Price Index for the corresponding period. In terms of benchmarks, the prices observed were comparable to:

• Local market rates during the same period (Zambia public procurement authority market price index Q4 2024 https://www.zppa.org.zm/view-article/-/journal_content/56/20182/98470)

While the prices paid exceeded the initial budget estimates, this was driven by drought-related supply shortages and the resulting rise in market prices. A comparison with prevailing local market rates, including the Zambia Public Procurement Authority Market Price Index for Q4 2024, confirmed that the prices remained within a reasonable range for the period. The procurement therefore remained cost-realistic under the prevailing market conditions.

(ii) Changes between design and implementation costs

As already mentioned, there were significant variations in unit costs between the design and implementation stages of the grant. Maize prices increased from an estimated USD $13 per 50kg bag at design to approximately USD $22 per 50kg bag during implementation. These changes were largely driven by market price fluctuations, inflationary pressures, seasonal supply dynamics, and, most critically, the effects of drought, which reduced the availability of commodities at both national and community levels. The shift from planned procurement through FRA and local farmers to procurement from the open market further contributed to the increased costs. These factors indicate that the cost assumptions made during the design phase were no longer valid under the evolving and volatile context experienced during implementation.

(iii) Effect of the crisis context on costs, implementation, and results

The crisis context, particularly the drought and associated food insecurity, significantly affected grant costs by driving up the prices of key commodities such as maize and beans. This resulted in increased pressure on the grant budget and necessitated continuous adjustments to procurement strategies and budget allocations. The initial Home-Grown School Meals procurement model was not feasible due to limited maize grain availability, requiring a transition to open market sourcing at higher prices.

Despite these challenges, the impact on implementation and results was effectively mitigated through adaptive management. The project procurement planning was revised, closely monitored market trends, and reallocated funds within approved thresholds to accommodate rising costs. As a result, the project was able to deliver its planned outputs without significant compromise to coverage or quality. This demonstrates the program's operational resilience and ability to adapt to a rapidly changing and resource-constrained environment.

(iv) Cost overruns or savings

The project did not realize significant cost savings, as it operated under sustained cost pressures due to rising food commodity prices throughout the implementation period. Expenditure on maize and beans exceeded initial unit cost estimates, while costs associated with non-food activities, such as training, remained largely stable. Although unit costs for key commodities exceeded original projections, there were no major budget overruns at the overall grant level. The project remained within the approved funding ceiling through proactive financial management, including ongoing budget revisions and adjustments to planned quantities. Overall, while the crisis context led to increased costs, the grant maintained financial control and achieved its intended results through effective cost management and adaptive implementation strategies.

Coordination and partnerships

Detailed Description

(i) Coordination with education and humanitarian stakeholders

Grant implementation benefited from strong coordination led by the MoE, with support from key education and humanitarian stakeholders. The World Food Programme (WFP), as the MoE's technical partner on school feeding, played a central advisory and coordination role, enhancing alignment with national school feeding standards and practices. SC regularly provided progress updates through the Education Cluster, which is co-chaired by UNICEF, with SC serving as the Secretariat. Updates were also shared through the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) coordination mechanisms, national reporting platforms, and other inter-sectoral coordination meetings. These platforms facilitated information sharing on coverage, targeting, and implementation progress, contributing to more coherent and complementary responses across sectors.

Although coordination through the Provincial and District Disaster Management Committees was effective where meetings were constantly held, engagement was inconsistent in some locations due to competing priorities and logistical constraints. Nevertheless, existing national coordination platforms enabled SC to map other actors implementing school meal programs in the same geographical areas, including organizations such as World Vision. This coordination helped prevent duplication of efforts, as agreements were reached on geographic targeting and beneficiary coverage.

During the final phase of implementation, adaptive coordination arrangements were established. The MoE, with support from other partners, distributed food in selected districts in Central Province where SC was not operating, while SC concentrated its interventions in nine districts across Southern and Western Provinces. This division of coverage improved efficiency and ensured broader reach to drought-affected learners.

Overall, effective coordination strengthened alignment, reduced duplication, and enhanced the collective impact of school feeding interventions, contributing positively to grant implementation and results.

(ii) Collaborations and partnerships leveraged

Several strategic partnerships were leveraged to support the grant, both financially and in kind. Notably, WFP's in-kind contribution of cowpeas to all schools significantly complemented the project's food commodities, improving dietary diversity and nutritional value of school meals. This contribution enhanced learning outcomes and learner satisfaction, reinforcing attendance gains attributed to the feeding program.

