

Project Evaluation Report

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Notes:

Some annexes listed in the contents page of this document have not been included because of challenges with capturing them as an A4 PDF document or because they are documents intended for programme purposes only. If you would like access to any of these annexes, please enquire about their availability by emailing uk_girls_education_challenge@pwc.com.

Baseline Evaluation Report

Baseline Evaluation of the Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER) project within the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) - Leave No Girl Behind project (LNGB)

Prepared for: IRC and the EAGER Consortium

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Final Report

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Acronyms and Terms

BBC MA	British Broadcasting Corporation Media Action
BLN	Basic literacy and numeracy
CCU	Consortium Coordination Unit
CO	Country Office
CWW	Concern Worldwide
DFID	Department for International Development
EAGER	Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient project
EE	External Evaluators (used interchangeably with evaluation team)
ESP	Education Sector Plan
FGM	Female genital mutilation
FM	Fund Manager
GCS	Girls' Combined Survey
HoH	Head of Household
IMC	IMC Worldwide
IO	Intermediate Outcome
IP	Implementing Partner
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LNGB	Leave No Girl Behind
LBS	Life skills and business
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MGCA	Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs
MSWGCA	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OOS	Out of School
RD	Restless Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEL	Social emotional learning
SERAIS	Social-Emotional Response and Information Scenarios
SO	Strategic Objective
SOW	Scope of Work
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TOR	Terms of Reference

2. Executive summary

IMC Worldwide (IMC) was hired by IRC to undertake the baseline, midterm and final evaluations of the EAGER project. This report presents the baseline evaluation approach, findings and conclusions, and recommendations.

Background

The Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER) project is a DFID-funded Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) project in Sierra Leone. EAGER is implemented by IRC in partnership with Concern Worldwide (CWW), Restless Development and BBC Action Media in ten Districts across Sierra Leone. The project duration is approximately four years running from February 2019 to January 2023. EAGER targets out-of-school (OOS) adolescent girls aged 13-17 – those who have never attended school or who have dropped out – and lack basic literacy and numeracy skills. EAGER aims to significantly improve learning outcomes for functional literacy and numeracy as well as business and life skills through an eleven-month learning programme. Additionally, girls will receive one-on-one mentorships from selected female mentors within the community to develop individual transition plans focused on empowerment (economic, learning, household, community and personal). EAGER aims to reach a total of 32,500 adolescent girls across three cohorts in 500 communities with activities for cohort one (7,500 girls) starting in January 2020. Cohort one is the focus of the external evaluation.

Approach

A convergent mixed methods design informs this baseline evaluation and quantitative and qualitative data collection occurred simultaneously. The evaluation design includes a pre- and post-test assessment of a group of treatment girls and a cluster-based sampling method accounting for marginalisation status and geographic diversity. Surveys and learning assessments¹ were conducted with 2,084 beneficiary girls from 215 communities, and their caregivers or head of households for quantitative data collection. The qualitative component provides context and depth to the findings of the quantitative impact evaluation and increases validity by triangulating findings. Qualitative data collection relied on a purposeful approach across 10 communities (1 per each of the 10 implementation districts) and reached 441 individuals (247 females and 194 males, including 144 beneficiaries) via key informant interview and focus group discussions.

Main Findings and Conclusions

Marginalisation analysis: Thorough subgroup analyses identify that beneficiaries face several important barriers to education. Along with district-level differences that arose during analysis, these barriers require nuanced consideration from EAGER. They are not mutually exclusive and may intersect with other barriers.

- A higher than anticipated percentage of beneficiaries are married (44.1 percent) and many have children (57.5 percent).
- Baseline findings call EAGER's attention to an unspecified subgroup of 9 percent of beneficiaries who are also their own heads of household.
- 14.6 percent of the sample qualify as girls with one or more disability; with 60 percent of those qualifying in whole or in part because of daily experiences of anxiety or depression.

¹ The Early Grade Mathematics Assessment for numeracy and the Out of School Learning Assessment for literacy

- Nearly half (45.3 percent) of girls in the sample never went to school and nearly the same proportion (45.2 percent) went to school but dropped out with less than six years of education completed (equivalent or primary education level).
- In the past, girls have experienced the following barriers to education: families not having enough money to pay fees (72.2 percent), followed by girls needing to help around the house (23.4) and a girl having a child or being pregnant (18.9 percent).

Analysis of project's gender approach:

- EAGER's approach is largely gender accommodating with opportunities to shift towards a more deliberate gender transformative approach.
- While men and boys interviewed are interested in women and girls gaining further education and them contributing more substantially to household expenses, empowerment will likely be limited due to existing gender norms.
- Although interviews with partners and caregiver revealed little overt resistance, only a small number of males pledged to actively support girls in their EAGER pursuits.
- Transition options, which though not fully articulated at baseline, may simply reinforce traditionally female pathways like catering, hairstyling and soapmaking, limiting beneficiaries' opportunities.

Transformative programming will likely be needed to increase the proportion of males actively supporting girls for EAGER participants to succeed in the programme, especially given the high percentage of girls who are married and/or who have children. EAGER will also need to closely scrutinise its transition plan as it develops for gender transformative opportunities.

Outcome 1: Learning

- **Literacy:** Three distinct groups of beneficiaries emerge in terms of literacy skills: 1) 40 percent could not read any letters, 2) 35 percent achieved letter recognition but could not read or comprehend proficiently, and 3) 25 percent who could not read proficiently but succeeded with the majority of the easy comprehension questions.
- **Numeracy:** On average, all test-takers performed equally or slightly better on the real-world settings items. Girls who had never attended school performed significantly better (9 percentage points) on real-world problems while girls who had attended school performed only slightly better (3 percentage points).
- **Life skills:** Girls demonstrated a weak to moderate awareness on the wide range of knowledge, attitudes and skills assessed by this tool. Sub-task analysis shows that while over half of girls (58.8 percent) assumed hostile intent in response to story prompts, a much smaller percentage of girls (21.1 to 39.1 percent) say they would act in an emotionally dysregulated way. Results also show that girls with disabilities and younger girls may benefit more significantly from exposure to these particular life skills.

Takeaways: EAGER's learning programme aligns with beneficiaries' needs in focusing on real-world numeracy skills. Because of beneficiaries' significantly different reading abilities, however, EAGER will need to emphasise a tailored approach for literacy instruction based on each individual group of girls. In life skills, EAGER presents an opportunity for girls to strengthen their awareness of important topics like good health practices as well as strengthening girls' reactions to unpleasant situations and building upon problem-solving tendencies.

Outcome 2: Transition

EAGER's transition component will focus on five types of empowerment though details of the approach are still being finalised: economic, learning, household, personal and community.

- Challenges for economic empowerment: The majority of girls are not employed (57.5 percent) at baseline while 4.5 percent are employed by others and 29.7 percent are self-employed. Almost none (five individuals) are engaged in formal paid employment.
Interviews with men, especially male partners emphasised education as a means to generate household income but did not approve of changes that would alter traditional gender norms. Social and community norms will likely be obstacles for girls.
- Challenges for learning empowerment: 75 percent of the sample of girls demonstrated the inability to read or comprehend proficiently. The same barriers (lack of financial means, household constraints and childrearing/pregnancy) that complicated schooling previously likely will also complicate other schooling opportunities.
- Challenges for household, personal and community empowerment: Girls demonstrate limited ability to make decisions in their lives. While 75 percent of girls expressed capacity to make important decisions and voice opinions in their home, 66 percent also state that they cannot choose their educational path and are subject to the decisions of others.
- Challenges of the mentor model: Mentors, who are to guide girls in their transition, exhibit more similarity in age and background to girls entering the project than initially expected.

Takeaways: Adequately trained mentors and connections to community resources, networks, and knowledge necessary for identified transition pathways will require proactive planning and resource building in the first year of the project. Attention to various identities, such as girls' marital status, parental status and disability status should all be addressed, and accommodations made. Entrenched norms, specifically around gender, are likely to continue to be major barriers to girls' transitions. EAGER's community programming will need to be substantial and effectively target community members, especially boys and male partners to foster a transformative approach.

Outcome 3: Sustainability

- Nearly all boys' focus groups, caregiver focus groups and community leaders (91.5 percent) demonstrate a "latent" rating according to the sustainability scorecard, indicating some changes in attitude towards girls' education and empowerment already at baseline, but behaviour may not yet have followed.
- A notable 8.5 percent of stakeholders demonstrated a "negligible" status showing no support for girls' education. These stakeholders included 2 boys focus groups (out of 10).

Takeaways: The overall sustainability score is "1" based solely on the community indicator. EAGER should build upon participants' changing views to move towards changed practices.

Intermediate outcome findings

IO1 Attendance: Although the project had not yet begun, well over the majority of beneficiary girls perceive going to the learning spaces as valuable and they are keen to participate in the project. The success of the EAGER project will depend upon its ability to mediate barriers over which girls have no control, working closely with community members and existing champions of girls' education and empowerment to shift norms to promote gender equity and social inclusion. The supports and incentives identified in the theory of change, namely start-up grants, special needs grants and/or learning resources will be key to providing girls with appropriate scaffolding.

IO2: BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors deliver quality inclusive instruction in BLN, life/SEL skills, financial literacy and (self-) employment skills: While instruction was not yet operational, the baseline focused on a review of the life skills curriculum and analysis of facilitators' skills. The life skills curriculum shows it to be GESI transformative in its exploration of norms, relationships and power dynamics. Although BLN facilitators, show relevant background

experience and familiarity with inclusive instructional strategies, mentors have little formal schooling, business experience or experience in such a role. Without adequate training and support for mentors, EAGER risks poor quality instruction and accommodating and reinforcing norms discriminating to girls, in particular, those with disabilities and family responsibilities.

