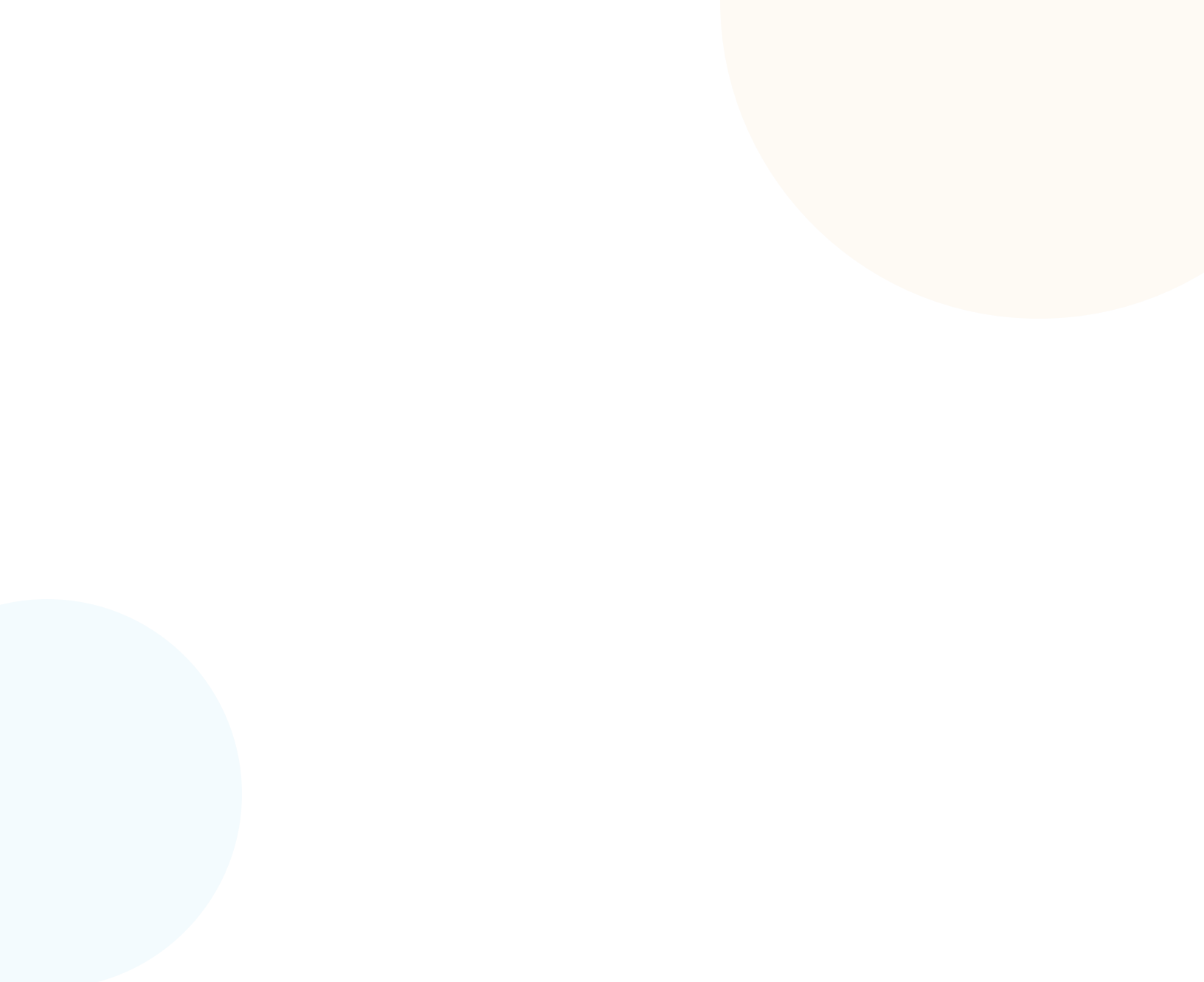UNFPA-UNICEF
GLOBAL PROGRAMME
TO END CHILD
MARRIAGE

TECHNICAL NOTE ON LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMMES FOR EMPOWERING ADOLESCENT GIRLS:
NOTES FOR PRACTITIONERS ON WHAT WORKS

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Life skills are defined as "a large group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills that can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help lead a healthy and productive life".[1]

Life skills programmes for adolescents aim to build knowledge and skills, and to promote empowerment and resilience. Life skills development is a strategy used in interventions related to promote human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention, empowerment, sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, employment readiness, livelihoods, education, citizenship, peacebuilding, child marriage prevention and other areas, as one component of broader agendas. In child marriage prevention programmes, life skills for adolescent girls is a core intervention deployed to equip girls with information, skills and support networks so that they can be change agents in their own lives.[2]

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has developed a Global Framework on Transferable Skills in Education[3] that highlights the relevance of life skills (referred to as transferable skills) adaptable to any setting and for addressing different outcomes. In addition, UNICEF's Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) has completed a review of life skills programmes in four countries implementing programmes to end child marriage,[4] and identified some standards for effective life skills programmes.[5] However, as UNICEF builds its portfolio of life skills interventions across various platforms (school, community, digital, etc.), girls deserve special attention to make sure that programmes meet their needs and interests. Globally, girls have less access to resources, less freedom of mobility, lower autonomy in decision-making, less education than their male counterparts and less power over the terms of their lives. To level the playing field, life skills programmes need to be implemented with deliberate consideration to gender and power dynamics and differentials so that girls can participate and benefit equally and meaningfully.

This technical note aims to provide practical considerations for country offices implementing and supporting life skills programmes or programmes that integrate **life skills, particularly when focused as a strategy within child marriage prevention and girls' empowerment programmes.**

The *Rapid Review of Life Skills Programmes and Curricula* compiled findings from 11 meta-analyses covering 746 programmes in child and youth development, girls' empowerment, twenty-first century skills, comprehensive sexuality education, and HIV prevention. It considered target groups, delivery platforms, effectiveness of programmes, coverage of disadvantaged girls, and elements of effective life skills programmes.

It is based on the *Rapid Review of Life Skills Programmes and Curricula*, covering 11 life skills modules[6] and meta-analyses of life skills programmes[7] in developing countries **to determine characteristics of design (target group, the skills and outcomes sought), implementation (platforms, methods, resourcing and time) and grounding in community and services that promote girls' empowerment.** The review and this technical note complement the UNICEF Global Evaluation of Life Skills Education Programmes and the ESARO review.

The guide provides a snapshot of modules and manuals used by countries under the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage in Annex 2 and notes that life skills programmes are delivered through different approaches. While empowerment is the common feature of girl-centred interventions, the Global Programme is implementing two intrinsically and complementary evidence-based approaches, namely life skills education aimed at increasing positive and adaptive behaviour by practicing psychosocial skills,[8] and comprehensive sexuality education with a focus on gender and human rights, aimed at equipping girls with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for empowerment and realizing their health, well-being and dignity.[9] There are often overlaps in implementation and some countries adopt both approaches, whereas others adopt only one.

