



## **Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER)**

Social and Behaviour Change Communication  
Endline Evaluation Report

March 2023

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## Acronyms

CCU	Consortium Coordination Unit
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
EAGER	Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient
FGD	Focus group discussion
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEC	Girls' Education Challenge
IDI	In-depth interview
OOS	Out-of-school
SBCC	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

## A. Executive summary

### 1. Introduction

This report presents findings and recommendations from an endline evaluation on the reach, engagement and impact of two radio programmes produced by BBC Media Action for the Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER) project. EAGER is a 4-year (2019-2023) girls' education and empowerment project that was implemented in 10 districts of Sierra Leone with funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) through the Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) initiative of the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC). Through a consortium led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in partnership with Concern Worldwide, Restless Development, and BBC Media Action, EAGER created new learning opportunities for 27,322 of the most marginalised out-of-school (OOS) adolescent girls ages 13-19<sup>1</sup> who lacked basic literacy and numeracy skills – including girls who were pregnant or already mothers, married girls, girls with disabilities, and girls who were heading their own households. The project aimed to equip these girls with significantly improved learning outcomes and enable their transition into further learning and/or earning opportunities within a context of increased support from their families and community.

### 2. EAGER Social and Behaviour Change Communication

Two radio programmes were developed under the project's Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) component, which sought to address the underlying harmful attitudes, including those resulting from discriminatory gender norms, that prevent adolescent girls from accessing education and skills development opportunities. Developed by BBC Media Action, EAGER's radio programmes were designed to demonstrate that if caregivers and community influencers engage with trusted gender-sensitive media content, they will adopt more enabling attitudes toward adolescent girls, thereby supporting girls' learning and empowerment.

EAGER's SBCC activities included two national radio programmes and social media content produced by BBC Media Action, and partnerships with 18 community radio stations across all 16 Districts of Sierra Leone to support the production of local radio shows. This evaluation examines the reach and impact of the two national programmes:

- *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* (When the Girl Child Stands) was a weekly 30-minute, BBC Media Action-branded radio magazine show broadcast from July 2020-November 2022.
- *Kotoku Baray* (Open Secret) was a short-format, BBC-branded weekly radio drama and discussion show broadcast from May 2022-November 2022.

The evaluation was carried out from October 2022 to December 2022 and used a mixed method approach. A nationally representative face-to-face survey was conducted with 3,048 individuals (ages 15+ years) in all 16 districts of Sierra Leone. An additional 'booster' sample of 555 adolescent girls aged between 13 and 19 years who participated in the EAGER project in the 10 implementation districts was added to assess any additional impact of the SBCC component. Qualitative research was done to gain deeper understanding of how the radio programmes had influenced target audiences and to triangulate findings from the quantitative research. It covered 6 out of 10 districts in which EAGER was implemented. Data collection was done through focus-group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs) with parents/caregivers, marginalised adolescent girls, EAGER girls, adolescent boys, and community stakeholders.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> EAGER worked with girls ages 13-17 in the first cohort. For the second cohort, the age range was expanded to 13-19 to allow girls who were 17 during the pandemic to still participate in the programme.

<sup>2</sup> According to EAGER's definition of sub-groups, marginalised girls were categorised for this evaluation as those who are married or living with a partner, or have some form of disability, or have not attended school or dropped out of school, or have children or were pregnant during the time of interview. Community stakeholders included a community chief, female leader, youth leader, health worker, religious leaders (Muslim/Christian), partner of an adolescent girl, and teachers (formal and vocational).

### 3. Key findings

#### Reach of and engagement with the radio programmes

*Findings demonstrated high, regular listenership across Sierra Leone.* At the time of the evaluation, approximately 1.7 million people (31% of the 15+ population in Sierra Leone) had listened to at least one episode of *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* or *Kotoku Baray*. Approximately 1.1 million people (21% of the 15+ population) were regularly reached (had listened to at least every other episode). With a longer broadcast span, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* achieved the larger audience, with 27% of the population reached and 17% reached regularly. In comparison, 16% of the population were reached by *Kotoku Baray*, with 11% reached regularly.

*The radio programmes were successful in reaching a diverse audience, including key target groups and hard to reach audiences, despite typically low access to radio in remote rural areas.* Reflecting their higher level of radio access and regularity of listenership, a higher proportion of the male population, and those aged over 30 years, were regularly reached by both programmes. The programmes were effective at reaching a regular audience in both urban and rural areas, despite challenges faced in remote rural areas to consistently access radio signal. Target audiences who are typically harder to reach were represented relatively strongly among those regularly reached by the programmes. For example, the *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* regular audience consisted of 19% of the sample population who were identified as living with a disability and 15% of those identified as marginalised adolescent girls.<sup>3</sup>

*EAGER radio programmes reached EAGER girls both via national broadcast radio and through targeted girls listening groups.* Four in five (80%) of EAGER girls who were included in the booster survey, which included EAGER girls who had attended the girls listening groups were reached by at least one episode, and 56% were regularly reached. EAGER girls frequently mentioned that they liked that the programmes educated them, that they learned new skills to improve their lives, and that the programmes addressed issues that concern them.

*The programmes garnered strong engagement among audiences and were described as 'educative'.* Regular listeners most frequently cited the educational aspect of the programmes, when asked what they like about *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* (82%) and *Kotoku Baray* (68%). The programmes resonated with audiences, with regular listeners saying that issues covered were relevant to their community, their family, and their own lives. More than half of regular listeners (54%) said they have discussed *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* or *Kotoku Baray* with others, and discussing the value and importance of educating girls was the most frequently mentioned point (85% of those who reported discussing the programmes).

*EAGER radio programmes prompted more frequent discussion about education and skill development opportunities for girls and boys.* Regression analysis<sup>4</sup> showed that regular exposure to EAGER radio programmes was positively associated with more frequent discussion of education and skill development opportunities with girls and boys, even when controlling for potential confounding factors, such as age, gender, level of education and urban/rural location. Adolescent girls (including those identified as marginalised) reported feeling more empowered and confident to raise issues with their parents and caregivers, and to have a voice when it came to making decisions about their future opportunities. They described how the family dynamic had changed to be more inclusive of their views.

#### Knowledge and understanding on equal opportunities for girls

*Programming contributed to improved knowledge and understanding around education and empowerment for girls.* Almost all respondents (98%) who were regularly reached by *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* at least agreed that the programme helped them to better understand girls' learning, skills development, and education opportunities (with 66% strongly agreeing). Findings from qualitative research corroborated these findings, with participants almost unanimously reporting that the main thing they had learned from the EAGER radio programmes was that all girls in Sierra Leone had the right to an education and that even if a formal education wasn't possible, there

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<sup>3</sup> Survey respondents were identified as living with a disability and/or marginalised adolescent girls based on answers to a series of survey questions (i.e., respondents did not self-identify as this), and were subsequently grouped for analysis purposes.

<sup>4</sup> Regression analysis is a statistical technique that measures the association between variations in one or more independent variables and variation of a dependent one. For the purposes of this report, regression analysis is used to compare people regularly reached by EAGER radio programmes against those who have not listened to the programmes. This is done to identify any differences in these two groups in terms of their different levels of knowledge or attitudes. The advantage of regression is that it removes any distorting effects that might explain any differences between the groups. This process of removal is sometimes referred to as "controlling for confounders".

were opportunities available for girls to engage in learning new skills and trades. These results align with findings from the EAGER Endline Evaluation, in which 87% of caregivers surveyed agreed that *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* helped them to better understand girls' learning, skills development, and education opportunities.<sup>5</sup>

### **Taking action in support of girls**

*Actions such as re-enrolling girls into school were directly attributed to EAGER radio programmes by respondents.* Among those who were regularly reached by EAGER radio programming, over half (54%) reported that they have taken an action in support of girls as a result of listening to EAGER radio programmes. Among those, 61% reported that they have enrolled a daughter/girl in school and 48% said they have enrolled a daughter/girl in school after having a child. Actions reported among qualitative interviewees included key aspects of an enabling environment for girls' empowerment, such as taking a more supportive and inclusive approach to parenting, discussing sensitive issues with their children more often, and adopting family planning measures.

## **3. Sustainability: Shifts in attitudes affecting the lives of girls**

### **Attitudes towards girls' education**

Girls and women in Sierra Leone experience significant disparity in educational outcomes. Data from September 2021 places adult literacy rates at 52% for men and 35% for women; among youth, literacy rates are 71% for boys and 63% for girls.<sup>6</sup> According to the 2019 Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 39% of women (compared to 29% of men) have no education.<sup>7</sup> Within this context, EAGER's radio programmes were designed to provide trusted information to its primary target audience of caregivers and community stakeholders to support improved understanding of the value of girls' education and learning, recognition of the different choices available to girls, and to try to change discriminatory attitudes that hinder girls' access to these opportunities.

*Regular exposure to EAGER radio programmes is associated with more positive attitudes towards girls and boys having equal rights to education.* Respondents who were regularly reached by EAGER radio programming were significantly more likely than those not exposed to *strongly agree* that girls and boys should have the same rights to education (74%, compared with 68% of unexposed respondents). This positive association was found to hold, even when controlling for potentially confounding factors such as age, gender, level of education, and urban/rural location. Supporting these findings, qualitative research uncovered strong and consistently positive attitudes towards girls having equal rights to an education among all audience groups, with many self-attributing changes in attitude to what they had learned through the EAGER radio programming. Parents/caregivers and stakeholders reported that they now considered a girls' education to be just as important as a boys', whilst adolescent girls reported a strong sense of empowerment around their right and ability to learn anything after listening to the radio programmes. Pointing to shift in attitude at a broader community level, there was a view among participants that there has been a change in mindset in their communities about girls completing a traditional education.

*Attitudes around prioritising education over domestic roles remain more challenging to shift.* When the concept of girls' rights to traditional education were juxtaposed with gendered roles in the household, attitudes were comparatively less supportive, and evidence suggests that EAGER radio programmes had limited impact on shifting these. For example, there was no significant difference in the proportion of regularly reached audiences who *strongly agreed* that pregnant girls have the same rights as other girls to attend schools (39%, compared to 35% of non-listeners), or *strongly disagreed* that when a girl marries, she should stop going to school to take care of her husband and household (32%, compared to 29% of non-listeners). These findings reflect findings from the baseline assessment of the National Policy for Radical Inclusion launched by the Government of Sierra Leone in 2021, which found that pregnant or parent learners remain the most stigmatised in the school system, and continued to experience discrimination by their teachers, peers, and the wider community.<sup>8</sup> This points to the fact that attitudes towards domestic roles, especially for girls who are pregnant or parent learners, remain

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<sup>5</sup> EAGER Endline Evaluation Report July 2022, IMC Worldwide

<sup>6</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.MA.ZS?locations=SL> UNESCO Institute for Statistics

<sup>7</sup> <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR365/FR365.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> National Policy for Radical Inclusion, Baseline Report for Implementation, June 2022 <https://mbsseknowledgeplatform.gov.sl/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Radical-Inclusion-Baseline-Report.pdf>

deeply entrenched, and that although some small shifts can be seen in response to radio programming targeting this issue, more targeted and sustained efforts are required to expand such shifts and make them sustainable.

### **Attitudes towards skills development for girls**

*Regular exposure to EAGER radio programmes is associated with positive shifts in attitudes towards, and practical support for, girls pursuing skills and trades.* Respondents who were regularly reached by EAGER radio programming were significantly more likely than those not exposed to *strongly agree* that a girl who is not going to school can engage in learning new skills/trades (71%, compared with 63% of unexposed respondents), that girls should get the same opportunities/resources for skills/trade development as boys (64%, compared with 58% of unexposed respondents), and that girls can do as well as boys in trades, such as being a mechanic (55%, compared with 49% of unexposed respondents). This positive association was found to hold, even when controlling for potentially confounding factors such as age, gender, level of education, and urban/rural location.

This was consistently reflected in qualitative interviews, with adolescent girls resolute around the idea of girls being capable of learning any skill/trade. Many of the girls mentioned their own plans to train and/or start a business in the future, inspired by what they had heard on EAGER radio programmes, whilst others were already engaged in training or business, mostly as petty traders. Caregivers also reported that people were more open to girls developing skills and taking on jobs that were traditionally considered to be for boys and men only, and that they encouraged their girls to take up new trades. All EAGER girls interviewed as part of the qualitative booster study expressed positive attitudes on their rights and capability to learn skills and trades. However, they also expressed a sense that the attitudes of others in the community presented persistent barriers to normalising all trades (for example, mechanical engineering) for girls.

*Gender norms related to the traditional household hierarchy remain entrenched, despite positive attitudes towards women and girls learning new skills and trades.* Results indicated that there was no significant relationship between regular exposure to EAGER radio programmes and strong disagreement with the statement that a girl does not need to be economically independent because she will be looked after by her husband after she gets married. While there is more progress to be made around such attitudes which can limit opportunities for women and girls, findings do point to a very promising sense of self-reliance among girls, and aspirations to contribute to the household finances, which is a point of pride and self-respect, and can have positive impacts on many aspects of their lives.

### **Attitudes on gender roles**

*Even among those regularly reached by EAGER radio programming, the perceived role of women and girls as primarily homemakers continued to present a challenge to emerging positive attitudes towards education and empowerment of girls.* Underpinning most of the less supportive attitudes towards girls' education and skills development are the strong social norms that set expectations for the role of women and girls in the household. Results suggest that these attitudes were not shifted among those regularly exposed to EAGER radio programmes. For example, regularly reached respondents were only slightly, but not significantly, more likely to *strongly disagree* that a woman's most important role is being a good homemaker (12%, compared with 10% of non-listeners) and that girls should do more household chores than boys (11%, compared with 9% of non-listeners). Qualitative discussions underpinned the finding of limited impact, but did indicate that some people are willing to challenge some restrictive gender norms. For example, some participants reported that they had been inspired by the radio programmes to share household chores among other members of their family, including with boys and men. However, the prevailing attitude was that domestic duties were primarily the domain of female members of the household, and that the community (particularly in rural settings) would frown on men who did domestic chores.

The entrenchment of gender norms, and the barriers these continue to present to girls achieving their education and empowerment goals, was also detected in the EAGER Baseline, Midline and Endline evaluations looking at all programme activities, with some indications of continued resistance from respondents to challenge and negotiate these norms.<sup>9</sup> These results are not surprising in the context of entrenched gender norms and radio programmes that were broadcast over a relatively short period of time. Changing gender norms such as these is

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<sup>9</sup> EAGER Endline Evaluation Report July 2022, IMC Worldwide

a long-term, gradual process and would require continued broadcasting of SBCC radio programming in coordination with other targeted gender-transformative interventions over a greater length of time. The EAGER evaluations point to early signs of promising practices to support these efforts.

### **Attitudes on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)**

Formative research found that girls in Sierra Leone face significant challenges in accessing and completing their education. Adolescent pregnancy and marriage rates are key reasons for secondary school dropout rates among girls. A third of women (29.9%) aged 20-24 are first married before the age of 18 years (2017 MICS).<sup>10</sup> Only 24% of girls and women ages 15-19 (who are unmarried and sexually active or are married) use a modern form of contraception (2019 DHS). This points to systemic barriers to girls' ability to exercise their rights and agency in making decisions about their sexual and reproductive health in Sierra Leone.

Against this challenging backdrop, this evaluation indicates that there was a positive association between regular exposure to EAGER radio programmes and more knowledge and discussion of, and supportive attitudes towards, issues such as early and forced marriage and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)..

*Listening to EAGER radio programmes has contributed to greater understanding of the risks of early marriage and more positive attitudes around girls' right to decide if, and who, they want to marry.* Regular programme listeners were significantly more likely to *strongly agree* that a woman/girl, of any age, should have the right to decide WHO she want to marry (49%, compared with 43% of non-listeners), and that a woman/girl has the right to say 'no' to marriage (40%, compared with 33% of non-listeners). These positive associations hold even when controlling for potentially influential factors like gender, age, urban/rural location, and level of education. Further evidencing the positive contribution made by EAGER radio programmes, caregivers and adolescent boys and girls self-attributed their own increase in knowledge and awareness of the risks and negative impacts of practices such as early or forced marriage to what they had heard on *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* and *Kotoku Baray*. They reported that whilst the practice of early or forced marriage was still common in some of their communities, it was happening less due to a combination of government policy and projects such as EAGER making people more aware of the harmful impacts of such practices. When compared with findings about consent, as presented above, these results highlight the complexity of shifting harmful gender norms and provide insights into the potential for SBCC programming to be further adapted and tailored to produce greater impacts on these sensitive issues.

*Exposure to EAGER radio programmes support more positive attitudes towards, and more frequent discussion of, SRHR issues.* Regular exposure to EAGER radio programming is linked with more positive attitudes of parents/caregivers towards discussing contraception with their sons<sup>11</sup> and daughters,<sup>12</sup> and menstruation with their daughters,<sup>13</sup> as well as more frequent discussion of such issues with their children.<sup>14</sup> Regression analysis found that this positive association holds even when controlling for potential confounding factors such as age, gender, education, level of income, and urban/rural location. In qualitative interviews, female caregivers reported feeling comfortable discussing menstruation, menstrual hygiene, and contraception with their daughters, and mentioned that EAGER radio programmes had made them confident to have such conversations. Male caregivers mentioned that the programmes had reminded them of their responsibility as parents to discuss SRHR issues with their children, even if they felt uncomfortable doing so. However, most male caregivers reported that they did not find it easy to discuss menstruation with their daughters, pointing to the need for continued and more targeted interventions to shifts male caregivers' attitudes on such topics.

*Findings around understanding of, and attitudes towards, issues of consent suggest this is an area for future focus.* According to the 2019 DHS,<sup>15</sup> an estimated 62% of women aged 15-49 in Sierra Leone reported having experienced physical or sexual violence and a similar share (61%) of ever-married women aged 15-49 have

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<sup>10</sup> [Sierra Leone 2017 MICS Survey Findings Report](#)

<sup>11</sup> Respondents regularly reached were significantly more likely than those not exposed to *strongly disagree* that talking to their sons about contraception might encourage them to start having sex (22%, compared with 30% of unexposed).

<sup>12</sup> Respondents regularly reached were significantly more likely than those not exposed to *strongly disagree* that talking to their daughters about contraception might encourage them to start having sex (23%, compared with 29% of unexposed).

<sup>13</sup> Respondents regularly reached were significantly more likely than those not exposed to *strongly disagree* that men should not talk to their daughters about menstruation and menstrual hygiene (25%, compared with 31% of unexposed).

<sup>14</sup> Respondents regularly reached were significantly more likely than those not exposed to report discussing SRHR issues with their sons 'often' (33%, compared with 18% of unexposed), and with their daughters (32%, compared with 24% of unexposed).

<sup>15</sup> Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Demographic and Health Survey (2019)



experienced spousal violence whether physical, sexual or emotional by their husband or partner. At the school level, gender-based violence is also evident, with violence occurring both on the way to school and in school – by perpetrators including male teachers, peers and older students.<sup>16</sup> Within this setting, EAGER radio programming sought to address the harmful attitudes and behaviours around sex and relationships, and equip girls with the knowledge, understanding and life skills that would enable them to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights. However, results highlight that attitudes in this area remain particularly difficult to shift due to entrenched social and gender norms which curtail women and girls’ power to act on these rights. For example, respondents who were regularly reached by EAGER radio programmes were significantly *less* likely than non-listeners to believe that a woman always has the right to say ‘no’ to sex from her husband or partner (25%, compared to 30%). Regular programme listeners were more likely to believe that a woman/girl had the right to say no to her husband ‘in certain circumstances’ (42% reported this). The issue of consent was not raised frequently among qualitative participants as something they had learned from the programme, although some respondents did note that they had improved their understanding, and positively changed their attitude and approach towards gaining consent from sexual partners. These conflicting findings may be in some part due to the challenges of accurately measuring attitudes towards such a complex and sensitive issue, particularly speaking about such topics with unknown enumerators within the context of socially-acceptable responses, and limitations on the depth of research on this area within an evaluation of a broader set of outcomes. However, when reviewed against the backdrop of the high rates of gender-based violence recorded in Sierra Leone,<sup>17</sup> these results stress how interventions aimed at shifting norms remain necessary to drive more sustainable results, and does suggest that this is an area that warrants focus in future programming.

*There are positive indications that SBCC radio programming contributes to positive impact among EAGER participants alongside the wider EAGER programming.* Whilst the booster study used to explore the impact of SBCC radio programmes on EAGER participants was underpowered<sup>18</sup> to detect small significant shifts in knowledge and attitudes between EAGER girls regularly reached by the SBCC radio programmes and EAGER girls who had not listened to the radio programmes, results do indicate a consistently positive directional shift across each of the attitudinal statements tested. This suggests that SBCC activities may be contributing positively to deepening the impact of EAGER programming, thus also demonstrating the potential of SBCC interventions to reinforce the outcomes of integrated empowerment programmes for marginalised girls.

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<sup>16</sup> UNICEF 2012 Sierra Leone Statistics

<sup>17</sup> <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR365/FR365.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Statistical power, or sensitivity, is the likelihood of a significance test detecting an effect when there actually is one. A study being ‘underpowered’ means that a test only has a small chance of detecting a true effect or that the results are likely to be distorted by random and systematic error.

## B. Project context and background

With a population of over 7 million people, Sierra Leone faces escalating poverty and inflation. Before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was included in the low human development category in 2019, standing at 182 out of 189 countries and territories.<sup>19</sup> Economic pressures have undermined education outcomes overall and disproportionately affected girls' education and development. Sierra Leone ranks at 150 out of 160 countries on the Gender Inequality Index, with this inequality widening later in the education system as more girls than boys drop out of the education system.<sup>20</sup>

Adolescent pregnancy and marriage rates are among the highest in the world, and dominant causes of school drop-out rates among girls. Pregnant girls were not allowed to attend school or sit for examinations until 2020, when the government changed this policy. But stigma and discrimination persist for pregnant girls and adolescent mothers attending school. To counter these barriers to girls' education, the government has instituted the National Teenage Pregnancy Reduction Strategy (2013-2015) and its successor the National Strategy for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy and Child Marriage (2018-2022). Other policies on persons with disabilities, free quality school education and radical inclusion have also been developed to fulfil government commitments on inclusive and accessible education.

Against this backdrop, EAGER aims to improve learning outcomes for marginalised out-of-school adolescent girls and support their transition to further education, training, or employment. Funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) through the Leave No Girl Behind portfolio of the Girls Education Challenge (GEC), EAGER is implemented by a consortium of four partners: the International Rescue Committee, Concern Worldwide, Restless Development and BBC Media Action. The project duration is approximately four years (February 2019 - March 2023).

EAGER engages girls ages 13-19 in a Learning Programme to improve their functional literacy, numeracy, financial literacy, and life skills. The Learning Programme is followed by a Transition period in which girls prepare and implement self-directed Empowerment Plans. The plans detail four goals, one for each domain of EAGER's empowerment concept (learning, household, community and financial), along with steps to help achieve these goals. EAGER was launched in 285 communities with a first cohort of 7,481 adolescent girls in January 2020. In the following years of the project (inclusive of the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic), the project continued to work in these communities with the same cohort. In the last year, the project expanded to 381 communities supporting a new cohort of 19,841 adolescent girls.

## C. Social and Behaviour Change Communication in EAGER

### 1. Approach and theory of change

The EAGER project adopted an SBCC strategy to address the discriminatory attitudes, including those related to discriminatory gender norms that impose barriers in girls' lives, in order to create a more enabling environment for girls and to contribute to the sustainability of project outcomes. EAGER's SBCC strategy posits that if caregivers and community influencers engage with gender-sensitive media content, they will know about, discuss and adopt more enabling attitudes toward girls' education and opportunities.

EAGER's SBCC approach draws from the socio-ecological model and aims to influence gender-related power dynamics and drivers of change. It is informed by BBC Media Action's understanding of how media and communication can contribute to shifts in attitudes, behaviours and norms, as outlined in its strategies on health communication,<sup>21</sup> advancing gender inequality<sup>22</sup> and supporting young people.<sup>23</sup> The socio-ecological model emphasises that multiple levels of social influence (peers, family, community and wider society) exist around an individual's ability to act and these levels are interactive and reinforcing.

Insights from the SBCC formative research undertaken by BBC Media Action for EAGER, which focused on understanding barriers, facilitators and power dynamics, helped to prioritise increased support for learning,

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<sup>19</sup> [Briefing note for countries on the 2020 Human Development Report Sierra Leone](#)

<sup>20</sup> WFP Sierra Leone Country Brief, December 2020

<sup>21</sup> [BBC Media Action \(2017\), Health: Strategy and Approach \(2017-2010\)](#)

<sup>22</sup> [BBC Media Action \(2017\), Gender inequality: Our Approach and Strategy \(July 2017\)](#)

<sup>23</sup> BBC Media Action (2019), Young People: Our Approach and Strategy (January 2019) – available on request

education and skills development opportunities for marginalised girls as the overarching behaviour change objective for the project. The drivers of change that media and communication could influence at different levels of the socio-ecological model were identified as knowledge and understanding; discussion and dialogue; and supportive attitudes. By targeting these drivers, EAGER's SBCC interventions sought to create a supportive environment for girls and to bring the community and girls closer together in order to find solutions – moving from power over to power with.

Informed by this approach, EAGER's SBCC theory of change assumes that support towards girls' education and empowerment will increase if adults and girls:

- have the facts and information about girls' education or skills' development opportunities, and the choices available to achieve these;
- have talked to each other to exchange information, ideas, problems and solutions about girls' education and skills opportunities;
- have learned or been motivated by watching or hearing how other people like them support girls, or how other girls have overcome barriers, and the positive consequences of these actions in girls' lives.

The SBCC approach also links with the overall EAGER theory of change that if national and local radio programmes exploring the barriers and norms related to girls' education are broadcast, and opportunities and resources are created to promote discussion and dialogue within communities that explore the barriers and norms related to girls' education and empowerment, then communities that participate in such discussions and receive trusted and impartial information will experience a shift in attitudes and will understand and support adolescent girls in navigating barriers to education and their transition to adulthood.

## 2. SBCC activities

EAGER's SBCC activities include two national radio programmes and partnerships with 18 community radio stations to produce local radio shows based on the national programmes. The choice of radio programming was informed by formative research conducted in July - September 2019, which explored the media habits of audiences, particularly with regards to radio and social media. This research showed that radio is the most owned, used, and trusted media channel in Sierra Leone. Having confirmed the increasingly widespread use of social media in Sierra Leone, particularly among youth and professionals in urban areas, social media stories based on the radio content were also posted on BBC Media Action's Facebook page to reach this audience.