IO3A: Girls age 13-17 develop a transition plan that includes their self-identified goals and timelines to gain safe fairly-paid employment, self-employment or further learning or training, or goals for greater community or household empowerment: Findings show that 1) over 75.3 percent of girls responded affirmatively to a series of statements related to goal achievement, demonstrating a high level of self-efficacy, 2) girls' notions of future work at baseline are generally limited to the common trades and often those that are gendered for females, and 3) Girls relationships with their peers may be stronger than EAGER's original assumptions, as 11 of 20 girls interviewed readily identified having strong relationships with their peers. The life skills curriculum will be important to drawing upon girls' experiences and strategies to develop problem-solving, coping skills as well as strengthening peer relationships further. EAGER has the opportunity to broaden girls' worldviews of future possibilities, including through entrepreneurship.

IO3B: Girls apply skills learned in life skills sessions in their daily lives: Baseline analysis focused on the mentors' potential to deliver quality life skills sessions. Mentors and other project staffs' mastery of life skills topics is questionable prior to project roll-out but subsequent to some staff trainings. These findings create additional doubts about the quality of life skills instruction. Additional staff trainings and curriculum revision that took place after the baseline analysis may mitigate some of these issues.

IO4A/B: Community members regularly listen to and/or engage in dialogue surrounding issues relating to girls' education and empowerment (disaggregated by girls, boys, men and women): This IO specifically focuses on the use of radio programming. The baseline evaluation finds that some stakeholders and communities display scepticism of the use of radio as a means to discuss and affect gender norms. EAGER facilitation of community discussions in addition to radio may be critical to changing community norms.

IO4C: Girls report greater support for girls' education and learning and at community level: Although beneficiaries overwhelmingly feel they have the right to access the safe space (84.8 percent), and many stakeholders see value in girls' education, beliefs prioritising boys' advancement and constricting girls' advancement within prescribed roles persist. In addition, conflicting data on beneficiaries' views of the rights of girls with disabilities to attend safe spaces indicate both general support as well as entrenched discriminatory attitudes. Findings reinforce the need for EAGER to work closely with beneficiaries as well as boys, girls' spouses/partners, and community leaders to effect transformation that fosters gender equity and social inclusion.

IO4D: % of girls that report fewer barriers to accessing education, and increased perception that they have the right to access safe spaces: Building upon findings related to barriers above, data demonstrate supportive attitudes among girls for their right to attend learning spaces. The midline evaluation will seek to explore this attitude as well to gather more nuanced evidence related to girls' various identities, particularly disability, marital and parenthood status.

IO5: Government supported to achieve strategic outcome for increased literacy for out-of-school (OOS) youth (aligned to updated ESP 2018-2020): Discussions with national level officials were not possible at baseline. On-going communication between EAGER staff and district officials will be important throughout the life of the project.

Baseline IO Indicator Levels and main findings can be found in Annex 20.

Key Recommendations

The list below identifies key recommendations as EAGER ramps up its programming. See full list within report for the relevant actor(s) and timing priorities.

Project Design
Work with programme staff to revisit the programme structure and accommodations to best support girls who are married and have children . Identify existing community support systems and work with supportive partners and families to put into place creative solutions, such as rotating childcare.
Given high prevalence of mental health disabilities, assure and adjust curriculum so that mental health is front and centre . Emphasise negotiation skills, critical thinking, expressing emotions and stress management along with gender topics during life skills sessions. Provide additional trainings to EAGER staff, and in particular, mentors and facilitators, to be able to assist young people in need.
Conduct skills assessments of girls for each learning area at the beginning of the learning phase to identify beneficiaries' abilities in light of baseline findings (i.e., gaps between literacy rates; different learning outcomes by district). Implement differentiated instruction alongside active learning pedagogies and reliance upon real-world examples.
Allow and encourage variation in the pace of the curriculum between communities and districts to recognise the differences in starting abilities of beneficiaries.
Reinforce mentors' training in life skills through additional training sessions and anticipate weekly coaching for mentors in life skills as well as gender sensitivity. Open discussions of gender norms and examinations of gender transformative attitudes and practices should be explored during trainings.
Given relative basic business experience and youth evidenced by mentors, reinforce transition coaching for girls through visits, discussions, and guest speaking opportunities with prominent female community members, including those who may be visiting from other areas of Sierra Leone and world.
Rather than focusing all on the same trades (catering, soapmaking, tailoring, etc.) and risking oversaturation within the community, ensure business skills curriculum exposes girls to basic entrepreneurship concepts and building upon their skills and interests. Examine ways to help beneficiaries confront existing gender norms that may push back on their choices.
Sustainability
Elevate face-to-face community discussions as the primary means of fostering gender norms change, complemented by radio programming.
Target male partners, boys and community leaders to effect gender norms change through community dialogues, radio and life skills classes for boys. Qualitative data, suggest that particularly attention may be placed on communities that are more strictly Muslim or where early marriage is more prevalent.
Identify champions of girls' education for out-of-school girls within communities who may help to build awareness within communities. Begin with community leaders as well as supportive male caregivers.

3. Background to project

3.1 Project context, target beneficiary groups and theory of change (Prepared by the EAGER project)

3.1.1 Overview of EAGER project

The Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER) project, with a total value of £17,916,896.63 is DFID-funded through the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) initiative Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) funding window and is implemented by the International Rescue Committee, Concern Worldwide, Restless Development and BBC Media Action. The project duration is approximately four years (February 2019 - November 2023) in 10 of the 16 districts of Sierra Leone.

EAGER targets out-of-school (OOS) adolescent girls aged 13-17 – those who have never attended school or who have dropped out – and lack basic literacy and numeracy skills. The project also focuses on girls facing other factors of educational marginalisation, including those with disabilities, those pregnant, young mothers, girls who have married early or who have been affected by the 2014 Ebola outbreak or violence.

The project aims to significantly improve learning outcomes for functional literacy and numeracy as well as business and life skills through an eleven-month learning project followed by a four-month one-on-one mentorship from young women who will serve as mentors. The eleven-month learning project comprises nine months of basic literacy and numeracy classes as well as life skills classes then two months of business skills classes. On completing the learning project, girls will receive one-on-one mentorships from selected mentors to develop individual transition plans that are focused on home, community, learning or economic empowerment.

The project is being implemented in 300 communities (cohort for year 1: 7,500 adolescent girls) since January 2020. In year 2, the project will continue work in these communities, and expand into 200 new communities and an additional 5,000 girls (cohort 2: 12,500 adolescent girls across existing and new communities). In year 3, the project will continue in the 500 communities but work with a new group of 12,500 adolescent girls. The project aims to reach a total of 32,500 adolescent girls within the four years and the three cohorts.

3.1.2 Project Context

Sierra Leone has an estimated population of 7.5 million, is divided into 4 administrative divisions and 16 districts, ranks 181 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index and is the 5th poorest country in the world. The gross national income per capita is \$ 1,381 and 52.2 percent of the population live below US\$1.90 per day². The country emerged from a decade-long civil war in 2002, during which 2 million people were displaced and 50,000 people were killed.

Progress made to rebuild collapsed public systems stalled as a result of the Ebola outbreak that took place between May 2014 and March 2016. This resulted in 8,704 Ebola cases and 3,589 deaths (and an increase in non-Ebola morbidity and mortality due to the effects of the crisis on public services and local/national economy)³.

² UNDP (2019) Human Development Report. Briefing note for countries on the 2019 Human Development Report, Sierra Leone.

³ World Health Organisation (2016). Ebola Situation Report – 16 March 2016.

National revenue lost due to the outbreak, exacerbated by a simultaneous decline in global iron ore prices (an important source of export revenue for Sierra Leone), was estimated to be more than US\$74 million; businesses failed and families descended further into poverty⁴. Low confidence in public institutions and marginalisation of subgroups (survivors, health care workers and burial teams) led to weakened community cohesion. Schools were closed between June 2014 and April 2015, with some used as Ebola holding or treatment centres, and 78 teachers died during the outbreak.⁵

About 45.5 percent of all women in Sierra Leone have suffered some form of violence and the risk of violence against women and girls significantly increased during the 2014 Ebola outbreak; Sierra Leone ranks among the ten countries with the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in the world and the rate of teenage pregnancy spiked during the outbreak, likely due to school closings resulting in reduced protection of girls.⁶

Sierra Leone has a long-standing aspiration to attain middle-income country status by 2035.⁷ The objectives of the 2015 National Ebola Recovery Strategy incorporated medium and long-term objectives from the 2013-2018 Agenda for Prosperity, which was the original guide for growth and development. This framework lays out ambitions for diversified and private sector generated growth with gender-equitable employment, improved access to health care and improved literacy and equitable access to education. More recently, the Sierra Leone Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019-2023 reiterates the development goals, albeit acknowledging the challenges in meeting them presented by the Ebola crisis. Throughout its extant strategic plans, the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has expressed commitments to meeting the Sustainable Development Goal of ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promote life-long learning, and has put forward ambitious strategic outcomes for improved literacy of out-of-school (OOS) youth in the National Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2018-2020.⁸

3.1.3 Gender Inequality and Marginalisation

Prior to the 2014 Ebola crisis and the resulting closure of schools for approximately eight months, 17.6 percent of girls aged 12-17 were OOS and the literacy rate for females over 15 years was 22 percent⁹. In 2015, of the population aged 3+, the percentage of males attending school and having ever attended school was 39.1 percent and 60.0 percent, respectively, compared to the percentage of females attending school and having ever attended school at 35.3 percent and 50.9 percent, respectively. The literacy rate for the population 10 years and above was 51.4 percent, with the literacy rate for males at 58.3 percent compared to 41.5 percent for females¹⁰. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) for Primary, Junior Secondary School (JSS) and Senior Secondary School (SSS) is 1.06, 1.30 and 1.01, respectively.