Although it is recognized that there are knowledge gaps on how best to approach life skills programming, this note summarizes evidence about what is known to be effective and transformative for adolescent girls, to assist country and programme managers when designing interventions. It also shares summaries of the modules reviewed, to assist teams in selecting materials for adaptation to their local settings.
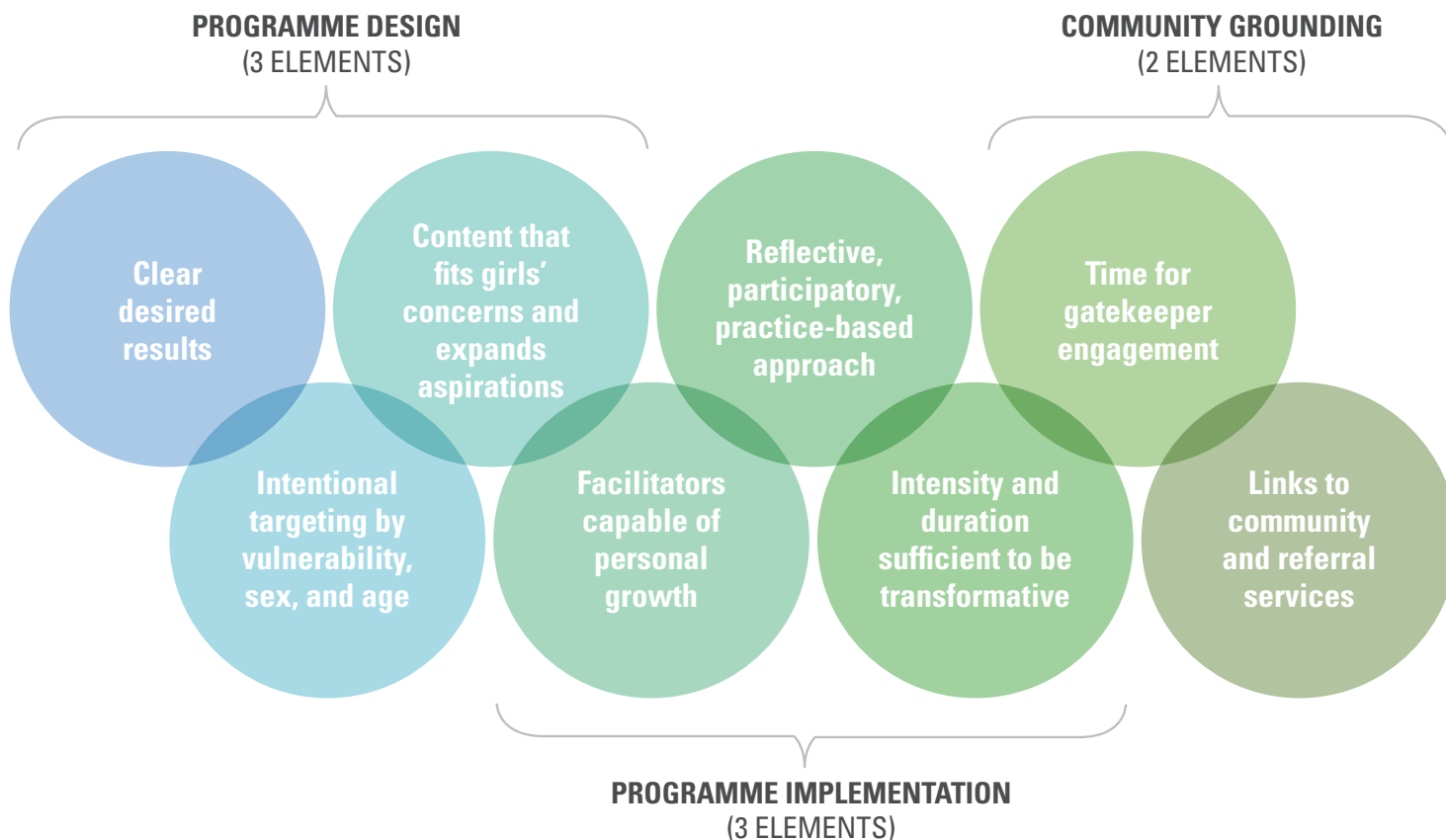
PROGRAMME DESIGN
(3 ELEMENTS)

COMMUNITY GROUNDING
(2 ELEMENTS)

Clear desired results

Content that fits girls' concerns and expands aspirations

Reflective, participatory, practice-based approach

Time for gatekeeper engagement

Intentional targeting by vulnerability, sex, and age

Facilitators capable of personal growth

Intensity and duration sufficient to be transformative

Links to community and referral services

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION
(3 ELEMENTS)

FIGURE 1. **Key elements of gender-transformative life skills programmes for adolescent girls**

EIGHT ELEMENTS

The *Rapid Review* identified eight elements of transformative life skills programmes for adolescent girls. 'Transformative' means programmes that both challenge existing gender inequities and empower girls with skills to navigate the world in their own interest. For example, girls may know their rights to education but not be able to act on that knowledge without skills in communicating with authority figures, accessing available financial assistance or planning steps to enrolment. The eight elements focus on design, implementation and linkages to community that are most important for adolescent girls to benefit from life skills programmes, whether girls are the primary learners or the programme is targeted at girls and boys equally.

This technical note assumes that programme designers have completed a number of formative steps, including participatory and gender analyses of challenges, opportunities and potential risks facing the target population. Although many aspects of adolescence are common to all groups of adolescents, it is important to understand the perspectives of the specific adolescents in a target group so that relevant programmes are designed and implemented, which address needs, concerns, ambitions and any risks faced informed by age, sex, context, etc.

Figure 1 illustrates eight elements of life skills programmes that are transformative for adolescent girls. These elements can be grouped by their relation to programme design, programme implementation and programme grounding in the local community. The box below offers a key question to answer for each of the eight elements to inform programme design. A checklist is also included in Annex 1 to support practitioners.

Transformation implies programmes that actively examine rigid gender norms and imbalances of power that advantage boys and men over girls and women. Gender-transformative approaches are defined as sustained changes in gender discriminatory norms at the **individual**, **relational** and **institutional** levels. Transformative programming aspires to tackle the root causes of gender inequality and reshape unequal power relations.

Source: UNFPA & UNICEF, *Technical Note on Gender-Transformative Approaches In The Global Programme To End Child Marriage Phase II: A summary for practitioners*, UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, New York, 2019.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ANSWER WHEN DESIGNING GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMMES

Programme design

1. **CLEAR DESIRED RESULTS:** What is the pathway of change to which a new skill or skillset contributes to shifting inequities and power where girls are able to navigate better outcomes for their lives?

2. **INTENTIONAL TARGETING BY VULNERABILITY, SEX, AND AGE:** What is your strategy for reaching the adolescent girls you want to reach? Are you reaching the most marginalized?

3. **CONTENT THAT FITS GIRLS' CONCERNS AND EXPANDS ASPIRATIONS:** Do girls see themselves, their concerns and their aspirations in life skills lessons and activities?
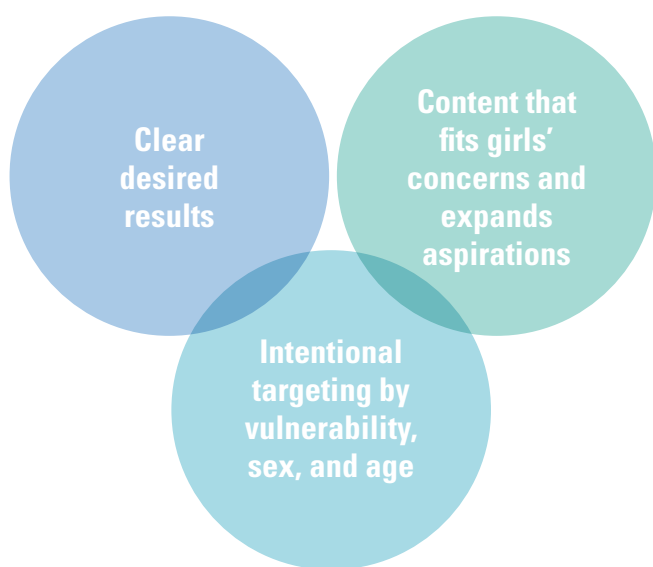
Programme implementation

4. **FACILITATORS CAPABLE OF PERSONAL GROWTH:** How will you identify and prepare facilitators to be mentors and role models supportive of adolescent girls?

5. **REFLECTIVE, PARTICIPATORY, PRACTICE-BASED APPROACH:** How will you ensure activities are carried out according to programme design?

6. **INTENSITY AND DURATION SUFFICIENT TO BE TRANSFORMATIVE:** What is the best pace of learning and internalization for adolescent girls in the programme?

Programme grounding in the community

7. **TIME, MODE AND CONTENT FOR GATEKEEPER ENGAGEMENT:** How long will it take to generate familial and community support, and what kinds of messages, delivered by whom?

8. **LINKS TO COMMUNITY AND REFERRAL SERVICES:** How is the programme connected to community activities, resources and referral services that are responsive to adolescent girls?

Clear desired results

Content that fits girls' concerns and expands aspirations

Intentional targeting by vulnerability, sex, and age

PROGRAMME DESIGN ELEMENTS

1. Clear desired results

In programme design, clear conceptualization of desired outcomes, objectives and goals focuses efforts and directs resources efficiently. **Clear desired results help ensure that life skills interventions are lean but effective, scalable and with outcomes that are measurable.**

The *Rapid Review* found that many life skills programmes suffer from vague objectives, or from trying to accomplish too much at once. It is important to be clear about not only **short-term learning targets** (as in lesson plans), but also the **overall goals** of the life skills programme and the **medium- or long-term aims** for adolescents beyond the scope of the programme. It is also important to note that life skills training is just one component of a broader agenda for empowering adolescent girls and realizing their rights.