This evaluation explores the reach and impact of the two national programmes:

- **Radio magazine programme *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* (When the Girl Child Stands)**

*Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* is a weekly 30-minute, BBC Media Action-branded magazine programme. The show aims to be topical and relevant. Episodes are aligned with the EAGER Life Skills curriculum, but also reflect talking points in the country, such as the rainy season or the cost-of-living crisis. Ideas are also drawn from audience research conducted by BBC Media Action. Themes are localised and focused on adolescent girls. Each topic is mapped against the SBCC communications framework to ensure that it fits within EAGER's wider project objectives. A creative brief is developed for each episode to identify barriers for achieving the desired behaviour change objectives, motivators, or ways of overcoming those barriers, and what the production team wants audiences to know, feel or do as a result of engaging with that piece of content. For each episode, the production team also outlines potential risks and mitigations to adhere to Do No Harm, safeguarding and protection guidelines. Episode briefs are reviewed by consortium specialists, most often the safeguarding and protection specialists, but also at times by specialists on education and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

- **Radio drama and discussion show *Kotoku Baray* (Open Secret)**

*Kotoku Baray* is a short-format, BBC-branded radio drama and discussion show created to address sensitive issues relating to SRHR and GBV that are more challenging to approach on the factual magazine show. The production approach for *Kotoku Baray* is different from *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*. The creative process was completed at one stretch. Based on BBC Media Action's formative research and immersive research carried out by the drama writing team, a list of topics and talking points was developed for the entire series. Each episode was written to drive towards a specific talking point. These topics and talking points were discussed

with thematic specialists. Detailed briefs were then drawn up on each topic. The talking points and topic briefs were used to develop an overarching story line for the entire series and individual episodes were written based on the talking points. Alongside each script, a guide was developed for the discussion segment in order to provide questions to which audiences could react. Production began once the entire series had been written. Recording took place at an outdoor location to lend authentic sounds to the programme. Recorded episodes of the drama were then played to community groups to produce the discussion segment of the programme, with experts invited to be part of the recordings when relevant. The discussions were pre-recorded to prevent the dissemination of any misinformation and/or community conflicts. The drama and discussion segments were edited together as a half-hour programme for broadcast.

Both programmes were broadcast in Krio on 64 radio stations across all 16 districts of Sierra Leone. The formative research for EAGER revealed that 68% of the population listens to radio programmes in Krio across all regions and age groups. Broadcasting time slots for the programmes were determined according to the formative research,<sup>24</sup> which showed that most people – males and females and across age groups – listened to the radio between 6-8am (80%), followed by 9pm-midnight (69%) and 6-8pm (61%) on weekdays and weekends.

Despite the difference in format, both *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* and *Kotoku Baray* were girl-centred, 'showing' and not just telling audiences about girls' agency. Positive and empowering stories, told in the voices of and from the perspectives of girls, helped audiences to see what girls are capable of. With this girl-centred approach, the programmes encouraged inter-generational discussion among adolescent girls, their families, and communities.

*Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* and *Kotoku Baray* were designed to gradually build trust with audiences and evolve from being 'gender-sensitive' toward 'gender-transformative' media, with the aim of increasing knowledge, discussion and supportive attitudes toward girls. The factual radio program covered foundational topics such as two-way discussion, positive parenting and listening to girls. These shows pave the way for more complex discussions on barriers to girls' education, especially around SRHR, that were addressed in the drama and discussion show.

Since the SBCC strategy focuses on transforming discriminatory attitudes and practices toward adolescent girls, the primary target audience for the radio programmes was the community around girls that exerts influence on their lives. The formative study conducted by BBC Media Action for EAGER in July-September 2019 reiterated the fact that decisions around an adolescent girl's life are mainly made by her parents/caregivers, and by her partner after she is married. Community leaders such as chiefs, religious heads and *mammy queens* were seen as important stakeholders due to their influence over parents and their enforcement of laws. Families were found to be the biggest potential enabler for an adolescent girl, both financially and emotionally. The EAGER Baseline evaluation confirmed these contextual realities, noting how girls had little decision-making power over their education (66% of girls enrolled in EAGER at Baseline stated that they could not choose their own educational path and were subject to the decisions of others) and many girls experienced social marginalisation, stigma, isolation from their peers, and heavy chore burdens due to life circumstances. In many cases, this was associated with barriers at the household and community level (44.1% were married, 57.5% were mothers, 7% were pregnant at the time, and 9% were their own head of household). The EAGER Baseline also identified how men, especially male partners, supported education as a means to generate household income but qualitative data presented the nuance that many did not approve of changes that would alter traditional gender norms. At Baseline, there was a general lack of community support for key components required to support girls in the community: qualitative data demonstrated this with regard to girls' participation, education, safety, and/or empowerment.

Against this backdrop, adolescent girls form the secondary audience for the radio programmes as the aim is to bring a community together to discuss issues that were presenting barriers to girls accessing education and skill development opportunities (such as lack of empowerment, social marginalisation, heavy chore burdens, and lack of family and community support), and find solutions to these challenges. The EAGER Baseline identified also that girls were unaware of the gender norms that underpin their lives: 3.7% demonstrated awareness of gender norms, suggesting that these norms are largely internalised through socialisation and the absence of

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<sup>24</sup> Formative research included [media landscape](#) data from a nationally representative survey commissioned by BBC Media Action conducted in November & December 2019.

female role models. By shifting the dynamics between girls and those in their social networks from ‘power over’ to ‘power with,’ the radio programmes seek to build an environment which enables girls to have ‘power to’ shape their lives, supported by those around them.

## D. Research approach and methodology

This report presents findings and recommendations from a mixed-methods endline evaluation conducted in September-November 2022 to study the reach and impact of EAGER’s national radio programmes. Through quantitative and qualitative analyses, it explores associations between exposure to the radio programmes and changes observed in knowledge, discussion and attitudes including on gender norms, around girls’ learning and empowerment. The evaluation is the last of a series of studies by BBC Media Action and is designed to document learning from EAGER and to make recommendations for future girls’ education, empowerment and/or SBCC interventions.<sup>25</sup>

Table 1 below summarises the EAGER logframe indicators that BBC Media Action has reported against in this evaluation.

Table 1: EAGER logframe indicators for SBCC activities

Outcome	Description	Indicator
OUTCOME 3 - Sustainability	National level: Listening and engaging with EAGER radio programme results in more positive attitudes towards girls’ education and empowerment amongst wider population	% of radio listeners that foster more supportive attitudes towards girls’ learning/education/entrepreneurship/participation in society (disaggregated by sex)
Intermediate Outcome 4	Community members regularly listen to and/or engage in dialogue surrounding issues relating to girls’ opportunities, education, and safety (disaggregated by girls, boys, men, and women)	IO4 Indicator A. # of people reached (including frequency) through national programming  IO4 Indicator B. % of radio listeners who report actively engaging with topics discussed in radio programming
	Community members, including caregivers of girls, demonstrate more supportive attitudes and/or behaviours toward girls’ opportunities, education, and safety	% of community members who demonstrate supportive attitudes towards girls’ opportunities, education, and safety (disaggregated by sex, role)

The evaluation responds to the following overarching research questions:

- How many people have been reached nationwide with EAGER’s radio shows?
- What signs of changing knowledge and attitudes on girls’ learning and empowerment can be observed as a consequence of the radio shows?
- Which attitudinal changes modelled through the radio shows have the potential to continue after the end of the project?<sup>26</sup>
- What recommendations can be made for future projects based on learning from EAGER’s SBCC activities?
- Have the radio shows made any added impact on girls engaged in EAGER activities?

<sup>25</sup> Previous qualitative research studies conducted by BBC Media Action for the EAGER project that helped inform and tailor radio programming includes: A formative study (July-September 2019), pre-testing, a longitudinal panel study at three timepoints (November-December 2020, June-July 2021 and April-May 2022) and midline evaluation (November-December 2021).

<sup>26</sup> The EAGER radio shows have featured caregivers and girls who have ‘role modelled’ positive attitudes and behaviours that listeners can ‘observe’ through listening to the shows.

Based on the EAGER project design, the radio programmes were produced and disseminated to respond to a national-level logframe indicator: *Listening to and engaging with EAGER radio programmes result in more positive attitudes towards girls' education and empowerment among the wider population.*

The endline evaluation additionally interrogates the impact of radio programming as part of the EAGER project to demonstrate if this made any additional impact on adolescent girls reached through the project. Additional data was collected through a quantitative and qualitative booster sample to gather feedback from EAGER girls who have been exposed to a certain level (number of episodes) of the radio programmes.

## 1. Quantitative evaluation

For the quantitative component of this endline evaluation, a nationally representative survey was conducted with a sample of 3,048 individuals aged 15 and above in all 16 districts of the country in October-November 2022. The sample size was calculated based on previous research done by BBC Media Action on media outputs that had reached 51% of the adult population in Sierra Leone.<sup>27</sup>

A probability proportionate to size (PPS) multi-stage cluster sampling method was used:

1. In the first stage, 204 Enumeration Areas (EAs) were selected with probability proportional to size (PPS) selection procedure.
2. Household selection in the second stage was conducted by computing a sampling interval based on the estimated number of households in the community and then selecting a random start by drawing a random number between one and the sampling interval.
3. In the last stage, participant selection at the household level was conducted using a random selection function in the Survey CTO software (used for Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) data collection) to select a respondent among the household members aged 15 + from a completed household roster.

Post-data collection checks were carried out and the data was weighted by age, sex and province before analysis to ensure it is representative of the population. Descriptive as well as inferential statistical analysis like linear regressions were conducted to compare the results between respondents regularly reached by the radio programmes and those not exposed. As applicable, results have been tested for statistical significance at  $p < 0.05$ .

- Regular reached: Those who had listened to at least every other episode of *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* within the last 12 months or every other episode of *Kotoku Baray* within the last 6 months at the time of data collection (n=641).
- Not exposed: Those who reported having not listened to an episode of either show (n=2,090). This does not include audiences who were 'reached' but not 'regularly reached' (n=317).

An additional sample of 555 adolescent girls aged between 13 and 19 years who participated in the EAGER Learning Programme in the 10 implementation districts was added. This 'booster' study aimed to explore the theory that a *combination* of EAGER community-based programming and SBCC activities would have the most positive impact on adolescent girls. As such, the study sought to assess whether any additional impact specific to the SBCC component could be detected among EAGER participants. Fieldwork was conducted in November and December 2022. This booster sample aimed to compare two groups:

- Control group (279 girls): 20 randomly sampled EAGER Cohort 1 communities were selected. A maximum of 16 adolescent girls per community who had attended the EAGER Learning Programme were randomly selected for interviews.
- Intervention group (276 girls): 20 purposefully sampled Cohort 1 communities in which BBC Media Action radio mentors facilitated listening sessions in Girls' Clubs so that girls could listen to and discuss a series of episodes of both the factual and drama-discussion shows were selected. A maximum of 16 adolescent girls who had attended the EAGER Learning Programme and were members of the Girls' Clubs where the EAGER radio shows had been played were selected for interview.

Findings from the booster sample of EAGER girls have been presented throughout this report. However, results should be interpreted keeping in mind both the way in which the sample was selected and the sample size. As

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<sup>27</sup> The magazine radio show *Tawa Fo Welbodi* reached 2.1 million people (51% of Sierra Leone's adult population). <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/mediaaction/pdf/research-briefing-CHARM-malaria-sierra-leone-2021.pdf>

compared to the randomly selected national sample, the booster sample was collected purposively. This means that results are not representative of *all* girls who took part in the EAGER Learning Programme, and that direct comparison cannot be made between the nationally representative and the booster samples.

During analysis of the quantitative booster sample, it was found that exposure to EAGER radio programming was high even among EAGER girls who had not attended the radio listening sessions (control group), implying that they had heard the programmes on the radio during normal broadcasts. Due to this, analysis of the booster sample was conducted using the same approach as the national sample, comparing EAGER girls regularly reached by the radio programmes with EAGER girls who had never listened to the programmes. Because listenership was so high among participants in the booster sample, the control group (those not exposed to EAGER radio programming) became relatively small (n=114). This means that the booster study is somewhat underpowered and unlikely to detect small differences at a significant level, even if they do exist. Nevertheless, findings from the booster sample analysis provide valuable insight into the impact of the radio programmes on EAGER girls.

A quantitative questionnaire was created to address the research questions outlined above. The quantitative questionnaire was then adapted into a computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) survey to allow for mobile data collection. The quantitative questionnaire was programmed into a CAPI survey using the SurveyCTO software platform on a secure server.

Piloting of the survey questionnaire was conducted by three field staff who were trained on the questionnaire and field procedures. One Enumeration Area (EA) in the Western Urban Area district was selected for the pilot as this was close to the proximity of the head office. A five-day face-to-face training was conducted for field staff in Freetown. Training activities focused on a question-by-question review of the survey, use of the mobile phone and SurveyCTO software to capture data, methods to boost respondent rapport and field logistics.

The following key activities were conducted to ensure the quality of the data collection:

- Piloting
- Training with enumerators and supervisors from the agency
- Review and approval of first 100+ cases in SPSS
- Monitoring visits by field supervisors. As required, the supervisors further instructed the team members on data collection processes.
- Spot checks to monitor data collection
- Daily and weekly reports
- Data cleaning

## 2. Qualitative evaluation

Qualitative research was used to facilitate deeper understanding of what listeners think of the radio shows and why and how these shows may have had an influence related to the research objectives. The research was used to triangulated findings from the quantitative research.

The qualitative evaluation covered 6 out of 10 districts in which EAGER is implemented to be able to carry out purposive sampling to select participants for focus-group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs). The following criteria was used to select the 6 districts:

- Regional representation to ensure views are reflected from across the country.
- Number of radio stations airing EAGER content.
- Prevalence of issues that have been identified as barriers to girls' education and learning.<sup>28</sup>

The recruitment criteria prioritised finding participants who had listened to a minimum of three episodes each of the factual and drama-discussion shows. If this was not possible, a second option was to recruit participants who had listened to six episodes of either show within the last three months.

The qualitative evaluation included FGDs and IDIs with caregivers, marginalised adolescent girls, EAGER girls, adolescent boys, and community stakeholders.

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<sup>28</sup> [Sierra Leone Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey \(MICS\) Report \(2017\)](#).

Table 2: Qualitative evaluation participants

Respondents	Methodology	Number of FGDs/IDIs	Districts
Caregivers of marginalised girls (Females)	FGDs	3	Urban areas: Western Area, Bo, Koinadugu (Kabala)
		3	Rural areas: Kenema, Kono, Port Loko
Caregivers of marginalised girls (Males)	FGDs	3	Urban areas: Bo, Koinadugu (Kabala), Western Area Urban
		3	Rural areas: Kenema, Kono, Port Loko,
Marginalised adolescent girls between 13-19 years	FGDs	3	Urban areas: Bo, Koinadugu (Kabala),
	FGDs	1	Rural areas: Kono,
Marginalised adolescent girls between 13-19 years	IDIs	2	Urban areas: Bo, Koinadugu (Kabala),
	IDIs	5	Rural areas: Kenema, Kono, Port Loko, Western Area
Adolescent boys	FGDs	1	Urban areas: Western Area.
	FGDs	3	Rural areas: Kenema, Port Loko, Bombali.
Community stakeholders	IDIs	6	Urban areas: Bo, Koinadugu (Kabala)
	IDIs	3	Rural areas: Kenema, Kono, Port Loko, Western Area
EAGER girls <i>Similar to the quantitative evaluation, a set of FGDs was added to the qualitative segment to respond to the research question on the added impact of SBCC programming on EAGER girls.</i>	FGDs	3	Urban areas: Port Loko, Bo, Magburaka
		8	Rural areas: Port Loko, Kono, Kenema, Kailahun, Bo

Separate interview guides were developed for caregivers, adolescent girls and boys, EAGER girls and community stakeholders, with questions also separated for *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* and *Kotoku Baray*. Moderators were trained to conduct data collection in an exploratory manner by following the flow of the conversation to get a deeper understanding into issues rather than asking all participants the exact questions.

Data was managed and stored according to BBC data protection policy. Interviews were audio recorded. The records were transcribed and translated to English by trained transcribers. All personal identifiers were removed and pseudonyms were used where appropriate.

A framework method was used for data analysis, drawn from the research questions, SBCC theory of change and logframe indicators. Transcripts were added to the framework on the basis of location, group and sub-group type, question asked and the general topic of the question. Coding was undertaken to identify themes and to make an assessment against the research questions. Short summaries of the findings were compiled for each question and key quotes were added to the framework to illustrate the findings, which were triangulated with quantitative results to help interpret the overall findings.

Spot checks were conducted to ensure that the discussions and interviews were being administered properly. Field teams sent daily interview notes through a Whatsapp group. Sample audio files and transcripts were reviewed on a weekly basis to pick up any errors and see the quantity and quality of data being collected.

Participants in the qualitative study, who were both exposed to SBCC radio programmes and engaged in the EAGER Learning Programme often discussed what they had learned from the EAGER Learning Programme and the radio programmes interchangeably, which is expected as EAGER Life Skills curriculum and the radio communications framework were aligned. In analysing and reporting data, perceived impact of SBCC has only been reported where girls have directly attributed something to the EAGER radio programmes.



As well as the Endline Evaluation research described above, this Endline Report also draws on research conducted by BBC Media Action through the project life cycle. This includes:

- **Formative Research (March 2022):** The purpose of the formative research was to inform the development of BBC Media Action SBCC activities within the overall EAGER project. The research aimed to draw out the key barriers and motivations to girls' empowerment and to understand how they interact to influence support given to adolescent girls. The research used qualitative methodologies, alongside desk research. Fieldwork consisted of 17 FGDs and 15 IDIs in total, which took place in four districts in Sierra Leone and was conducted between July and September 2019.
- **Audience Panel (September 2022):** A qualitative longitudinal panel study was conducted with listeners of *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* to monitor and evaluate the engagement and impact of the radio programmes. This research involved interviews with the same audience members at three timepoints throughout the project (Wave 1 fieldwork: November-December 2020, Wave 2 fieldwork: June-July 2021, Wave 3 fieldwork: April-May 2022). The panel included families, adolescent girls and mothers, fathers, and caregivers.
- **Midline Evaluation (June 2022):** This study aimed to assess emerging impacts from the factual radio show *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*. The evaluation explored audience engagement with the radio show, as well as evidence of changes in attitudes, behaviours and norms around girls' learning and empowerment. Using qualitative methodologies, this research included 14 FGDs and 10 IDIs with regular listeners of *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* in six out of the 10 EAGER districts and was conducted in November to December 2021.

### 3. Safeguarding and ethics

BBC Media Action adhered to strict ethical standards in accordance with its safeguarding, child protection and data protection policies during this evaluation. Its research protocols consider anyone under the age of 18 as a child and it operates a zero-tolerance policy concerning all forms of abuse and exploitation of children and vulnerable people.

Verbal informed consent/assent was sought and recorded for all participants. For participants under 18 years of age, in addition to seeking informed assent from the child, parents were asked to give consent. In cases where girls/boys were mothers/fathers, married and/or heads of households, they were considered emancipated and consent from caregivers was not sought. Participants aged 18 and above gave consent themselves. Before obtaining consent/assent, data collectors informed participants about the purpose of the study, topics covered and how the data gathered will be used.

Participants were reminded that informed consent/assent is a continuous process and that they were free to stop their interview at any point and could choose not to answer any question if they did not feel comfortable or did not want to, without any negative consequences to them. They were also informed that their opinions and feedback will be kept completely anonymous, their comments will never be associated with their names and their personal details will be kept confidential. For participants under 18 years, data collectors explained these points to their parents/guardians as well as the participants.

Data collectors prioritised the welfare and safety of participants. They did not ask any personal experiences or circumstances during data collection that might encourage disclosure. Discussions touched upon general community, social and cultural considerations. Data collectors were trained and prepared to ensure that participants are not worried, confused or misled by any questioning, especially around potentially contentious or disturbing topics. They carried information about referral services from EAGER consortium partners to give to participants, if required, as well as contact information for BBC Media Action's safeguarding focal point in Sierra Leone.

Data collection took place in safe and protected spaces. Parents/guardians/chaperones were present near the space during data collection with adolescent boys and girls so that the participants could speak freely but their parents could be easily available if needed. FGDs were conducted separately for girls and boys, and were conducted in a private, safe space. Data collection with adolescent girls was conducted by females.

#### 4. Limitations

- The endline evaluation had to be conducted within a short timespan due to several factors. Fieldwork for the nationally representative survey could only start after the peak months of the rainy season. The endline had to be conducted after most episodes of *Kotoku Baray*, which went on air in May 2022, had been broadcast in order to measure its reach and impact. Data collection, therefore, had to be planned very precisely to meet close deadlines. Despite preparations, fieldwork teams faced delays due to long distances and poor road and river access conditions between some EAs. Fuel shortages and high costs that peaked during this time due to the rampant inflation in the country during the data collection period aggravated these difficulties. BBC Media Action and the EAGER Consortium Coordination Unit (CCU) set up a system of direct communication between field teams and EAGER District Supervisors that helped to overcome these delays to a large extent. Field teams were able to quickly change plans and communicate this information in communities to meet daily quotas and avoid a major delay in the evaluation.
- EAGER District Supervisors supported field teams in identifying EAGER Cohort 1 girls to participate in the booster survey, but there were a number of instances where the full sample size of 16 girls per community was not met as the girls no longer lived in the community or were not present during data collection. BBC Media Action and the CCU had discussed this risk during the design of the booster sample. Field teams were, therefore, prepared to make changes in the communities. When enough EAGER Cohort 1 girls could not be identified in some communities, these were replaced with other communities in a nearby chiefdom.
- During analysis of the quantitative booster sample of EAGER girls, it was found that exposure to EAGER radio programming was high even in the control group. This implied that apart from the radio listening sessions organised by BBC Media Action, EAGER girls had heard the programmes on the radio during normal broadcasts. Due to this, the analysis plan for the booster sample had to be adapted. It was conducted using the same approach as the national sample, comparing EAGER girls regularly reached by the radio programmes with EAGER girls who had never listened to the programmes. Since the control group (those not exposed to EAGER radio programming) became relatively small (n=114), this means that the booster study is somewhat underpowered and unlikely to detect small differences at a significant level, even if they do exist. Nevertheless, the booster sample revealed differences between regular listeners and non-listeners, providing valuable insight into the impact of SBCC programming on EAGER girls.
- The recruitment criteria for qualitative data collection (those who had listened to a minimum of three episodes each of the factual and drama-discussion shows or those who had listened to six episodes of either show within the last three months) made it challenging to identify participants for the FGDs and IDIs within the timeframe for fieldwork. Even after participants were identified, there were instances when they were away for farming or other work during interviews. BBC Media Action worked closely with its radio station partners and radio monitors to recruit participants. Radio station managers and presenters were able to provide names of their regular audiences who called in after different programmes, after obtaining their consent. In many areas, respondents for the qualitative evaluation could be successfully identified using this group.

## E. Key findings: Impact on audiences

### 1. Logframe Results

Table 3: Logframe results

Description	Indicator	Survey Question	Result
<b>Outcome 3: Sustainability National level:</b> Listening and engaging with EAGER radio programme results in more positive attitudes towards girls education and empowerment amongst wider population	% of radio listeners that foster more supportive attitudes towards girls' learning/education/ entrepreneurship/ participation in society (disaggregated by sex)	Supportive attitude statements towards girls <sup>29</sup>	(Average) 63% of regular listeners of either programme (strongly agree with a set of statements <sup>30</sup> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>65% female and 62% male regular listeners 'strongly agree' with the set of statements<sup>31</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Intermediate Outcome 4:</b> Community members regularly listen to and/or engage in dialogue surrounding issues relating to girls' opportunities, education, and safety (disaggregated by girls, boys, men and women)	<b>IO4 Indicator A.</b> # of people reached (including frequency) through national programming	Those who have listened to at least every other episode of <i>Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap</i> within the last 12 months or every other episode of <i>Kotoku Baray</i> within the last 6 months	<i>Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap</i> or <i>Kotoku Baray</i> Regular reach - 21% (Approximately 1.1 million) Female: 46% Male: 54%
	<b>IO4 Indicator B.</b> % of radio listeners who report actively engaging with topics discussed in radio programming	Have you ever discussed the <i>Wae Pikin Gyal Tinap</i> / <i>Kotoku Baray</i> programmes with anyone?	54% of regular listeners of either programme have discussed the radio programme with others Female: 52% Male: 55%
Community members, including caregivers of girls, demonstrate more supportive attitudes and/or behaviours toward girls' opportunities, education, and safety	% of community members who demonstrate supportive attitudes towards girls' opportunities, education, and safety (disaggregated by sex, role)	Supportive attitude statements around equal opportunities for girls <sup>32</sup>	(Average) 51% of regular listeners compared to 45% of not exposed 'strongly agree/strongly disagree' with set of statements <sup>33</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>51% female and 50% male regular listeners 'strongly agree/strongly disagree' with set of statements<sup>34</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>29</sup> Five statements were included in the supportive attitudes as a direct result of listening to either of the radio programmes:

1. The programme(s) has made me realise the value of sending all girls to school (Strongly agree)
2. The programme(s) has made me realise the importance of supporting girls/daughters to make their own choices (Strongly agree)
3. The programme(s) has made me realise the importance of supporting girls in accessing opportunities in my community (Strongly agree)
4. The programme(s) has made me realise the importance of supporting girls in making decisions about their own safety in my community (Strongly agree)
5. The programme(s) has made me realise the importance of listening to girls views and ideas (Strongly agree)

<sup>30</sup> Base: 641 regular listeners of either *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* or *Kotoku Baray*.

<sup>31</sup> Base: (Regular listeners) Female (n=293) Male (n=349)

<sup>32</sup> Seven statements were included in the supportive attitudes:

1. Girls and boys should have the same rights to an education (Strongly agree)
2. Even when funds are limited it is worth investing in a girl's education (Strongly agree)
3. A girl is just as likely to use her education as a boy (Strongly agree)
4. When girls marry, they should stop going to school because they will have to take care of their husband and household (Strongly disagree)
5. Daughters should go to school only if they are not needed to help at home (Strongly disagree)
6. A pregnant girl has the same rights as other girls to attend school (Strongly agree)
7. It is never too late for a girl to learn to read and write (Strongly agree)

<sup>33</sup> Base: 641 regular listeners of either *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* or *Kotoku Baray*. Base: 2090 not exposed.

<sup>34</sup> Base: (Regular listeners) Female (n=293) Male (n=349)

## 2. Radio reach and engagement

This section reports results against EAGER’s intermediate Outcome 4: Community members regularly listen to and/or engage in dialogue surrounding issues relating to girls’ opportunities, education, safety (disaggregated by girls, boys, men, and women).