The barriers to education broadly faced by girls in Sierra Leone are at the household, school and system-level, with a range of crosscutting harmful socio-cultural practices. Household poverty affects both males and females. However, girls are more at risk of exclusion from school, as families favour boys over girls.

⁴ Government of Sierra Leone (2015) National Ebola Recovery Strategy for Sierra Leone.

⁵ World Health Organisation (2016). Ebola Situation Report – 16 March 2016

⁶ UNFPA (2015) 'Rapid Assessment of Pregnant Adolescent Girls in Sierra Leone,' Freetown: UNFPA.

⁷ Government of Sierra Leone (2018), Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019-2023

⁸ Government of Sierra Leone, 2017, Education Sector Plan 2018-2020

⁹ UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2017. UNICEF Statistics Sierra Leone.

¹⁰ Statistics Sierra Leone 2015 Population and Housing Census.

A 2014 survey of adolescents found that the primary reason cited by 25.1 percent of adolescent girls for dropping out of school was their household's inability to afford costs associated with schooling.¹¹ Primary education has been free since 2000 and secondary education since 2018, yet families struggle to cover the indirect cost of attending school (i.e. books, uniforms, food, etc.). Villages that do not have a JSS or SSS require girls to travel or reside elsewhere and thus incur additional costs. The Ebola outbreak had a significant impact on family livelihoods, with some families losing their primary earner. Subsequent to the Ebola crisis, there was an increase in child labour (39 percent of children ages 5-17 involved in economic activities or household chores), with most girls engaging in petty trading, as families recover.¹² Adolescent girls' economic value is tied to their sexual activity and engagement in transactional sex by adolescent girls increased as a result of the economic shock caused by the Ebola outbreak, evident by the increased teenage pregnancy rate observed during and since the end of the outbreak. Unless they have viable income-generating options, these girls often have to marry while still adolescents. In addition, their domestic chores are heavy, leaving little opportunities for socialising. Before the outbreak, it was estimated that 36.1 percent of girls married before the age of 18 years. During and after the crisis, however, research indicated an increase in child marriage as families sought to generate income through dowries^{13,14}.

At school-level, there is a shortage of female teachers to provide mentorship to female girls. Violence against women and girls is a pervasive problem, with 30 percent of rape incidents reported as school-related (perpetrators include male teachers, peers and older students). Students who need to travel long distances to attend school face additional risks while travelling. Among students surveyed in 2016, 28 percent reported that they knew a girl who had dropped out of school due to sexual violence. Transactional sex is also commonly reported, as some girls are coerced into sex with male teachers in exchange for grades or gifts.¹⁵

Teenage pregnancy, as a result of abuse, transactional sex, lack of information on reproductive health or otherwise, has been a persistent barrier to education, with 15.5 percent of girls and women between 12-25 reporting pregnancy as a reason for dropping out of school.¹⁶ Following the re-opening of schools in 2015, the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSEE), previously Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, officially banned pregnant girls from attending school or sitting exams, although unofficial exclusion was previously widespread. After missing months of school, many girls lose interest and are unable to re-enrol due to stigma and/or the additional economic burden of supporting a child. In 2015, 32.7 percent of girls 15-18 were recorded to be pregnant or already have 1 child.^{17,18}

The ban on pregnant girls attending school was officially lifted at the end of March 2020, but due to school closures stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, reenrolment of pregnant girls has not

¹¹ Innovations for Poverty Action, 2014. Empowerment and livelihood for adolescents in Sierra Leone – baseline report.

¹² Ministry of Education Science and Technology, UNICEF 2016. A National Assessment of Out-of-School Children in Sierra Leone.

¹³ Ministry of Education Science and Technology, UNICEF 2016. A National Assessment of Out-of-School Children in Sierra Leone.

¹⁴ Government of Sierra Leone (2015) National Ebola Recovery Strategy for Sierra Leone.

¹⁵ UNICEF 2012 Sierra Leone Statistics.

¹⁶ Ministry of Education Science and Technology, UNICEF 2016. A National Assessment of Out-of-School Children in Sierra Leone.

¹⁷ Plan Sierra Leone, CONCERN Worldwide, IBIS and Catholic Relief Services, 2010. National study on school-related gender-based violence in Sierra Leone

¹⁸ UNFPA (2015) 'Rapid Assessment of Pregnant Adolescent Girls in Sierra Leone,' Freetown: UNFPA

yet been possible. This transition is also likely to take time, as social norms and stigma discouraging pregnant girls from attending school may persist.

Harmful social norms reinforce practices surrounding gender disparities and attitudes on the use of violence against women and girls, sexual relationships and limited decision-making by women. The value of education, especially for adolescent girls, is not seen as a worthy investment for many caregivers¹⁹. While all of these barriers existed before the Ebola outbreak, the crisis further exacerbated the barriers and vulnerabilities faced by OOS adolescent girls.

Disability is one of the least reported reasons for children being out of school; however, about 76% of girls with disabilities are OOS and the prevalence of disability is under measured, particularly cognitive and psychosocial disability, with the majority of disabilities reported relating to physical impairment.²⁰ Again, there is stigma attached to certain disabilities and communities often underestimate the capabilities of girls with disabilities.

3.1.4 Differences in Context across regions

The same systemic challenges to girls' education exist across all project areas (the EAGER project operates in 10 of the 16 districts in Sierra Leone), some differences do exist both between and within regions. Linguistically, English is the official language of Sierra Leone, and represents the sole formal written language in the country, as well as the language of the national education system. In total, however, 23 languages are recognised in the country, the majority of which are represented in EAGER's areas of implementation. Given that none of these have a formal written format, or even an informal format that would ever be encountered in daily life, all project resources and the functional literacy curriculum will be produced in English. For numeracy, life skills and business skills, as well as to support understanding in literacy sessions, mentors and facilitators will translate project content at point of delivery to the mother tongue spoken in each community; as mentors and facilitators are from each community where the project is implemented, they will all have the relevant language skills to do this.

In terms of resources, there is a difference between areas; this, however, has more to do with urban vs rural settings rather than between districts. Chiefdom-level mapping conducted by the project demonstrated that in more rural areas, and particularly along border areas (with Guinea and Liberia), there were fewer education opportunities available to girls due to a lack of schools, and in particular a lack of junior and senior secondary schools. In addition, due to fewer economic opportunities in these areas and resulting poverty, girls often left school early to help contribute to family income. Areas where these issues were prevalent were prioritised when selecting communities for implementation, however this in turn creates challenges at other levels, for example limited accessibility, lower capacity of mentors and facilitators.

Formative research carried out by one of the EAGER partners, BBC Media Action, in order to inform national and local radio programming, revealed some other differences between rural and urban settings. These were that whilst it was apparent that there were more opportunities available to girls in more urban settings, frequently the family and wider support systems they had available to them were lacking in comparison to rural areas; one reason for this was that many girls in these areas were not living with immediate family, but rather with more distant relatives. Many had been sent to these areas from more rural settings by immediate family in the hope that

¹⁹ Ministry of Education Science and Technology, UNICEF 2016. A National Assessment of Out-of-School Children in Sierra Leone.

²⁰ Statistics Sierra Leone, 2017. Sierra Leone 2015 Population and Housing Census: Thematic Report on Disability.

they would have better opportunities, however often found themselves being made to generate income for their host family rather than participate in education.

Anecdotally, project staff based in communities have also discussed challenges due to the prominent religions found in different areas; Sierra Leone has approximately a 78 percent Muslim population and 21 percent Christian; whilst extremism in either is rare, staff found that in areas where stricter Muslim beliefs were enforced, there was a reluctance surrounding girls' education; this is an area that will be explored further in qualitative case-studies of communities.

Table 1: Summary of direct beneficiaries

Direct beneficiary numbers	Total figures
Total number of girls reached in cohort 1	7,481
Total number of girls expected to reach by end of project	32,500
Education level	Proportion of total direct beneficiaries (%)
Never been to school	33.7%**
Been to school but dropped out.	66.3%
Age banding (The age bandings used should be appropriate to the ToC)	Proportion of total direct beneficiaries (%)
E.g. 13 to 15	25.8%
E.g. 16 to 17	68.4%*

NOTE: For age banding, figures do not add up to 100% as a small number of girls are below and above the target range of 13-17. This relates to a 1) a lack of clarity around age (this is not formally recorded in most areas, so often is inaccurate/unknown with different ages given at mapping and registration phase) and 2) in some communities, 11 and 12 year olds were mapped for future cohorts; if there were not sufficient numbers to run cohorts 2 and 3, however, these girls were included in cohort 1. Please note that beneficiary database was updated in Jan 2020; the EE worked off an initial database when setting representative research sample

** Figures will be verified once attendance registers for beneficiaries are finalised (February was the first full calendar month for learning sessions, so this information is currently being collected).

3.1.5 Target Beneficiaries

The project's target group are the girls who are expected to receive the direct benefit of the project interventions; these adolescent girls must be living in one of the 300 communities in 10 districts selected by the project for cohort 1, and who meet the following criteria:

- Girls aged 13-17 years who never attended school or dropped out of school at primary level;
- Girls with less than basic literacy and numeracy ability.