ASK **What is the pathway of change to which a new skill contributes to fulfilment of girls' rights and empowerment?**

Part of identifying the pathway of change is understanding how life skills training, as a strategy, can complement or amplify changes being sought in institutions, relationships, services and policies to create an enabling environment for the fulfilment of girls' rights.

For example, removing barriers to girls' school attendance related to menstrual health and hygiene requires that girls have accurate, age-appropriate information; access to menstrual supplies and private facilities in school; and community support of their participation and freedom of movement during menstruation. Life skills programmes can equip girls with facts about their bodies, hygiene and rights; provide an entry point for tailoring knowledge on other sexual and reproductive health topics; and grow their skills in self-management, negotiation, decision-making and resilience. Girls then know how to advocate for their rights within their

families, schools and communities, for example, to negotiate with family members for resources to purchase menstrual supplies and for support to stay enrolled in school; to find solidarity with other girls to approach school administrators; or to develop emotional resilience and confidence in the face of community scorn.

When a life skills programme strategy is applied together with broader, systemic efforts to improve water and sanitation facilities at schools, increase availability of menstrual supplies and change community attitudes and norms, girls' attendance at school can improve, contributing to higher completion and lower dropout rates. This, in turn, can help delay the age at which girls marry and bring all the accompanying benefits of starting families at a later age.

> **Transformative life skills programmes both challenge existing gender inequities and empower girls with skills to navigate the world in their own interest.**

Once a pathway of change has been conceptualized that includes life skills programmes as a strategy, charting clearly how it contributes to achieving a goal, it becomes much easier to determine what specific skills and topics need to be included in a life skills programme, and what would be helpful to include but not essential.

2. Intentional targeting by vulnerability, sex and age

Life skills programmes are most effective when they are designed for a specific group of adolescents and those adolescents are intentionally sought out for participation.

ASK What is your strategy for reaching the girls you want to reach?

TARGETING BY VULNERABILITY: To date, few life skills programmes have been successful at reaching vulnerable groups of adolescents, such as those out-of-school, married girls, the very poor, ethnic and religious minorities, working, homeless or adolescents with disabilities. Yet many programmes report wanting to involve these groups. **If a programme has been designed with a specific population in mind, it is essential to have a strategy to reach those adolescents and enable their participation**. Participation should also be ensured through the monitoring phase. This may mean actively seeking out the girls for whom the programme is designed, by collaborating with agencies or

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For the **Biruh Tesfa project in Ethiopia**, project staff went door-to-door to identify girls out of school. After asking about female family members, they explicitly asked about domestic workers because people would seldom mention them, even though they tended to be adolescent girls who had migrated from rural areas and were not attending school. The door-to-door visits also gave staff the opportunity to negotiate with employers and family members for girls' participation. Because of this strategy, 40% of participants were domestic workers.

Sources: Erulkar, A., *From research, to programme design, to implementation: Programming for rural girls in Ethiopia*, Population Council, Addis Ababa, 2011; Erulkar, A. & Medhin, G., *Evaluation of Health and Education Impacts of a Girls' Safe Spaces Programme in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*, Population Council, Addis Ababa, 2014.

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organizations already working with those girls; going door-to-door or to locations where those girls spend time; and/or screening potential participants according to predefined criteria. It is also essential to identify and remove barriers to participation. For example, the poorest adolescent girls may need transportation support or the mentors would need to approach them near where they live; girls from socially marginalized groups may need a longer startup phase to build trust with programme representatives; and girls with disabilities may require individualized plans to reach meeting sites and accommodate learning. Whatever particular group the programme seeks to involve, participant recruitment needs to be intentional and strategic. As the programme proceeds, falling attendance suggests that facilitators should trouble-shoot barriers to participation with girls and their family members.

TARGETING BY SEX: Whether to design a girls-only programme or to include boys depends on the programme's goals and its social and institutional context. 'Safe space' programmes such as girls' clubs are particularly useful when sensitive topics such as sexual and reproductive health or violence against women and girls are being discussed. They also provide an opportunity for girls to build solidarity among themselves and strengthen their peer networks, especially important in settings where girls' time

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While mixed-sex groups make sense in some contexts and at select times during a programme, girl-only groups allow girls to feel free to open up, express themselves, ask questions and take on leadership roles—behaviours that they might be uncomfortable or afraid of doing otherwise, or that they may feel are inappropriate.

Source: UNFPA & UNICEF, *Programme and Monitoring & Evaluation Guidance*, UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, New York, 2017 [unpublished].

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and movements are highly controlled, and they have little or no chance to socialize with peers. Yet there may be trade-offs or challenges with girls-only groups, for example, when boys would benefit from the same activities or lessons, or in school-based settings where it can be difficult to separate girls and boys because of space and staffing constraints. In some contexts, girls and boys may benefit from coeducation when participating jointly and understanding the perspectives, challenges and priorities of peers of a different sex.

It is also possible to blend sex-segregated and inclusive groups. Many life skills-based comprehensive sexuality education programmes, for instance, take place among mixed groups of students with sessions on some topics that can be considered sex-specific material (such as menstrual management) done separately in sex-segregated groups. There are also programmes that teach life skills in mixed groups during the schoolday but offer after-school clubs just for girls with additional activities.

BY AGE: Because adolescence is a period of quick behavioural, cognitive and physical changes, **narrow age ranges provide the best chance of matching a programme's content to its participants,** including through use of an age-appropriate programme. Life skills programmes that are integrated with or take place in formal academic settings naturally create some segregation by age, inasmuch as the student population is enrolled at the appropriate age and continually advancing through grades. For programmes outside of the classroom, this does not happen as automatically, and it is important to

be strategic about the targeted age group. For example, if a programme aims to reach unmarried girls and reduce the incidence of child marriage in a place where the median age of marriage is 15–16, then girls younger than 15–16 should make up a large proportion of participants.

3. Content that fits girls' concerns and expands aspirations

The skills that benefit adolescent girls and boys are largely the same but may be applied differently, and to different kinds of needs, challenges and risks in girls' and boys' lives. For adolescent girls, skills need to be taught in a way that is relevant to them and that reflects the reality of their lives and how to fulfil their rights.

ASK **Do girls see themselves, their concerns and their aspirations in life skills lessons and activities?**

Because girls often have limited autonomy and choice outside the control of others, relationships play a large role in determining the parameters of their daily lives. **Imbalances of power in girls' key relationships need to be recognized in the scenarios, motifs, examples, characters, methodologies and lessons included in life skills programmes.** See the box below for examples.

There are also certain risks that overwhelmingly affect girls, such as dowry violence, forced marriage, unplanned pregnancy, and female genital mutilation (FGM). In a setting where girls are likely to experience specific gender-based risks, these should be explicitly addressed unless doing so would put girls at

greater risk or create new threats to their safety. For example, in contexts where child marriage is common, a life skills course that aims to empower girls would be incomplete without including content on child marriage and skills girls can use to delay their own marriage and/or strengthen their capacities for self-care and protection within marriage.

While girls need to see their daily realities reflected in programme content, they also need to be able to envision themselves as empowered individuals. In many places, adolescent girls are not encouraged to have ambitions, so life skills programmes can be an opportunity for them to discover new aspirations for their present and future personal and professional lives. Women and girls should be portrayed in life skills programmes as confident, capable and empowered to handle the difficult situations that life brings them and to pursue their goals. Contents related to human rights, gender equality and power relations are critical to transformative programmes.

Many life skills programmes develop their course material by borrowing content from curricula, manuals and modules developed by other actors. Most modules will require some

contextual adaptation to suit the target group, including in language and cultural references, images, topics and format. These changes do not lower the effectiveness of the programme, and well-designed psychosocial and behavioural interventions can be successfully replicated in different contexts, even when moving from a high- to a low-resource setting. However, **as materials are reviewed and adapted, it is important to keep in mind the situations that are common for adolescent girls in the target group, and how they might realistically apply new skills in their lives.** Content should consider how gender norms and gender power imbalances are being challenged and alternatives provided, and guard against the replication of gender inequalities. Note that sexual and reproductive health content that explicitly addresses gender and power in sexuality education and HIV prevention programmes has proven to be more effective than content that does not.[10] Of particular note, is how girls' voices and realities are being reflected in the design of the intervention and adaptation of materials – practitioners are encourages to create the space to engage girls' in the design, delivery and monitoring of such programmes enabling their voices, visions and realities to be reflected.