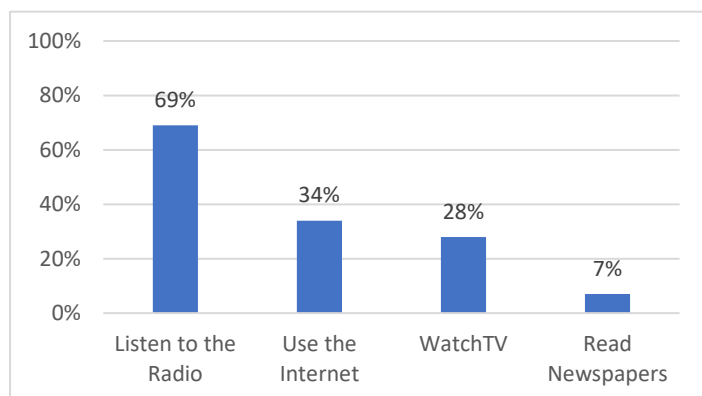
Findings respond to the following research questions:

- What is the reach and regular reach of *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* and *Kotoku Baray*?
- Who listens to the EAGER radio programmes and how often do they listen?

### 2.1 Media landscape of Sierra Leone

Results from the quantitative survey showed that radio remains the most used media platform in Sierra Leone, validating the choice of radio as the main medium for EAGER’s SBCC activities. As per Figure 1 below, a total of 69% of respondents reported listening to the radio within seven days prior to the survey. This compares to 34% who reported using the internet, 28% who had watched television, and just 7% who had read newspapers.

Figure 1: Media platforms accessed<sup>35</sup>



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Survey October & November 2022 (base = 3,048)

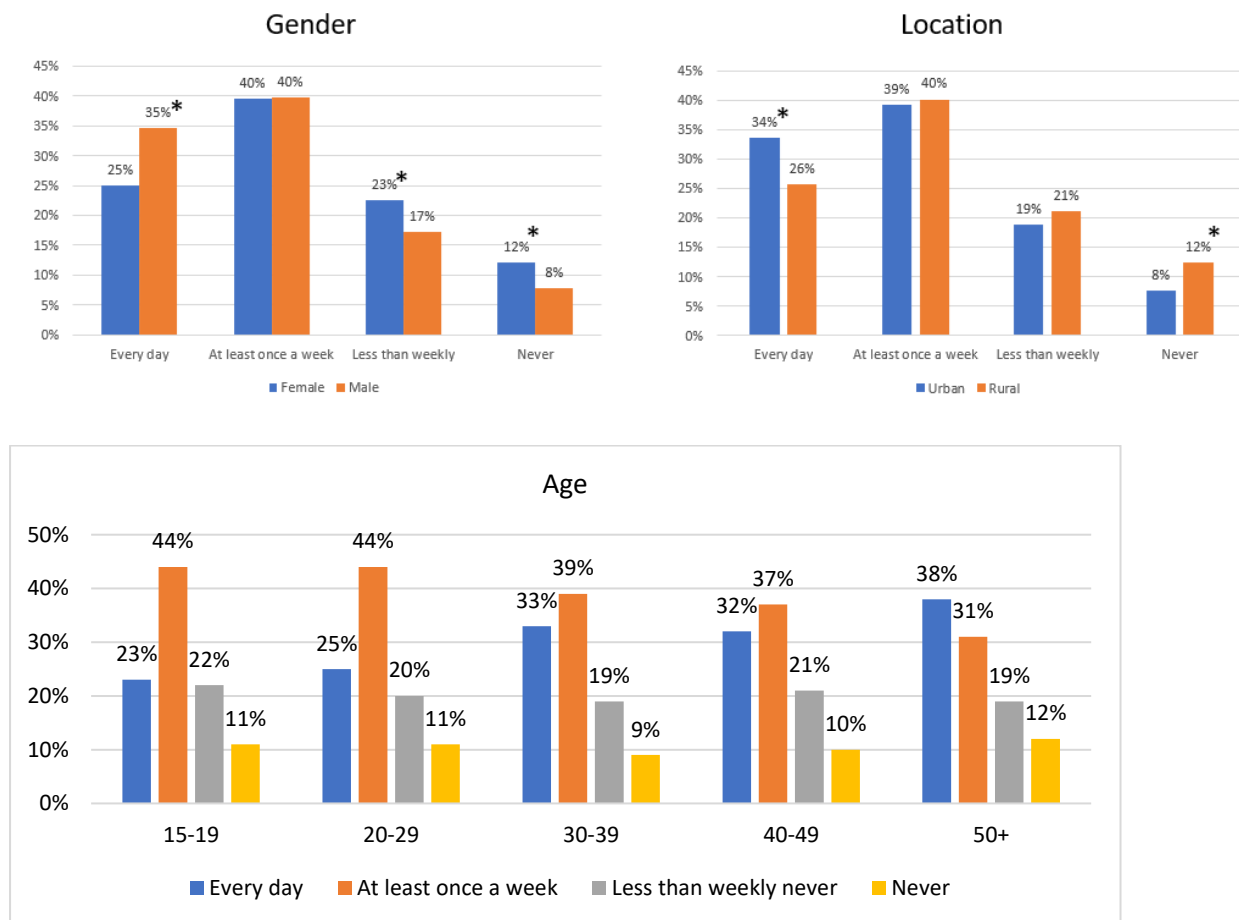
Figure 2 below presents frequency of access to radio across key demographic groups. In Sierra Leone, males are significantly more likely than females to listen to the radio on a daily basis (35% compared to 25%), and females are significantly more likely to listen to the radio less than once a week (23% compared to 17%). Following the same trend, females are significantly more likely than males to have no access to radio (12% of females reported having never listened to the radio, compared with 8% of males). This reflects the higher ownership and control over radio sets by men.

Urban respondents in this survey were significantly more likely to be regular radio listeners compared to their rural counterparts – 73% of urban respondents reported listening to the radio at least weekly, compared with 66% of rural respondents. Within this, urban respondents were significantly more likely to listen to the radio every day (34%, compared with 26% of rural respondents). Conversely, rural respondents were significantly more likely to have no access to radio, with 12% reporting never listening to the radio, compared with 8% of urban respondents. This could be due to the higher presence of media-dark pockets in rural areas, where radio frequencies do not reach.

Across age groups, people aged 50 and above were most likely to listen to the radio every day (38% of this group report listening to the radio daily), which could be a consequence of more time available to this age group to listen to the radio with less time required for studying, working, or family responsibilities. Respondents between the ages of 15-29 are most likely to report listening to the radio at least once a week (but not daily). Across all age groups, the percentage of respondents who never listen to the radio ranges from 9% (30-39 age group) to 12% (50+ age group).

<sup>35</sup> 'Use the Internet' includes respondents who use Internet, Facebook, or Instagram.

Figure 2: Access to radio by gender, location and age



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Survey 2022, base = 3,048. Note (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different between comparison groups at  $p < .05$ .

Notably, radio listenership was higher than expected among survey respondents classified as marginalised girls (63% reported accessing radio within the last week). Among EAGER girls who made up the booster sample, 72% said they had listened to the radio in the week prior to the survey. This is on par with the total 70% radio listenership among the adult population of Sierra Leone, and 67% of people aged 15-19 years.<sup>36</sup> Radio listenership was also found to be high among people living with disabilities (71%).<sup>37</sup> Findings from qualitative research suggest that whilst radio ownership and household access is limited among these groups, they listen to the radio communally with family, friends, and neighbours, and that radio listenership was often based on listening to specific programmes on a regular basis. This higher than expected level of listenership among typically harder to reach groups may also reflect access to radio via listening groups which were part of the EAGER programme. It may also be inferred, supported by qualitative findings, that target audience groups intentionally sought access to radio to listen to specific programmes, including the EAGER radio programmes.

## 2.2 Reach of EAGER programmes

At the point of the endline data collection in October and November 2022, approximately 1.7 million people (31% of the 15+ population in Sierra Leone)<sup>38</sup> had listened to at least at least one episode of *Wae Gyal Pikin*

<sup>36</sup> Population level media access figures are based on the full nationally representative BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey of n=3048 adult respondents aged 15+

<sup>37</sup> Persons living with a disability Base: (n=1,020)

<sup>38</sup> 15 years + population: 5.4 million (Source: 2015 Census, Statistics Sierra Leone)

*Tinap* and *Kotoku Baray*, defined as reach of the radio programmes. Approximately 1.1 million (21% of the 15+ population) had listened to at least every other episode of the programme, defined as regularly reached.<sup>39</sup>

With a longer broadcast span (July 2020–November 2022), *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* achieved the larger audience, with 27% of the population (1.5 million people) reached and 17% (0.9 million people) reached regularly. In comparison, 16% of the population (0.9 million people) were reached by *Kotoku Baray*, with 11% (0.6 million people) reached regularly.

In total, 80% of EAGER participants who were surveyed as part of the booster sample were reached by EAGER radio programming, reporting that they had heard at least one episode of either *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* or *Kotoku Baray*. Furthermore, 56% were regularly reached by the radio programmes. The majority of those reached by the programmes had listened to *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* – 76% of the EAGER girls in the booster sample had listened to at least one episode, and 50% were regular listeners. The high level of reach, which was higher than the share of booster sample participants who reported having access to a radio in their household, reflected findings from qualitative research that many marginalised girls often listen to radio programmes via radios or mobile phones owned by family members, friends or neighbours. The share of EAGER participants who were listening to EAGER radio programmes in their own time was higher than anticipated, with close to half (47%) of those who had not attended the radio listening sessions reporting that they were regular listeners of either *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* or *Kotoku Baray*.

Table 4: Reach of EAGER radio programmes

	Reach	Regularly Reached
Total Combined Reach	31% (1.7 million)	21% (1.1 million)
Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap	27% (1.5 million)	17% (0.9 million)
Kotoku Baray	16% (0.9 million)	11% (0.6 million)

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048).

### 2.3 Audience profile of EAGER radio programmes

BBC Media Action’s SBCC strategy focused on tackling discriminatory attitudes toward adolescent girls, and as such the primary target audience for the radio programmes is the community around a girl that exerts influence on her life. According to the SBCC formative research, caregivers are critical gatekeepers in an adolescent girl’s life. Community leaders like chiefs and religious heads are also important stakeholders due to their influence over parents and the enforcement of laws and norms. The primary target audience for the radio programmes was, therefore, caregivers and community stakeholders. Adolescent girls formed the secondary audience for the radio programmes as the aim was to bring a community together to discuss and find solutions. By shifting the dynamics between girls and those in their social networks from ‘power over’ to ‘power with’, the radio programmes sought to build an environment which enables girls to have ‘power to’ shape their lives, supported by those around them.

- Nearly a quarter of caregivers (23%) were regularly reached by either of the radio shows.
- Almost a fifth of marginalised girls (19%) were regularly reached by either of the radio shows.<sup>40</sup>

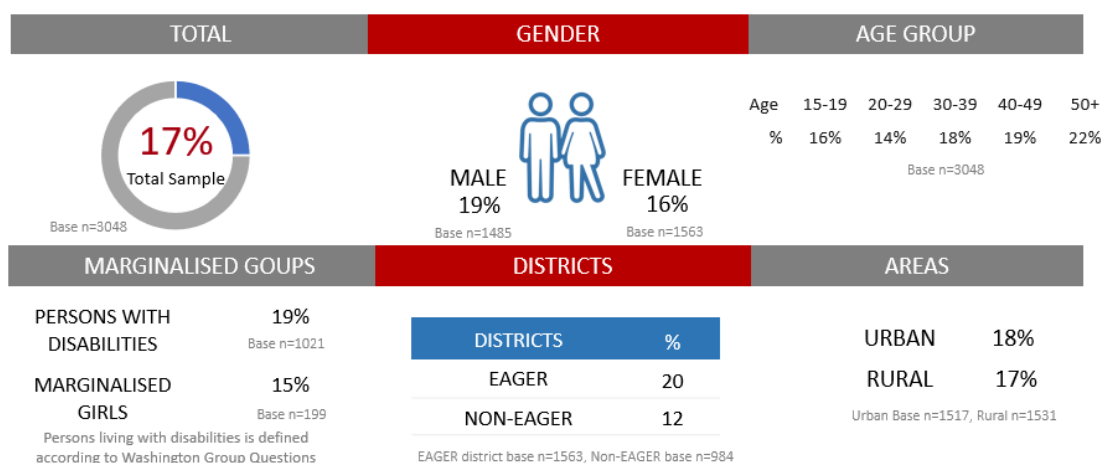
Figure 3 below depicts the demographic profile of those who were regularly reached by *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*, as a proportion of the sample population.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Throughout this evaluation report, impact analysis focuses on a comparison between respondents reached regularly and respondents that have not listened to any EAGER radio programming.

<sup>40</sup> The base size of marginalized girls for this survey is small – only 200 girls were marginalized in this sample and only 37 were regularly listeners of either show.

<sup>41</sup> The demographic profile of the radio programmes has been presented at population level, as this shows the proportion of people regularly reached within each target category of interest including marginalised girls and within EAGER districts.

Figure 3: Demographic profile of those regularly reached by Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3,048); Total regularly reached by Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap n=530. Figures represent the share of regularly reached people within the total sample.

Reflecting their higher level of radio access and regularity of listenership, a higher proportion of men were regularly reached by *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* than women (19%, compared to 16%). When looking at the age of the audience, regular listenership was highest among those aged over 40 years, with 19% of those aged between 40 and 49 regularly reached and 22% of those aged 50+ years regularly reached. Among the youngest survey respondents (those aged between 15 and 19 years), 16% reported listening to *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* regularly. Whilst slightly lower than reach among the older age groups, this does suggest that the programme was successful in appealing to this group despite their overall lower-level radio listenership and limited control over what is played on the household radio (qualitative data indicates that the male head of the household often controls what is listened to on the radio).

Despite challenges faced in remote rural areas to access radio and radio signal, a similar proportion of urban and rural respondents were regularly reached by *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*. Qualitative research indicated that those who did not own a radio themselves or had access to only one radio set in their household often listened with friends or neighbours. Qualitative findings suggest that the programme particularly resonated with rural audiences, who reported intentionally seeking access to radio when the programme aired.

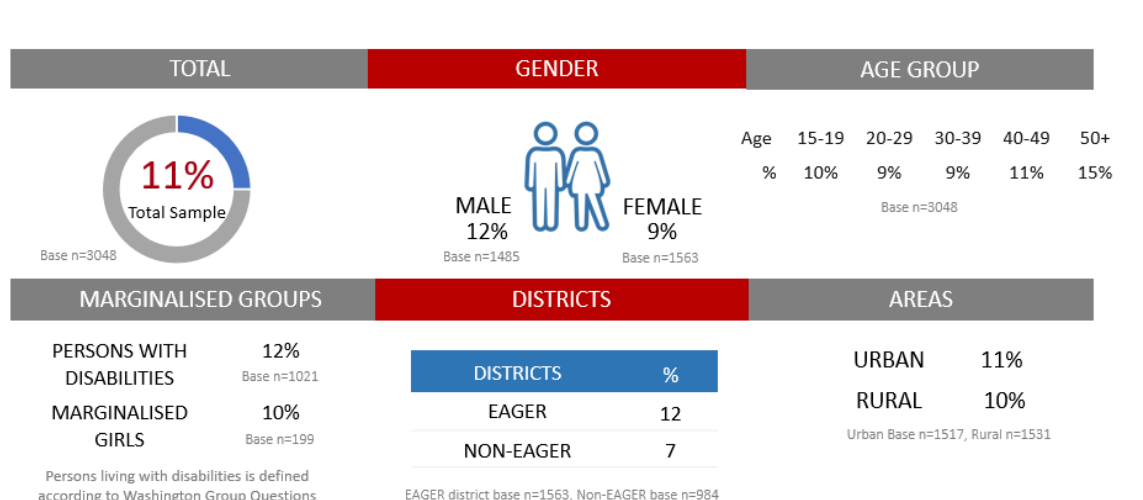
*"I listen to [the programme] at home with my children and sometimes with my neighbours. I call them so they can listen for themselves and directly [hear] the teachings."* (Female caregiver, Port Loko, rural, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

*"I listen with my uncle. I listen with him because he owns the radio and he switches on the radio all the time."* (Marginalised adolescent girl, Bo, urban, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

One in five (20%) people living in EAGER districts were regularly reached by *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*; this compares to 12% of those living in non-EAGER districts. It is likely that EAGER's community-based programming had an amplifying effect on listenership in these districts, with radio content resonating with those engaged in EAGER activities. Among those survey respondents classified as marginalised girls, 15% reported regularly listening to *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*, whilst 19% of those who reported living with a disability were regularly reached by the programme. It may be inferred that the programme resonated with these groups as the content was specifically addressing key issues that affected people like them.

Figure 4 below depicts the demographic profile of those who were regularly reached by the drama and discussion show *Kotoku Baray*, as a proportion of the sample population.

Figure 4: Demographic profile of those regularly reached by Kotoku Baray



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3,048); Total regularly reached by Kotoku Baray n=322. Figures represent the share of regularly reached people within the total sample.

Overall, the regular audience of Kotoku Baray was smaller than that of *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*, likely due to the fact that *Kotoku Baray* was broadcast for a much shorter period of only 7 months. The demographic profile of the audiences of the two programmes was similar across all indicators. A higher proportion of males were regularly reached by *Kotoku Baray* (12%), compared to females (9%). Older people (those aged over 40 years) were the most likely to be regular listeners, with 15% of those aged over 50 years, and 11% of those aged 40-49 years tuning into the programme regularly.

The programme was equally effective at regularly reaching urban and rural listeners – 11% of survey respondents who lived in urban locations regularly listened to the programme, compared with 10% of those based rurally. As with *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*, a higher proportion of people living in EAGER districts were regular listeners of *Kotoku Baray* (12%), compared to those living in non-EAGER districts (7%). One in ten marginalised girls (10%) reported listening to the programme regularly, whilst 12% of those who reported living with a disability were regularly reached.

Similar to *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*, the levels of regular listenership among groups who are typically hard to reach via media broadcast, including young people, those living with a disability and marginalised girls, may be in some part attributed to these groups intentionally seeking access to radio when the programme aired. It may be inferred that the programme resonated with these groups as the content was specifically addressing key issues that affected people like them. The resonance of programme content with key target audience groups and strong audience engagement, discussed in the following sections, likely contributed to overcoming some of the barriers to listenership.

## 2.4 Engagement with EAGER radio programmes

As per Table 5 below, 82% of survey respondents who were regular listeners of *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* mentioned that they liked the programme because it educated them. This reflects the factual nature of the programme and coverage of relevant topics with a solutions-focused approach. This response illustrates that the objective of the programme to provide factual information about girls' education or skills' development opportunities was met, and also demonstrates the trust that audiences placed in the programme. While the BBC brand might have contributed to building trust in *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* initially, audiences characterising the programme as educational implies that the programme was able to maintain this trust on the basis of the quality of its content.

Respondents also frequently mentioned that they liked *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* because they learned new skills to improve their lives (40%). Caregivers who took part in the qualitative research described the show as 'interesting' and 'educative', and consistently mentioned that they took advice from the programme to apply in their lives, especially around their relationships with their daughters. Female and male caregivers alike recalled topics covered by *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*, including issues around girls dropping out of school and early pregnancy, describing the coverage of these issues as useful and relevant to what was happening in their communities.



Female caregivers especially recalled topics which offered advice on parenting, for instance the importance of forming strong relationships with children and involving daughters and sons in family decision-making.

*“The programme educates parents as to how to take great care of their children, especially the girl child, how she can become a successful person in the future and how to protect herself from things that may stop her from achieving her goal, like teenage pregnancy, early marriage and menstrual hygiene, and the girl child should be asked before marriage and she should be participating in family meetings and be included in taking major decisions at home.”* (Female caregiver, Port Loko, rural)

*“When you have a girl child you want to see her progress and develop to be a better person in the community and I find this programme so interesting because it is addressing issues of girl children to be successful, especially on their education.”* (Female caregiver of marginalised adolescent girl, Port Loko, rural)

Similarly, adolescent girls who were interviewed for the qualitative research described *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* as ‘enlightening’, ‘educative’, and supportive of girls’ role in society. They recalled many topics, including body image, menstruation, girls’ agency in decision-making, apprenticeships, and how the increase in the cost of living is affecting girls – all of which are key issues that impact girls’ empowerment and educational opportunities. The strong recall of these topics indicates that these issues, and the way they were addressed by the programme, resonated with girls. EAGER girls interviewed as part of the booster study described *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* as a programme which encourages adolescent girls to be strong and to empower themselves. Notably, they mentioned that the programme had inspired adolescent girls to resume their education.

*“I like the programme because it’s about supporting girls to be better people in society and for us girls to know that the male child should not be the only one to have a say in the family. The girl child should also have a say in the family.”* (Adolescent girl living with a disability, Port Loko, rural)

*“I recall the stories and discussions that the presenters and contributors raised about issues affecting adolescent girls like menstruation, sex, and relationship issues. I discuss these with my mother who provides me with advice. These issues are sensitive, and I need somebody close to me for guidance and advice. Now I am open and bold to discuss these sensitive things with my mother. Moreover, my mother gives me good advice rather than my friends who used to give me wrong advice.”* (Adolescent girl living with a partner/married, Western Area, rural)

*“The reason I like this programme is that it has helped and contributed to the return of many adolescent girls back to school.”* (EAGER girl also attending girls listening group, Kono, rural)

Adolescent boys were able to recall fewer specific topics covered by the programme, and generally felt that the programme was about educating girls. This is perhaps because *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* covered topics more specific to girls’ experience in Sierra Leone. However, they did mention shows covering cyberbullying, skills training, girls’ involvement in decision-making and the cost of living.

Table 5: What audiences liked about *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*

Top 5 responses	Total (n=530)	Gender		Age				
		Female (n=250)	Male (n=280)	15-19 (n=76)	20-29 (n=129)	30-39 (n=123)	40-49 (n=87)	50+ (n=116)
It educates the listeners	82%	82%	82%	81%	81%	86%	80%	80%
It addresses issues that concern me	45%	45%	44%	45%	40%	39%	47%	53%
I learn new skills to improve my life	40%	41%	39%	49%	37%	34%	31%	51%
It is entertaining	35%	38%	32%	44%	34%	31%	34%	35%

It covers things that are happening in my community	25%	29%	21%	18%	23%	28%	31%	24%
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Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022 (n=3,048); Base includes all those regularly reached by Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap.

*Kotoku Baray's* regular audience also expressed a strong sense that the programme covered issues that were relevant to their community, their family, and their own lives. As presented in Table 6 below, survey participants frequently mentioned that the programme addressed relevant issues (45%), and that the programme covers things that were happening in my community (25%). Notably, females were significantly more likely to mention that the programme covered issues that were happening in the community (29%, compared with 21% of males). This perhaps reflects resonance with issues covered by the programme among female listeners, particularly among those for whom the issues addressed relate to their own lived experience as a girl in Sierra Leone.

Despite the sensitive nature of the topics covered, *Kotoku Baray* achieved strong engagement with audiences. Qualitative participants who were regular listeners to *Kotoku Baray* were able to recall and describe several characters and specific storylines or scenes from the drama. Adolescent boys and girls frequently recalled storylines and scenes that addressed early pregnancy, peer pressure and sex education. Girls also recalled a storyline that addressed menstrual hygiene, a topic that was not mentioned by adolescent boys. EAGER girls who were regular listeners to *Kotoku Baray* were able to recall storylines and characters that resonated with them, including storylines involving issues of consent, access to and use of family planning, and relationships between adolescents and their caregivers.

Adolescent girls cited several characters that resonated with them, including Saffie, Gilo, Sunkarie, and the antagonist character of Mama Sharp. They particularly identified with the character and storyline of one of the main characters in the drama, Saffie, who was described as 'bold'. She became pregnant as a teenager as she was not aware of contraception and had no guidance on relationships and sex. However, her character showed that even when she became pregnant, she could remain focused on her dreams.

*"There are two characters that I find interesting, they are Saffie and Sunkarie. The stories teach adolescent girls to be bold and to befriend their parents discussing issues affecting their wellbeing and education."* (Adolescent boy, Western Area urban, *Kotoku Baray* listener)

*"I like the drama in general, but I like the "Wahala nor dae don" episode. The characters in that episode were Mama Sharp, Saffie, Gilo and Yusuf. Mama Sharp does not advise the girls the right way. Her character is not appropriate in society because she misleads adolescents. As for Gilo, she is a good woman and relates good to others. It is good to have such women in society. As for Yusuf, he is a bad guy who doesn't have good intentions for girls and fools young girls."* (Female caregiver, Western Area urban, *Kotoku Baray* listener)

When asked what they liked most about the programme, survey respondents who were regular listeners to *Kotoku Baray* were most likely to say that they liked that the programme educated listeners (68%). Qualitative research participants, including caregivers (both female and male) reported that the programme educated them about good parenting and building relationships between parents/caregivers and their children, particularly daughters. They recalled coverage of specific issues, including sex education, preventing early pregnancy and early marriage, with the programme giving them guidance on how to best support their children through these issues. Some participants mentioned that given its educational value, they hoped the programme would continue to provide advice for parents and caregivers in the future.

*"The discussion around consent is quite an interesting one since it teaches us how to be tolerant of our adolescent girls and how we can ensure we support them to make their various choices so that they can eventually be good people in society in the future."* (Male caregiver, Bo, urban, EAGER district)

*"The radio programme really fits what is happening in our community. I pray other parents and caregivers listen to the programme so that they can rightfully advise the children. Issues like teenage pregnancy, dropping out from school, peer pressure, etc. among other factors*

*affect adolescents in our community.” (Male caregiver of marginalised adolescent girl, Kono, rural, EAGER district)*

Adolescent girls and boys who took part in the qualitative research said that the programme was helpful in providing advice to both adolescents and their parents and caregivers, sensitising parents/caregivers to the issues that affect adolescent girls and empowering girls to address sensitive issues with their parents/caregivers.

Regular listeners to *Kotoku Baray* also frequently mentioned that they liked that the drama addressed issues that concerned them (53%), with women significantly more likely to mention this (61%, compared with 46% of men). Furthermore, 59% of regular listeners *strongly agreed* with the statement: ‘I could imagine myself or people in my community facing similar situations as those that we heard about on *Kotoku Baray*.’ Reiterating this, qualitative respondents described the storylines of *Kotoku Baray* as relatable to situations and people in their own community. These findings indicate that the production intent to reflect the lives of audiences in the drama, and to develop storylines and characters that resonated with listeners, was successful.

*“The episode relating to how a mother asked the teacher and the school not to teach her child about sex – this shows the taboos in society; later she was educated on why this is important, and she later accepted.” (Adolescent boy, Port Loko, rural, Kotoku Baray listener)*

*“It is really common in our community – issues like early marriage and early pregnancy. Some parents forced their daughters into early marriage when the child is not of age to get married because it is said that when the child is 18 years of age, she should be the one to say she wants to get married.” (Marginalised adolescent girl, Kono, rural, Kotoku Baray listener)*

*“Honestly, the drama reflects what is happening to families and people in our community. A similar situation like what happened between Saffie and her stepmother also happened in my community. There was a woman who doesn’t care about her stepdaughter and mistreated her. The girl was so afraid of her stepmother to the extent she was nervous whenever the woman was around. Because of her situation, the girl was always influenced by her friends [and didn’t have the guidance of an adult caregiver].” (Adolescent boy, Western Area urban, Kotoku Baray listener)*

EAGER girls who participated in the booster sample and were regular listeners of *Kotoku Baray* also felt that the programme reflected what was happening in their own lives and among their communities, with almost half (47%) of regular listeners *strongly agreeing* with the statement ‘I could imagine myself or people in my community facing similar situations as those that we heard about on *Kotoku Baray*’.