The girls selected for the project have been excluded from educational outcomes due to a range of factors, including cultural practices e.g. forced marriages / FGM, their location (a large proportion of the country's population live in remote or rural locations with limited education opportunities), poverty, or conservative attitudes about acceptable social roles for girls. EAGER identifies the following levels of marginalisation among its girl beneficiaries:

1. Girls with disabilities;
2. Young mothers or pregnant;
3. Married early; and,
4. Working outside of the home.

Information was collected on all beneficiary target individuals that demonstrates, at a minimum, the individual's gender, age, family, work and disability status and geographical location. Questions on experiences of violence were not asked due to the sensitive nature of this topic. Collection of this information was through completion of a beneficiary selection form where a trained staff requested the personal data of the girl using a set questionnaire.

Questions were asked verbally in the respondent's mother tongue and captured in the form. A database containing all these entries allowed the project to determine the marginalisation factor(s) or subgroup(s) that each girl belongs to and make appropriate selection of beneficiaries based on this data. The interventions are designed to non-selectively impact on all the subgroups.

In terms of girls with disabilities, EAGER recognises that disability is caused by social constructs and beliefs - and it is these constructs which result in the barriers to girls with disabilities in society and/or education. EAGER will aim to remove such barriers – be it attitudinal, physical etc. – to ensure that girls with disabilities can be more independent. EAGER will employ the social model approach which shifts the focus from impairments at the individual level to a focus on the barriers that exist in society, and how to reduce those barriers, to ensure full and equitable participation in society. The project recognises that at present, the support available to persons with disabilities in Sierra Leone is limited, with no formal support provided by the government. Although the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was signed by the GoSL in 2007 and ratified in 2010, no further progress reports have been submitted. Inclusion of persons with disability in the education system is also limited; a 2017 report from UNDP reported that only 37% of people with disability have ever attended school, with a stark gender divide; just 13.2% of girls with disability report having ever attended school²⁰. Sierra Leone has committed to the UNDP sustainable development goal of education for all, and the development of an inclusive education plan and equipping 15% of schools with ramps for access is part of the 2018-2020 Education Sector Plan for the country. To date, however, there has never been a conception of universal education in Sierra Leone²¹, and many of those with disabilities who have obtained education have done so through very limited places at special education schools. Because most teachers have never received any training in inclusive education (with many practicing teachers also never having received any formal teacher training at all), their capacity to facilitate inclusive practices is limited. Further, resources available to support learning by persons with disabilities are also very limited, meaning that many people who are deaf, mute or blind are never equipped with tools or training to

²¹ Pai, G (2014). Particularizing Universal Education in Postcolonial Sierra Leone. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 16, (1), 62 – 73.

enable independent communication. This is an issue that EAGER is also facing; the majority of mentors and facilitators delivering learning sessions have very limited or no experience in facilitation or teaching, have low levels of literacy making delivery of even the basic learning programme a challenge, and have no prior experience of inclusive practices for persons with disabilities. This context means that asking these community volunteers to make programme adaptations for girls with profound disabilities is beyond their current ability, though ongoing training will seek to enhance this over the course of the programme. These challenges mean that while EAGER is striving to achieve inclusivity for all in our project delivery and will continue to make adaptations to move closer to this goal, we are not there yet, and are constrained by the context in which we operate.

For girls who report having any disability (defined as having “a lot of difficulty/cannot do at all” in response to an adapted set of Washington Group Short-Form Questions used in the beneficiary selection form; the full set of child functioning questions were asked during the baseline), an individual follow-up assessment was conducted to assess the feasibility of their participation in the EAGER project. Due to the aforementioned limited capacity of the project to accommodate girls with profound disabilities as a result of its scope and design, it was not possible to include all girls reporting high levels of difficulty in functioning; efforts were made to link these with disability services in existence in the region/nationally however. From project mapping data, 19 girls were excluded from participation in the programme during Cohort 1 due to severe disability. Assessments for inclusion were made on a case by case basis, and it will be explored if greater accommodation (for example, provision of a “buddy” or learning assistant who has already completed the learning project) may be possible in cohorts 2 and 3, and if audio recordings could be used for girls with vision impairments. Ongoing training will also focus on inclusive practices to support and facilitate participation by current beneficiaries with disabilities, including the identified subgroup of those that experience high level of anxiety and depression, as well as for beneficiaries in Cohorts 2 and 3 in an effort to further expand inclusion as the programme progresses. It was also noted by project officers that identification of girls with disabilities not captured by the initial mapping process continued when more concrete relationships were forged with communities after longer time periods spent working there. In the initial mapping process, some of these girls were hidden or not put forward for selection due to a lack of understanding from caregivers around capabilities and what adjustments might be possible to facilitate participation. Due to a delay in the start of the programme, project officers were later able to identify additional girls that could still take part in cohort 1. As relationships with communities continue to be developed (most of which implementing partners are working in for the first time), and engagement with communities around the capabilities of girls with disabilities will be a focus of community dialogues throughout cohort 1, the project envisages that identification of even more girls that may have been overlooked at the onset will be possible for cohorts 2 and 3,

Wherever possible, adaptations were made using the project Access to Learning fund to include girls with disabilities, by adapting the safe space (e.g. building a ramp), or providing individual assistance (e.g. linking with hearing aid providers, obtaining glasses, mobility aids, etc.).

The research evaluation will disaggregate all data collected by marginalisation factors (see table below), to ascertain if the project works differently for different subgroups, but all the subgroups were asked the same questions.

3.1.6 Disaggregation of data (Research)

In addition to displaying overall figures, all data will be disaggregated at the following levels for reporting.

Figure 1: Disaggregation of Data

Age**	13-15 16-17/18
Education level	Never been to school Left school at Lower Primary level (Class 1-3) Left school at Upper Primary level (Class 4 – 6) Left school at secondary school level
Family status	Married/unmarried Children/no children Living with family/living with husband or partner/living with others
Working outside the home/ Type of Work	No/Not working outside the home Mining Farming Petty trading Cookery shop Domestic work Other (please describe)
Location	Urban / Peri-urban / Rural
Disability (adolescent functioning)	Any disability Difficulty with mobility Difficulty with sight Difficulty with hearing Difficulty with communicating/understanding

*Age** - Beneficiary age as an indicator needs to be treated with a lot of thought and care as it cannot be independently verified and in many cases the girls do not know their own ages.*

3.1.7 Selection of Beneficiaries

This followed a 4-step process, as outlined below:

1. *District Mapping*: The districts included in the EAGER project were selected in order to ensure national coverage by DFID-funded girl-centred educational projects. At the time of the EAGER proposal development, there were 14 districts in Sierra Leone; as 4 of these were already the sites of ongoing interventions, the remaining 10 were selected for the current project. (After changes to geographical divisions, there are now 16 regions in Sierra Leone; EAGER still operates in 10 regions, whilst SAGE, another DFID-funded project will operate in the remaining 6).

2. *Chieftom mapping*: a chieftom mapping exercise was carried out by each partner in order to select areas where target beneficiaries are likely to be based. Information collected for each chieftom included categorisation of rural/urban setting (with a balance desired), remoteness, presence of primary and secondary schools, women’s groups, and estimations of number of out-of-school girls. Areas where there were not already existing education projects were also preferred.

3. *Identifying EAGER communities/project sites*: within the selected chiefdoms, district teams identified EAGER communities/project sites on the basis of them meeting four key criteria; 1) support from the chief and key stakeholders, 2) presence of suitable safe and learning spaces, 3) suitably qualified mentors and facilitators, and 4) enough out-of-school adolescent girls. Presence of suitable safe/learning spaces and facilitators/mentors were gauged using assessment tools developed by the project, with selected spaces and individuals then verified by out-of-school girls to indicate satisfaction with these choices.

4. *Identifying beneficiary girls*: A door-to-door mapping exercise was conducted in selected communities where information on adolescent girls aged 11-17 (11 and 12 year olds will be eligible for selection in cohorts 2 and 3) was collected via a beneficiary selection form. All information was entered in a database, and repeat visit was carried out where:

- a. A disability was reported; this was to make an assessment if reasonable accommodation could be provided to ensure that the girls could partake in EAGER activities, and to link with relevant support services;
- b. A girl left school at upper-primary school or above; in these instances, a screening test was administered to see if the girl's level of learning was suitable or above the standard the EAGER project is aimed at.

In selecting beneficiaries for cohort 1 (7,500 in total), in the instance that more girls were identified that there was space for in the first cohort, girls that had never been to school or dropped out in lower primary were prioritised, as were girls aged 16-17 (to ensure that they did not age out of the project); Other girls were waitlisted either for cohort 2/3, or for later inclusion in cohort 1 in the event that a selected girl later decided not to participate. In total, more than 10,000 suitable girls were identified during the mapping process. Identification of suitable girls and 200 additional communities will follow steps 3 and 4 above for cohorts 2 and 3.