The *I Am Somebody* **manual used in Sierra Leone** (see Annex 2) provides one example of how to put girls' perspectives and concerns into the material. First, there are scenarios with a recurring fictional character who is like an older friend or 'auntie' named Sissy Aminata who answers questions from adolescents, many of which are based on real questions submitted in an early phase of the programme. Second, the stories used in lessons often portray girls facing common struggles, such as how to pay for school without engaging in transactional sex, or even how to reduce the risks of engaging in transactional sex.

For example, one letter to Sissy Aminata reads: "Dear Sissy, Me, I am a 19-year-old girl and my parents died from Ebola. Now I have to take care of my 3 sisters and 2 brothers. I was in secondary school and I want to sit my [exams], but I don't have the fees. Plus, I need money to take care of my sisters and brothers. There is an older man who runs the supermarket in town and he wants me to be his girlfriend. He says he will pay for my fees and for our family's needs. I don't like him at all. But what can I do?". Another scenario used for practicing decision-making is: "Dalinda is 14. She stopped going to school when she was 9 because her parents couldn't pay her school fees. Now her father tells her he wants her to marry one of his friends who is 42 years old, because she will fetch a good bride price".

Following these stories, adolescents identify actions the girl could take, recognizing that her choices and her power are limited in the situation, but that she does have the agency to reach out to trusted adults and friends for support, seek the help of local organizations, and/or advocate for her own safety and well-being. In contrast, scenarios for teaching decision-making in other life skills programmes - for instance, one in which an adolescent is invited by friends to consume alcohol or smoke - often ignore the dynamics of gender and power. They are therefore less effective instruments for building skills that girls can use to navigate relationships with others who have significant influence or control in their lives.

Third, even while the manual reflects the realities of girls' lives, it also challenges ideas about what roles, behaviours and jobs are considered appropriate for girls and women. This approach helps girls broaden their vision of what is possible for their lives and challenges restrictive gender norms. For example, sessions highlight female Sierra Leoneans who have served as ministers, cooks, doctors, business owners and chiefs.

Among the modules included in the Rapid Review, there is at least one that deals with each of the following issues: transactional sex, social media safety and trafficking, child marriage, violence against women and girls, intimate partner violence, safety in public, early pregnancy, HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), Ebola, FGM, obstetric fistula and mental health. Unfortunately, there were no materials that addressed self-harm directly, although some covered coping mechanisms for stress and positive self-talk.

FIGURE 2. Examples of life skills applied[11]

1 NEGOTIATION (with family decision makers, intimate partners) in unequal power balance, self-advocacy

2 PARTICIPATION
Navigation of services like health, education, protection, legal, financial services

3 SELF AWARENESS
Self-esteem, affirming dignity, understanding the power dynamics around them

4 COMMUNICATION
across generations, with men and boys

5 RESILIENCE
Mental health, self-talk, perseverance, role models

6 CRITICAL THINKING
Clear, honest content on gender, power, rights

Reflective, participatory, practice-based approach

Facilitators capable of personal growth

Intensity and duration sufficient to be transformative

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENTS

4. Facilitators capable of personal growth

When a programme seeks to shift gender norms and attitudes, **it is particularly important that life skills are taught by facilitators who can challenge old ways of thinking and model new ones**. The effect of facilitators' own attitudes on the outcomes of life skills training is demonstrated by findings from the Adolescent Girl Empowerment Programme (AGEP): girls whose facilitators had positive attitudes towards contraception and scored high on self-efficacy assessments were less likely to have ever been pregnant or married or to have had unwanted sex.[12]

ASK How will you identify and prepare facilitators to be mentors and role models supportive of adolescent girls?

In socially conservative settings, facilitators may need to undergo their own personal transformation to challenge assumptions and clarify their values about gender equality and women's and girls' rights. Training for facilitators or teachers may include activities to lead them through such a process, and there are tools available to trainers for this purpose.[13] Facilitators who have undergone critical reflection on the role of gender norms and practices in their own lives can bring that experience to life skills programmes that seek to do the same with adolescents.

Alternatively, a programme can select facilitators who already demonstrate knowledge of gender equality and girls'

empowerment, and who possess self-awareness that enables personal growth and the potential to become a role model for adolescents. **The person's character – non-judgemental, encouraging, trustworthy – is more important than their formal education.**

Girls have been found to benefit from role models who have lived their same experiences and had success in their lives. For this reason, some programmes have hired local young women who are slightly older than girls as facilitators. There is promising evidence that programmes with female mentors and counsellors can have a significant impact on girls' academic learning. Evidence also shows positive outcomes with female mentors in community-based life skills activities, such as the Biruh Tesfa programme in Ethiopia, in which young female mentors from within the community are recruited and trained to facilitate life skills sessions and to perform the role of mentors.

School-based programmes may face particular challenges in preparing teachers to deliver life skills because many of them are trained to teach using frontal methods (such as lectures), rather than participatory methods, and are accustomed to teaching facts rather than skills. It is hoped that this will change as more national education systems incorporate life skills in their pre-service and in-service teacher training or the whole concept of skills-based education. There remains a lot to learn about if, and under what circumstances, it is more efficient, cost-effective or impactful to employ specially trained, dedicated educators for life skills programmes than to require regular teachers to deliver life skills. External teachers with whom students do not routinely interact may be more comfortable teaching about sexuality in some contexts, for example.

5. Reflective, participatory, practice-based approach

Participatory learning methods are fundamental to life skills programmes. Evidence from the Rapid Review showed that

The **Tipping Point project in Nepal and Bangladesh** created multiple opportunities for staff to explore issues related to gender and power dynamics in their own lives and begin a process of clarification of values and self-transformation. This was done through workshops at the start of the project, followed by monthly and quarterly reflection meetings at which staff discussed ways their thinking and behaviour had evolved, and the challenges faced in working with adolescents or communities.

Source: CARE, *Leading Change by Being the Change: Staff transformation in tipping point phase 1*, Geneva, n.d.

Facilitators are mentors who are good at listening, sharing their own experiences, avoiding judgment, maintaining confidentiality, recognizing achievements, and having fun. They must also be reliable and wise and not expect gifts.

Source: République du Niger & UNFPA, *Burkintarey Bayrey Illimin Zaman Dunia, Initiative Adolescentes – Guide du Mentor*, n.d. [unpublished].

positive results are much more likely when implementation is faithful to the design of a programme, including the use of participatory and reflective techniques. The quality of facilitation can make or break a programme. Facilitators need to foster processes of personal reflection, practice of new skills, and the application of new knowledge and competencies in learners' lives, especially for girls to develop skills that will work for them in the circumstances of their individual lives.

Yet, life skills activities are not always implemented according to design. For instance, the Rapid Review found that even when teachers believe that participatory methods are most effective, these are often outside their comfort zone and therefore seldom used. School-based programmes are susceptible to having sessions cut or rushed because teachers and students are busy with exams and other lessons, or teachers are uncomfortable delivering the programme content. Modifications might then be made that can lower effectiveness, such as: reducing the length or number of sessions, eliminating key messages, skills or topics, limiting participant engagement and using inadequately trained or fewer facilitators than recommended.

ASK **How will you ensure that activities are carried out according to design and address desired outcomes?**

To ensure faithful implementation, **it is necessary to monitor the implementation of life skills programmes at the point of delivery, that is, in the classroom or meeting space.** Rather than 'output monitoring', tracking which activities are implemented, 'process monitoring' tracks how **activities are implemented** – the quality of implementation and progress to addressing outcomes. In life skills programmes, process monitoring should aim to create a tight feedback loop to facilitators, to foster continuous growth of their skills in participatory and reflective methods. Monitoring and feedback can take place through periodic observation by master facilitators, peer facilitator review, adolescent consultations or interviews, or creative use of technologies to record or observe at a distance.

Data from the Adolescent Girl Empowerment Programme in Zambia showed that girls who had more skilled facilitators – facilitators who were particularly good at creating positive, safe spaces for group activities and rated highly in building relationships with girls and communities – were less likely to have been married, pregnant or sexually active.