Notably, especially for a drama, being entertaining was mentioned by just 26% of regular listeners. It may be inferred that ‘entertainment’ was considered a secondary element to the programme by audiences. They found the fictional storylines and characters to closely resemble what is happening in their daily lives and were, therefore, able to trust and learn from the programme and its coverage of key issues facing girls in Sierra Leone.

Table 6: What audiences liked about *Kotoku Baray*

Top 5 responses	Total (n=322)	Gender		Age				
		Female (n=141)	Male (n=181)	15-19 (n=46)	20-29 (n=81)	30-39 (n=63)	40-49 (n=48)	50+ (n=83)
It educates the listeners	68%	72%	65%	66%	58%	74%	68%	75%
It addresses the issues that concern me	53%	61%	46%	60%	42%	47%	56%	61%
The stories are easy to follow	41%	44%	39%	50%	38%	37%	41%	41%
I like the characters in the drama	39%	45%	35%	46%	35%	42%	42%	37%

It is entertaining	26%	30%	24%	17%	31%	20%	25%	32%
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Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022 (n=3,048); Base includes all those regularly reached by Kotoku Baray

### 3. Knowledge and understanding on learning opportunities for girls

This section responds to the following research questions:

- To what extent has listening to the EAGER radio programmes influenced audiences’ understanding of girls’ learning, skills development and education opportunities?
- Are regular listeners, compared to non-regular listeners of the radio programmes, more likely to understand what learning and skills development opportunities are available for girls?

There is significant disparity in educational and learning outcomes by gender in Sierra Leone. Data from September 2021 places adult literacy rates at 52% for men and 35% for women; among youth, literacy rates are 71% for boys and 63% for girls.<sup>42</sup> This is reflective of the widening gender inequality later in the education system, with more girls than boys dropping out as they move through Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary School.<sup>43</sup> According to the 2019 DHS, 39% of women (compared to 29% of men) have no education.<sup>44</sup> The net attendance ratio (NAR) is 87% at the primary level but at secondary level, the figures drops drastically to 44% among girls and 46% among boys.

Within this context EAGER’s radio programmes were designed to provide trusted information to its primary target audience of caregivers and community stakeholders to support improved understanding of the value of girls’ education and learning, recognition of the different choices available to girls, and to try to change discriminatory attitudes that hinder girls’ access to these opportunities.

Regular audiences of *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* attributed improved knowledge about education and learning for girls to the programme. As per Figure 5 below, almost all survey respondents who were regularly reached by *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* (98%) agreed that the programme helped them to better understand girls’ learning, skills development, and education opportunities. The majority (66%) among this group *strongly agreed*.

Table 7 below shows the overall level of agreement was consistent across all key demographic groups, indicating that the programme contributed to improved knowledge and understanding about girls’ education and learning among its target audiences of caregivers, as well as marginalised girls. Results from the EAGER Endline Evaluation<sup>45</sup> corroborate this finding, in that it found that nearly 9 out of 10 (87%) caregivers agreed that *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* had helped them to better understand girls’ learning, skills development and education opportunities.

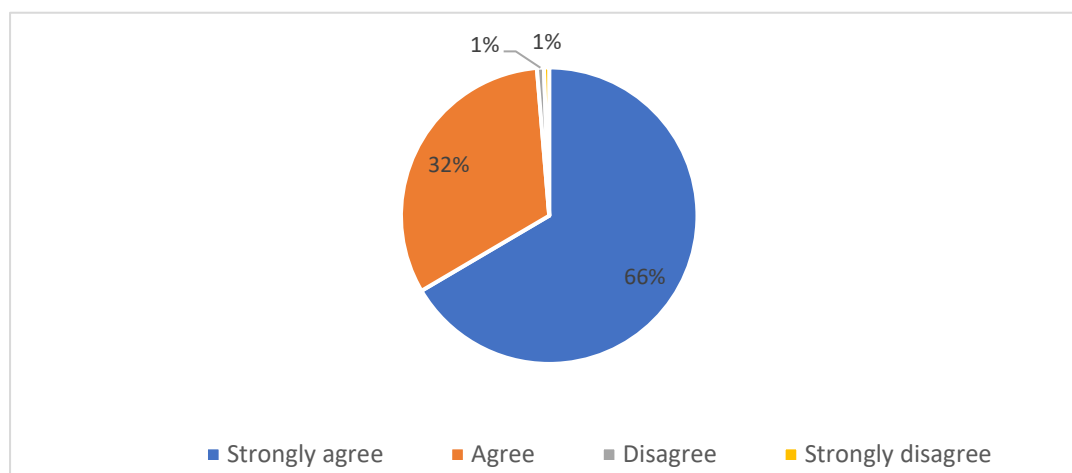
<sup>42</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.MA.ZS?locations=SL> UNESCO Institute for Statistics

<sup>43</sup> MBSSE 2019 Annual School Census Report

<sup>44</sup> <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR365/FR365.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> EAGER Endline Evaluation Report July 2022, IMC Worldwide

Figure 5: Programmes help understanding of opportunities for girls



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3,048); Base includes all those regularly reached by Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap (n=530). Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 7: Programmes help understanding of opportunities for girls, disaggregated by regularly reached target audience

	Regularly reached audience (Disaggregated by gender and age)							
	Total (n=530)	Gender		Age Groups				
		Female (n=250)	Male (n=280)	15-19 (n=76)	20-29 (n=129)	30-39 (n=123)	40-49 (n=87)	50+ (n=116)
Strongly agree	66%	67%	65%	68%	63%	72%	60%	65%
Agree	32%	30%	33%	30%	35%	26%	37%	32%
Disagree	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Strongly disagree	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%

	Regularly reached audience (Disaggregated by key target groups)			
	Female Caregiver (n=135)	Male Caregiver (n=147)	Marginalised adolescent girl (n=30)	Living with a disability (n=189)
Strongly agree	71%	64%	63%	74%
Agree	28%	33%	31%	23%
Disagree	0%	1%	6%	1%
Strongly disagree	1%	0%	0%	2%

Q: To what extent do you agree with the statement, “Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap’ helps me to better understand girls’ learning, skills development and education opportunities.” Percentages may not add to 100% because responses ‘don’t know/refused’ are not included. Note, sample size for the marginalized adolescent girls’ group is small – therefore results should be interpreted with caution.

Exploring what audiences had learned through the qualitative research, caregivers noted that since listening to *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* they now encourage girls to focus on their education and/or vocational training instead of marriage. Male caregivers reported learning that girls should not be stopped from attending school or learning a skill, whilst female caregivers reported learning that girls who dropped out of formal education could still join vocational trainings to empower themselves.

*“The programme raises awareness about encouragement and to pursue goals. I learned that even when you fall, you can still rise again because there are always opportunities.”* (Female caregiver of marginalised girl, Bo, urban, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

*“Kotoku Baray is trying to tell us things about the girl child and the responsibility of the parents towards girl children and how they should be together in harmony and should be included in decision-making and taken good care of and should not be sent out to make money for the family but should be in school to learn.”* (Male caregiver of marginalised adolescent girls, Bo, urban, *Kotoku Baray* listener)

*“As for me, I never knew the importance of involving adolescent girls until I started encouraging my daughter to take part in pertinent issues, her contributions are very much welcomed, and I like that.”* (Male caregiver of marginalised adolescent girls, Bo, urban, *Kotoku Baray* listener)

Community stakeholders who were engaged in the qualitative research also reported learning that girls should have the same opportunities as boys in both education and skills development, and about the need to engage girls in decisions affecting them.

*“Girls have the potential and abilities to prevail wherever. Girls have the same rights to go to school and education and other skill development trainings.”* (Community stakeholder – health worker, Western Area rural, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

*“For example, there was a time I wanted to send my daughter to my mother for holidays, but after I seek her consent, she said that she is not willing to go on holidays. Then I asked her what she wanted to do while staying here, she replied that the holiday is very short, therefore she wanted to be taking computer class. I later realised that she has a better reason of staying here rather than going on holidays. Then I supported her in doing the computer programme.”* (Male stakeholder – religious leader, rural, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

Adolescent girls who took part in the qualitative research said that the programmes have helped them to understand that there are many opportunities for girls to succeed in life, even if their education is disrupted. Learning about girls’ right to have their voices heard on matters that affect them was also frequently mentioned by this group. Adolescent boys mentioned that they had learned about the importance of education for girls and their right to make their own decisions.

*“When a girl is not educated, it doesn’t mean that is the end of their life. So even though you were not able to be in school, it doesn’t mean that you cannot do something in the future, that you should just sit idly and get married. You should make sure you learn some skills, like we have some organisations which do skills training.”* (Marginalised adolescent girl, Koinadugu, urban, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

*“As a girl you do not need to be shy about anything that affects you. Thus, I have learnt through the programme that as girls, we need to be bold to say what affects us in our community, schools, and in our homes.”* (Marginalised adolescent girl, Koinadugu, urban, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

*“I learned that girls should make decisions on their own and make choices on their own which will bring a positive impact on their lives, the environment, and the country as a whole.”* (Adolescent boy, Bombali, urban, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

*“Education is very important when you are educated you stand to benefit a lot more. So as a girl child and disabled, when you are educated you have the chance to represent your*

*fellow disable. And disability does not mean that you cannot do it – it is all about focus and when you focus on your education and your dream, you can make it.” (Adolescent girl living with a disability, Koinadugu, urban, Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap listener)*

#### 4. Taking action in support of girls

This section responds to the following research questions:

- What actions have audiences taken as a result of listening to EAGER radio programmes?
- Are regular listeners of EAGER radio programmes compared to non-regular listeners more likely to believe that girls should be supported to make decisions about their education and learning and skills development?

The EAGER radio programmes aimed to inspire parents/caregivers and community stakeholders to change discriminatory behaviours toward girls by showcasing role models who have supported girls, given them the space to make their own choices, and included them in decision-making at home. The programmes highlighted positive parenting through the stories of girls who had been supported by their parents/ caregivers. Role models were identified from different communities so that audiences could relate to them and learn from them.

Audiences reported taking actions in support of girls’ access to learning opportunities as a result of listening to the programmes including enrolling a girl in school or discussing education with their girls. Among survey respondents regularly reached by EAGER radio programming, over half (54%) reported that they had taken an action in support of girls’ education, most frequently this was around enrolling a girl in school: 61% reported that they had enrolled their daughter/girl in school, whilst 48% said they had enrolled their daughter/girl in school after having a child. Speaking with their daughters/girls about her education was also frequently mentioned (41%).

In qualitative interviews, caregivers who had listened to EAGER radio programming reported that they were now making more effort to adopt good parenting practices, developing more supportive relationships with their children, and seeking input from their daughters on matters that affect them. This was reflected among adolescent girls, who reported changes in their interactions with parents/caregivers. Several girls mentioned that listening to the programme had helped to change their relationship with their parents and caregivers. They felt that parents now exhibited more supportive practices, asked for their opinion, discussed issues, and gave them more advice. Furthermore, teachers interviewed for the qualitative research reported that they are encouraging adolescent girls to discuss issues with their parents because of what they had heard on the programme.

*“In the past years, our parents wouldn’t allow us to give our own opinion during family meetings or anywhere they hold family discussion. But since we started listening to Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap, parents have begun listening and have got some understanding pertaining to these topics, that everyone especially girls have the right to make their own decision.” (Adolescent girl, Koinadugu, urban, Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap listener)*

Qualitative insights also supported these findings and demonstrated that beyond knowledge of the law around marriage, the radio programmes supported greater understanding of how early marriage increases risks to girls health, safety and overall wellbeing. Results from the booster study of EAGER girls found that EAGER girls who were regular listeners to the radio programmes, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* and *Kotoku Baray*, were significantly more likely to be able to correctly identify the legal age for marriage in Serra Leone as 18 years (97%, compared with 90% of non-listeners). Qualitative participants were knowledgeable about the negative impacts of early marriage and that it can limit a girl’s future opportunities.

Female caregivers and community stakeholders mentioned that they have started using measures to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as a result of what they had learned from listening to the programmes, as well as providing guidance to girls on family planning to prevent early pregnancy. A religious leader mentioned that after listening to the programmes, he now preaches topics discussed in *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* as a way of reaching adolescent boys and girls and their parents in church, and no longer attends early marriage ceremonies in his community.

*“I advise my daughter about teenage pregnancy, and I ensure that my daughter concentrates on her education. Therefore, early marriage is out of the agenda. She will choose the right man at the right time. That’s her right to consent.”* (Female caregiver of marginalised girl, Western Area urban, *Kotoku Baray* listener)

*“Recently my wife and I decided to address sex and family planning with our daughter. I was prompted to take action after I listened to one of the episodes wherein one of the girls was impregnated. As a result of that, we decided that she should have contraceptive implantation to avoid early pregnancy.”* (Male caregiver of marginalised girl, Western Area urban, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

## 5.1 Discussion and dialogue around the programmes

*Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* and *Kotoku Baray* tell positive and empowering stories, in the voices and perspectives of girls, to help audiences see what girls are capable of. With this girl-centred approach – targeted at the community around a girl – the programmes aimed to encourage inter-generational discussion among adolescent girls, their families, and communities and change underlying discriminatory attitudes that limit the lives of girls. Aligned with the GEC’s Gender Equality and Social Inclusion framework, the programmes demonstrated constructive and Do No Harm-based approaches that focus on girls’ agency and, at the same time, on having difficult conversations with gatekeepers in girls’ lives.

Most qualitative research participants reported that they listened to the programmes communally, most often together with their families – their husbands, wives, children, sisters, and brothers. Others mentioned that they also listened to the programmes with their friends and neighbours, with some qualitative respondents mentioning that they would specifically gather at a neighbour’s house to listen to the EAGER radio programmes.

Perhaps reflecting this communal setting, more than half of regular listeners (54%) said they had discussed *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* or *Kotoku Baray*, and among these 47% reported having discussed with their children (see Figure 6 below). Among qualitative respondents, community stakeholders and parents/caregivers frequently reported discussing the programmes with their children, other family members and friends. Caregivers noted that they encouraged others in their community to listen to the programmes. Adolescent listeners said they predominantly discussed issues addressed by the programmes with their siblings or friends, or within the school environment. Marginalised adolescent girls also reported discussing the programme predominantly with their sisters and friends.<sup>46</sup> Among the EAGER girls who took part in the booster study, just less than three in four (71%) EAGER girls who were regular listeners of the radio programmes reported discussing the programmes with others. Among those who had discussed the programmes with others, 59% had discussed with friends and 50% had discussed with a sister. EAGER girls had less frequently discussed the programmes with parents, with 28% discussing with their mother, and 15% discussing with their father.

*“I listen to the programme with my sister, and the reason why I was listening to it with my sister is because we are both parents. When I am not around, she takes good care of my children and I also do the same for her.”* (Female caregiver of marginalised adolescent girl, Port Loko, rural, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

*“I listen with my uncle. I listen with him because he owns the radio and he switches on the radio all the time.”* (Marginalised adolescent girl, Bo, urban, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

While adolescent boys noted that the programmes are mainly about girls, they still found the content engaging.

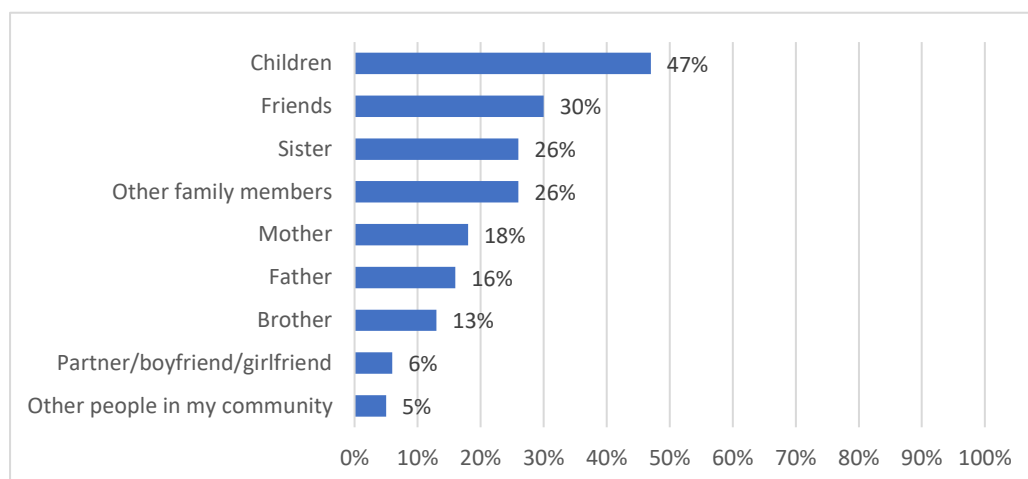
*“I found[out] about this programme through my grandmother. Whenever she listens to the programme, I sit in the veranda and listen to the drama because it is interesting and educates girls.”* (Adolescent boy, Western Area urban, *Kotoku Baray* listener)

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<sup>46</sup> These results are based on a very low base size of n=16 for marginalised adolescent girls who were regularly reached by the radio programmes and reported discussing the programmes with others. Results are reported, and should be interpreted, as qualitative only.



Figure 6: Who regular listeners discuss the programme(s) with



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3,048); Base includes all those regularly reached by either Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap or Kotoku Baray who report discussing the programme with others (n=345)

Table 8: Who regular listeners discuss programme(s) with, disaggregated by gender and age

	Total (n=345)	Gender		Age				
		Female (n=153)	Male (n=192)	15-19 (n=46)	20-29 (n=79)	30-39 (n=77)	40-49 (n=57)	50+ (n=86)
Children	47%	50%	46%	14%	42%	42%	57%	68%
Friends	30%	28%	32%	45%	36%	27%	35%	18%
Sister	26%	29%	24%	29%	46%	27%	16%	13%
Other family members	26%	25%	26%	15%	23%	31%	32%	25%
Mother	18%	24%	13%	22%	25%	14%	12%	16%
Father	16%	10%	20%	28%	19%	14%	15%	7%
Brother	13%	9%	16%	22%	11%	13%	16%	8%
Partner/boyfriend/ girlfriend	6%	5%	7%	6%	8%	8%	6%	2%
Other people in the community	5%	4%	6%	2%	5%	6%	9%	4%

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022 (n=3,048); Base includes all those regularly reached by either Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap or Kotoku Baray who report discussing the programme with others (n=345)

BBC Media Action’s research in Sierra Leone and other countries shows that such discussion is a key driver of attitudinal change. If people listen to/watch and then discuss media programmes with others, such a combination effect can transform behaviours as it not only reaches audiences at scale but also impacts them in multiple reinforcing ways. In South Sudan, for instance, BBC Media Action’s Life in Lulu programme uses radio drama in conjunction with a discussion programme to address gender norms and non-violent conflict resolution. Research carried out for that programme has found that the call-in discussion programme, hosted by local radio

stations following the drama broadcast, has had a stronger effect in changing perceptions.<sup>47</sup> Similarly in Bangladesh, research conducted for BBC Media Action’s maternal and child health program has revealed that women exposed to a TV drama and a discussion programme gained better health knowledge and showed greater intention to practise the targeted behaviours than those who had only watched the drama.<sup>48</sup>

At the point of the Endline for EAGER, regularly reached survey respondents who reported discussing the programmes with others most frequently mentioned discussing the value and importance of educating girls (85% - see Table 9 below). Respondents also frequently mentioned discussing that it is never too late for a girl to join school (50%), and the importance of girls returning to school after having a baby (51%). This was reflected in the qualitative research, with adolescent girls reporting that they felt empowered to have their voice heard within their families after listening to the radio programmes. They said they were now more involved in discussions and decision-making in the household, particularly around matters related to their own futures. Some girls cited situations in their own lives in which they were able to express their views and had their opinions heard and valued by their parents and family members.

*“It is the right of girls to make decisions concerning their education or skills training, but with the support and guidance of their parents. Just like I mentioned in my case, when I decided to study commerce, but my father wanted me to do arts. Eventually my mother talked to my father and accepted my decision.”* (Marginalised adolescent girl, Kono, rural, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

Some adolescent girls living with a disability mentioned feeling encouraged to speak up after listening to the programme.

*“After listening to the radio program, I made positive changes to return to school and to be bold and have family bonding with my mother. Now I feel comfortable and communicate sensitive issues with my mother.”* (Adolescent girl living with a disability, Kono, rural, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

*“...this programs has made me bold to talk to personalities within and outside the community and recently I have just been invited to represent people with disability.”* (Adolescent girl living with a disability, Kabala, urban, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

Table 9: Discussion after listening to EAGER programmes

Top 5 responses	Regularly Reached (n=345)
The value/importance of educating girls	85%
It’s never too late for a girl to join school	50%
Importance of girls returning to school after having a baby	51%
Value of girls learning new skills/trade	44%
Different types of skills training for girls	21%

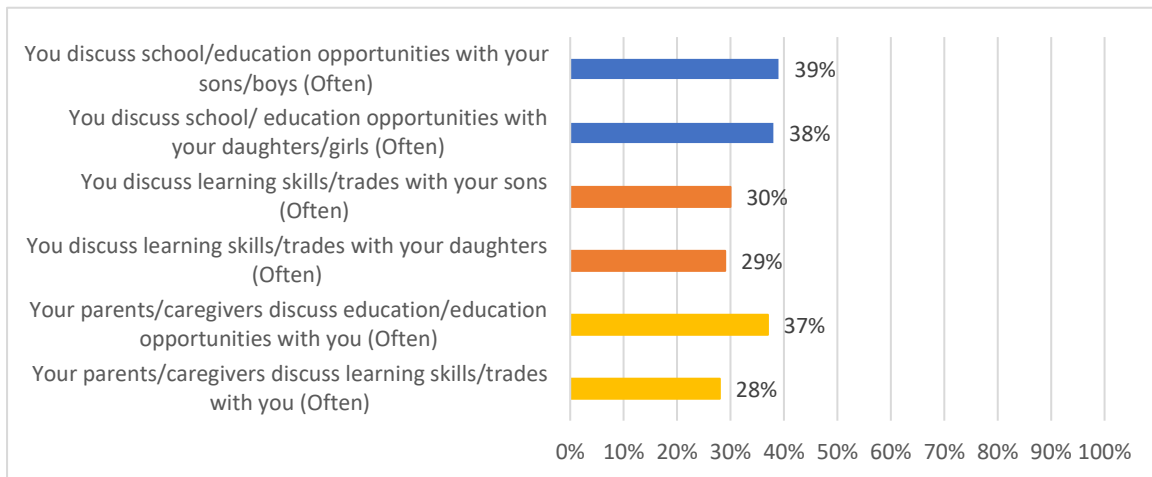
Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3,048). Base includes Regularly Reached audience who reported discussing the programmes with others (n=345).

Around a third of parents/caregivers reported discussing school and education, as well as learning skills and trades, with their sons and daughters *often* (see Figure 7 below). Responses from adolescents corroborate this level of discussion in the household – around a third of adolescents surveyed reported that their parents discuss both educational opportunities (37%) and learning skills and trades (28%) with them often.

<sup>47</sup> [BBC Media Action \(2020\) Life in Lulu: How can radio drama shift peoples’ perceptions around violence and support women to resolve disputes?](#)

<sup>48</sup> [BBC Media Action \(2017\) Can a health drama and discussion show affect the drivers of behaviour change?](#)

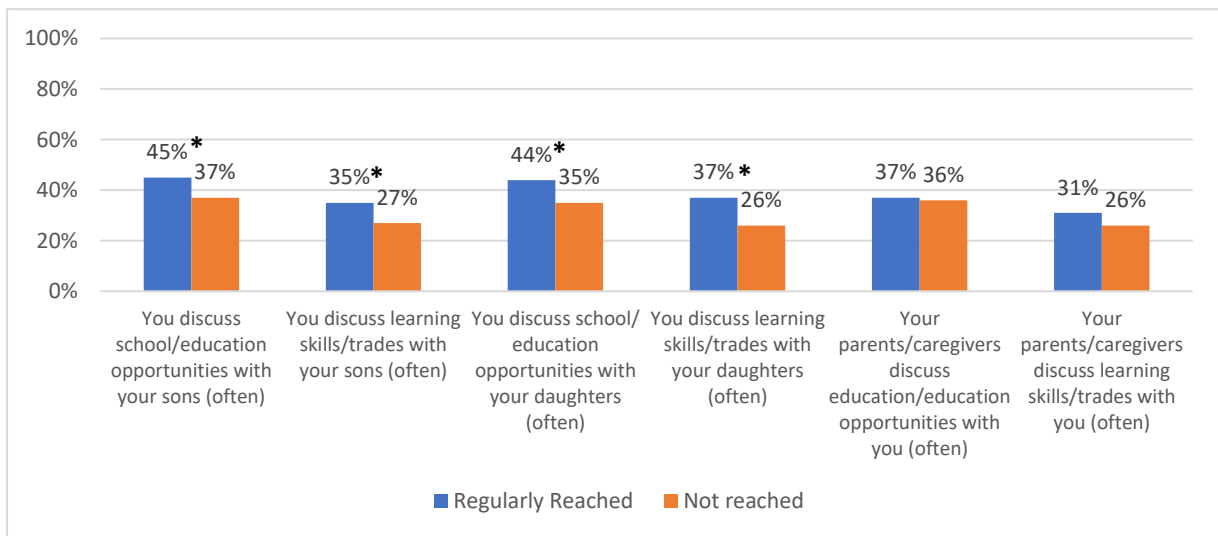
Figure 7: Discussion of education and learning in the household (population)



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). Base sizes: Parents with boys (n=1353); Parents with girls (n=1470); adolescents (n=483).

Respondents who were regularly reached by EAGER radio programming were significantly more likely to report discussing school/education and learning skills/trades with their girls and boys *often*, compared with adults who had not listened to the radio programmes. Respondents were more likely to discuss school and education with their sons than with their daughters, with the opposite holding for discussing skills/trades.

Figure 8: Discussion of education and learning in the household (regularly reached versus not reached)



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). Base includes unexposed adults: with boys (n=913), with girls (n=1002), and unexposed adolescents (n=347), Regularly Reached adults: with boys (n=300), with girls (n=334), and regularly reached adolescents (n=92). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different between not reached and regularly reached respondents at  $p < .05$ .