Table 2: Proposed Intervention Pathways

Intervention pathway	Which girls follow this pathway?	How many girls follow this pathway for cohort 1?	How long will the intervention last?	How many cohorts are there?	What literacy and numeracy levels are the girls starting at?	What does success look like for learning?	What does success look like for Transition?
Functional Literacy and Numeracy, Life Skills (9 months) Business Skills (2 months), Development of individual transition plan and mentoring	100%	100%	16 months	3	Girls with the lowest levels of education were targeted, with literacy levels not expected to exceed the ability of a student in Class 2 in formal schooling. For girls that dropped out of school in upper primary (Class 4 or above), a screening test was used to assess basic functional literacy and numeracy; of those screened, Partial data shows that of the 2,410 girls who left school early from Upper Primary and JSS levels and took the test, 2,239 (93%) did not pass and were enrolled in cohort 1.	EAGER Basic Literacy and Numeracy takes a functional approach to adolescent learning. The goal is to prepare learners to function in the world, or their communities, and enable them to develop skills to increase their earning potential and contribute to their community. A successful EAGER learner will be able to: access, use, interpret, and communicate mathematical information and ideas, in order to engage in and manage the mathematical demands of a range of situations in their lives. They will be able to understand, evaluate, use and engage with written text in order to participate in society, to help them achieve their goals, and develop their knowledge and potential.	Girls develop individual transition plans and have made progress towards reaching long term-goals related to empowerment at home, community, learning and/or business level. Plans are assessed for quality and feasibility by project officers and mentors, and individual mentoring is provided to help girls achieve their set goals.

Table 3: Indirect Beneficiary Groups

Group	Interventions received	Total number reached for cohort 1
Boys	Life skills training (8 – 10 sessions)	6000 (TBC)
BLN Facilitators	5 days of training, Literacy and Numeracy; 1 day inclusive education & protection training, (1 training completed, 2 nd week scheduled for May 2020) Quarterly district-level learning cluster meetings 9 months continued coaching and professional development	345
Life Skills Mentors	1 week of training, life skills 1-day workshop on curriculum delivery 2 days training, protection and safeguarding Quarterly district-level learning cluster meetings 16 months continued coaching and professional development	300
Business Skills Mentors	1 week of training, life skills 2 days training, protection and safeguarding 1 week training, business skills & mentoring Quarterly district-level learning cluster meetings 16 months continued coaching and professional development	300
Community members	6 community dialogue sessions (TBC)	7500 (300 groups with approx 25 members in each – TBC)

3.1.8 Project Theory of Change

The EAGER project's latest Theory of Change (ToC) can be found in Annex 17. Please note that it is not the final ToC but the most recent version. The ToC will be updated by the EAGER project and shared with the evaluation team before the midterm evaluation.

Learning: Girl only safe spaces and learning spaces for mentorship, BLN classes, life skills and business skills classes will be identified to provide girls with an inclusive safe learning environment. Project Officers will meet one-on-one with girls to provide guidance on navigating around their specific barriers and with both female and male caregivers to again discuss barriers and girls' participation. These activities link to **Output 1** for the provision of safe spaces addressing primary barriers faced by adolescent girls. EAGER will develop a targeted BLN programme specific to the needs of adolescent girls. Life skills curriculum will build upon the GoSL package and combine this with IRC's Girl Shine curriculum, infused with social emotional learning (SEL) competencies, safety and gender transformative assets, shown to improve learning outcomes and life-skills, and supplemental materials based on prior research. Partners' existing business skills curricula will be reviewed, consolidated and tailored for programme use and adapted for use based on the primary economic activities in each district. Training for BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors will include cascade training on inclusive, gender transformative, age appropriate and learner-centred teaching practices, quarterly individual coaching and peer-learning sessions. The learning programme will include 9 months of concurrent BLN classes (216

hours) and life skills classes (72 hours), followed by 2 months of business skills classes (32 hours). These activities link to **Output 2** for the successful resourcing, training and coaching of BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors. Attendance (**Intermediate Outcome 1**) and quality instruction (**Intermediate Outcome 2**) are linked to outputs under Learning. To achieve improved learning outcomes, it is assumed that girls can be supported and motivated to attend, BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors can be motivated to apply their training and communities can ensure the provision and maintenance of safe spaces.

The pedagogical approach as well as mode of delivery will be inclusive. The medium of instruction will be in the girls' mother tongue in Literacy, Numeracy and Life and Business Skills, while all materials are in English. The medium of instruction will therefore vary according to different groups and geographical locations. Mentors and Facilitators are actively encouraged to use mother tongue in Life and Business Skills and Numeracy, but to teach some key words that relate to the main themes, in English. For literacy, the content is in English and mother tongue will be used to bridge the gap to acquisition of new English vocabulary and engaging with text in English.

As few local languages have a formal written format, and it would be uncommon to encounter any written text in a language other than English, from a functional perspective, a focus on literacy through the English medium is the only viable option.

Integral to an inclusive approach for the BLN programme is the use of illustrations, visuals and teaching aids to guide understanding, and to help overcome the language barriers. As such, each learning space will be provided with Learner Books which will have reading passages, illustrations, diagrams, pictures etc. to help guide learning, and help girls engage with the material. In addition, the content of the curriculum will be contextualised to the reality of the girls so they can relate to and engage with the content. All content will feature a diverse representation of beneficiary girls, and concepts of gender equity and inclusion will be reflected in the curriculum and visuals, as well as any material at the level of the project (e.g. communication documents). The Learning Fund can also be used to ensure girls have access to the curriculum, for example, for girls that are visually impaired, larger text and visual aids can be provided. The overall approach is functional - at the level of the girls/ pitch. This will include a "do more/ do less" approach to cater for different abilities.

Finally, training for BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors will include strategies to make learning and safe spaces inclusive. For both, training will focus on how to manage the space to ensure every girl can participate fully, as well as strategies on how to include learners with impairments. For Facilitators, training will have a focus on the following: gender, GBV and code of conduct; gender responsive pedagogy, and inclusive education.

Transition: Transition will be a self-identified pathway for each girl; girls may specify pathways linked to empowerment within the home, community, learning, training, and/or economic domain. Support during transition includes guided development of a market- and opportunity- driven transition plan and, for those pursuing economic transition and who fall within the suitable age range, the provision of competitive start-up/growth grants or linkages to local markets, based on the results of a market analysis and high-potential opportunities. Transition to further learning will be on a case-by-case basis and dependent on available local opportunities; this may be in the form of training in a skill/trade through informal apprenticeships, or in exceptional cases, through formal schooling. Upon completion of the learning programme and under the guidance of BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors, girls will receive one-on-one guidance to facilitate their transition (**Output 3**) and develop an individual plan which will be assessed for quality by project officers (**Intermediate Outcome 3**). With support, girls who have completed the learning programme will have attained the skills to achieve their transition goals.

In determining suitable transition pathways together with each girl, individual characteristics and barriers will be taken into consideration; for example, possible hours of work or distance from training centres for girls that have children and caregiving responsibilities, and potential issues around access for girls with disabilities. Individual strengths will be leveraged to identify the most suitable opportunities in a process that will be guided by LBS project officers, and a special needs fund created to support the transition process for girls with disabilities will be available to provide additional assistance where required.

Sustainability: As outlined in our sustainability plan, the programme will work closely with communities to change attitudes and behaviours towards marginalised girls via community discussions that include transformative reflective sessions resulting in action plans – and via radio programmes. Monthly (6 in total per cohort) and quarterly community discussions, facilitated by the LSB Mentor and supported by project officers, will take place at the community and chiefdom level respectively.

Modules will be adapted to the barriers identified within each community as identified through individual meetings with girls and their caregivers, and will cover the specific barriers, including violence, that girls in their community face in accessing education and other opportunities, and develop action plans to address some of the specific issues identified.. National and local radio broadcasting will foster further dialogue in communities. These activities will create opportunities to change attitudes and challenge harmful socio-cultural gender norms which limit girls' education and employment (**Output 4**), seek to transform attitudes to girls with disabilities' capabilities, and develop action plans that address barriers to education and social exclusion for these girls. Both female and male caregivers and community leaders will actively engage in dialogue (**Intermediate Outcome 4**) and ultimately experience a shift in attitudes and practices that will contribute to the sustainability of learning and transition outcomes. In addition, staff and Programme Officers will be trained on how to engage the families and care-givers of girls with disabilities, and develop their individual strategies to circumvent the specific barriers that they encounter. At the system level, the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) will be consulted on the design of the BLN curriculum and research approach (**Output 5**). This involvement with the BLN curriculum (which will be made available to support the GoSL's own non-formal learning initiatives) and acceptance of the research findings will support the GoSL in achieving the ESP strategic outcome for improved literacy for OOS youth (**Intermediate Outcome 5**). The literacy and numeracy and life skills curricula developed by the project will also be made available to the ministry for continued use in educational programmes targeting OOS girls.

4. Baseline evaluation approach and methodology

4.1 Evaluation purpose and Evaluation Questions

IMC Worldwide, Inc. (IMC) was selected by the EAGER Consortium to perform the baseline, midline, and endline evaluations for the Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER) project. The purpose of the baseline evaluation of EAGER is to measure impact and performance of the EAGER project before, during and after implementation.

Specific objectives of the baseline evaluation are to:

1. Collect baseline data aligned with the project logframe in order to enable comparison of results on a longitudinal basis and assess the extent of change over the course of project implementation (focusing only on beneficiary girls from cohort 1).
2. Further refine project design and approaches on the basis of data collected prior to project implementation.
3. Produce data that to assess the process, impact, effectiveness, and sustainability of the EAGER project during and after implementation.

To achieve the purpose of the baseline evaluation, the evaluation team contextualised questions typically utilised for an end-of-project evaluation to assess whether the project's approaches and measurements are *likely* to produce evidence of positive improvements at the end of the project. While Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) guidelines focus on findings related to the outcomes and intermediate outcomes, the analysis of data from the research into the evaluation questions (presented in sections 5 and 6) serves to provide information that will be immediately useful to EAGER stakeholders. The baseline evaluation Scope of Work (see Annex 14) presented draft questions on which these refined questions have been based. One original question (related to value for money) was removed as no longer within the scope of the baseline research following consultation with IRC, as this will be conducted internally. The following table describes the final version of the baseline evaluation questions.