Collaboration with government institutions, humanitarian actors, and civil society partners strengthened implementation capacity, particularly in hard-to-reach and flood-affected districts. These partnerships enabled resource sharing, coordinated delivery schedules, and adaptive responses to emerging logistical challenges.
Collectively, these collaborations enhanced the efficiency, coverage, and nutritional quality of the intervention, reinforcing the project's role as part of a broader, coordinated response to the drought-induced education and food security crisis.

Use of data and evidence for improvement

Detailed Description

(i) Use of monitoring data and evidence to improve implementation

Throughout the project life cycle, monitoring data and field-level evidence were used consistently and effectively to inform adaptive implementation and support the achievement of intended results. The project relied primarily on findings from routine monitoring visits, post-distribution reports, and structured feedback from schools to assess progress and identify implementation gaps. Teachers were trained to collect and submit data using the Kobo data collection tool, which enabled real-time tracking of learner participation in the feeding program and identification of schools that were not meeting expected feeding targets. This data allowed implementing partners to follow up promptly with underperforming schools and provide targeted technical support.

In addition, a Post-Distribution Survey (PDS) was conducted to assess food availability, delivery timeliness, adherence to feeding schedules, and hygiene practices at school level. Findings from the PDS were directly used to accelerate food deliveries to schools that had not received full allocations, strengthen hygiene practices in schools that were not fully compliant, and reinforce consistent daily feeding of learners. This evidence-based approach contributed to improved operational efficiency and better learning and nutrition outcomes. Overall, the systematic use of monitoring data enabled timely decision-making, strengthened accountability, and ensured that implementation remained responsive to achieve the intended results.

(ii) Joint problem-solving and engagement with partners

Joint problem-solving mechanisms with country-level partners who are members of the Policy Implementation Technical Committee (PITC) and the GPE Secretariat played a constructive role in addressing implementation challenges. During the GPE supervision mission to Zambia in July 2025, key operational issues—including delays in procurement, reduced food quantities, and outstanding maize balances for selected schools—were openly discussed with the MoE and SC including the PITC members. SCI provided updates on the status of the procurements and food deliveries during the monthly cooperating partners. These engagements resulted in joint decisions on the procurement of maize balances for 420 schools in Central Province and helped resolve misunderstandings related to reduced quantities, which had been a point of concern for the Ministry. The mission provided an opportunity for the GPE Secretariat to draw on first-hand field experiences, improving shared understanding of implementation realities and the tangible benefits of the program for learners.

The joint discussions were useful in clarifying communication channels, approval processes, and expectations among stakeholders. Moving forward, such mechanisms could be strengthened through more frequently structured review meetings and joint engagement when implementation risks emerge. Regularized problem-solving forums would further enhance collaboration, transparency, and timely resolution of operational challenges.

Use of GPE processes

Detailed Description

Overall, key GPE process features played a constructive role in facilitating the design, implementation, and achievement of the grant's objectives. The project consistently adhered to GPE reporting and approval requirements, which strengthened implementation quality, transparency, accountability, and oversight throughout the grant lifecycle.

Regular reporting and structured implementation updates ensured alignment with GPE requirements and enabled timely oversight by the MoE and other stakeholders. No major programmatic or financial adjustments were undertaken without prior authorization and endorsement from the MoE, ensuring compliance while maintaining strategic alignment with national priorities. The use of established coordination platforms, particularly the PITC, which serves as the Local Education Group (LEG), and District Disaster Management Unit Committees, facilitated stakeholder engagement, joint problem-solving, and coordinated decision-making. These mechanisms supported grant quality and effective implementation while keeping transaction costs at a reasonable level.

The project also benefited from two NCEs, both endorsed by the PITC and the MoE. The extensions were instrumental in addressing implementation delays caused by procurement disruptions, price volatility, and access challenges in hard-to-reach areas. By providing additional implementation time without increasing costs, the NCEs helped preserve grant quality and ensured that key activities could be completed as planned.

While GPE processes largely facilitated implementation, some requirements for approvals, reporting, and coordination inevitably extended decision-making timelines, particularly when rapid adjustments were needed in response to evolving operational challenges. However, these requirements also provided important safeguards for accountability, risk management, and quality assurance. Overall, the benefits of the GPE processes outweighed the associated transaction costs, contributing to the successful delivery of the grant and the achievement of its intended outcomes.