Regular discussion of school/education and learning skills/trades with sons and daughters was relatively consistent across all demographic and key target groups who were regularly reached by the EAGER radio programmes. Notably, regular audience members aged between 20-29 years were the least likely to report discussing these issues *often* – probably because their children will be younger, and perhaps not yet at school. Across all age groups, respondents were at least slightly more likely to report discussing school and education opportunities with girls and boys *often* compared to discussion about learning skills and trades. This reflects findings around what aspects of the radio programme listeners discussed, and with whom. Regularly reached audiences reported discussing the programme with their children, and that discussion was most frequently about the value and importance of educating girls.

Compared with the survey population in general, parents and caregivers living with a disability were more likely to report discussing both educational opportunities, and learning skills and trade, with their sons and daughters often, whilst adolescents living with a disability were more likely to discuss these opportunities with their parents, *often*. It may be inferred that discussion among this target group happens more because of the additional challenges this group may face in accessing these opportunities, as well as perhaps being stimulated to discuss these issues based on what they had heard on the EAGER radio programmes.

Table 10: Discussion of education and learning in the household (regularly reached audience – demographics)

	Regularly Reached Audience (Disaggregated by Audience Demographics)						
	TOTAL (n=641)	Gender		Age			
		Females (n=138)	Males (n=162)	20-29 (n=79)	30-39 (n=83)	40-49 (n=58)	50+ (n=80)
You discuss school/education opportunities with your sons/boys (Often)	45%	44%	47%	37%	47%	45%	52%
You discuss learning skills/trades with your sons (Often)	35%	34%	37%	31%	33%	32%	43%
		Females (n=153)	Males (n=181)	20-29 (n=90)	30-39 (n=88)	40-49 (n=69)	50+ (n=87)
You discuss school/education opportunities with your daughters/girls (Often)	44%	42%	45%	35%	50%	45%	45%
You discuss learning skills/trades with your daughters (Often)	37%	40%	34%	26%	38%	41%	43%
Your parents/caregivers discuss education/education opportunities with you (Often)	37%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Your parents/caregivers discuss learning skills/trades with you (Often)	31%	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048).

Table 11: Discussion of education and learning in the household (regularly reached audience – key target audiences<sup>49</sup>)

	Regularly Reached Audience (Disaggregated by Target Groups)			
	Female Caregiver (n=105)	Male Caregiver (n=122)	Marginalised Adolescent Girls	Living with a Disability (n=117)
You discuss school/education opportunities with your sons/boys (Often)	43%	52%	-	61%
You discuss learning skills/trades with your sons (Often)	35%	41%	-	50%
	Female Caregiver (n=153)	Male Caregiver (n=181)		Living with a disability

<sup>49</sup> The same respondents may appear in a number of different target groups (for example, one respondent may be classified as both a female caregiver and a person living with a disability) – as such, their response will be counted in both target group categories. Comparison between target groups should be made with this in mind.

				(n=127)
You discuss school/ education opportunities with your daughters/girls (Often)	42%	45%	-	53%
You discuss learning skills/trades with your daughters (Often)	40%	34%	-	47%
			Marginalised Adolescent Girls (n=37)	Living with a Disability (n=26)
Your parents/caregivers discuss education/education opportunities with you (Often)	-	-	36%	53%
Your parents/caregivers discuss learning skills/trades with you (Often)	-	-	27%	42%

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). Note, sample size for the marginalized adolescent girls' group is small – therefore results should be interpreted with caution.

Caregivers who participated in the qualitative research reported that they were now more open to discussing education and learning with their daughters and listening to their views. Community stakeholders said that more parents were engaging their daughters in discussion and decision-making after listening to the EAGER radio programmes. Whilst such reports of more inclusive discussion within the household is positive, illustrating entrenched gender roles, the majority of qualitative participants reported that ultimately decisions, including those related to girls' education and learning, were made by the male head of the household and what they decided was final. However, it is encouraging that findings indicate girls are now part of important discussions, and as such, decisions taken are more likely to incorporate the inputs and interests of girls.

*“Well, the problem is some of us, the parents, are guilty of not engaging our girls to know what is lacking; but through this programme, we are now challenged to be listening to our children, as they have their own views.”* (Community stakeholder – school teacher, Bo, urban)

Qualitative respondents mentioned discussing some of the key barriers to girls' education and learning, after listening to the EAGER radio programmes. Male and female caregivers reported discussing the issue of early marriage with people in their community, whilst issues such as early pregnancy and menstrual hygiene were discussed within the family, predominantly with daughters. Adolescent girls cited specific incidences where they had advised friends or other family members, like their sisters and aunts, based on what they heard on the programmes. Others noted that they had discussed issues they personally faced (such as wanting to return to school or forced early marriage) with their parents after listening to the programmes. They noted that they discussed menstrual hygiene with their mothers.

*“I encourage others because the programme is beneficial to everyone. You cannot listen alone and keep what you learn to yourself. It is good to motivate other parents and caregivers and adolescents to listen to the programme. This programme encourages parents to understand and create bonding in the family.”* (Female caregiver of marginalised adolescent girl, Western Area urban, Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap listener)

*“One of my friends had decided to marry one of their daughters early but when they divulged that information to me, I told her to pay attention to Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap. That has helped her and her husband to change their minds. They are planning to send their daughter back to school.”* (Female caregiver, Koinadugu (Kabala), Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap listener)

*“I discussed with a sister who dropped out of school to go back to school. I told her age doesn't matter and she must return to school. I even explained the importance of returning*

*to school so that she gets empowered.” (Adolescent girl living with a disability, Kono, rural, Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap listener)*

*“I have discussed early marriage with my parents because I want them to know that to send a girl child into early marriage is not good as it will affect the girl’s future.” (Marginalised adolescent girl, Kono, rural, Kotoku Baray listener)*

Some issues were considered too sensitive to discuss, however. Some caregivers noted that they did not discuss issues around sex and family planning with their children as they believed they were too young, whilst male caregivers noted that they were not comfortable discussing menstrual hygiene and sex with their daughters. Adolescent girls and boys also mentioned similar topics that were considered too sensitive to discuss with parents, including sex and early pregnancy.

*“I don’t feel comfortable discussing sex with my parents. However, I feel comfortable discussing such topics at school. At school they educate us about safe sex and how to protect ourselves from sexual infections.” (Adolescent boy, Western Area urban, Kotoku Baray listener)*

Findings indicate that SBCC radio programmes have been successful in inspiring more frequent and supportive discussion between caregivers and their children, as well as among caregivers and among adolescents. Qualitative respondents described gaining confidence to have more open, constructive discussion, including about topics that are often considered sensitive or taboo, and self-attributed this to the EAGER radio programmes. These findings are a significant indicator of the radio programmes success, and the foundation on which transformative social and behaviour change will develop. It also validates the ‘ecosystem’ approach of the project design, which targeted the community, and specifically influential adults in a girl’s life. These findings suggest this was a successful strategy that future programmes can learn from and further tailor especially to target remaining barriers in approaching these topics within the household

## 6. Sustainability: Shifts in attitudes affecting the lives of girls

This section presents findings in relation to Outcome 3: Listening and engaging with EAGER radio programme results in more positive attitudes towards girls’ education and empowerment amongst wider population.

It responds to the following research questions:

- To what extent has listening to the EAGER radio programmes influenced audiences’ supportive attitudes towards girls’ learning / education / entrepreneurship / participation in society?
- What attitudes are likely to be sustainable over time to support girls’ education and learning?

Five questions were asked to create an indicator to measure whether listening to either of the radio programmes had encouraged audiences to have more supportive attitudes towards girls’ learning, education, and participation in society. On average, 63% of regular listeners of either programme strongly agreed with the set of supportive attitude statements. Results were slightly higher for female caregivers compared to male caregivers who were regular listeners.

	TOTAL (n=641)	Regularly Reached Audience (Disaggregated by Target Audiences)			
		Gender		Caregiver	
		Female (n=293)	Male (n=349)	Female Caregiver (n=105)	Male Caregiver (n=122)
The programme(s) has made me realise the value of sending all girls to school	69%	69%	69%	74%	72%
The programme(s) has made me realise the importance of	66%	67%	65%	72%	65%

supporting girls/daughters to make their own choices					
The programme(s) has made me realise the importance of supporting girls in accessing opportunities in my community	62%	63%	61%	67%	62%
The programme(s) has made me realise the importance of supporting girls in making decisions about their own safety in my community	62%	67%	58%	71%	60%
The programme(s) has made me realise the importance of listening to girls' views and ideas	58%	59%	58%	61%	55%

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey 2022, October & November (n=3048).

Attitudinal changes on specific enablers and barriers to education that were also covered prominently in the programmes have been explored in more detail in the following sections. Changes have been measured according to results observed in the overall population of respondents and comparing this to and between regularly reached listeners of EAGER radio programmes (those who had listened to at least every other episode of *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* within the last 12 months or every other episode of *Kotoku Baray* within the last 6 months at the time of data collection) and respondents who have never listened to the programmes. As applicable, results have been tested for statistical significance at  $p < 0.05$ .

### 6.1 Attitudes towards girls' education

In Sierra Leone, gender disparity in educational outcomes begin in adolescence, when more value begins to be placed on girls' domestic roles, rather than their education. Adolescent pregnancy and marriage rates in Sierra Leone are among the highest in the world and are among the dominant causes of high school drop-out rates among girls. Pregnant girls were not allowed to attend school or sit for examinations until 2020, when the government changed this policy. But stigma and discrimination persist for pregnant girls attending school. This is evident in the widening gender inequality later in the education system, with more girls than boys dropping out as they move through Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary School.<sup>50</sup> EAGER Baseline findings highlighted the low learning outcomes experienced by many out-of-school girls in Sierra Leone. Results indicated that the girls enrolled in Cohort 1 lacked key functional skills that limited their independence and confidence: 45% of girls had never gone to school, and 45% went to school but dropped out before completing primary school. Three in four girls (75%) were unable to read or comprehend proficiently. While many girls demonstrated pre-literacy skills, 89% achieved a "non-learner" score.

Furthermore, Baseline findings highlighted multiple barriers to education experienced by girls. For example, 72% of girls reported that they were previously unable to attend school because their families did not have enough money to pay fees, 23% because they needed to work at home, and 19% because they had a child or became pregnant. The same barriers were likely to complicate future schooling opportunities. Girls also noted that they had little decision-making power over their education: 66% stated that they could not choose their own educational path and were subject to the decisions of others.

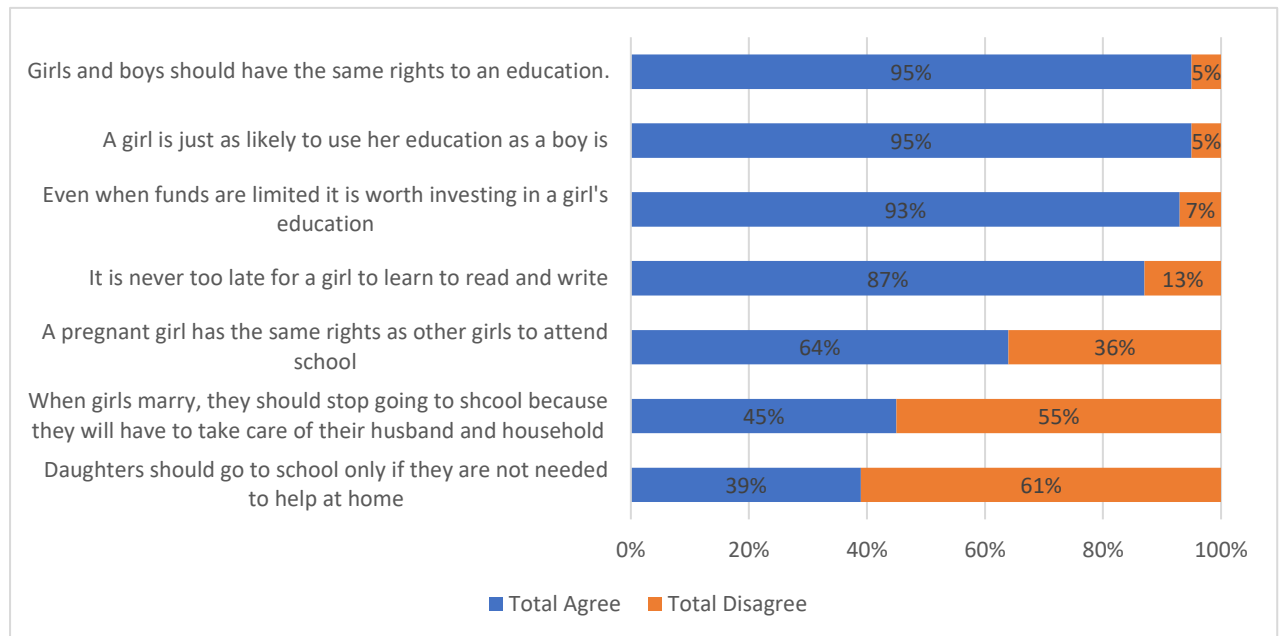
With this backdrop, EAGER radio programming aimed to inform listeners about girls' education opportunities, and the choices available to achieve these; and to encourage and support discussion and the exchange of information and ideas on the challenges and solutions to girls' accessing education.

Figure 9 below depicts overall attitudes towards girls' education at the population level (among all survey respondents). Results suggests that general understanding of, and positive attitudes towards, girls' rights to an education are widespread in Sierra Leone. For example, most survey respondents agree that girls and boys should have the same right to education (95%), that a girl is just as likely to use her education as a boy (95%), that even when funds are limited it is worth investing in a girl's education (93%) and it is never too late for a girl

<sup>50</sup> MBSSE 2019 Annual School Census Report

to learn to read and write (87%). However, attitudes are less positive when juxtaposed with gender roles. Nearly half (45%) of all survey respondents agree that when girls marry, they should stop going to school as they will have to take care of their husband and household. And over a third of respondents harbour negative attitudes towards pregnant girls attending school (36%) or believe that daughters should only go to school if they are not needed to help at home (39%).

Figure 9: Overall attitudes to girls' education (population)

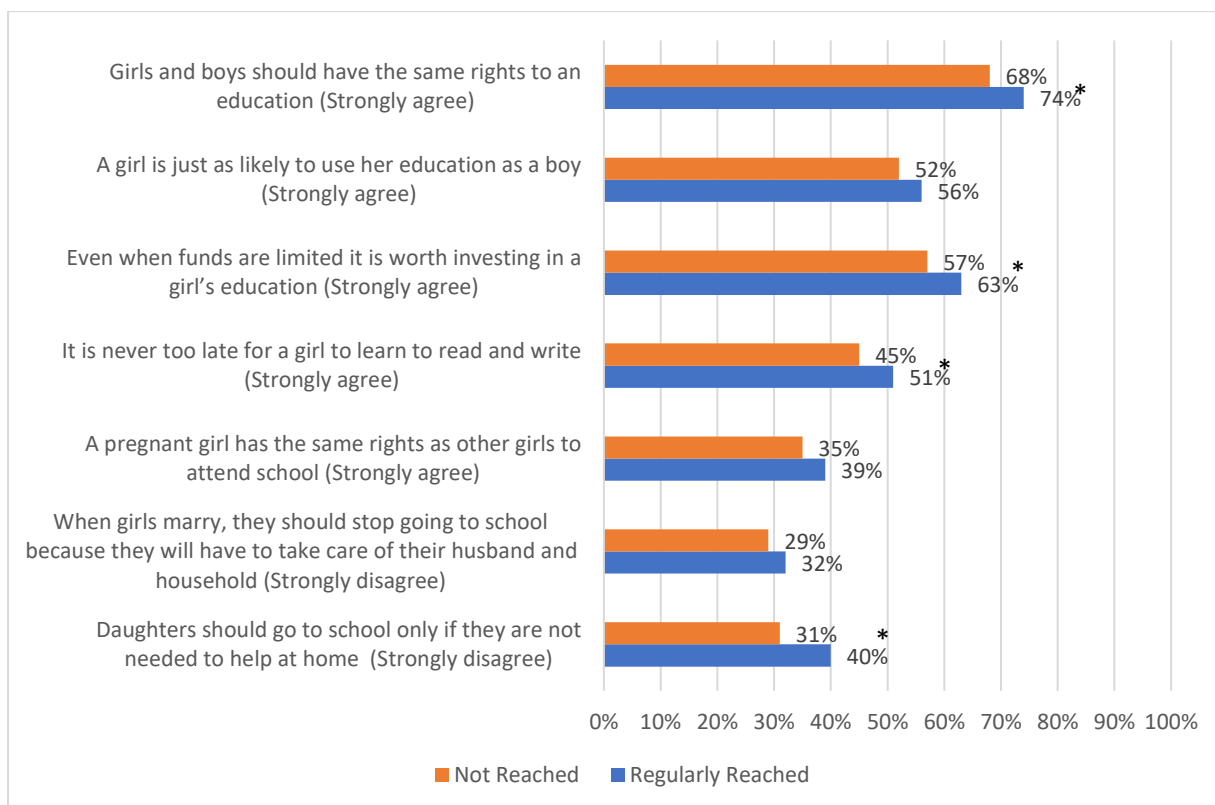


Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3,048). Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Exploring the impact of EAGER radio programmes on attitudes towards equal opportunities in education for girls, results show significant differences between regular listeners and non-listeners, as shown in Figure 10 below. Respondents regularly reached by EAGER radio programmes, as compared with non-listeners, were significantly more likely to *strongly agree* that girls and boys should have the same right to education, that a girl is just as likely to use her education as a boy, that even when funds are limited it is worth investing in a girl's education, and it is never too late for a girl to learn to read and write. They were also significantly more likely to *strongly disagree* that daughters should go to school only if they are not needed to help at home.

Figure 10: Share of positive attitudes towards to girls' education (regularly reached v not reached)





Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey 2022, October & November (n=3048). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different between not reached and regularly reached respondents at  $p < 0.05$ .

Regression analysis showed a positive significant association ( $p < 0.05$ ) between regular exposure to EAGER radio programmes and agreement that girls and boys should have the same rights to an education, even when controlling for potentially influential factors like gender, age, level of education, level of income, and urban/rural location. Supporting this finding, qualitative research uncovered strong and consistently positive attitudes towards girls having equal rights to an education among all audience groups, with many attributing changes in attitude to what they had learned through the EAGER radio programmes. Parents/caregivers and stakeholders reported that a girls' education was now considered just as important as boys. Adolescent girls themselves reported a strong sense of empowerment around their right and ability to learn anything after listening to the radio programmes. There was a view among participants that there has been a broader change in mindset in their communities.

*"This programme has changed the mindset of the people in the community. They have realized that education is very important. Girls have been motivated and are really doing well here now. We have a girl that is a mechanic as result of this programme."* (Community stakeholder – religious leader, Kono, rural, Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap listener)

*"In the past, I thought boys should be given more privilege to education. But that perception was completely wrong. Boys and girls have the same rights to education, skills development and to achieve other aspirations."* (Community stakeholder – health worker, Western Area rural, Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap listener)

*"Adolescent girls who dropped out of school because of early pregnancy should be encouraged to return back to school to continue their education or join skill training institutes to capacitate themselves so that they will become self-reliant."* (Male caregiver of marginalised adolescent girl, Kono, rural, Kotoku Baray listener)

*"Before now, we used to be forced to believe that as a girl you will have to get married and leave your parents while the boy will always be there to help his family. This programme has opened our eyes to the reality that those are all just myths because what a boy can do,*

*a girl can also do. Girls can even do things better than boys.” (Marginalised adolescent girl, Koinadugu, urban, Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap listener)*

*“Through the programme we have realised that if a man can become president, a woman can also become president.” (Marginalised adolescent girl, Koinadugu, urban, Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap listener)*

These positive attitudes were also evident among EAGER girls who were part of the booster sample, with many demonstrating positive attitudes around the right to, and benefits of, girls’ education. Participants in the booster survey who were regularly exposed to *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* or *Kotoku Baray* were more likely to *strongly agree* that girls and boys should have the same rights to an education (61%, compared to 55% of unexposed EAGER girls), and that it is never too late for a girl to learn to read and write (47%, compared with 38%), as compared to non-listeners.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the widely positive attitudes towards girls’ rights to an education, there was an underlying sense that ultimately boys need to gain a better education than girls because of the expectation that they will be the decision-makers and primary earners for the household.

*“I think boys are doing well and they ought to do well because at the end, they will be the head of the home.” (Male caregiver of marginalized adolescent girl, Western Area urban, Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap listener)*

EAGER girls who took part in the booster study reported that whilst they wanted to return to school, there was no money available for them to do so, and that they didn’t have the support of their family to do so. The EAGER Post-Endline assessment shed light on the increased hardship girls in the EAGER communities have been coping with in the year preceding this endline. The volatile financial context in Sierra Leone has been severely affected by the global crisis that began in 2022, compounding already worsened economic conditions led by the secondary effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. This conflation led to higher cost of living, in some cases doubling the cost of items in comparison to costs at the time girls were developing their Empowerment Plans. In the face of these challenges, girls continued to demonstrate persistence and spirit of initiative in pursuing their goals, but demonstrated how the changing economic situation became harder to navigate, a reflection of what the whole country has been experiencing.

Following the pattern seen at the population level, attitudes towards girls’ education among those regularly reached by EAGER radio programmes were less positive when juxtaposed with gender roles, and analysis indicated that there had been no significant shift in attitudes between regular listeners and non-listeners on pregnant girls having the same right to attend school as other girls, and on girls dropping out of school to take care of their husband and household. This was also true among EAGER girls who took part in the booster study. For example, around one in five (21%) of EAGER girls at least disagreed (either *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*) with the statement ‘A pregnant girl has the same rights as other girls to attend school’. Furthermore, just over half (53%) either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that daughters should go to school only if they are not needed to help at home. It should be noted that all girls enrolled in EAGER were out of school, 46% of girls enrolled was food insecure, 56% had no earnings, and that 58% of girls enrolled in EAGER already had a child. This means that for many girls, home responsibilities also included caring for their own child. As such, these attitudes are likely to reflect the reality of their own experiences of the barriers to accessing education.

The less positive attitudes towards education in the context of gender norms and discriminatory practices reveal the persistent and deeply entrenched nature of the barriers and risks girls in Sierra Leone continue to face to access and remain in education. Lasting stigma around pregnant girls and young mothers attending school continues to be felt acutely by young girls, and the burden of domestic duties continue to be disproportionately borne by girls and women. These findings reflect findings from the baseline assessment of the National Policy for Radical Inclusion, which found that pregnant or parent learners remain the most stigmatised in the school system, and continued to experience discrimination by their teachers, peers, and the wider community.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> These findings are based on findings from a small ‘booster’ sample of EAGER Learning Programme participants aged 13-19 years. Due to the small sample size, comparisons between regularly exposed and unexposed respondents should be interpreted with caution.

<sup>52</sup> National Policy for Radical Inclusion, Baseline Report for Implementation, June 2022 <https://mbsseknowledgeplatform.gov.sl/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Radical-Inclusion-Baseline-Report.pdf>

Encouragingly, those aged between 15 and 19 years who regularly listened to the EAGER radio programmes were the most likely to hold positive attitudes towards pregnant girls having the same rights as other girls to attend school (44% of 15-19-year-olds strongly agreed with this), compared with all other age groups (see table 12 below). Further to this, caregivers who took part in qualitative research suggested that the stigma around pregnant girls or young mothers returning to school was becoming less of a barrier, and that people were more accepting of pregnant girls' rights to an education. This is a positive indication of growing awareness among young people of their rights and opportunities, linked to regular listenership of EAGER radio programming, and points towards the potential of SBCC to continue to support sustained efforts towards advocating for a more inclusive society in Sierra Leone.

Table 12: Share of positive attitudes towards girls' education (regularly reached audience – disaggregated by demographic groups)

	TOTAL (n=641)	Regularly Reached Audience (Disaggregated by Target Audiences)						
		Gender		Age				
		Female (n=293)	Male (n=349)	15-19 (n=92)	20-29 (n=167)	30-39 (n=142)	40-49 (n=104)	50+ (n=137)
Girls and boys should have the same rights to an education ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	<b>74%</b>	74%	74%	69%	74%	73%	75%	79%
Even when funds are limited it is worth investing in a girl's education ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	<b>63%</b>	62%	63%	58%	67%	60%	58%	67%
A girl is just as likely to use her education as a boy is ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	<b>56%</b>	55%	57%	49%	55%	57%	49%	65%
It is never too late for a girl to learn to read and write ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	<b>51%</b>	54%	49%	50%	46%	52%	50%	58%
A pregnant girl has the same rights as other girls to attend school ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	<b>39%</b>	40%	37%	44%	37%	34%	39%	40%
Daughters should go to school only if they are not needed to help at home ( <i>Strongly Disagree</i> )	<b>40%</b>	38%	43%	34%	38%	44%	40%	43%
When girls marry, they should stop going to school because they will have to take care of their husband and household ( <i>Strongly Disagree</i> )	<b>32%</b>	35%	30%	36%	29%	30%	28%	37%

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). Due to data weighting base sizes may not always add up to the total base size.

Table 13: Share of positive attitudes towards to girls' education (regularly reached audience – disaggregated by key target audiences)

	Regularly Reached Audience (Disaggregated by Target Audiences)			
	Female Caregiver (n=153)	Male Caregiver (n=181)	Marginalised Adolescent Girls (n=37)	Living with a Disability (n=231)
Girls and boys should have the same rights to an education ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	75%	76%	70%	83%
Even when funds are limited it is worth investing in a girl's education ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	64%	63%	51%	69%
A girl is just as likely to use her education as a boy is ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	56%	59%	42%	64%
It is never too late for a girl to learn to read and write ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	59%	49%	48%	59%
A pregnant girl has the same rights as other girls to attend school ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	44%	40%	34%	43%
Daughters should go to school only if they are not needed to help at home ( <i>Strongly Disagree</i> )	42%	46%	37%	47%
When girls marry, they should stop going to school because they will have to take care of their husband and household ( <i>Strongly Disagree</i> )	33%	25%	32%	39%

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). Due to data weighting base sizes may not always add up to the total base size. Note, sample size for the marginalized adolescent girls' group is small – therefore results should be interpreted with caution.

Overall, results demonstrate that radio programming has the potential to be an effective strategy to complement programme approaches that target norms shifting in an integrated manner, with a focus on challenging resistance patterns that persist in a way that is safe and does not cause harm. This is critical in the context of Sierra Leone, where attitudes that prioritise domestic roles over education remain deeply entrenched and continue to dictate decisions around girls' education and limit opportunities for girls. With a high incidence of poverty,<sup>53</sup> many children in Sierra Leone have to support the household by taking part in economic activities and, predominantly for girls, helping with domestic chores. Many families in poverty make difficult decisions about how to use scarce resources, and in this context, the decision to sacrifice girls' education may be considered unavoidable. These conditions have significantly worsened in Sierra Leone in the period during which EAGER was implemented. The EAGER Baseline evaluation pointed out how many girls were impoverished (43%) and food insecure (46%), with intersecting barriers at the educational and social level. The Covid-19 pandemic heavily compounded an economic situation already severely affected by months of continuous currency depreciation and rampant inflation, overall affecting opportunities and access to services for the most marginalised groups, including OOS adolescent girls, with many EAGER girls reporting an increased lack of food (70%), transport opportunities (57%) and money (48%), as well as increased household chores (60%). This is reflected at the national level, with severe economic challenges resulting in food insecurity: 73% percent of Sierra Leone's population is food insecure, among which, 11% of households are severely food insecure, and 62% are moderately food insecure.