Table 4: Evaluation questions and summary of quantitative and qualitative data/analysis required to answer question

Evaluation question	Qual data/analysis required to answer question	Quant data/analysis required to answer question
<p>EQ1 Project Process:</p> <p><i>1.0 Is the project design likely to result in successful implementation?</i></p> <p><i>1.1. What are the girls’ perceptions and experiences with the interventions?</i></p>	<p>FGD data compare perspectives of girls and boys from different subgroups</p>	<p>The Girls’ Combined Survey data provide information on girls’ attitudes towards education and literacy, specifically at the beginning of the project. Data will also provide some information on teaching and learning practices at the beginning of the project for later comparison.</p>
<p>EQ2 Project Impact:</p> <p><i>2.0. What is the likely impact of the project on the learning and transition of marginalised girls, including girls with disabilities? How and why might this impact be achieved?</i></p> <p><i>2.1. How are outcomes likely to vary for different subgroups of girls (e.g. single vs. married, pregnant vs. not pregnant, disabled vs. non-disabled, rural vs urban, older vs younger girls, etc.)?</i></p> <p><i>2.2. What individual (including psychometric measures), home and community level characteristics are associated with girls’ learning and transition outcomes?</i></p> <p><i>2.3. What are the profiles and experiences of girls who are likely to successfully be able to transition to formal education, training or (self) employment and how do they differ from girls unable to transition into new paths?</i></p> <p><i>2.4. What are some of the facilitators/barriers to girls’ education, employment and successful transition? What community attitudes may serve as facilitators and as barriers? How are these likely to change over the course of the project?</i></p> <p><i>2.5. What is the likelihood that girls will be able to remain in their chosen transition pathway after the project and mentoring concludes? What are the likely obstacles for girls who are unable to transition?</i></p>	<p>Data from FGDs and KIIs with girls, boys, caregivers and other key stakeholders provide insights into barriers to girls improving their learning outcomes and transition; Case studies of communities with a range of characteristics will draw conclusions across inter-linked stakeholders. Discussions with community members and others probe understandings and attitudes surrounding gender and inclusion norms and practices that can help establish a baseline along with reviewing project assumptions.</p>	<p>Data from learning tests and Girls’ Combined Survey establish baseline from which to assess the girls’ literacy and numeracy competencies. Results will allow comparison across the main characteristic subgroups of interest. The SEL/life skills tool provides data about girls’ core SEL competencies such as self-awareness and self-management, as well as measuring sexual health knowledge and practices, nutrition gender norms and gender-based violence (GBV) related issues. Household survey will produce baseline data on parents’ attitudes towards education and gender and inclusion practices. Disaggregation by subgroup as well as other characteristics help identify possible areas where project support may need to differ. Head of Household/Caregiver surveys indicate attitudes towards learning and transition across a large sample.</p>

<p>2.6. How do key stakeholders understand gender and inclusion norms most relevant to out-of-school girls given EAGER's learning and transition objectives? What changes to attitudes and behaviour regarding gender and inclusion norms may be possible?</p>		
<p>EQ3 Project Effectiveness:</p> <p>3.0. What is likely to work (and not to work) to increase the learning and transition of marginalised girls as defined by the project?</p> <p>3.1. What implementation characteristics (e.g. attendance at interventions and community group discussions) are likely to moderate the effect of the EAGER learning project and business training on girls' learning and transition outcomes?</p>	<p>FGDs and KIIs across a range of stakeholders including girls, boys, caregivers, community leaders and EAGER staff identify possibilities for a successful transition as well as barriers, including an exploration of gender norms. Discussions provide insights into past experiences.</p>	<p>Surveys with households/caregivers provide indications of their attitudes towards education and gender norms. Combined Girls' Survey will demonstrate information on girls' attitudes towards reading at baseline.</p>
<p>EQ4 Project Sustainability</p> <p>4.0. How sustainable are the activities funded by the GEC-LNGB towards promoting improvements in the lives of girls and better gender relations? Which aspects of the project promote sustainability? What are possible opportunities for leveraging additional interest and investment at the safe spaces, community and systems levels?</p>	<p>FGDs and KIIs, in particular, along with document review, provide a more nuanced understanding opportunities for sustainability of improvements in girls' lives and gender relations related to the EAGER project at the safe space, community and systems level. Discussions with caregivers and community leaders indicate interest in the project as well as establish a baseline regarding already existing opportunities. The LNGB Sustainability Scorecard will provide a useful rubric for assessing sustainability.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

4.2 Overall evaluation design

Evaluation Design and Assumptions

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach relying on a convergent design,²² wherein, due to time constraints, quantitative and qualitative data collections occurred simultaneously. The evaluation design includes a pre- and post-test assessment of a group of treatment girls. The quantitative collection uses a cluster-based sampling method designed to be representative of beneficiaries by both marginalisation status and geographic diversity. The sample sizes were determined to ensure the minimum expected improvements in outcomes could be measured to a statistically significant level. The breadth of the quantitative approach allows for a statistically representative sample of project locations and participants while the qualitative component provides context and depth to the findings of the quantitative impact evaluation, as well as enables triangulation of findings, thus increasing their validity.

The quantitative component allows for a broad assessment of beneficiaries by stratifying collection both at the community and beneficiary level. This ensures diversity by geography and that the research is representative of the marginalised groups targeted by the project. The qualitative approach focused on developing ten in-depth community-level case studies. These cross-stakeholder analyses involved both direct and indirect beneficiaries and make use of quantitative data available from each community to further develop a snapshot of each community within the qualitative sample.

The data collection methods used reflect the inclusion of multiple data sources and methods to triangulate information and draw conclusions regarding relationships and links between resources/inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, the long-term goal, the context of the intervention (e.g. political, institutional, cultural) and other factors (e.g. operational, political, technical) that enable or inhibit success.

Tools used during the baseline evaluation were:

- Key informant interviews (KIIs)
- Focus group discussions (FGDs)
- Adapted Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA)
- Adapted Out of school Learning Assessment (OLA)
- Girls' Combined Survey
- Life Skills Survey
- Head of households Survey
- Caregivers Surveys
- Programme Data Sheet

The evaluation team had also developed a *Session Observation Tool* that they did not implement as project activities had not begun at the time of the baseline assessment. The tool will be revisited and modified accordingly for the midline research. The specific tools are discussed in detail in section 4.3 below.

²² See Creswell & Plano Clark (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Duration, Timing, Joint Approach and Cohorts

The baseline evaluation took place from September 2019 through March 2020 with data collection timed to coincide closely with the anticipated commencement of project activities (in January 2020) to ensure as accurate a representation of the sampled population as possible. The evaluation consisted of three phases:

- **Phase 1** (September to November 2019) consisted of a desk review; the development of research tools and sampling plan; and the development of the Inception Report.
- **Phase 2** (November – December 2019) was the data collection phase, including pretesting of learning assessments; training of enumerators and qualitative researchers; piloting of all tools; an in-country debrief with the Evaluation Steering Committee, and data collection itself.
- **Phase 3** (January - March 2020) comprised cleaning, coding and analysis of data and development and review of the baseline evaluation report. A final presentation was given to the Evaluation Steering Committee in Freetown by the national data collection partner (Dalan Consultants) with remote participation by the international members of the IMC Worldwide evaluation team.

Geographically, the evaluation covered communities in all ten districts participating in EAGER. The evaluation (including research and midline and endline) will focus solely on the participants in cohort 1 (i.e., 7,500 beneficiary girls) of the EAGER project. The baseline approach used a joint sampling approach and evaluated the same group of beneficiary girls for both learning and transition. The baseline does not include transition benchmarking (see below).

Cross Cutting Components

Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI)

Several evaluation components address gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) standards. Specifically, the sampling approach specifically stratified to include the following vulnerable groups:

- girls with disabilities
- girls who are married
- girls who have children and/or are pregnant
- girls who work outside of the home

The evaluation team also utilised the GESI Assessment Tool completed by IRC for EAGER to inform the development of both quantitative and qualitative research tools across key stakeholder groups. GESI standards, and the categorisation of GESI accommodating and GESI transformative, in particular, guided data analysis especially related to the sustainability of the project's objectives, per EAGER's logframe to key stakeholder groups. Further, the evaluation team included additional evaluation questions²³(in addition to those listed in Table 4 above) to elicit feedback on opportunities to further address gender and inclusion in EAGER programming for all cohorts.

²³ Please see the Inception Report included in the Annex that includes all the evaluation questions, including questions 5. Findings and Conclusions; and 6. Evidence-based, practical recommendations which were not included above.

Fidelity to logframe

The Baseline Evaluation Matrix (see Annex 16) presents a conceptual map linking the project logframe outcomes and intermediate outcomes to the evaluation questions and to the evaluation data collection methods and tools. This matrix also articulates key assumptions between the Intermediate Outcomes (IOs) and outcomes, thus ensuring they are included in the baseline design and analysis.

Changes made to the project logframe during the design phase of the baseline evaluation were also reflected in updates to the evaluation questions, matrix, and tools to ensure the research was focused on the outcomes as articulated in the project logframe.