Resilience and Grant Management

Resilience and Build Back Better

Detailed Description

The project was co-designed with the MoE and supported as such. The School Feeding program is a national program and now fully endorsed by the Republican President of Zambia as it has proved to produce effective learner outcomes. Learners are staying in schools with improved performance. During the last phase of implementation, MoE with government resources started distributing maize in all the schools where the project was implemented. This was part of the transition plan to have all schools under the government school feeding program for continuity. Further the Ministry is funding the production units which should supplement the feeding. There are lessons learned looking into the future. MoE should always have continuous Framework Agreements or contracts with FRA to avoid delays in seeking authorizations and approvals for government support programs to access maize from FRA. With fast evolving crisis, there should be room for quick decision making and adjustments to market changes, prices and inflation -budgeting for contingency. Effective communication among implementing partners, government stakeholders, and sector actors is critical in school feeding programs, as it fosters a shared understanding of objectives, roles, and expectations, thereby enhancing coordination, timely decision-making, and overall program effectiveness.

Grant Management and Use of Funds

Unspent funds

Amount of funds that were not spent by grant closing

Detailed Description

The project is spent at approximately 100%.

Management performance

Level of Management Performance

Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

Detailed Description

The initial project start and end dates were from October 8, 2024 to July 31, 2025. However, the implementation period was extended to January 30, 2026 due to challenges arising from non-compliance with procurement processes by one of the suppliers contracted by SC responsible for delivering maize to schools in Southern Province and Central Province, Zambia.

Despite being paid, the contractor failed to deliver 1,297.83 MT of maize within the agreed timeframe, resulting in delays in the delivery of maize to 420 schools. In response, SC used its own resources to procure and deliver maize to all affected schools, while simultaneously pursuing the matter through legal channels.

Document Attachments

#	File Name	Document Type	Description
1	Accelerated funding grants' completion report template Results Framework.Final 090626.docx	Results Framework	Results Framework
2	PDM School Feeding Final Report.docx	Evaluation Report	PDM School Feeding Final Report
2	Carolina.docx	Knowledge Product	Impact Story
2	Pretty Zulu.docx	Knowledge Product	Impact Story
2	Schools Heads.docx	Knowledge Product	Impact Story

The documents listed were submitted with the progress report. If you'd like access to them, please contact the grant operations officer for your country.

Annexes

Annex 1: List of Acronyms

Acronym	Description
ECE	Early Childhood Education
FRA	Food Reserve Agency
DMMU	Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit
MoE	Ministry of Education
SC	Save the Children

SHN	School Health and Nutrition
DEBs	District Education Bureaus
MT	Metric Ton
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
NCE	No Cost Extension
WFP	World Food Programme
PSEAH	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment
PDS	Post Distribution Survey
PITC	Policy Implementation Technical Committee
LEG	Local Education Group
ZK	Zambia Kwacha

Annex 2: Global Numbers Reporting Template

Provide the data related to GPE's three global numbers for this reporting period below:

- Textbooks purchased and distributed
- Teachers trained
- Classrooms built or rehabilitated

Note: For cofinanced grants, please provide the proportion that can be attributed to GPE grant. For example, if the grant's financial contribution accounts for 50 percent of a teacher training activity, the proportion that can be attributed to GPE grant for the number of teachers trained through that activity would be 50%. If the unit of analysis in the indicator is the number of schools and not classrooms, please enter an estimated number of classrooms and provide an explanation in the comments box.

GPE Indicators

Textbooks purchased and distributed

#	Indicator	Actual Number Achieved (for entire project period)	% attributed to this grant (for cofinanced grants)	Comments
1	Food Purchased and Distributed:	10,157.97	100	Completed: Revised maize target reduced from

	1) Types of distributed food items in MT -Maize 2)Types of distributed food items in MT- Beans 3) Types of distributed food items distributed – Salt 4) Types of distributed food items- cooking oil in liters			12,892.95 MT to 8,860 MT due to increased market prices compared to the initially planned cost at the FRA. Target 2,148.83 (898.27 MT revised) Actual: 898.25, Completed: Revised beans target from 2,148.83 to 780 MT due to higher cost at time of procurement and escalating prices. Target 42,450 Actual: 42,450, Completed Target 176,803 liters (140,800 revised) Actual: 140,800 liters, Completed: Remainder of budget was aligned towards procurement of maize.

GPE Indicators

Teachers trained

#	Indicator	Actual Number Achieved (for entire project period)	% attributed to this grant (for cofinanced grants)	Comments
1	Non-Food Items purchased and distributed 1) Number of hand-washing equipment procured and distributed 2) Number of cooking wooden spoons distributed 3) Number of plates procured and distributed 4) Number of cooking pots procured and distributed	235	100	1)Target: 1,640(235 revised) Actual: 235, Completed: Variance is due to change in size and design to facilitate schools with higher enrolments- Planned for 20L capacity but procured 80L capacity. 2)Target: 606 Actual: 606, Completed 3)Target: 306,744 (84,440 revised) Actual: 84,440, Completed: Variance is due to under budgeting. The cost at design was ZK 5 but procured at ZK 18 at prevailing market price. 4) Target: 1,640 Actual: 272, Completed: Variance was due to under budgeting at design phase – ZK 150 and procured at ZK 1,500 and above depending on the size of the pot.