Source: Austrian, K., & Hewett, P., *Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme: Research and evaluation mid-term technical report.* Population Council, Lusaka, 2016.

There is evidence that consistent mentoring and coaching of facilitators in participatory, reflective techniques benefits their own as well as learners' skills development, although there is a lot more to learn about how to mentor and monitor. Alternative models of delivery within education institutions – such as linking classroom lectures to group-based activities outside the classroom, mini-courses led by outside facilitators, team teaching, girls-only spaces in school, and other innovative approaches – should be supported whenever feasible. We know that continuous improvement in the quality of life skills programmes is only possible with monitoring and capacity-building of facilitators to ensure that they are using a reflective, participatory and practice-based approach.

6. Frequency and duration sufficient to be transformative

Building girls' confidence to try and do new things needs regular input. Consider if life skills programmes were like medicine. Many medicines will not work with a single large dose; instead, they need to be taken regularly and consistently over a period of time. It is the same with personal transformation. If skills are developed progressively, then pacing of the content delivery matters – package the skills training too densely and learners do not have the opportunity to practice those skills in real life; package it with long periods of time in between learning, and knowledge is more difficult to retain and progress is lost. Evidence from the Rapid Review backs this up – regular participation bolsters positive outcomes.

ASK **What is the best pace of learning for girls in the programme?**

There is no strict formula for the ideal pace of learning, but **programmes with weekly or more frequent sessions have been found to be the most successful, if girls can spare the time.**

Importantly, frequency is different from the total number of hours or sessions a programme covers, although that also matters. Very short programmes of a few hours' duration will

EXAMPLES OF PROCESS MONITORING IN LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMMES

The Bangladeshi Association for Life Skills, Income, and Knowledge for Adolescents (BALIKA) programme in Bangladesh had facilitators in nearby villages meet each week for peer support and coaching as they prepared the following week's group activities. Project supervisors observed sessions in each girls' group regularly and provided feedback on facilitators' interactions with girls using a rating system that fed into the project's monitoring system.

The Adolescent Girl Empowerment Programme (AGEP) in Zambia carried out quarterly 'spot checks' to observe programme activities. Based on the data gathered, site coordinators identified facilitators' weak spots and provided additional coaching. They also used monthly administrative meetings with facilitators to address programme challenges together and conduct short training sessions on facilitation skills, home visits and key topics.

be too narrow in scope to generate transformational change for girls. However, they can be effective for teaching very specific skills and knowledge – such as identifying a police station, a health facility or opening a bank account – within a larger programme structure.

Table 1 gives some examples of duration and frequency from life skills programmes for girls that have been evaluated and reported positive results. Clearly, differences in programme goals and contextual factors mean that there can be wide ranges in duration and frequency that are effective. The right pacing for adolescent girls needs to take into consideration responsibilities they may have at home, in school and

DOSAGE MATTERS. A review of behavioural interventions to reduce HIV, sexually transmitted infections, and pregnancy in adolescents showed that programs delivered with greater intensity or for a longer duration were more effective than shorter programs, perhaps because they allow for more in-depth discussion of and reflection on cultural and gender norms and other social structures that have a powerful effect on individual behaviours and capacity to change.

Source: Chandra-Mouli, V., Lane, C. & Wong, S., What does not work in adolescent sexual and reproductive health: A review of evidence on interventions commonly accepted as best practices, *Global Health Science and Practice*, 2015, 3(3), pp. 333–340.

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in productive work. Girls often carry a heavier burden of labour than boys, especially among the most disadvantaged girls. Yet, the Rapid Review found that girls often benefit significantly from the social capital, friendships and networks that result from regular participation in groups that meet for several months. **It is important to find the right balance in consultation with the girls themselves.**

TABLE 1. Duration and frequency of selected evaluated life skills programmes

	DURATION IN HOURS	FREQUENCY
BALIKA, Bangladesh[14]	88	1 × week for 2 hours
Biruh Tesfa, Ethiopia[15]	31	3–5 × week for 1 hour
Illimin/Adolescent Girls Initiative, Niger[16]	39	1 × week for 1 hour
Safe and Smart Savings, Kenya and Uganda[17]	208	1 × week for 2 hours
Siyakha Nentsha, South Africa[18]	80	2 × week for 2 hours

Time for gatekeeper engagement

Links to community and referral services
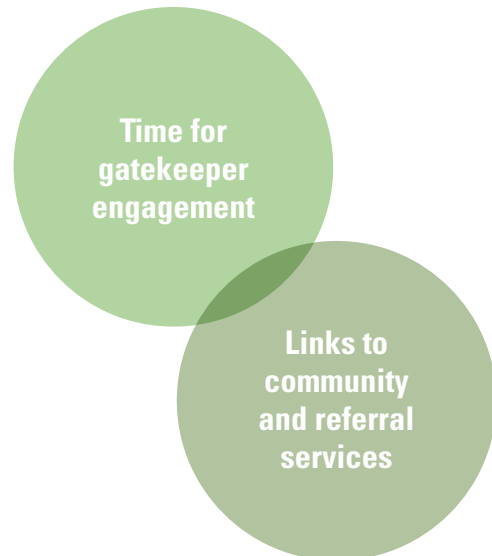
COMMUNITY GROUNDING ELEMENTS

7. Time for gatekeeper and stakeholder engagement

Community stakeholders, especially 'gatekeepers' who make decisions for girls, need to be engaged early in the process of instituting a life skills programme, because it may take time to build their support for girls' participation. Parents, faith leaders and other influential community members may raise objections to programme content that challenges existing gender norms and practices, such as those related to sexual and reproductive health or girls' rights. Sometimes in formal education programmes, parents or teachers may disagree with allocating time to life skills because they are considered less important than preparing for standardized tests so students can advance to the next grade level.

ASK **How long will it take to generate familial and community support?**

Allow time in the programme's workplan for parents, teachers and other stakeholders to provide input on the scope and structure of the programme, and to raise broad community engagement, support and awareness of the benefits of life skills programmes for adolescent girls. A rushed process that does not foster the community's support can jeopardize the programme's success. Consider whether faith or other community leaders are influential as moral authorities, and, if so, involve them as well. Community resistance to life skills programmes should not be assumed to be insurmountable. Often community members are appeased simply by knowing what adolescents will be taught. In some cases, resistance to sexuality

education has been overcome by explaining and sensitizing parents about the content and importance of those lessons or having gender-specific reflections about particular topics.

Beyond building community support for life skills programmes, outreach to parents, teachers and community influencers is an opportunity to affect them directly and influence their own knowledge and skillsets to positively impact how they parent or teach and how girls are perceived, supported or restricted in social spaces. When feasible, programming should accompany life skills for adolescents with complementary life skills development for parents, teachers and other adults.

Successful programmes allocated from two to six months for engaging stakeholders before life skills activities began, followed by periodic engagement throughout the programme. The box on page 14 provides two examples of how life skills programmes for girls engaged with communities at start-up.

8. Links to community activities and referral services

The *Rapid Review* found that when life skills programmes were accompanied by additional programme activities or with other stakeholders in communities and families (such as parents or teachers), the package of interventions was more effective than a stand-alone programme. Common additional programme components were community awareness-raising activities, engagement with learners' family members, exposure or exchange visits to other youth groups or community services such as banking facilities, provision of youth-responsive health services, condom distribution and material support for education.

ASK How is the programme connected to, and supported through, community engagement and services?

If a life skills programme does not have the capacity to implement multiple components, consider what other agencies, groups and local non-governmental organizations are doing for adolescent girls and how the programme can link with their activities. Are there voucher initiatives or subsidies for health care; safety net or conditional cash transfer programmes aimed at keeping girls enrolled in school; or groups that assist girls in obtaining legal identity documents? School improvement programmes, community savings and loans groups, and sports activities also benefit adolescent girls.

At a minimum, **facilitators should always know the referral services in a community and make girls aware of them**. Girls may not know what services or resources

Build in and sustain engagement with family members. This is vital both for securing commitment to girls' attendance and for changing discriminatory norms at community level.

Source: Marcus, R., Gupta-Archer, N., Darcy, M., & Page, E., Girls' Clubs and Life Skills Programmes: Positive potential, unanswered questions. GAGE Policy Brief. Overseas Development Institute, London, 2017.