<sup>53</sup> Sierra Leone Economic Diversification Study – (P162720)  
<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/pt/354291578288053592/pdf/Sierra-Leone-Economic-Diversification-Study.pdf>

Future radio programming should focus on portraying practical steps to support girls to complete their education, highlighting solutions to common challenges, and sharing successful stories of change within and through economic hardship and highly challenging living conditions.

## 6.2 Attitudes towards skills development for girls

EAGER Baseline findings indicated that many girls lacked opportunities to earn their own money: 57.5% had no earnings, 29.7% worked for themselves, and 4.5% were employed informally by others. Just five girls reported that they had formal paid employment. Exacerbated by this economic marginalisation, girls lacked key resources for daily living: 46% were food insecure and 43% were impoverished.

In this context, EAGER radio programmes, particularly *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*, sought to role model supportive behaviours to change attitudes on the range of skills development opportunities that can be available for girls. The programmes address the importance of girls accessing skills training in their communities when available and presents different types of training centres that can found within communities, including on carpentry, tailoring, weaving, hairdressing, welding, backyard farming, catering, recycling of plastics, and motor engineering. Through stories of adolescent girls who have successfully learned different skills to start their own small businesses, the programme highlighted both conventional and unconventional choices for skills development for girls.

Figure 11 below shows attitudes towards girls' access to skills development opportunities among the overall population. Over nine in ten respondents at least agree that a girl who is not in school can engage in learning new skills and trades (98%), that a girl should get the same opportunities for skills and trades development as a boy (97%), and that girls can do as well as boys with trades (92%). This is on par with population level results across attitudes towards girls' education, and suggests that at an overall level, people in Sierra Leone are aware of, and positive towards, the varied opportunities available for girls outside of formal education.

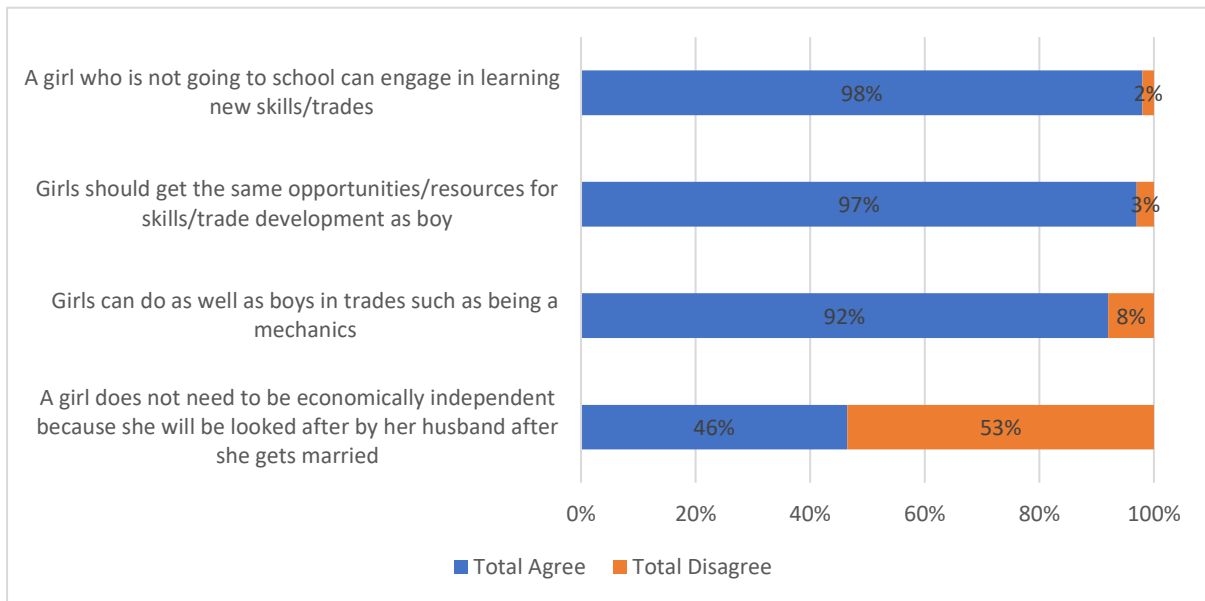
However, like the pattern seen in attitudes towards school and education for girls discussed in Section 6.1 above, when put in the context of gender roles, attitudes towards equal opportunities in skills development for girls were less positive. A large share of respondents (46%) at least agreed that a girl does not need to be financially independent as she will be looked after by her husband once she is married. This reflects prevailing gender and social norms in Sierra Leone, which continue to place the country among the bottom ranked countries on the Gender Inequality Index (182 out of 189 in 2019)<sup>54</sup> and the Global Gender Gap (121 out of 156 in 2020).<sup>55</sup> These indices are based on measures of health and survival, women's empowerment, economic participation, and educational attainment.

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<sup>54</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GI>

<sup>55</sup> World Economic Forum, "Global Gender Gap Report 2021: Insight Report"

Figure 11: Attitudes towards skills development for girls (overall population)

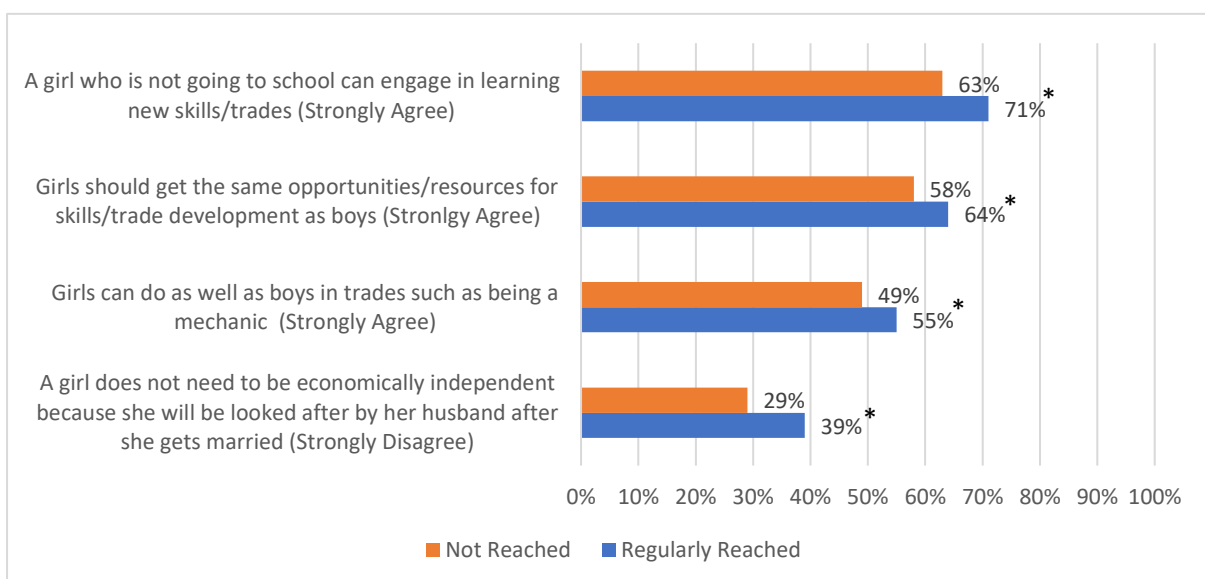


Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Exploring the impact of EAGER radio programmes on attitudes towards equal opportunities in learning skills and trades for girls points to a link between regular listening of EAGER radio programmes with supportive attitudes. As illustrated in Figure 12 below, respondents who were regularly reached by EAGER radio programmes were significantly more likely to hold positive attitudes towards equal opportunities in learning skills and trades for girls across all four statements tested. Further reinforcing this finding, regression analysis also showed a positive significant association ( $p < 0.05$ ) between exposure to EAGER radio programmes and agreement with three statements that tested attitudes towards skills development for girls:

- A girl who is not going to school can engage in learning new skills/trades
- Girls should get the same opportunities/resources for skills/trade development as boys
- Girls can do as well as boys in trades such as being a mechanic

Figure 12: Share of positive attitudes towards skills development for girls (regularly reached vs. not reached)



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different between not reached and regularly reached respondents at  $p < .05$ .

These positive findings were consistently reflected in qualitative interviews. Adolescent girls were resolute around the idea of girls being capable of learning any skill/trade. They were able to point to many examples in their own communities where girls had been successful in starting businesses. Girls reflected on how similar situations being portrayed in the drama, and examples shared through *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*, which inspired them to take up learning a new skill. Many of the girls mentioned their own plans to train and/or start a business in the future, whilst others were already engaged in training or business, mostly as petty traders. Adolescent girls who listened to *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* reported deciding to take skills-based training such as tailoring after listening to the programme.

*“Though it is true that education is good, those who do not go to school but engage in business also empower themselves a lot. I have some a business idea, which is make-up artist. I am currently working on it.”* (Marginalised adolescent girl, Koinadugu, urban, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

*“The tailoring [training] I am doing I made the decision which is as result of listening [to] the program *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*.”* (Adolescent girl living with disability, Kono, rural, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener).

*“My situation is reflected in the drama because they said if you don’t go to school, or you have dropped out of school, there are other skills you can learn that you will use to support yourself. That is why I am doing tailoring since I have not been to school so that I can support myself.”* (Marginalised adolescent girl, Kono, rural, *Kotoku Baray* listener)

*“The programme says that boys and girls have equal rights and opportunities to education and skills training. I agree with that idea. There are girls who, having gone through skills training, work as mechanics, plumbers, machine operators, etc. It is society that stereotype the roles of women and men. If you go to Sierra Rutile Ltd, there are women operating caterpillar machines. What men can do, women can also do or do it better.”* (Female caregiver of marginalised girl, Bo, urban, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

Similarly, EAGER girls who were regular listeners to *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* or *Kotoku Baray* were more likely to *strongly agree* that a girl who is not going to school can engage in learning new skills and trades (63%, compared with 54% of non-listeners). Furthermore, qualitative findings showed strong positive attitudes among EAGER girls who took part in the booster study on their rights and capability to learn skills and trades, and aspirations of gaining independence through developing new skills. In fact, many were either already training towards a new skill or were already operating their own small businesses. One participant described how she was currently training to be a hairdresser, while another was learning tailoring skills from her father. Some girls interviewed were involved in petty trade and using the profits to support their family. This is likely a reflection of the success of the wider EAGER interventions with women and girls, and the approach to Transition through the Empowerment Plan model, providing a path to empowerment outside of traditional education<sup>56</sup> This success was demonstrated by the progress that the girls made towards their personal goals as assessed by the EAGER Endline, and changes in their work and education status pointed to a greater number of girls working for money and returning to school at Endline.

*“The programme is just to remind us that education is not the only thing. We should not think it is the only option but also when one is not fortunate to go through formal schooling, then one should also learn some useful skills through which one can be able to take care of herself and support herself and her family.”* (EAGER girl, Kono, rural)

*“As for me I have completed training to be a mechanic and I wanted to go to the village to also engage my sister so that she can also come and train to be a mechanic. But the problem is that in our community mechanic jobs are seen as jobs for men and not for women, so most people will be laughing at me and have discouraged my sister to move from the village*

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<sup>56</sup> EAGER Endline Evaluation Report July 2022, IMC Worldwide

*to come and train to become a mechanic. So, she is just there doing farm work. That is a great barrier.” (EAGER girl, Kailahun, rural)*

Caregivers also reported that people were more open to girls developing skills and taking on jobs that were traditionally considered to be for boys and men only, and that they encouraged their girls to take up new trades.

Table 14 below shows results across attitudinal statements disaggregated by key demographic and target groups. Attitudes towards skills training for girls were consistent among regularly reached female and male audiences, and relatively consistent across age groups. Similar levels of positive attitudes were also detected across key target audiences, including caregivers and those living with a disability. –The consistency of positive attitudes towards skills training for girls across key demographic and target groups reflects the success of the EAGER radio programme (and wider EAGER programming) in improving awareness of available opportunities for adolescent girls and women among all audiences and instilling positive attitudes around training and development for girls.

*Table 14: Share of positive attitudes towards skills training for girls (regularly reached audience - demographics)*

	TOTAL (n=641)	Regularly Reached Audience (Disaggregated by Target Audiences)						
		Gender		Age				
		Female (n=293)	Male (n=349)	15-19 (n=92)	20-29 (n=167)	30-39 (n=142)	40-49 (n=104)	50+ (n=137)
A girl who is not going to school can engage in learning new skills/trades ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	71%	71%	71%	68%	68%	71%	69%	79%
Girls should get the same opportunities/resources for skills/trade development as boys ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	64%	64%	65%	62%	61%	66%	62%	69%
Girls can do as well as boys in trades such as being a mechanic ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	55%	55%	55%	48%	53%	56%	54%	61%
A girl does not need to be economically independent because she will be looked after by her husband after she gets married ( <i>Strongly Disagree</i> )	39%	40%	39%	35%	42%	35%	35%	38%

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). Due to data weighting base sizes may not always add up to the total base size.

*Table 15: Share of positive attitudes towards skills training for girls (regularly reached audience – target audience)*

	Regularly Reached Audience (Disaggregated by Target Audiences)			
	Female Caregiver (n=153)	Male Caregiver (n=181)	Marginalised Adolescent Girls (n=37)	Living with a Disability (n=231)
A girl who is not going to school can engage in learning new skills/trades ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	77%	74%	60%	79%
Girls should get the same opportunities/resources for	67%	63%	49%	70%



skills/trade development as boys ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )				
Girls can do as well as boys in trades such as being a mechanic ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	61%	57%	42%	62%
A girl does not need to be economically independent because she will be looked after by her husband after she gets married ( <i>Strongly Disagree</i> )	43%	40%	36%	48%

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). Due to data weighting base sizes may not always add up to the total base size. Note, sample size for the marginalised adolescent girls group is small – therefore results should be interpreted with caution.

In the context of Sierra Leone, where one of the barriers to women and girls participating fully and equally in society is a lack of economic independence,<sup>57</sup> further impacted by the economic stresses noted above, this apparent shift in attitudes and behaviour around uptake of trades is a strongly positive step towards empowerment of women and girls. This is supported by findings from the EAGER Endline that indicate the percentage of girls that were not working or going to school at Baseline decreased from 59.6% to 9.7% at Endline. Similarly, the percentage of girls who were working for an income increased from 39% at Baseline to 85.7% at Endline, with 14% of girls reportedly returning to school at Endline.

### 6.3 Attitudes on gender roles within the household

One practical barrier to girls in Sierra Leone achieving equality in education and learning, as well as other spheres of life, is the unequal burden of household chores they carry. Gender norms see women and girls take onboard a disproportionate share of domestic duties and mean that girls often miss or drop out of school in order to support the household, or, in the case of the 30% of girls who are married before the age of 18 years,<sup>58</sup> to run their own household. The EAGER Baseline evaluation findings on the contextual realities of out-of-school adolescent girls across the 10 districts where the project was implemented reflected this, noting that 44% of enrolled girls were married or living with a partner, and 58% had at least one child. These realities become additional barriers for the girls, as girls’ husbands may block them from regular attendance in learning activities or force them to drop out due to household responsibilities or anger, which may lead to backlash and increased violence against girls in the household. Economic or household priorities and/or childcare responsibilities may keep girls with children from attending and lead to dropout or lower learning outcomes. Families may not support childcare, or children may be at risk when left with other caregivers. The declaration of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 and subsequent response measures in Sierra Leone heightened risks to girls’ safety, security, and wellbeing. A survey conducted by EAGER in June 2020 with enrolled girls and Mentors revealed the additional risks since the start of the pandemic, with 60% reporting an increased workload either inside or outside of the home, and 20% reporting an increase in gender-based violence in their communities.

The traditional household hierarchy which places men at the head of the household and as the final, sometimes solo, decision-maker underpins these realities and can hinder opportunities for women and girls to have their voices heard on key decisions that affect their lives.

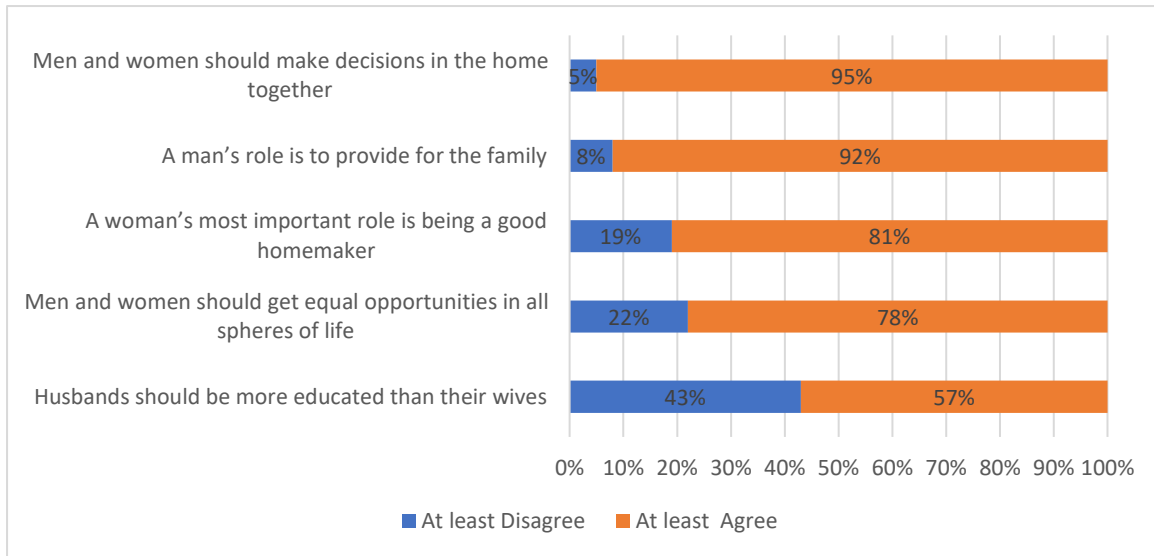
At the overall population level (depicted in Figure 13 below), responses indicate that whilst attitudes are generally positive towards the concept of gender equality and joint decision-making, discriminatory attitudes still prevail around gender roles in the household, particularly those related to the distribution of household chores. For example, survey respondents almost unanimously agree that men and women should make decisions in the home together (95%), and that men and women should get equal opportunities in all spheres of life (78%). Nevertheless, most respondents believe that a man’s role is to provide for the family (92%) and a woman’s most important role is being a good homemaker (81%). Just less than half of all survey respondents (43%) believe that husbands should be more educated than their wives. Notably, female respondents were

<sup>57</sup> See Gender Inequality Index <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.concern.net/news/gender-equality-sierra-leone>

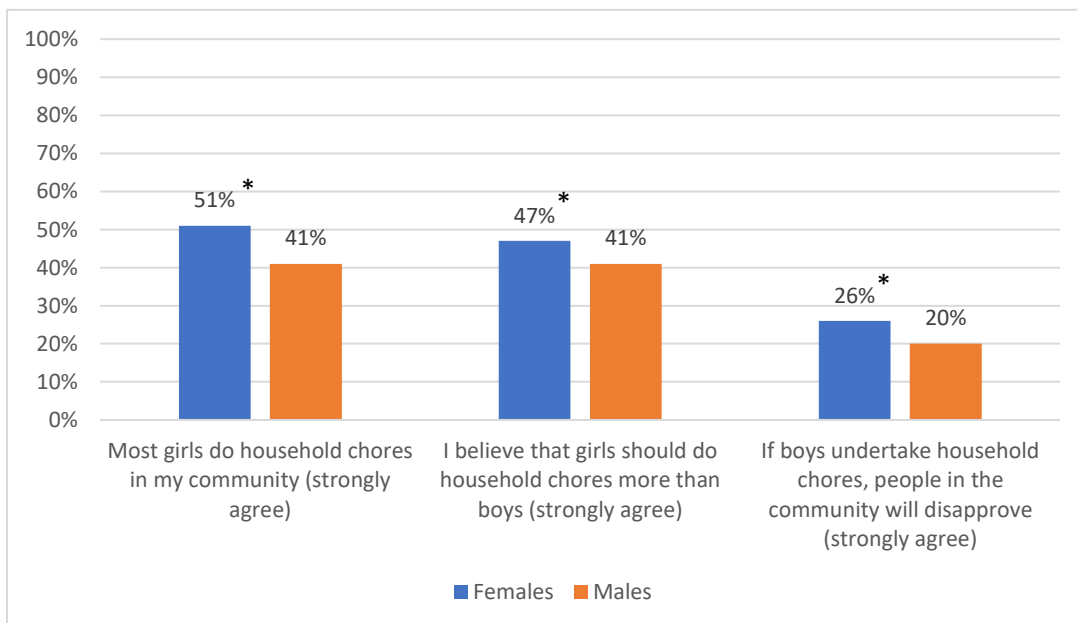
significantly more likely than male respondents to strongly disagree that husbands should be more educated than their wives (32%, compared with 18% of male respondents). Unsurprisingly, given how gender norms are normalised and internalised among girls and women, female respondents are more likely than male respondents to believe that women should bear the majority of household duties. At the overall population level (depicted in Figure 14 below), female respondents were significantly more likely than their male counterparts to strongly agree that most girls should do more household chores than boys (47% compared with 41%), and if boys undertake household chores, people in the community will disapprove (26% compared with 20%).

Figure 13: Attitudes towards gender roles and norms (population level)



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 14: Attitudes towards gender roles in the household (population level – by gender)

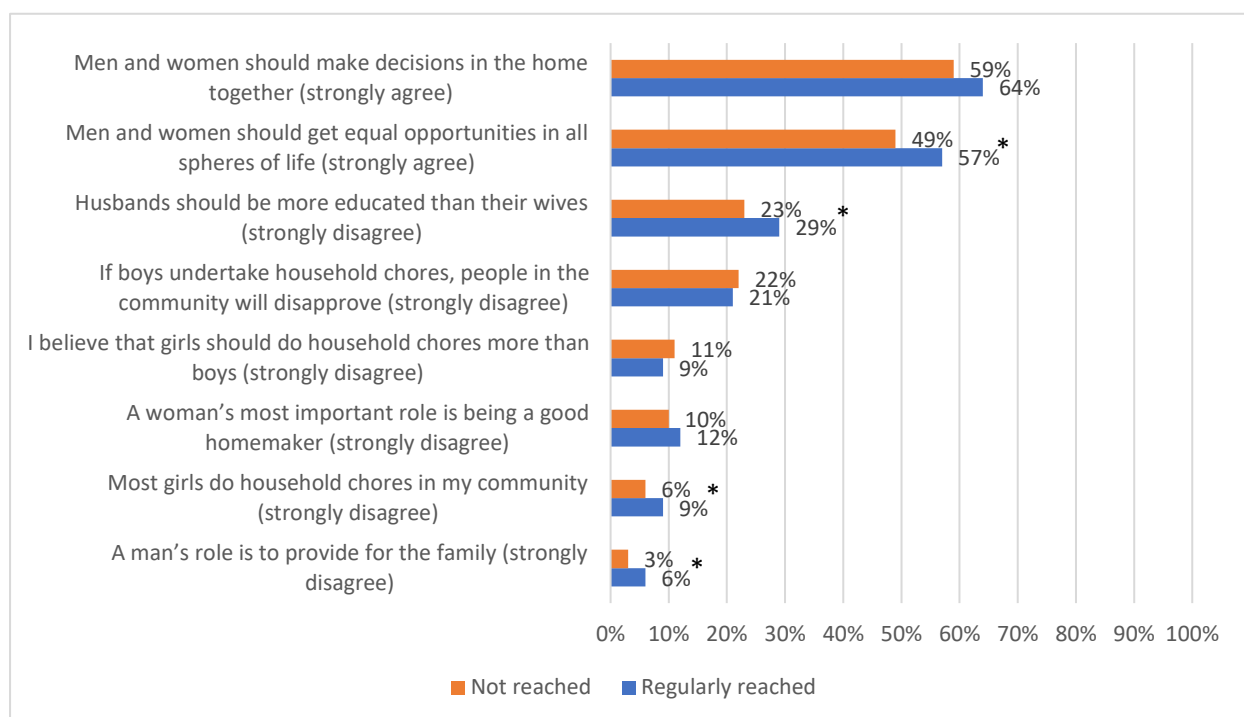


Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different between females and males at  $p < .05$ .

Exploring the impact of EAGER SBCC radio programmes on gender norms indicated some promising shifts in attitudes, but that entrenched gender norms still prevail. Attitudes still largely endorse the role of women as primarily homemakers, and men as the head of the household.

Positively, regular exposure to EAGER radio programmes is linked to more positive attitudes around equal opportunities in all spheres of life for men and women – with those regularly exposed to the radio programmes significantly more likely to strongly agree with this statement (57%, compared with 49% of non-listeners). This positive association was shown to hold even when controlling for potentially influencing factors like age, gender, education, level of income, urban/rural location, with regression analysis showing a positive significant association ( $p < 0.05$ ) between exposure to the EAGER radio programmes and strong agreement that ‘men and women should get equal opportunities in all spheres of life.’ This indicates the presence of strong positive attitudes around the broad concept of equality, in line with what was found in relation to educational opportunities for boys and girls and indicates that EAGER radio programmes have likely contributed to creating a more positive, accepting environment for girls.

Figure 15: Share of positive attitudes towards gender roles and norms (regularly reached v not reached)



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different between not exposed and regularly reached at  $p < 0.05$ .

However, survey results indicate that EAGER radio programmes had lower impact on attitudes around sharing domestic duties. There were no significant differences between those regularly reached by EAGER radio programmes, and those not reached across statements related to this issue, with the exception of regularly reached audiences being significantly more likely to strongly disagree with the statement: Most girls do household chores in my community (9%, compared with 6% of non-listeners).

Female caregivers who took part in qualitative research, particularly those living in urban areas, said they believe that household chores *should* be shared between men and women, and that the stereotypical roles of men and women in the household were starting to be challenged within their communities. This reflects findings from earlier BBC Media Action audience research among *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listeners, which identified that caregivers appeared to be developing more positive attitudes towards sharing domestic chores equally between

girls and boys.<sup>59</sup> However, this was in contrast to rural qualitative participants, who noted that it is taboo for men to cook and clean, and that people in the community would mock men who undertook household chores.

Some male caregivers reported that they were themselves challenging the gender norms by taking on some domestic duties after listening to the radio programmes, but this was not widely or easily accepted. Whilst some adolescent girls who listened to the programmes reported that within their own household, chores were shared among boys and girls, there remained an awareness that people in the community would not approve of boys doing household chores.