The only exception is with respect to business skills (Outcome 1) as training of participants related to this outcome will not commence until after the nine-month literacy and numeracy course. As such, financial literacy/business skills measurement was not a part of the baseline but will be included in the midline in October 2020, prior to commencement of these sessions. Given the substantial testing burden on girls taking part in the evaluation, and that the business skills curriculum was still under development (and thus could not be aligned with assessment tools), this component was not assessed. The Girls' Combined Survey does include some measures on income generation and work inside and outside of the home at baseline, which will provide data related to this outcome. Similarly, various interview questions explored attitudes towards business practices and skills among the qualitative sample.

Alignment with the MEL Framework

The baseline evaluation methodology also closely followed the EAGER Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework with small deviations, in part due to the External Evaluator's direct involvement in the document's development in terms of providing support on the projects MEL approach. The most significant difference between the baseline evaluation and MEL framework is the absence of transition benchmarking²⁴ as part of the baseline research. The MEL framework originally included a transition benchmark sample for the baseline research (of 18– 20 per age cohort). However, it was decided not include transition benchmarking following communication from the FM that it was no longer an absolute requirement. The EAGER consortium opted to conceptualise transition in terms of empowerment and decision-making within their household and in the community, in addition to learning/training and employment. Instead of benchmarking for transition, the evaluation team accounted for the revised understanding of transition through the addition of items to the girls' combined survey related to their empowerment and decision-making within the community and their households as well as interviews and focus group questions.

4.3 Evaluation ethics

Ethics and safeguarding elements were considered during all key activities of the evaluation, most importantly at tool and approach design (please see Inception Report in the Annex section) and also during data collection. During the tool and approach design phase, and prior to beginning data collection activities, EAGER obtained IRB approval from IMC's IRB that is registered with the US government's Department of Health and Human Services and revisions were made to the tool and approach based on IRB feedback. Below are the ethical protocols that were included in the MEL Framework and then any deviations from those protocols during the baseline.

²⁴ The purpose of a transition benchmarking is to capture general levels of transition (as defined by the EAGER logframe) in beneficiary communities.

Figure 2: Evaluation Ethics during Baseline Evaluation

Aspect of MEL	Ethical protocols developed for MEL Framework	Any differences during design and delivery of baseline evaluation
<p>Your overall MEL approach, including your evaluation design (including any use of control or comparison groups), your overall monitoring system and your approach to learning.</p>	<p><u>Monitoring & Evaluation approach:</u> This section of the MEL framework outlines the approach for monitoring and evaluation, including the research design, strategies for tracking outputs, measuring primary and intermediate outcomes, and the ethical protocols that must be in place in order to conduct a rigorous and ethical evaluation, including ensuring child protection and safe guarding procedures are in place.</p> <p>The basis for IRC’s ethics framework is a set of four internationally recognised ethical principles for monitoring, evaluation, research and learning conduct (respect, beneficence, justice, research integrity):</p> <p><u>Respect for persons:</u> involves respect for their privacy, which requires ensuring confidentiality or anonymity, and guaranteeing protection of data.</p> <p><u>Beneficence:</u> IRC’s obligation to maximise benefits and minimise harm, by anticipating any potential negative consequences of conducting research and ensuring that procedures for mitigating harm are in place.</p> <p><u>Justice:</u> will involve distributing the risks and benefits of research fairly and refrain from research practices that reproduce injustice, or take advantage of or exclude marginalised populations</p> <p><u>Research integrity:</u> which is related to ensuring the quality, rigour, professionalism, transparency and validity of research.</p> <p>The IRC is accountable for ensuring robust safeguards are in place to protect children who take part in evaluation activities. To this effect, IRC will be training all staff on Child Safeguarding Policy that dictates the ethos on how entities that come into contact with children should conduct themselves to safeguard these children including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – That the staffs (including EE) will adhere to the policy in place and that all research activities, whether sub-contracted or not, adhere to the safeguards outlined. – That recruitment of all IRC staffs including EE and MEL members will be guided by safe recruitment practices. – IRC will enforce a comprehensive code of conduct that outlines how to protect both children and our target beneficiaries from inappropriate behaviour perpetrated by staff/contractors. – All IRC staff members including the MEL team and EE will be trained on Child Protection (CP) to understand how protection features in different evaluation aspects including developing tools and research methods, informed consent, code of conduct, incident reporting mechanisms, data protection etc. – IRC as part of the LNGB project is developing a complaints response mechanism framework. The development of 	<p>No differences. All safe guarding and child protection procedures were following during the baseline evaluation. The evaluation design did not use a control group and only collected data from project participants.</p>

	<p>effective complaints response mechanisms will be guided by inputs by stakeholders and clients. This will include investigating the ways in which our clients in Sierra Leone access, understand, evaluate and interact with NGO support services, and what barriers they may face in making complaints in a time-sensitive, accurate, safe and confidential manner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Evaluation only with project participants.</u> LNGB will use repeated-measures approach to evaluation, where within-group differences in learning outcomes will be assessed at Baseline, Midline and Endline. Evaluation participants will be recruited from beneficiary girls participating in the project at cohort 1. No comparison group will be included meaning that all research participants will directly benefit from the programme. This is also the case for community members who participate in qualitative focus groups, as community discussions open to these participants will be run in every community. - <u>Monitoring for Action:</u> The IRC will adopt a <i>Monitoring for Action</i> (vs. monitoring of action) approach to ensure that all data collected will be put to use for course correction. MfA will enable IRC and its partners to a) to adopt appropriate strategies to design the project, b) to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for monitoring, c). To plan monitoring activities and tools systematically, develop data management system as per project and stakeholders' information needs, e). Develop system of storing and processing data properly, f) Ensuring that data is utilised for decision making, h) Learning and knowledge is critiqued and used for the improvement of current as well as for the future intervention. All data collected as part of EAGER will be used primarily for the purposes of learning, which is an integral part of IRC monitoring system. Throughout the process, the programme will collect monitoring data on the project intermediate outcomes and outputs, to identify and improve the quality of the programme implementation in an on-going basis, which the EE will integrate in the evaluation of the programme to identify the degree to which the assumptions of the theory of change of the programme were met or not during the implementation and how they are associated with girls' learning and transition outcomes. 	
<p>Quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and tools</p>	<p><u>IRC MEL Framework / Strategy and Policy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing IRC MEL framework that explain how consideration of ethical dimensions of respect, beneficence, justice, and research integrity must inform the selection of data collection methods. <p><u>Ethical Guidelines in Qualitative Research</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative researchers should undergo formal research ethics training. - Research ethics deals primarily with the interaction between researchers and the people they study. Professional ethics deals with additional issues such as collaborative relationships among researchers, mentoring relationships, 	<p>There was limited deviation in terms of what was stated in the MEL framework and the baseline evaluation. All data collectors (both qualitative and quantitative) were briefed on safeguarding and child protection policies and signed the required compliance forms during the training. IMC established a reporting system should there have</p>

	<p>intellectual property, fabrication of data, and plagiarism, among others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative training for LNGB will be varied in length between five and seven days depending on the number of qualitative tools to be used (up to 10 different in-depth and focus groups interview tools). Training should include: overview of qualitative research, review of tools, practice and role plays, and qualitative tips (e.g. probing, follow up, and establishing rapport). - The project will administer background information questionnaires, numeracy and literacy assessments, and life skills assessments. Both the background information questionnaire and the life skills assessments will contain potentially sensitive information. The project will inform participants that their participation is voluntary, and that all information will be treated in a confidential way, that will never link their data to their names in reports. Additionally, the project will inform all participants that they can skip any question they don't feel comfortable answering or stop their participation in an assessment or the study without negative consequences to them. 	<p>been any issues that came up during data collection. This included providing enumerators and qualitative data collectors with Child Protection Issue Reporting Protocol form. The training of the field staff also included a comprehensive discussion of the consent and assent process required for each respondent group ensuring that respondents were informed that participation was voluntary, information confidential, and that they can skip questions or terminate the interview/survey at any time.</p> <p>The main deviation was the training period was shorter than 5 days- only 4 days, for the researchers. Additionally, some enumerators were queuing up beneficiary girls for the surveys and keeping them waiting a long time, without letting them know they could leave if needed in one community. IMC was made aware of this concern and addressed the issue with their local partner, Dalan, who ensure this did not occur again.</p>
<p>Quantitative and qualitative sampling approaches</p>	<p><u>IRC's Safety and Security Protocol in Implementation areas</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety procedures of those involved in data collection is in place to protect the safety and physical, social and emotional wellbeing of evaluation personnel and participants. This includes secure recording and storage of any information as it is gathered. - IRC's "Do No Harm policy" is in place and research participants are not inadvertently put at risk, reinforced via unequal power structures, or discriminated against. - There already exist critical incident protocols in IRC to mitigate issues that arise before any fieldwork begins and are used to rapidly respond to any safety issues that arise thereafter for all IRC staffs. - Existing IRC's data collection standards gives consideration to the locations and set up of data collection activities, that factors in confidentiality, accessibility and safety for the participants. 	<p>No deviation during the baseline evaluation. IMC and their partner ensured that data was collected and stored securely from respondents. Ethical considerations were discussed during the training of the enumerators and qualitative data collectors.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing ethical protocols are regularly reviewed during data collection to identify emerging risks or concerns and additional protocol amendments. - Existing IRC's principle of non-retaliation that ensures our target individual groups of participants are not being inadvertently excluded from data collection activities, and steps are continuously taken to prevent this from happening to ensure they meaningfully participate. - IRC's commitment to Belmont's principles of <u>respect and justice</u> that ensures data collection teams are aware of - and able to mitigate - the stigma and discrimination experienced by marginalised children, such as those with disabilities during data collection... - Demonstrate administrative, technical and physical safeguards to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants' physical and electronic data. For example, when longitudinal sampling or studies are carried out, it is essential that personal information is separated from the panel participants' data. 	
<p>Quantitative and qualitative data collection process, including your approach to seeking consent/assent</p>	<p><u>IRC Way and Code of Ethics</u> <u>Obtain informed and voluntary consent without coercion</u> IRC LNGB consortium staff, contractor or partner must design and provide participants with an informed consent (IC) form provided in a format that is consistent with the capabilities (including literacy) of participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data collectors must obtain informed consent before conducting any data collection activities. When interviewing children, in most cases children's parents', guardians, or caregivers must also provide informed consent. Consent must not be sought from children but assent must be sought before any evaluation activities take place. Where parents/caregivers are asked to consent, and children have declined to take part, the view of the child should be respected. - Consent should be obtained before recording participants with any audio or video devices, or before taking photos in accordance with IRC's project's child safeguarding policy. - A portion of the data collector training will review ethical guidelines and child protection procedures, including reporting protocols. The training will also review potential risks to participants (these are assumed to be minimal) and how to identify and mitigate any potential physical, psychological or disclosure dangers that can be anticipated. <p><u>Ensure privacy and confidentiality</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enumerators should respect the privacy of individuals, including respecting participants' refusal to answer any sensitive questions. Enumerators must respect the confidentiality of participants by not sharing any information obtained in interviews with others. <p><u>Ensure that research and Monitoring is conducted with transparency, honesty and accountability</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enumerators must conduct all data collection transparently and honestly, and must not falsify or fabricate data. 	<p>No deviation from what was included in the MEL framework and in undertaking the baseline evaluation.</p>