The more effective programmes typically worked with family members, wider community members and other opinion-formers and gatekeepers. This was particularly important in changing perceptions of programmes from being seen as places for girls to gossip or as a threat to local cultures and traditions to being seen as valuable places for learning new skills and knowledge.

Source: Marcus, R., Gupta-Archer, N., Darcy, M., & Page, E., Girls' Clubs, Life Skills Programmes and Girls' Well-Being Outcomes. GAGE Rigorous Review. Overseas Development Institute, London, 2017.

exist, for example, if there are child protection committees or women's groups to support victims of violence or scholarships for continuing education. They may not be aware that they need health care or that they are entitled to visit health facilities. A facilitator who shares the number for a helpline or crisis support line can literally save a girl's life. In addition, group visits to health centres, employment services, women's shelters, legal support and other local services should be included whenever possible to familiarize girls with their locations and introduce them to providers. Finally, facilitators can identify local businesses that are adolescent-responsive, such as pharmacies that sell contraceptives, menstrual supplies or other items that girls need, and banks that welcome adolescents. In places with particular security concerns for girls, such as mobile phone stands with attendants that sell girls' numbers to predatory men, or markets where sexual harassment is common, it is important to identify safe shops for girls to patronize.

The *I Am Somebody* **manual in Sierra Leone** includes visits from health professionals (including to help with specific sessions on contraception and HIV), links to the nearest health centre or voluntary HIV counselling and testing (VCT) facilities, information on where to get contraceptives and HIV prophylactics, and connection with local Child Welfare Committees or other local advocates and community members.

In the **Rupantaran programme in Nepal**, knowledge of local services for substance abuse, de-worming, disaster response, vocational training, VCT, family planning and sexual and reproductive health, domestic or sexual violence, legal services and human trafficking are all identified as learning objectives.

EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENCES IN GIRLS' LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMMES

Siyakha Nentsha, South Africa:

Community engagement involved a year-long process to secure the interest of school officials and approval to work as part of the official school day and curriculum. It takes approximately two months to root the program in the community…Networking began with school heads to assess interest in the program, and continued throughout the program period. Stakeholders were regularly briefed on program status. Numerous meetings were then held with the district manager of the Department of Education, life orientation educators in each school, school governing bodies, traditional leadership, community-based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the area, the political leadership, and members of the ruling political party's youth structure. Stakeholder input was incorporated into the program as appropriate, and stakeholders were also involved in the recruitment of facilitators and in facilitating parents' approval… The program was delivered in school classrooms during school hours.

Safe and Smart Savings Products, Kenya:

During the pilot phase in Kenya, approximately six months were required to root the program in a new community including project development and savings product development. In subsequent phases, that time was reduced to four months, and in the new rollout, it took approximately one to two months… Before recruitment, orientation meetings are held with community leaders and parents. The program is advertised at local NGOs and community groups, schools, churches, and to adult banking clients who have daughters/nieces eligible to join, in addition to door-to-door recruitment. Meetings with participating girls are held by mentors in schools, churches, compounds, and community halls.

Source: Sewall-Menon, J,, et al., The Cost of Reaching the Most Disadvantaged Girls: Programmatic evidence from Egypt, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda. Population Council, New York, 2012.

ANNEX 1: CHECKLIST FOR DEVELOPING GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMMES

1. CLEAR DESIRED RESULTS	
ANSWER	What is the pathway of change to which a new skill contributes?
IDENTIFY	❑ A specific skill that contributes to… ❑ A specific behaviour that contributes to… ❑ A specific outcome in a girl's life

2. INTENTIONAL TARGETING	
ANSWER	What is your strategy for identifying and reaching the adolescent girls you want to reach?

IDENTIFY	❑ Vulnerabilities and relative advantages, group composition by age and sex
	❑ How to find and involve these girls – where are they located or congregate
	   • *Door-to-door*
	   • *Partner organizations*
	   • *Institutions*

3. CONTENT THAT FITS GIRLS' CONCERNS AND EXPANDS ASPIRATIONS	
ANSWER	Do girls see themselves, their concerns and their aspirations in life skills lessons and activities?
IDENTIFY	❑ Risks girls face ❑ How girls will apply new skills ❑ Scenarios that portray empowered women and girls

4. FACILITATORS CAPABLE OF PERSONAL GROWTH	
ANSWER	How will you prepare facilitators to be mentors and role models supportive of adolescent girls?
IDENTIFY	Strategies for facilitators to undergo: ❑ Values clarification ❑ Examining assumptions ❑ Personal transformation of gender attitudes

5. REFLECTIVE, PARTICIPATORY, PRACTICE-BASED APPROACH	
ANSWER	How will you ensure activities are carried out according to programme design?
IDENTIFY	Strategies for process monitoring of facilitation quality: ❑ Periodic on-site monitoring/ mentoring ❑ Feedback loops for continuous improvement ❑ Peer support groups

6. INTENSITY AND DURATION SUFFICIENT TO BE TRANSFORMATIVE	
ANSWER	What is the best pace of learning for adolescent girls in the programme?
IDENTIFY	❑ How often girls can meet (at least weekly recommended) ❑ How many hours modules require ❑ Girls' needs for peer support and social time

7. TIME FOR GATEKEEPER AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	
ANSWER	How long will it take to generate familial and community support?
IDENTIFY	❑ Stakeholder and gatekeeper groups ❑ Time in workplans for dialogue with communities and families ❑ Schedules of periodic engagement

8. LINKS TO COMMUNITY AND REFERRAL SERVICES	
ANSWER	How is the programme connected to community activities and referral services that are responsive to adolescent girls?
IDENTIFY	❑ Other local programmes for girls ❑ Local referral services in health, protection, safety net programmes, etc.

ANNEX 2: MANUALS AND MODULES FROM THE RAPID REVIEW

The Rapid Review included a look at 11 manuals and modules used by various UNFPA and UNICEF offices and partners in life skills programming for adolescents. The review mapped basic aspects of the design of each module, manual or toolkit, such as number of hours, intended target group and skills covered. It also assessed the strengths of each module and in which settings or populations each module would fit best.

This section shares key highlights of eight manuals and modules based on the review and assessment in the hopes that they are useful for UNFPA and UNICEF and partner personnel selecting a module to adapt for a life skills programme.[19] Part of the Rapid Review framework grouped skills and knowledge into eight topical categories. These categories are presented in the matrix below. Icons are presented in either full or pale colors to reflect the extent of focus on each category in a given module. Full color icons mean that the skill category comprises a large portion of the material; pale color icons mean the the skill category is only lightly covered. Also, a special icon is used to highlight the modules that include the topic of child marriage.

	TOPIC	EXAMPLES OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE
	Agency/empowerment	Identity, self-esteem, communication, problem-solving, conflict resolution, managing stress, teamwork, empathy, goal setting, decision-making, leadership, values, assertiveness, gender and power, body image, gender-based violence
	Basic literacy or numeracy	Counting money, reading, completing forms, calculations
	Citizenship, rights, participation	Advocacy, networking, rights and responsibilities, local governance, vital registration, elections
	Digital/information and communication technology (ICT) literacy	Internet and social media safety, computer use
	Employment/livelihood/vocational skills	Microenterprise, vocational training, jobs and entrepreneurship, job search skills
	Financial literacy	Financial planning, money, financial capability, savings, keeping money, spending money, borrowing
	Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and HIV	Nutrition, hygiene, menstruation, sexual violence, contraceptive use, puberty, reproduction, sexual desire, sexuality, consent, relationships
	Child marriage	Knowledge of relevant legislation and rights, rights in marriage, range of skills including negotiation, communication, navigating services