GPE Indicators

Classrooms built or rehabilitated

#	Indicator	Actual Number Achieved (for entire project period)	% attributed to this grant (for cofinanced grants)	Comments

1	Teachers and SHN committees trained and participating in School Feeding 1) Number of SHN Coordinators trained in food handling and hygiene, safeguarding and protection of learners. 2) Number of SHN committee members trained in improved hygiene and school feeding practices.	1,583	100	1) Target: 1,640 Actual: 1,583: Completed: Some schools were already trained by MoE with support from WFP. 2) Target: 16,400 Actual: 11,480: Completed: Some schools had less than 10 SHN committee members.

Annex 3: Cumulative beneficiary children / other students reporting template

Provide the cumulative number of children of pre-primary, primary and secondary school age (both in school and out of school) and other students (adolescents beyond secondary school age and adult learners participating in basic education programs) who **directly participated in project activities, received project-supported incentives or services, or benefited from project interventions,** over the entire duration of the grant. Also provide relevant disaggregated values by subgroups (at a minimum by sex, and by any other groups as feasible). Reporting beneficiary data cumulatively means counting all beneficiaries as a running total, adding up all beneficiaries since the start of the grant and up to the end. Data on beneficiaries are to be collected using the methods and tools proper to each project. It is understood that some disaggregated data will only be collected if a project expressly targets specific subgroups through their interventions and deploy their own approaches for counting beneficiary children/other students.

Note: For cofinanced grants, please provide the numbers for the entire program and indicate the proportion that can be attributed to GPE grant. For example, if the grant's financial contribution accounts for 40 percent of the program that is cofinanced by GPE and other donors, enter 40% in the "% attributed to this grant.

	Pre-primary (optional)	Primary (optional)	Secondary (optional)	Other (Optional)	Total	% attributed to this grant (for cofinanced grants)
Number of children/other students who directly benefited from the project over the entire duration of the project					948,759	100
Of which, female					502,707	100
Of which, children/other students with a disability (optional)					5,291	100
Of which, refugee children/other students (optional)						
Of which, internally displaced children/other students (optional)						

Of which, out-of-school children (optional)						

Of which, children/other students from marginalized ethno-cultural/ linguistic minorities: specify which ones (optional)

Provide any comments on beneficiary children/students, if needed. This could include, for example, the definition employed by the project for a particular subgroup (including a more granular description of these subgroups), the approach/tool used to calculate the number of beneficiaries overall or by subgroup, any limitation of the approach/tool employed for this calculation and reasons why data on beneficiary children/students are unavailable. Please provide the number or proportion of girls for varied subgroups in the comment section below, if available.

The project utilized the Kobo data collection tool to capture daily feeding data for children. However, the data was not disaggregated by school level and was instead reported as aggregated totals per school, categorized only by gender and disability status. This limitation affected the level of data disaggregation and constrained detailed analysis and reporting.

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1 High-There were no shortcomings or at most minor shortcomings in the continued alignment between project activities and the needs of the beneficiaries, considering the evolution of the emergency. The project provided clear evidence of such alignment. If circumstances changed, the objectives were changed accordingly to keep objectives fully relevant. Substantial-There were moderate shortcomings in the continued alignment between project interventions and the needs of the beneficiaries, considering the evolution of the emergency. The project provided generally sufficient information on such alignment. If circumstances changed, the objectives were changed accordingly to keep objectives fully relevant. Modest-There were significant shortcomings in the continued alignment between project interventions and the needs of the beneficiaries, considering the evolution of the emergency. The project provided limited information on such alignment. If circumstances changed, the objectives were not changed accordingly to keep objectives fully relevant. Negligible -There were severe shortcomings in the continued alignment between project interventions and the needs of the beneficiaries, considering the evolution of the emergency. The project differed from those current needs or did not provide information to assess such alignment. If circumstances changed, the objectives were not changed accordingly to keep objectives fully relevant.

2 High-The project exceeded or fully achieved its objectives (intended outcomes) or is likely to do so. Substantial-The project almost fully achieved its objectives (intended outcomes) or is likely to do so. Modest-The project partly achieved (or is expected to partly achieve) its objectives (intended outcomes). Negligible -The project barely achieved or did not achieve (minimal achievement, if any) its objectives (intended outcomes).

3 High-Efficiency exceeded expectations. Substantial-Efficiency was what would be expected. Modest-Efficiency was below expectations. Negligible -Efficiency was very low.