*“Many perceive it wrongly. I have been in such a situation before because I can cook and as a result, my male friends and even ladies laugh at me saying I am a girl.”* (Male caregiver of marginalised adolescent girl, Kenema, rural, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

*“Before this time, I was the only one doing all the housework but because of this programme I have been explaining it to my aunt and my uncle, they have now shared the work with my other brothers.”* (Adolescent girls, Kono, rural, *Kotoku Baray* listener)

*“Some people in the community will say the men are idle, that is why they are doing those kinds of jobs. In fact, the community will give them female names like if the name of the man is Lamin, they will start calling him Laminatu. They will tend to provoke these kinds of people.”* (Marginalised adolescent girl, Koinadugu, urban, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

Findings show mixed results in terms of the radio programmes’ impact on the concept of a traditional household hierarchy and gender dynamics in the household. Positively, regular listeners of EAGER radio programmes were significantly more likely to strongly disagree with statements that reflect the norm of power imbalance in the household hierarchy: ‘Husbands should be more educated than their wives’ (29%, compared with 23% of non-listeners), and ‘A man’s role is to provide for the family’ (6%, compared with 3% of non-listeners). Notably, female respondents who were regularly reached by the radio programmes were significantly more likely to strongly disagree that men should be more educated than their wives (36% compared with 24% of males regularly reached by the programmes), suggesting that women and girls are pushing against the power imbalance in education inequity.

While these differences are significant, the proportion of regular programme audiences who exhibit these positive attitudes is low, indicating that attitudes that support male dominance and power in the household persist and are more challenging to shift. Qualitative research also found near unanimous agreement that within households, men were the head of the household and the main provider for the family, while women took care of domestic duties, and played a supporting role to her husband. Community stakeholders reported that a man was the only person to make major decisions in his household for his children. Adolescent girls corroborated this view, identifying their fathers or male relative as the head of the household and noted that decisions, even when discussed with others, were (and should be) made by men. This was view also consistently cited among EAGER girls who participated in the booster study. These findings are in line with the risk and barriers identified by the EAGER Baseline evaluation, which indicated that, while men, especially male partners, supported education as a means to generate household income, qualitative data presented the nuance that many did not approve of changes that would alter traditional gender norms. The Baseline assessment also indicated that girls were unaware of the gender norms that underpin their lives: 3.7% demonstrated awareness of gender norms, suggesting that these norms are largely internalised through socialisation and the absence of female role models. This points to how community acceptance of girls’ autonomy and decision-making power may not keep up with girls’ increasing levels of confidence in their own capacity and rights. *“The husband is supposed to bring money into the home because he is the head of the family, and the wife is there to assist the husband.”* (Female caregiver of marginalised adolescent girl, Kono, rural, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

*“I believe the men should provide for the family and the women must serve as an auxiliary to complement the effort of the man.”* (Male caregiver of marginalised adolescent girl, Kenema, Rural, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

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<sup>59</sup> BBC Media Action. (March 2021). Leave No Girl Behind: Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER): Audience Research Report.

“Women also have the right to make decisions, but major decision should come from the man.” (Marginalised adolescent girl, Bo, urban, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

“The man is going to decide for the children and choose for your children which school you want them to attend. In some part in our community, children decide what to do for themselves, which is not correct. The man is the right person to make major decision at home. The man will say if you cannot go to school again, or to go and do a skills program. For example, in my family as a chief, I decide everything for my children to do.” (Community Stakeholder (male) - Community Chief, Kenema, rural, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

Table 16: Share of positive attitudes towards gender roles and norms (regularly reached disaggregated by demographics)

	TOTAL (n=641)	Regularly Reached Audience (Disaggregated by demographics)						
		Gender		Age				
		Female (n=293)	Male (n=349)	15-19 (n=92)	20-29 (n=167)	30-39 (n=142)	40-49 (n=104)	50+ (n=137)
Men and women should get equal opportunities in all spheres of life ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	57%	56%	58%	56%	61%	50%	59%	59%
A women’s most important role is being a good homemaker ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	12%	13%	11%	7%	9%	11%	19%	15%
Men and women should make decisions in the home together ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	64%	65%	64%	59%	71%	61%	58%	68%
Husbands should be more educated than their wives ( <i>Strongly Disagree</i> )	29%	36%	24%*	32%	28%	32%	30%	26%
A man’s role is to provide for the family ( <i>Strongly Disagree</i> )	6%	5%	6%	2%	8%	4%	7%	6%
I believe that girls should do household chores more than boys ( <i>Strongly Disagree</i> )	11%	9%	13%	10%	8%	12%	13%	13%

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different comparator groups at  $p<.05$ . Due to data weighting base sizes may not always add up to the total base size.

Table 17: Share of positive attitudes towards gender roles and norms (regularly reached disaggregated by target audience)

	Regularly Reached Audience (Disaggregated by Target Audiences)			
	Female Caregiver (n=153)	Male Caregiver (n=181)	Marginalised Adolescent Girls (n=37)	Living with a Disability (n=231)
Men and women should get equal opportunities in all spheres of life ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	58%	59%	53%	61%
A women’s most important role is being a good homemaker ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	16%	11%	0%	14%
Men and women should make decisions in the home together ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	66%	69%	57%	66%
Husbands should be more educated than their wives ( <i>Strongly Disagree</i> )	37%	18%*	32%	38%

A man's role is to provide for the family ( <i>Strongly Disagree</i> )	6%	6%	0%	6%
I believe that girls should do household chores more than boys ( <i>Strongly Disagree</i> )	9%	10%	9%	15%

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different comparator groups at  $p < .05$ . Due to data weighting base sizes may not always add up to the total base size.

These multi-faceted results described above reinforce the understanding that change in gender norms is built upon the gradual adoption and spread of new ideas, knowledge, and practices, and that integrated and multi-pronged approaches targeting different demographic groups and communities at large should be pivoted to drive sustainable changes. Stories of change among qualitative respondents that indicate practices and attitudes around discriminatory gender roles are changing within households and in communities are positive and point to emerging signs of such shifts. Self-attribution of these changes to EAGER radio programmes are valuable indications that the SBCC approach taken has contributed in some part to these incremental shifts towards more equal and enabling gender norms and attitudes and therefore has potential to add value to integrated programme designs that aim at shifting these norms.

#### 6.4 Attitudes on SRHR

The SBCC formative research for EAGER found that SRHR issues such as early/forced marriage and early pregnancy impose some of the biggest barriers to girls' education and learning in Sierra Leone. It highlighted early pregnancy as one of the major issues affecting young girls in Sierra Leone. Participants in the formative research study, including girls, referred to early pregnancy as the key reason for girls to drop out of school.

According to the 2017 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), 29.9% of women (and 6.5% of men) aged 20-24 were first married before the age of 18 years.<sup>60</sup> In Sierra Leone, early marriage (under 18 years of age) is illegal, but largely unenforced. Also, customary law allows marriage under 18 years of age with parental consent. This contradiction in the law around early marriage is recognised and policy makers are trying to rectify this, but progress is slow. Girls are forced to marry early, particularly in rural areas, because it is a norm, the family will receive a dowry, and because it is one less person to feed. Most caregivers and communities believe that girls will be taken care of by their husbands, so believe that it is a positive choice. After they are married, most girls do not have financial independence to be able to go back to school or take up other opportunities. Early pregnancy poses a great risk to girls: according to the 2019 Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), only 24% of girls and women ages 15-19 who are unmarried and sexually active or are married use a modern form of contraception.

In response, EAGER radio programmes aimed to provide trustworthy information and shift harmful attitudes around these issues, also reflecting the GEC GESI framework in terms of developing empowerment activities with girls that bring SRHR issues into conversations and to support girls to identify and challenge discriminatory ideas around sexual agency. *Kotoku Baray* was the main programme that dealt with SRHR attitudes so that adolescent girls were not exposed to any harm by relating their stories on the factual show, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*. The programmes aimed to encourage caregivers and adolescent girls to feel confident having these conversations and to have the tools and understanding to support girls in accessing information and making informed choices.

#### Discussion of family planning and SRHR

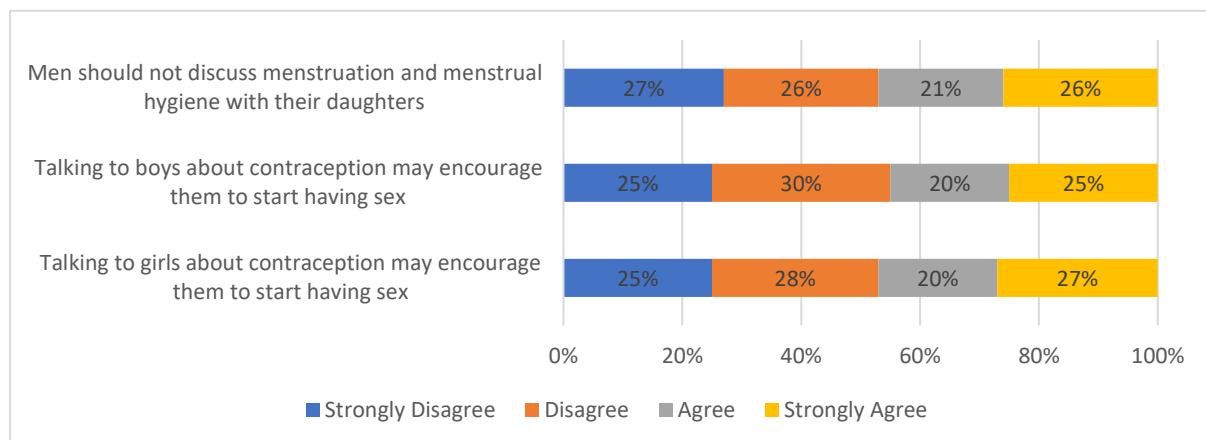
In this context, EAGER SBCC radio content aimed to contribute to shifting attitudes around SRHR by showing the value of talking to girls about family planning and safe sex. This links to the GEC GESI framework, in developing empowerment activities with girls that bring SRHR issues into conversations to support girls to identify and challenge heteronormative and discriminatory ideas around sexual agency.

At Endline, all survey respondents were asked about their level of agreement on three statements related to attitudes around SRHR. Results at the overall population level, as shown in Figure 16 below, demonstrated that

<sup>60</sup> [Sierra Leone 2017 MICS Survey Findings Report](#)

unhelpful attitudes around SRHR remain prevalent in Sierra Leone - around half of survey respondents agreed that talking to boys or girls about contraception may encourage them to start having sex, and that men should not discuss menstruation with their daughters.

Figure 16: Attitudes towards sexual and reproductive health (population)



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Analysis to explore the impact of EAGER radio programmes on attitudes towards SRHR indicated that regular exposure to EAGER radio programming is linked with significantly more positive attitudes on SRHR. As depicted in Figure 17 below, regular listeners were significantly more likely to *strongly disagree* that:

- Talking to girls about contraception may encourage them to start having sex (29%, compared with 23% of those not exposed)
- Talking to boys about contraception may encourage them to start having sex (30%, compared with 22%)
- Men should not discuss menstruation and menstrual hygiene with their daughters (31%, compared with 25%).

This significant positive association between regular exposure to EAGER radio programmes and more positive SRHR attitudes holds even when controlling for potential confounding factors such as age, gender, education, level of income, and urban/rural location, through regression analysis.

Among EAGER girls surveyed in the booster study, those who were regular listeners to the EAGER radio programmes were significantly more likely to *strongly disagree* that talking to girls about contraception may encourage them to start having sex (29%, compared with 18% of EAGER girls who were not reached by the programmes). They were also slightly, although not significantly, more likely to *strongly disagree* that talking to boys about contraception may encourage them to start having sex (29%, compared to 20% of non-listeners).

Findings from the qualitative component of the research support these results, with caregivers mentioning that the programme’s coverage of ‘sensitive’ subjects such as sex, contraception and menstruation was helpful in making them more comfortable to discuss such issues with their children. Female caregivers reported feeling comfortable discussing menstruation, menstrual hygiene, and contraception with their daughters, and mentioned that EAGER radio programmes had made them confident to have such conversations. Male caregivers mentioned that the programmes had reminded them of their responsibility as parents to discuss SRHR issues with their children, even if they felt uncomfortable doing so. However, most male caregivers reported that they did not find it easy to discuss menstruation with their daughters and that mothers were better placed to have such conversations with their daughters. This result reflects the continued sensitivity of menstruation as a topic and the perception that it is taboo, especially in rural areas which represent the vast majority of Sierra Leone.

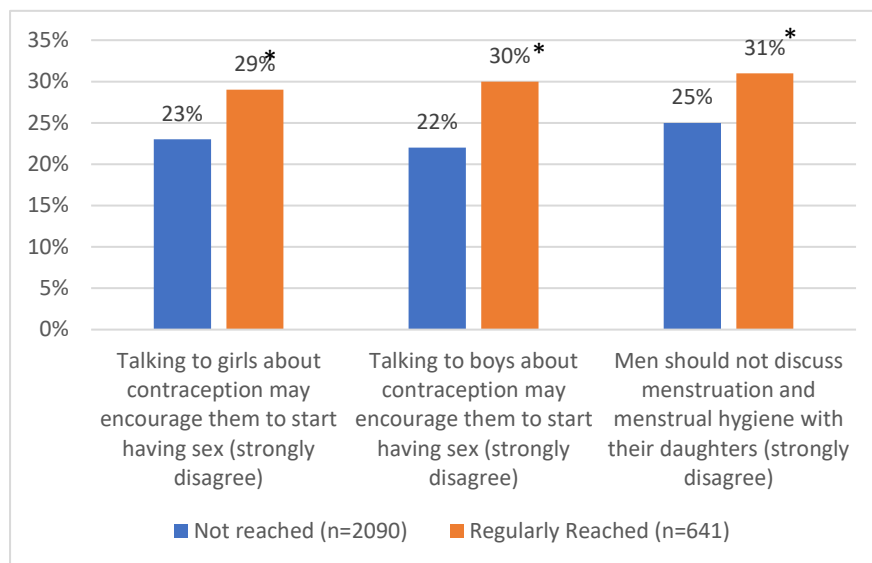
*“It used to be a taboo but listening to the programme has helped some of us overcome that aspect as well. Now as a parent I will sit with my daughter and will educate her on menstruation and what to do whenever she begins to have that experience.”* (Female

caregiver of marginalised adolescent girl, Koinadugu (Kabala), urban, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

*"I explain early pregnancy and preventing early pregnancy to my children. There is much more awareness of early pregnancy than in the past."* (Female caregiver of marginalised adolescent girl, Bo, urban, *Kotoku Baray* listener)

*"There are certain issues the mother should handle because girls are comfortable to discuss that with her. Issues like teenage pregnancy, menstruation and family planning. I can talk on these issues, but the mother can best discuss woman talk."* (Male caregiver of marginalised adolescent girl, Western Area urban, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listener)

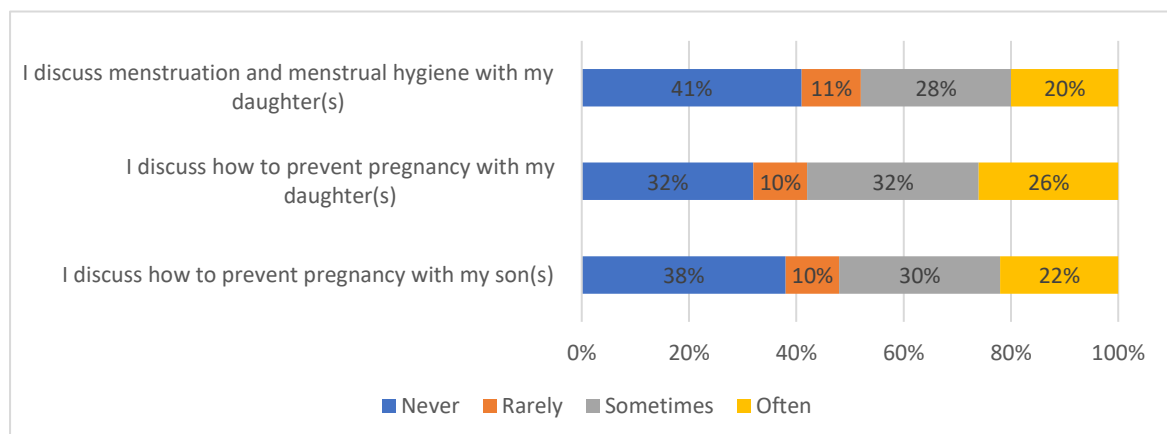
Figure 17: Attitudes towards sexual and reproductive health (regularly reached v not reached)



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different between not exposed and regularly reached at  $p < .05$ .

All survey respondents who were caregivers of adolescents were also asked how often they discuss ways to prevent pregnancy with their sons and/or daughters, and menstruation and menstrual hygiene with their daughters. Results are depicted in Figure 18 below. Around one in three respondents reported *never* discussing how to prevent pregnancy with their daughters (32%) or sons (38%), whilst two in five respondents (41%) reported *never* discussing menstruation with their daughters.

Figure 18: Discussion of sexual and reproductive health with sons/daughters (population)





Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022 (n=3048). Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

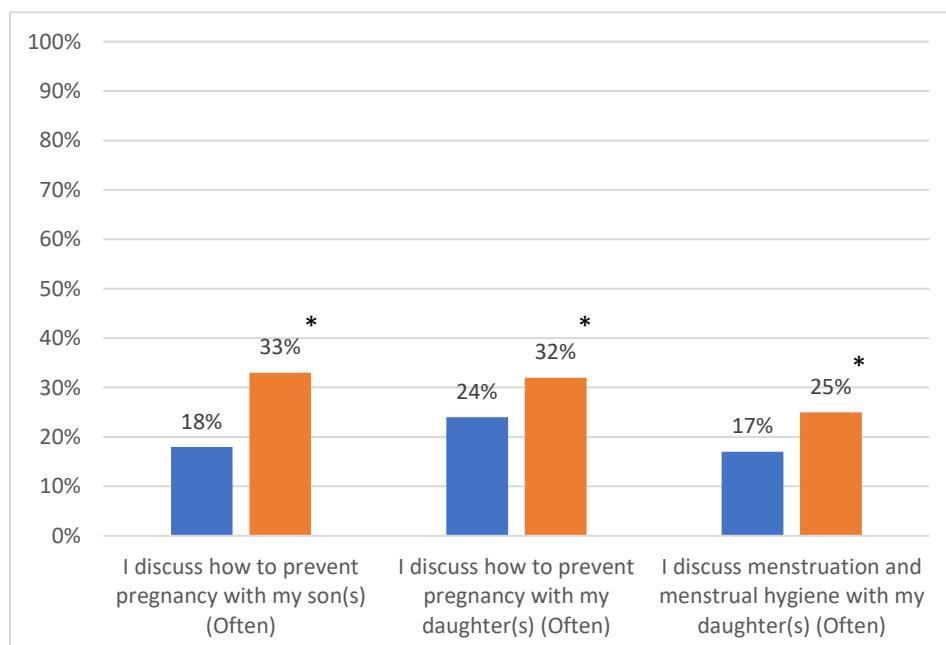
Respondents who were regularly exposed to EAGER radio programmes were significantly more likely to *often* discuss how to prevent pregnancy with both sons and daughters, and menstruation and menstrual hygiene with their daughters. Unsurprisingly, regularly reached female respondents, and female caregivers, were significantly more likely to report discussing menstruation with their daughters *often* compared to their male counterparts (32% compared with 19%). In fact, 50% of regularly reached male caregivers reported never discussing menstruation with their daughters. This indicates that men continue to feel discomfort around discussion of menstruation and menstrual hygiene with their daughters.

However, regression analysis, which controlled for potentially influential factors *including gender*, did find a significant positive association between regular exposure to the SBCC radio programmes and more supportive attitudes on discussing SRHR issues (including discussion of menstruation with daughters). This means that while males who were regularly exposed to EAGER radio programmes were less likely than females who were regularly exposed to the radio programmes *often* discuss menstruation with their daughters, they were still significantly more likely to do so compared to males who were not exposed to EAGER radio programmes. This suggests that the approach the SBCC radio programming took to equip caregivers with the tools and confidence to address these issues with their children was effective, even among men. Future programming may focus on further supporting male caregivers to manage these uncomfortable conversations with their girls.

Corroborating these findings, adolescent girls who took part in the qualitative research consistently reported that listening to the programmes, and the fact that their parents had also listened to the programmes, has helped them to have more open discussions with their parents on SRHR. Girls reported that they felt more comfortable seeking guidance on menstrual hygiene and pregnancy prevention from their mothers, and no longer had to rely on advice only from their friends. Reflecting the discomfort among male caregivers in addressing SRHR issues with their daughters, some girls mentioned that they didn't feel comfortable to discuss these issues with their fathers.

These findings, combined with results on regular exposure to SBCC radio programming being positively associated with increased discussion on education and skill training opportunities (as discussed in Section 5 of this report), demonstrate the capacity for SBCC activities to contribute to more frequent and more supportive discussion among audiences across a range of issues.

Figure 19: Discussion of sexual and reproductive health with sons/daughters



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). Base: Unexposed adults: with boys (n=913); with girls (n=1002). Regularly exposed adults: with boys (n=300); with girls (n=334). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different between not exposed and regularly reached at p<.05.

Table 18: Discussion of SRHR (regularly reached disaggregated by demographics)

	TOTAL (n=300)	Regularly Reached Audience (Disaggregated by demographics)					
		Gender		Age Groups			
		Females (n=138)	Males (n=162)	20-29 (n=79)	30-39 (n=83)	40-49 (n=58)	50+ (n=80)
I discuss how to prevent pregnancy with my son(s) (Often)	33%	30%	35%	20%	35%	21%	50%
	TOTAL (n=334)	Females (n=153)	Males (n=181)	20-29 (n=90)	30-39 (n=88)	40-49 (n=69)	50+ (n=87)
I discuss how to prevent pregnancy with my daughter(s) (Often)	32%	35%	30%	18%	32%	27%	50%
I discuss menstruation and menstrual hygiene with my daughter(s) (Often)	25%	32%*	19%	18%	23%	25%	33%

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different comparator groups at p<.05.

Table 19: Discussion of SRHR (regularly reached disaggregated by target audience)

	Regularly Reached Audience (Disaggregated by Target Audiences)		
	Female Caregiver (n=105)	Male Caregiver (n=122)	Living with a Disability (n=117)
I discuss how to prevent pregnancy with my son(s) (Often)	30%	36%	47%
	Female Caregiver (n=153)	Male Caregiver (n=181)	Living with a Disability (n=127)
I discuss how to prevent pregnancy with my daughter(s) (Often)	35%	30%	45%
I discuss menstruation and menstrual hygiene with my daughter(s) (Often)	32%*	19%	29%

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different comparator groups at p<.05.

During qualitative interviews for the booster study, some EAGER girls mentioned that they had advised their younger sisters and friends about family planning and the negative impacts of early pregnancy, based on what they had learned through the EAGER programming and radio programmes. There remained, however, a sense of reluctance among the girls to discuss these issues with parents. This again is not surprising, given the age and life experience of the girls interviewed.

*“For me, I have talked to my younger sister on how to protect herself from getting pregnant because she is still young and so that she will not become pregnant while still going to school.”* (EAGER girl, Kailahun, rural)

*“Topics like sex and pregnancy, these are topics that I dare not sit with my parent and engage them in such a discussion. I can’t talk to them about sex and pregnancy, I am afraid to do so. I find it difficult to discuss these topics with them.”* (EAGER girl, Kailahun, rural)

Findings around discussion of menstruation indicate that this remains a sensitive and challenging topic for adolescent girls to discuss with their male caregivers. Notably, 40% of the EAGER girls who took part in the booster study survey at least agreed that men should not discuss menstrual hygiene with their daughters. However, EAGER girls who were regularly reached by the EAGER radio programmes were slightly more likely to *strongly disagree* that men should not discuss menstruation and menstrual hygiene with their daughters (28%, compared to 21% of non-listeners), indicating that programmes may have contributed to supporting more open discussion on this issue. In the qualitative booster study, EAGER girls reported that EAGER programming and the radio programmes had increased their awareness and understanding of menstruation and menstrual hygiene. They mentioned that they were more open to discussing this with their mothers, that they realised that menstruation was not shameful or dirty and was not a barrier to attending school or training. In the context of Sierra Leone, the fact that the girls enrolled in EAGER acquired greater confidence in talking about menstruation with their mothers as opposed to concealing this topic as taboo is a positive step towards challenging norms about menstruation for the girls themselves and within the household. It should be noted that while the EAGER Learning Programme did incorporate discussions on this topic and emphasised that menstruation is not something to be ashamed of and should not be a barrier to girls attending school or training, the project design did not include a specific intervention to hold dialogues between caregivers and girls on this issue, recognising the risks to girls of bringing such a taboo topic into an open forum. Results that indicate that caregivers and adolescent girls were more confident and comfortable to discuss menstruation and menstrual hygiene could be considered a positive consequence of improved understanding of the issue gained through the multiple EAGER interventions, including the radio programmes

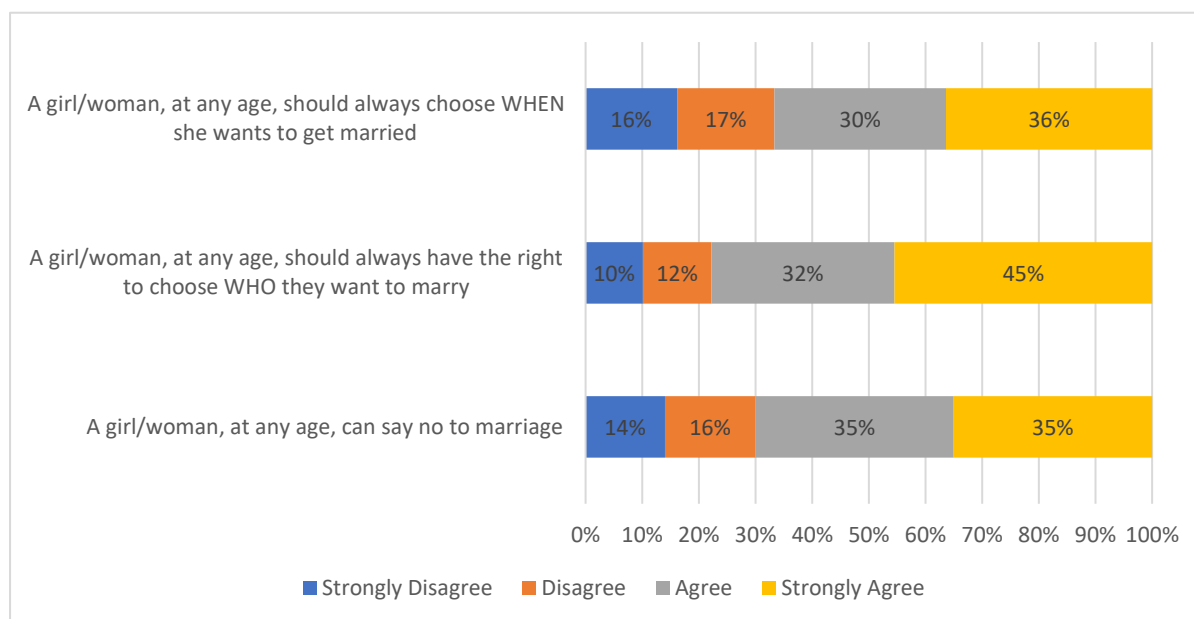
## **6.5 Attitudes towards early marriage**

Girls, and especially adolescent girls, in Sierra Leone face multiple educational, social and economic vulnerabilities that intersect with high risks of violence, abuse, and exploitation that adolescent girls may face in their homes and communities. According to the latest Demographic and Health Survey (2019), 61% of ever-married women reported having experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence from their partner, and 50% had experienced violence within the previous 12 months. A total of 30% of women aged 20 to 24 years were first married or in union before age 18. The EAGER Baseline evaluation further highlighted these contextual realities, indicating that 44% of enrolled girls were married or living with a partner at Baseline, and surveys with EAGER girls and Mentors highlighted how many more got married, during Covid-19 disruptions.