TITLE AND THEME	SKILL AREAS*	DURATION AND CONTENT	DETAILS
I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual [20,21] **Sierra Leone**		56–57 hours (younger cohort); 62–214 hours (older cohort) School- or community-based	**Evaluated?** No
The manual is aimed at harmonizing different manuals of civil society organizations. Broad outcomes speak to challenges such as child marriage, teenage pregnancy, HIV/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), gender-based violence and mental health, while focusing on adolescent resilience and a healthy society with successful and employable individuals. Gender equity and girls' rights are strong themes throughout the manual including gender-based violence, sexual violence, child rights and responsibilities, safe places (girls' mobility concerns) and girls' voices. In addition, older adolescents have a lesson on teenage advocacy, and communicating with elders is included in the gender and power module. Most scenarios used throughout the lessons are about challenges and burdens girls face and what strategies can be used to overcome those challenges.	*Agency/empowerment, rights and participation* (including gender and power), *financial skills* (including some numeracy), *SRH and HIV*. Also *Ebola* and *mental health* are covered in the manual. See summary of content under each module in the manual for details. The modules are designed so they can be used separately or together. The first module describes 'core' skills, some of which are cycled back to in other modules. For example, 'smart thinking' or critical thinking is taught in the first module and then raised again in the context of Ebola to help learners think about Ebola transmission. The approach is highly reflective and personal; facilitators are instructed to ask lots of questions and shown alternative ways of questioning to help a learner understand why they think the way they do when it comes to opinions or beliefs.	The set for younger adolescents includes 97 lessons, most of which are 35 minutes each (total of 56–57 hours). For older adolescents, there are 107 lessons, 35 minutes to two hours each, so the total content is somewhere between 62 and 214 hours. Some skills are contextualized in ways that address gender inequality. The lessons are very practical and grounded in learners' communities in terms of resources and services available for responding to violence against women and girls. Boys are encouraged to advocate for girls' rights. The lessons on communicating with elders use scenarios of girls facing common challenges of mobility, participation and household work. For older adolescents, the manual deals well with male sexual entitlement, transactional sex and rape through story-telling and discussion, using a risk reduction approach. Early marriage is addressed as one potential consequence of teenage pregnancy. There are also a couple of scenarios about young girls married to much older men that highlight national laws against child marriage, child rape and domestic violence.	**Ages:** 9–13 and 14+ **Sex:** Girls and boys **Best fit:** Settings in which transactional sex is common and child marriage is driven by pregnancy; works with non-literate adolescents.
Adolescent Girls Initiative Mentor Guide, Illimin [22] **Niger**		39 hours Community-based	**Evaluated?** Yes**
The manual is aimed at: 1) Providing girls with comprehensive knowledge on SRH, personal hygiene, gender-based violence, financial skills, gender issues and girls' aspirations; 2) strengthening girls' social competencies to express themselves, make decisions, participate fully in their community and make a positive impact; and 3) delaying child marriage and early pregnancy to reduce maternal deaths. Several activities give adolescents practice in new skills such as accepting compliments, recognizing emotions, relaxation, talking about sex, negotiating money matters, etc.	*Agency/empowerment, financial literacy, health and SRH*. Modules have been designed around different themes: 'Daily life skills' includes self-knowledge, self-esteem, goal setting, stress management, values, assertiveness, decision-making and problem-solving, peer pressure and leadership. Module 2 covers SRH, gender and power, and violence against women and girls (see manual for details). Module 3 is on financial skills (this module appears to be based on *Young Women: Your Future, Your Money*). Module 4 is on health and hygiene. 'Literacy sessions' is listed among the programme's activities but seems to be a separate component of the broader initiative.	The manual comprises 33 sessions of 60–90 minutes each, for an average of 39 hours total. Groups meet weekly. Although not stated explicitly, the manual promotes girls' empowerment through knowledge, values, information, peer support and skills development. Values about the roles of women and men are explored in early sessions focused on values clarification. In the second module, a session on gender and power goes deeper into power dynamics and expectations around sex and myths about sex, sexual desire of males versus females, menstruation, clitoral excision, and STIs and HIV. The realities of transactional and coercive sex are reflected in the scenarios used.	**Ages:** 10–19 **Sex:** Girls **Best fit:** Older adolescents in settings where work outside the home is common.

TITLE AND THEME	SKILL AREAS*	DURATION AND CONTENT	DETAILS
Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit, Breakthrough[23] **India**		10–24 hours School- or community-based	**Evaluated?** No
The full toolkit aims to increase adolescents' autonomy in their lives. Specific outcomes: 1) Adolescents increase in knowledge, skills and peer group support to make their community safer for girls and protect themselves from *violence, exploitation and child marriage*; 2) parents and community members *support adolescents* in seeking information and accessing services, encourage decision-making and play a key role in creating a protective, supportive environment; 3) relevant *government service providers implement and enforce laws, policies, schemes and programmes for adolescents* to prevent violence and exploitation. Module 5 covers general life skills, SRH and campaigning for change. Modules 8–10 offer a focused, efficient set of activities to address the root causes of child marriage, sexual harassment and domestic violence. Module 14 is for parents to build skills in supporting adolescent children. The remaining modules provide guidance for working with adolescents, non-governmental organization workers, religious leaders, panchayat members and police to address child marriage, gender-based violence and other forms of gender discrimination.	*Agency/empowerment:* Module 5: Confidence, goal setting, communication, assertiveness, trust, conflict resolution, teamwork, decision-making. Module 9: Gender and power in relationships, safe and unsafe places. *Citizenship, rights, participation:* Module 5: Leadership, advocacy, networking, collective power. Module 9: Rights of adolescent girls, collective power. *Financial literacy:* Modules 5 and 14: Financial planning. *Health and SRH:* Module 5: Nutrition, hygiene, menstruation, SRH and rights, sexual violence and abuse, HIV risk behaviours, mental health. Modules 8 and 9: Gender and gender discrimination, gender versus sex, violence and rights, child marriage, roles and responsibilities in marriage; domestic violence and sexual harassment; valuing girls and women. Sessions in Module 10 are selected from modules 8 and 9 to cover gender discrimination, marriage and relationships, gender-based violence and valuing girls. Module 14 for parents covers 'building self-worth in adolescents' (although the session is actually on gender stereotypes); decision-making by adolescents; safe and unsafe places; intergenerational dialogue and communicating with adolescents; and a session on financial planning, which adolescents join.	Module 5 (girls and boys): 24 hours in 21 sessions Module 8 (boys): 10 hours, 10 sessions Module 9 (girls): 12 hours, 15 sessions Module 10 (girls and boys): 9 hours, 9 sessions Module 14 (parents): 7 hours, 5 sessions The toolkit recognizes the different challenges of girls and boys in their gender socialization and treatment by family and society - for girls, child marriage, dowry and exclusion from major decisions about their own lives, and for boys, norms of masculinity that encourage risky behaviour and sexual violence. Sessions in Module 8 demonstrate how child marriage, domestic violence, sexual harassment and sex selection negatively affect boys and men as well as girls and women. Boys are also challenged to recognize the societal contributions of girls and women and to examine their roles in relationships.	**Ages:** 13–18 (girls) and 14–20 (boys) **Sex:** Girls and boys **Best fit:** South Asian contexts with high rates of arranged child marriage, domestic violence and sexual violence.
It's All One[24] **Global**		14–57 hours School-based	**Evaluated?** Yes
Contains Guidelines and Activities for a Unified Approach to Sexuality, Gender, HIV and Human Rights Education. The goals of the guidelines are to *increase* young people's: ability to make responsible decisions and act on their own choices; ability to participate in society and exercise their human rights; critical thinking and overall educational achievement; sense of self-efficacy and agency; and sense of sexual well-being and enjoyment…and *reduce* adolescents' rates of: unintended pregnancy; sexually transmitted infections including HIV; coerced or unwanted sex; and gender-based violence. In addition to the life skills goals, each activity includes an objective related to general academic skills, such as expository writing, research or public speaking. This enables the guideline to be integrated into other curricula in health, biology, civics or other subjects, when *It's All One* is used in formal and non-formal education.	*Agency/empowerment:* Intimate relationships, self-awareness, values, critical thinking, decision-making, communication, negotiation, active listening, conflict resolution, body image, stereotypes and implicit bias, double standards. *Citizenship, participation, rights:* Human rights, sexual and reproductive rights, rights and responsibilities, gender inequality, discrimination. *SRH and HIV:* Sex and gender, gender norms, gender-based violence, consent, abuse, pleasure, puberty, reproductive issues, safe motherhood, STIs/HIV, contraception, safe abortion, proper condom use. Most of the sessions on SRH and HIV assume that learners already know basic facts of biology and physiology or that they can quickly learn them from factsheets. Activities go beyond knowledge into the personal, interpersonal, and/or social dimensions of the issue or topic, for example, how power dynamics affect sexual relationships.	The full guideline is 57 hours, made up of 8 units and 54 activities. The subset of activities for learners younger than 15 covers 22 hours. The minimum set of sessions is 14 hours. There is no guidance on how often a group meets, but some homework requires a span of several days to complete. The guideline is founded in and begins with human rights. The first activity is about 'fairness'. The second unit is on gender, and gender equality is a consistent theme throughout the guideline. Power is explicitly discussed as a means to privilege or discrimination, and the content often raises challenges that adolescent girls face (mobility, safety, bodily autonomy, etc.). Ways that gender can restrict boys and men are also included. The tone of the guideline is particularly positive about the ability of youth to create change collectively and individually. Methods are largely academic with some discussions and activities; most reflection happens through individual writing.	**Ages:** 10–14 and 15+ **Sex:** Girls and boys **Best fit:** Older adolescents in school, although modules have been successful in community-based settings.

TITLE AND THEME	SKILL AREAS*	DURATION AND CONTENT	DETAILS
Rupantaran Training Package[25] **Nepal** (Modules currently only available in Nepalese)		80–90 hours School- or community-based	**Evaluated?** No
The high-level goals of the training package are aimed at 'overall empowerment' with a subject focus on comprehensive life skills and social education; financial education; and livelihoods awareness, including microenterprise development training. For each topic addressed, learning outcomes in knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviour are named, as well as the intended impact of the behaviour. There is a complementary package for parents of adolescents.	*Agency/empowerment:* Self-awareness; relationships and networks; safe and unsafe places; identity and diversity; communication; empathy; critical thinking; goal setting; decision-making; creative thinking; negotiation; assertiveness; emotions and stress; time management. *Citizenship, rights, participation:* Rights and responsibilities; civic engagement; disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation; natural resource management; gender and social inclusion; discrimination; local governance and planning processes; role of adolescents and children; volunteering; vital registration; voter registration. *Employment and vocational skills:* Options in a changing climate; business plans; vocational training; sustainable rural livelihoods; microenterprise; job-seeking skills (ages 15–19). *Financial literacy:* Saving and spending; planning and budgeting; wants and needs. *SRH and HIV:* Puberty; substance abuse; nutrition; first aid; reproductive rights; menstruation, hygiene, environmental hygiene; sex and sexuality; STIs/HIV; family planning and safe abortion (ages 15–19); pregnancy and safe motherhood; violence; child marriage; domestic violence; sexual violence/intimate partner violence; trafficking.	There are 15 modules with a total time of 80–90 hours. Frequency is established by the implementing organizations and is usually once or twice per week over 6–9 months. Gender is discussed within a human rights framework that distinguishes equity and equality. Issues of inequality are woven throughout the guideline for example, in nutrition (gender bias in household food allocation), gender and climate change, domestic violence and pregnancy, and other topics. Some content focuses on traditional harmful practices and girls' rights. Based on the outlines available, these sessions devote attention to how gendered roles and norms affect girls and women but not boys and men. There also seems to be less expected in adolescent boys' learning in these sessions. For example, the session on child marriage has learning outcomes that are predominantly written from a girl's perspective. Likewise, domestic violence learning outcomes exclude taking responsibility for preventing domestic violence through influencing potential perpetrators and/or seeking assistance if one fears they themselves may perpetrate domestic violence.	**Ages:** 10–14 and 15–19 **Sex:** Girls and boys **Best fit:** Strong in citizen participation, trafficking and international migrant labour.
Adolescent Education Programme's Peer Educators (PEs)[26] **India**		10–15 sessions spanning 7.5–22.5 hours School- (outside of formal curriculum) or community-based	**Evaluated?** No
The Peer Educator (PE) programme is part of India's Adolescent Health Strategy, which has six priorities: SRH, mental and emotional well-being, healthy lifestyle, violence-free living, improved nutritional status and substance misuse prevention. The programme aims to promote learning from trained peers and support-seeking through these peers; reduce fears or barriers experienced by adolescents; establish information and support networks among adolescents; and increase access to scientific and reliable sources of information.	*Agency/empowerment:* Self-awareness, emotions, communication, peer pressure, problem-solving, goal setting, gender vs sex, violence, unwanted touching, critical thinking. *Citizenship, participation, rights:* Rights and entitlements (excluded from the *Activity Book* version). *SRH and HIV:* Adolescence, puberty, substance use, nutrition, child marriage, STIs/HIV, hygiene, gender-based violence, domestic violence; the *Reference Book* version also includes environmental health and hygiene. The material often challenges gender stereotypes that affect girls' mobility, boys' emotional expression, household distribution of resources, etc. Sessions also explore discriminatory treatment of girls and adolescents' thoughts about fairness. Important gender issues include child marriage, masculinity and violence, sexual harassment and gender-based violence.	There are multiple versions: The Peer Educator Activity Book contains 6 modules and 10 sessions. The Peer Educator Reference Book has information for 8 modules and 15 sessions. The Training Manual for Peer Educators has 6 modules and 13 sessions. Most sessions are 45–90 minutes long. Groups meet weekly or biweekly. Many of the 'soft skills' learning components are tucked into health topics. For example, communicating with 'I' statements to resolve conflict is introduced in the nutrition module using a scenario about a girl being fed last with the lowest quality food. Assertive communication and problem-solving are taught next to substance abuse and peer pressure. Gender inequality is a recurring theme. The communication skills taught can be applied to self-advocacy for girls facing discrimination, and Peer Educators are equipped to link girls to referral services.	**Ages:** 10–14 and 15–19 **Sex:** Girls and boys, separated for many sessions **Best fit:** Unmarried adolescents enrolled in school.

TITLE AND THEME	SKILL AREAS*	DURATION AND CONTENT	DETAILS
Young Women: Your Future, Your Money Workbook[27,28] **Uganda**		16–18 activities, no time allocation School-, community-based, or self-directed	**Evaluated?** Yes**
Workbooks are available for girls only. Desired outcomes are not included, and lessons do not have learning objectives.	*Financial literacy:* Future planning, career goals, savings plans, budgets, wants and needs, banking, borrowing, negotiating for win-win agreements, and conflict resolution. The book for older adolescents also includes Strength Weakness Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis and wage versus self-employment. The workbooks can be used as a self-guided manual as an alternative to facilitated sessions.	There are 16 chapters in the manual for younger girls and 18 in the manual for older girls; no estimated length of time is given. The content is well-sequenced, and lessons refer back to previous learning. It is somewhat reflective: There are some questions meant to help girls understand themselves better to choose a career and make budgets, as well as stories that ask girls' advice about saving and spending. Gender inequity is not addressed. The manuals promote adolescent girls' economic empowerment. Inequality in access to banking and loans is not mentioned, nor how to use banking services or savings groups.	**Ages:** 10–14 and 15–19
			Sex: Girls
			Best fit: Adolescents in school in urban/ semi-urban settings.
Adolescent Kit for Expression and Innovation[29] **Global**		20–40 hours Community-based	**Evaluated?** No
The purpose of the kit is to support positive change among adolescents in challenging circumstances of humanitarian crisis and poverty: To cope with stressful circumstances, build healthy relationships, learn new skills and engage positively with their communities. Besides activities for adolescents, the toolkit provides guidance to facilitators in connecting adolescents to services and strengthening relationships with adults.	*Agency/empowerment:* Communication and expression; identity and self-esteem; leadership and influence; problem-solving and managing conflict; coping with stress and managing emotions; cooperation and teamwork; empathy and respect; hope for the future and goal setting; critical thinking and decision-making; and creativity and innovation. *Citizenship, rights, participation:* Action for community improvement. Although the kit promotes reflections on gender and identity with gender-equitable attitudes, it is limited in critical thinking about gender and gender inequality, challenges to gender stereotypes and applying skills to girls' empowerment.	The activities in the kit are laid out as a series of sessions linked by a common goal or theme. The four phases are: *Starting Our Circle, Knowing Ourselves, Connecting*, and *Taking Action*. Groups move through the phases at their own pace, and the structure allows for cycling back to earlier phases as needed. This flexibility accommodates the unpredictable nature of rapid-onset crises and allows the group to mature along with a humanitarian crisis. Each session is 60–120 minutes, so a phase would be at minimum 5–10 hours, and the whole course at least 20-40 hours.	**Ages:** 10–18
			Sex: Girls and boys
			Best fit: Crisis settings as part of humanitarian response.

*Full color icons are primary topics; pale color icons are secondary topics..

**The evaluation did not separate the impact of the module's use from other programme components.

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