Within this context, the EAGER radio programmes aimed to increase knowledge and understanding of the negative impacts early and forced marriage can have on a girl’s life, and to shift attitudes that supported early or forced marriage.

At the overall population level, most survey respondents (93%) are aware that 18 is the legal age to get married in accordance with Sierra Leonean law. Set against this seemingly high level of knowledge on the law, a considerably large number of all survey respondents however disagree that a girl/woman should have the right to choose who (22%), and when (33%) to marry, or have the right to say no to marriage (30%).

Figure 20: Attitudes towards Early Marriage (population)



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Exploring if regular exposure to the EAGER radio programmes has impacted attitudes towards early marriage, analysis found that regularly reached respondents were significantly more likely to strongly agree that a girl/woman at any age should always have the right to choose **who** they want to marry (49% compared with 43% of non-listeners), and that a girl/woman at any age **can so no** to marriage (40% compared with 33% of non-listeners). Regression analysis confirmed a positive significant association ( $p < 0.05$ ) between regular exposure to the radio programmes and agreement with these two statements. Furthermore, EAGER girls regularly reached by EAGER radio programming were slightly, but not significantly, more likely to *strongly agree* that a female, at any age, should always have the right to choose who they want to marry (42%, compared with 35% of non-listeners), and that a female, at any age, can so no to marriage (36%, compared with 27% of non-listeners).

Parents and caregivers, and community stakeholders who took part in the qualitative research predominantly believed that early/forced marriage was not acceptable, saying that the EAGER radio programmes had made them recognise its negative impacts on girls' lives. They reported that girls should get married only after turning 18, when, caregivers believed, they were mature enough to make decisions for themselves. Both male and female caregivers noted that a parent/caregiver should allow their children to decide who and when to marry.

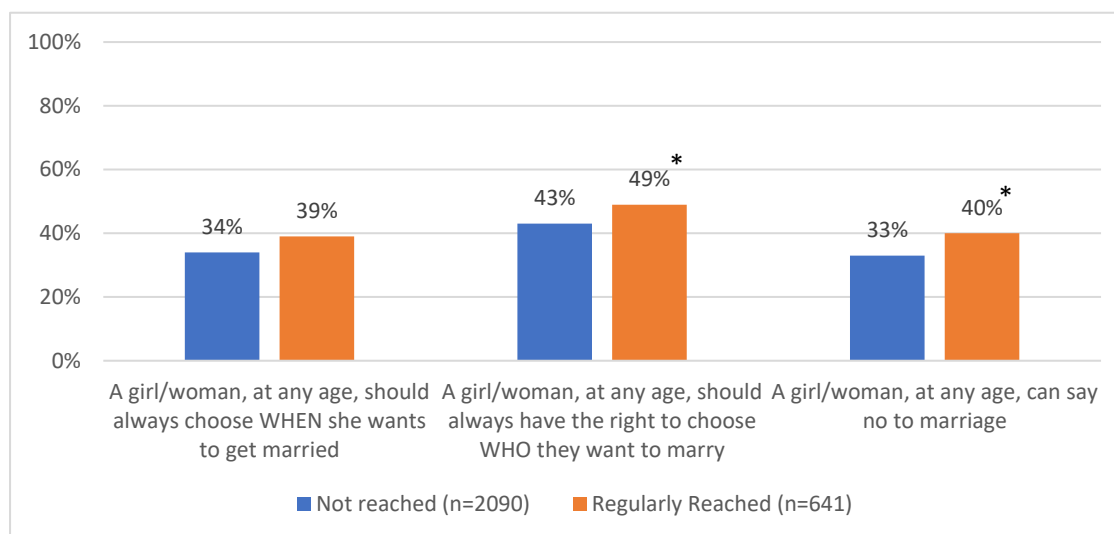
All adolescent girls, as well as adolescent boys, who took part in the qualitative research said that girls should not be married before the age of 18 and should have the right to decide when and who they get married to. They said they are aware of the negative impacts that early marriage has on girls and that it is best for girls to get an education and not focus on marriage at an early age.

*"The drama teaches us that some parents push their daughters into early marriage because they want financial support. Although this is the norm in most areas, but it is not right."*  
(Male caregiver of marginalised adolescent girl, Kono, rural, Kotoku Baray listener)

*"Some parents are in the habit of forcing their daughters to get married to men of their choice. They will prefer a rich man to marry their daughter even if the daughter does not like the man. So, the best thing is girls should be given the right to choose for themselves who to get married to."* (Adolescent girl, Kenema, rural, Kotoku Baray listener)

*"No, early marriage is not right because it destroys young girls' education and aspirations. Early marriage is also responsible for early pregnancy, fistula and maternal death."* (Adolescent boy, Western Area urban, Kotoku Baray listener)

Figure 21: Attitudes towards Early Marriage (regularly reached vs. not reached)



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different between not exposed and regularly reached at  $p < .05$ .

It was generally noted among respondents that early/forced marriage was still common in their communities, however, a combination of government policy and projects such as EAGER was contributing to reduce the practice. This reflects findings from the EAGER Endline Evaluation which also reported that various stakeholders interviewed expressed that early marriage is on the decline in their communities, due in part to the EAGER programme.<sup>61</sup>

*“Things have changed in our community since listening to the programme, especially in the area of early marriage. People no longer send their children to early marriage.” (Adolescent boy, Kenema, rural)*

Results point to EAGER radio programming, alongside wider EAGER activities, contributing to improved awareness and understanding of the negative impacts of early and forced marriage on women and girls, and shifting attitudes away from acceptance of this practice as a suitable pathway out of poverty.

Table 20: Share of positive attitudes towards Early Marriage (regularly reached disaggregated by demographics)

	TOTAL (n=641)	Regularly Reached Audience (Disaggregated by demographics)						
		Gender		Age				
		Female (n=293)	Male (n=349)	15-19 (n=92)	20-29 (n=167)	30-39 (n=142)	40-49 (n=104)	50+ (n=137)
A female, at any age, should always choose WHEN she wants to get married ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	39%	40%	39%	37%	38%	41%	36%	43%
A female, at any age, should always have the right to choose WHO they want to marry ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	49%	51%	48%	45%	47%	51%	49%	53%
A female, at any age, can say no to marriage ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	40%	37%	43%	37%	44%	44%	33%	39%

<sup>61</sup> EAGER Endline Evaluation Report, IMC Worldwide (July 2022)

Table 21: Share of positive attitudes towards Early Marriage (regularly reached disaggregated by target audience)

	Regularly Reached Audience (Disaggregated by Target Audiences)			
	Female Caregiver (n=153)	Male Caregiver (n=181)	Marginalised Adolescent Girls (n=37)	Living with a Disability (n=231)
A female, at any age, should always choose WHEN she wants to get married ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	40%	39%	36%	46%
A female, at any age, should always have the right to choose WHO they want to marry ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	53%	48%	46%	55%
A female, at any age, can say no to marriage ( <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	40%	47%	36%	43%

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022 (n=3048). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different comparator groups at  $p < .05$ . Due to data weighting base sizes may not always add up to the total base size.

## 6.6 Attitudes towards Consent

Among the underlying drivers of early pregnancy in Sierra Leone are harmful attitudes and behaviours around sex and relationships, with girls often lacking the knowledge, understanding and life-skills that would enable them to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights. Adolescent pregnancy and child marriage rates in Sierra Leone are among the highest globally – it is estimated that one in five girls drop out of school as a result.<sup>62</sup>

Against this backdrop, issues relating to sex and consent for under-18-year-olds were explored through the EAGER radio programmes, in particular the drama *Kotoku Baray*, with the aim to equip parents and caregivers with the confidence and tools to communicate constructively with adolescents on topics such as sex and relationships, as well as supporting girls and boys to understand sexual and reproductive rights and how to exercise critical decision-making in their relationships.

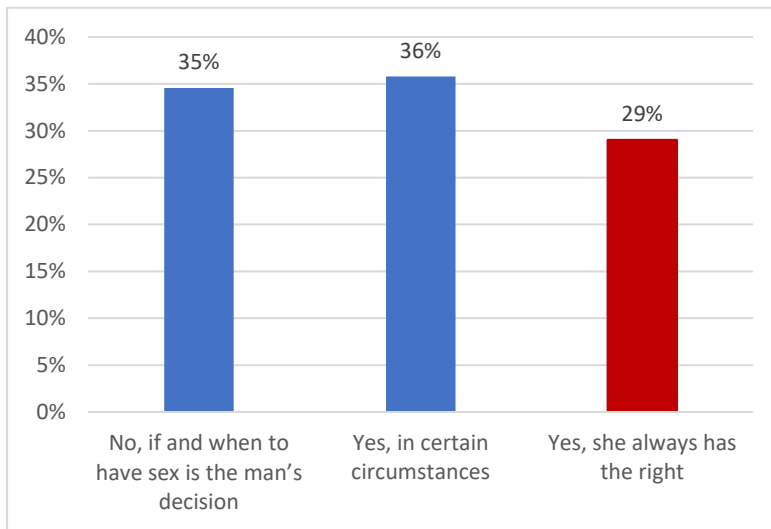
To explore attitudes around consent at Endline, survey respondents were asked: ‘Does a female, of any age, have a right to say ‘no’ to sex from her husband or partner?’. Reflecting persisting entrenched social norms towards a woman’s right to consent in Sierra Leone, at the overall population level, just 29% of survey respondents offered the desired response that a woman/girl always has the right to say ‘no’ to sex from her husband or partner. Over a third (35%) of all survey respondents believe that if, and when, to have sex is the man’s decision, with female respondents significantly more likely to believe this (38%, compared to 32% of male respondents). This is not surprising in the context of Sierra Leone, in which incidences of sexual and gender-based violence are rife<sup>63</sup> with the President declaring a ‘state of emergency’ with regards to GBV in 2019.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Statistics Sierra Leone and ICF, 2019. Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey 2019: Key Indicators, Freetown, Sierra Leone and Rockville, Maryland

<sup>63</sup> UN Women’s Global Database on Violence Against Women reported that in 2020, 40% of partnered women aged 15-49 years in Sierra Leone reported experiencing intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months (<https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/africa/sierra-leone#2>)

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.concern.net/news/gender-equality-sierra-leone>

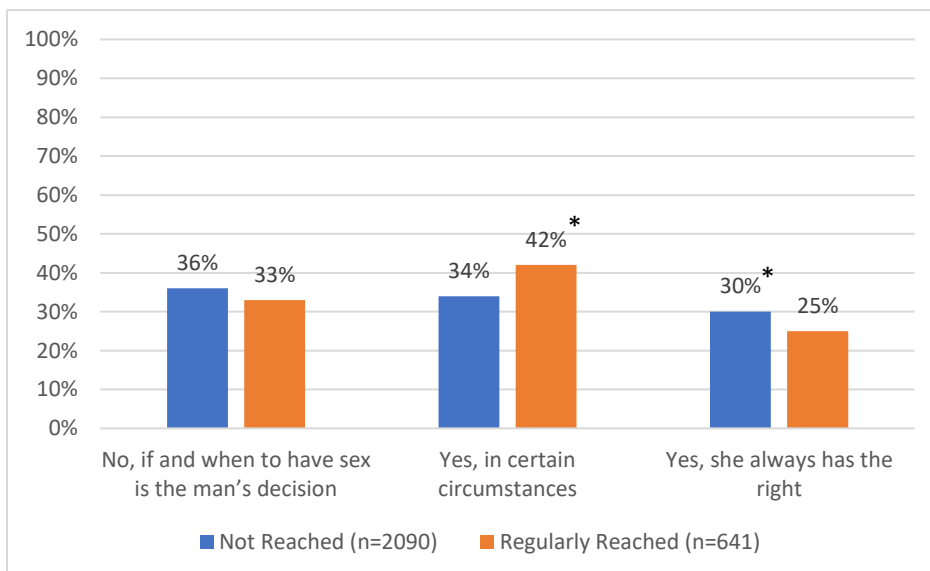
Figure 22: Perceptions of right to consent (population)



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Exploring the impact of EAGER radio programmes on attitudes towards consent found that a lack of understanding around sexual and reproductive rights remains (see Figure 23 below). Respondents who were regularly reached by EAGER radio programmes were significantly *less* likely than non-listeners to believe that a woman always has the right to say 'no' to sex from her husband or partner (25%, compared to 30%). Regular programme listeners were most likely to believe that a woman/girl had the right to say no to her husband 'in certain circumstances' (42% reported this). Positively, regular listeners aged 15-19 years were the most likely age group to identify that a woman/girl always has the right to say 'no', with 28% of this group reporting this. This compares to 20% of regular listeners aged 40-49 years, for example.

Figure 23: Perceptions of right to consent (regularly reached v not reached)



Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different between not exposed and regularly reached at  $p < .05$ .

The issue of consent was not raised frequently among qualitative participants as something they had learned from the programme. However, a few respondents noted that they had changed their own behaviours in relation to sex and consent, attributing this to what they had heard on the EAGER radio programmes.

“Consent makes me understand that even if a woman is married, if her husband wants to get intimate with her, he has to ask for her consent and if she declines, he should not force her. I now implement this in my life.” (Marginalised adolescent girl, Port Loko, rural, Kotoku Baray listener)

“I learnt from Kotoku Baray that you must get the consent of a girl before sexual intercourse. If she says no, you have to respect her decision. Yes means yes, and no means no.” (Adolescent boy, Western Area urban, Kotoku Baray listener)

These findings represent a markedly different result from the audience panel study<sup>65</sup> and midline evaluation conducted by BBC Media Action, where high levels of changes in knowledge and understanding were detected on the issue via qualitative research methods.

It should be noted here that the issue of consent in this context is challenging to explore quantitatively given the sensitivity and complexity of the issue. The Endline Survey design purposely limited questions related to consent under the guidelines of doing no harm to respondents. Consent was also not explored extensively in the qualitative research unless it was raised by respondents as something they had learned from EAGER radio programming. The mixed and somewhat inconclusive findings from this study may be a result of the limitations of exploring the issue both quantitatively and qualitatively, and as part of a much broader evaluation.

Future programming should consider how to address this issue, balancing sensitivity of subject with clarity of message. And research into this area will need to be specifically designed to explore attitudes around consent in more depth.

Table 22: Attitudes towards consent (regularly reached disaggregated by demographics)

	TOTAL (n=641)	Regularly Reached Audience (Disaggregated by demographics)						
		Gender		Age				
		Female (n=293)	Male (n=349)	15-19 (n=92)	20-29 (n=167)	30-39 (n=142)	40-49 (n=104)	50+ (n=137)
Does a woman/girl, of any age, have a right to say ‘no’ to sex from her husband or partner? (Yes, always)	25%	22%	28%	28%	27%	23%	20%	26%

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different comparator groups at  $p < .05$ . Due to data weighting base sizes may not always add up to the total base size.

Table 23: Attitudes towards consent (regularly reached disaggregated by target audience)

	Regularly Reached Audience (Disaggregated by Target Audiences)			
	Female Caregiver (n=153)	Male Caregiver (n=181)	Marginalised Adolescent Girls (n=37)	Living with a Disability (n=231)
Does a woman/girl, of any age, have a right to say ‘no’ to sex from her husband or partner? (Yes, always)	21%	27%	28%	24%

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). (\*) indicates that the results are significantly different comparator groups at  $p < .05$ . Due to data weighting base sizes may not always add up to the total base size.

<sup>65</sup> To monitor and evaluate the engagement and impact of the radio programmes, a qualitative longitudinal panel study was conducted with listeners of *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*, which involved interviews with the same audience members at three timepoints throughout the project. The panel included families, adolescent girls and mothers, fathers, and caregivers.



## F. Conclusions

*Radio proved to be a successful medium through which to reach a broad audience.* The SBCC radio programmes were successful in reaching a large proportion of the Sierra Leone population. Close to a third of the population in Sierra Leone (approximately 1.7 million people) were reached by at least one episode of the EAGER radio programmes.

*The combination of factual magazine and drama formats for radio programming ensured that listeners across key target groups engaged regularly with the programmes and were exposed to a wide range of content.* Over two-thirds of those reached (approximately 1.1 million people) tuned in regularly to the EAGER radio programmes (that is, they listened to at least every other episode of at least one of the programmes). This high level of regular engagement is critical to a programme's success, as those who listen to SBCC programming regularly are more likely to demonstrate positive changes in attitudes and behaviours as a result of the intervention. Qualitative research findings highlighted engagement among audiences. Regular listeners demonstrated strong engagement with the programme, readily recalling and describing detailed aspects of the show, including issues covered by both programmes, as well as characters, storylines, and scenes from the drama, *Kotoku Baray*. There was a strong sense among listeners that the programmes addressed issues that were relevant and applicable in their communities, their families, and their own lives.

*Findings from this evaluation suggest that the radio programmes are likely to have contributed to a significant positive shift in overall supportive attitudes towards girls' learning and empowerment.* Those regularly reached by the programmes were more likely to hold positive attitudes, at the conceptual level, around equal rights to education and skills development for girls. Caregivers regularly exposed to the radio programmes were also more likely to discuss educational and training opportunities with their sons and daughters *often*. These positive associations are found to hold even when controlling for potential confounding factors such as age, gender, level of education, and urban/rural location on research outcomes. Qualitative research reinforced these findings, with a strong sense of empowerment and an understanding of rights at the individual level among adolescent girls, self-attributed to the radio programmes. There was also awareness among caregivers and stakeholders that girls and boys should have equal rights to education, and a belief that they are equally capable of achieving it. However, this is offset by an underlying view among caregivers that boys' education needed to be prioritised as they will one day be the main earner and head of the household.

When equality in girls' educational and skills opportunities was examined against gender norms within the household, attitudes were comparatively less supportive, and analysis detected limited impact associated with regular exposure to EAGER radio programming. These results are not surprising in the context of gender norms that have been entrenched for many centuries, and radio programmes that were broadcast over a relatively short period of time. Changing gender norms such as these is likely to be a long-term, gradual process and would require continued broadcast of SBCC radio programming in coordination with other targeted interventions over a greater length of time.

However, this evaluation points to early signs of promising practices to support these efforts. Reported stories of change among qualitative respondents indicate that practices and attitudes around discriminatory gender roles are changing within households and communities. Examples of this include a sense that perceptions of girls returning to school, or taking up trades, after giving birth are shifting, and that the stigma around pregnant girls attending school was reducing at the community level. Caregivers showed more understanding of opportunities for girls beyond formal education, and more favourable attitudes towards girls taking up trades, and analysis found that those regularly reached by EAGER radio programming were significantly more likely to discuss these opportunities with their daughters. Self-attribution of these changes to EAGER radio programmes are positive indications that the SBCC approach taken has contributed to positive incremental shifts in harmful gender norms and attitudes.

Findings also suggest that adolescent boys and girls are now more equipped with the knowledge and confidence to change behaviours that are commonly barriers for girls achieving positive educational outcomes. Some qualitative respondents reported adopting family planning methods to avoid unwanted, early pregnancy, to ensure they could focus on their education. Adolescent boys reflected on a greater awareness and appreciation for the challenges faced by girls, and their own role in supporting girls to achieve more positive educational outcomes.

*Ultimately, findings from this evaluation indicate that EAGER radio programmes have contributed to more supportive attitudes among audiences towards girls' learning and empowerment. Whilst attitudes towards domestic roles, especially for girls who are pregnant or parent learners, remain deeply entrenched, this assessment has documented positive shifts in attitudes and behaviours in response to EAGER's radio programming. To continue building on these positive trends, sustained efforts will be required to further amplify and expand on these shifts to sustain the positive impacts on girls' lives.*

## G. Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions above, as well as on consultations with the BBC Media Action EAGER project and production teams. These recommendations are made with a view to inform potential future programming aimed at improving the lives of adolescent girls in Sierra Leone or in other countries.

- Targeting the community, and specifically influential adults, around a girl's life - the 'ecosystem' approach - was found to be a successful strategy that future radio programmes can learn from. Nearly a quarter of caregivers (23%) were regularly reached by either of the radio shows. On average 66% of caregivers who were regular listeners of either radio programme 'strongly agreed' with a set of supportive attitude statements towards girls' education and empowerment.<sup>66</sup> This evaluation has shown that radio programmes can play a key role in encouraging supportive attitudes among parents/caregivers and community stakeholders who play an influential role in girls' lives. In particular, the radio programmes contribution to inspiring and supporting more inclusive, open discussion between parents/caregivers and their children, and is the foundation on which transformative social and behaviour change will develop. Furthermore, while this study found evidence of positive impacts among adolescent boys, future programmes aimed at changing outcomes for girls should aim to fully engage and include boys as well, acknowledging the importance of engaging the wider community and the growing recognition of the role of boys and men in achieving gender equality.
- Future radio programming should harness the overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards the concept of girls' equal rights to education and skills development and take steps to inspire girls and other listeners to think about how girls can realise these rights in their own lives. As EAGER has achieved with the Empowerment Plans,<sup>67</sup> SBCC activities should ensure that they go beyond awareness raising on empowerment and on to action planning, supporting girls and women into economic, social movements, and even political actions, to effect change in power relations. This may be achieved through including girls' voices prominently, with a focus on practical steps to achieving these goals, highlighting solutions to common challenges, and sharing successful stories of change. There is great value in including girls' voices prominently and engaging girls as co-presenters.
- Future programming and SBCC outcomes should continue to target discriminatory gender roles and norms, leveraging the gains of EAGER and with a particular focus on raising awareness of underlying unequal structures and power relations that frame family and community life.
- A focus on synergistic SBCC programming and on-ground outreach activities, such as the EAGER radio programme listening groups, should be included from the outset of a project. Within this and other BBC Media Action evaluations, it is observed that media alone is not enough to change deeply entrenched gender norms. A stronger outreach component at the community level that enables deeper reflection and discussions may support greater change. Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation activities, for example longitudinal studies, should be embedded within outreach activities to achieve better understanding and more conclusive evidence of any additional impacts of SBCC radio programming.
- Radio programming should be used more extensively to enhance out-of-school and school programmes, especially on subjects such as life skills or sexuality education. The popularity of EAGER's radio programmes, which were aligned with its Life Skills curriculum, indicates that information on complex and sensitive subjects can be communicated effectively through engaging media content. In tandem with national or local broadcasting, radio content should be considered as teaching/discussion aids so that adolescent girls and boys can better relate to their curricula through the stories of their

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<sup>66</sup> The supportive statements are included in Table 3: **Outcome 3: Sustainability National level:** Listening and engaging with EAGER radio programme results in more positive attitudes towards girls education and empowerment amongst wider population

<sup>67</sup> Empowerment Plans are prepared and implemented by girls engaged in the EAGER Learning Programme. They detail four goals, one for each domain of EAGER's empowerment concept (learning, household, community and financial), along with steps to achieve these goals.

peers. The capacity of teachers and education staff should also be built on incorporating radio programming in education and learning programmes.

- In this study, radio drama has been proven to be an effective tool to achieve strong levels of engagement among audiences, as well as sensitively addressing challenging topics. As such, future SBCC projects, particularly those seeking to address sensitive issues, should plan to incorporate a drama component. Whilst the production of drama is expensive and requires significant resources and staff capacity-building to achieve quality standards required, future projects should consider planning for this investment.
- Regular, prompt, and flexible feedback and monitoring that directly informs SBCC content development should be incorporated in any future programme design. Whilst BBC Media Action's research and project teams worked effectively together throughout the EAGER project to ensure findings from research were incorporated into programming, building in additional space for informal and rapid feedback on radio content would enable more frequent learnings from community members and girls to continue informing production of programmes so it can reflect audience preferences and have greater impact, whilst also adhering to the safeguarding and protection standards of a girls' empowerment programme.

## H. Appendix

Table 24: Survey population – disaggregated by key demographics

		<b>TOTAL</b> (n=3,048)
<b>Gender</b>	Female	51%
	Male	49%
<b>Age</b>	15-19	16%
	20-29	30%
	30-39	22%
	40-49	15%
	50+	18%
<b>Location</b>	Urban	50%
	Rural	50%
<b>Province</b>	Eastern	21%
	Northern	21%
	North West	18%
	Southern	23%
	Western Area	18%
<b>Education</b>	Have never attended school	27%
	Started but did not complete primary education	10%
	Primary education completed	9%
	Did not complete secondary education	23%
	Secondary education completed	15%
	Some tertiary education (college, university)	5%
	Tertiary education (college, university) completed	4%
	Madarasa - Islamic education	2%
	Non-formal education	6%
<b>Wealth index</b>	We don't have enough money, even for food	36%
	We can afford food, but purchasing of clothes is a serious problem	10%
	We can afford food and clothing, but buying a cell phone and phone credit is difficult for us	13%
	We can afford food, clothing, and a phone, but paying for medical expenses and/or school fees is difficult for us	21%
	We can afford food, clothes, and medical expenses/school fees, but purchasing of durables such as a TV set or a refrigerator	11%
	What we earn is sufficient to buy anything except such expensive purchases as land or a place to live	6%
	We do not face financial problems. If necessary, we can buy land and a place to live	2%
	Don't know	1%
	Refused	0.5%
<b>Caregiver Type</b>	Caregiver with girl at school	95%
	Caregiver with girl never been/dropped out of school	5%
<b>Community Stakeholder</b>	No	76%
	Yes	24%
<b>Marginalised girls*</b>	Not marginalised	93%
	Marginalised	7%
<b>Disability</b>	Not PWD	67%
	PWD	34%
<b>EAGER District</b>	Non-Eager District	32%
	Eager District	68%

Source: BBC Media Action EAGER Endline Evaluation Survey October & November 2022, (n=3048). Due to data weighting base sizes may not always add up to the total base size.

\*BBC Media Action adopts the EAGER definition for marginalised girls i.e., those who are educationally, as well as socially and economically, marginalised, and those who have never been to school or who have dropped out of school.