	The EE must ensure that adequate field monitoring systems are in place to monitor the quality and legitimacy of data collection processes and outputs.	
Recruitment, training and supervision of MEL personnel	<p><u>The IRC's Code of Conduct:</u> The IRC will select, recruit, and hire project staffs including the EE and any sub-contractors who complies to IRC's commitment to child safeguarding by implementing checks and procedures to screen through any organisation or individual who is considered not suitable to work with children / vulnerable groups due to past or current convictions, or harmful practices. Successful candidates will be made aware of the binding nature of these policies, procedures, and codes of conduct, and that they are applied equally to their personal and professional life. The agreement contract to be signed with the EE will specifically include a separate agreement document on Child Safeguarding Policy, and it is expected that all evaluation protocols and tools will be child-friendly and gender sensitive.</p> <p><u>Ethics and safety:</u> The IRC and EE's team is expected to conduct ethics and safety training with all enumerators and qualitative interviewers collecting data for the LNGB. Ethics and safety training will include the topics spanning: how to obtain informed consent, including respecting the rights of participants to refuse to participate in any data collection procedures; how to deal with sensitive issues and questions, and cultural sensitivities (e.g. male enumerators asking men about their female family members); how to maintain confidentiality; how to conduct ethical research with children; how to mitigate ethical challenges; and child safeguarding procedures, including when and how to report the observation of a breach in child safety (e.g. when observing any type of violence perpetrated against a child). Additional training will be required for other types of research tools not listed above (e.g. household surveys, Learning observation tools, attendance data collection tools, etc.). The length and content of these training components is at the discretion of the MEL and EE team, but should include tool review, practice, challenges in data collection, and ways to mitigate challenges.</p>	All IMC team members and also field staff were made aware of IRC's code of conduct and signed the required forms at the field staff training. Ethics and safety training, including the consent process was covered during the training as well.
Data recording, storage, analysis and reporting	<p><u>Assuring privacy and confidentiality as part of the Ethics Respect component</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Electronic data collection tools and data transfers will be to password-protected data storage services. Data analysis will be on password-protected and encrypted machines. Normal good practice regarding anonymisation of data will be followed. Any audio, photos or video will be stored in line with the IRC policy set out in the Child Safeguarding self-audit. All data must be handled in line with IRC's data protection policy; the MEL policy details the laws we must comply to. - Follow appropriate data security procedures related to storage, transfer and destruction of data. - De-identify all datasets (quantitative and qualitative) before sharing with stakeholders, including the FM. - De-identify all data included in reports. 	No deviation. All data collected and also beneficiary information has been securely stored and transferred using password protected data storage services. Whenever identifiable information was not required to be kept in a file, it was separated. No identifiable photos of anyone involved in the project were allowed to be taken, and all enumerators were trained on proper child safeguards and relevant IRC policies.

	<p><u>Assuring research is conducted with transparency, honesty and accountability</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data cleaning, analysis and reporting processes will be transparent, and as independent and objective as possible. Inter-rater reliability and peer review are key processes that can support this transparency and objectivity. - Ensuring that data shared with the DFID and the fund manager are anonymised at all times 	<p>De-identification for qualitative data, all names of respondents were removed from transcripts to ensure anonymity.</p>
<p>Dissemination of results</p>	<p><u>Do no harm</u>: aimed to avoid any practices that may harm, abuse, discriminate or exploit participants. (Beneficence)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When disseminating reports, IRC will be mindful of any findings that may inadvertently harm participants and, where necessary, omit these from any publicly shared documents. - Ensure that findings are shared with research participants and communities, and dissemination strategies and practices are inclusive of marginalised groups. - Availing findings to children / marginalised target groups, illiterate individuals and community members with impairments. - Informing participants and communities about the evaluation findings. 	<p>No deviation from MEL Framework. When required during evaluations, IMC will develop infographic summaries that highlight key findings in a clear and easy to understand format that can be shared with communities. Additionally, IMC developed a Presentation for the Evaluation Steering Committee and EAGER partners to present the key findings of the baseline. That PowerPoint can be disseminated across stakeholders as well.</p>

4.4 Quantitative evaluation methodology

Quantitative evaluation tools

Several tools were used for quantitative data collection. Table 5 below presents all the quantitative data collection tools and additional information, including the indicators they collected data on.

Table 5: Quantitative Evaluation Tools

Tool name	Relevant indicator(s)	Who developed the tool?	Was tool piloted?	How were piloting findings acted upon (if applicable)	Was tool shared with the FM?	Was FM feedback provided?
Life skills survey	Outcome 1.3	IRC/CCU and External Evaluator	Yes	No major issues identified in piloting stage.	Yes	Yes
Caregiver Survey	Outcome 2; IO 4.1; Outcome 3.1	LNGB and External Evaluator		No major issues identified in piloting stage.	Yes	Yes
Head of Household Survey	Outcome 2; IO 4.2; IO 4.1; Outcome 3.1	LNGB and External Evaluator	Yes	No major issues identified in piloting stage.	Yes	Yes
Adapted OLA	Outcome 1.1	External Evaluator/CCU based off of EDC's OLA tool	Yes	Pretesting determined the test was too long so it was shortened. Enumerators also had issues understanding the directions clearly despite training by the quantitative specialist.	Yes	Yes
Adapted EGMA	Outcome 1.2	IRC/CCU/External Evaluator	Yes	No major issues identified in piloting stage	Yes	Yes
Girls' Combined Survey	Outcome 1.3; Outcome 2; Intermediate outcome 4.1; Intermediate outcome 4.2	LNGB & External Evaluator	Yes	No major issues identified in piloting stage	Yes	Yes
Programme data sheet ²⁵	N/A	LNGB & External Evaluator	Yes	No major issues identified in piloting stage	Yes	Yes
Observation survey tool ²⁶	IO2.2; IO2.1	IRC and External Evaluator	No	N/A- not used at baseline as the project hasn't started	Yes	Yes

²⁵ The Programme Data sheet was designed with the assumption that beneficiary girls' continuation/dropout would be related to transition, which may no longer be the case.

²⁶ Tool not used at baseline.

Recruitment and Training of Enumerators

IMC hired their local partner, Dalan Consultants, to provide the field team for this baseline evaluation for data collection. As such, Dalan Consultants provided the enumerators and field supervisors for quantitative data collection. As a research firm with extensive experience in data collection across Sierra Leone, Dalan maintains a wide pool of candidates for conducting different types of research in different locations. Dalan selected a team of 42 enumerators (for the quantitative research) on the basis of the following criteria:

- Bachelor's degree or higher,
- Experience undertaking surveys in the project communities,
- Experience working on similar evaluations,
- Computer and mobile device literacy,
- Facility with the local languages in the communities which they were assigned.

In this case, several of the selected enumerators had previous experience with GEC-funded project/project evaluations so were familiar with some of the research tools and could share this experience with their colleagues.

The enumerators conducted pretesting of learning assessments in Waterloo Western Rural (Kissy Town and Lumpa communities) on November 4, 2019. These communities were agreed upon to be sufficiently similar to beneficiary communities yet close enough to Freetown to allow enumerators from Dalan to travel there within a day. This exercise served both to assess the accuracy and appropriateness of the tools and to train the field team (only the field supervisors were selected for the pretesting component). Multiple versions of the OLA and EGMA were tested.

Pretesting of the learning assessments occurred in advance of the arrival of the international team members to Sierra Leone for initial contextualisation and calibration in advance of a larger piloting exercise during data collector training. Out-of-school girls are characterised by a broad range of literacy and numeracy skill levels (due to varying ages when dropout occurs). To provide an initial reference point for the draft assessments, the evaluation team based the difficulty level of the assessments on the current EAGER literacy and numeracy curriculum. The pretest results and subsequent wider piloting enabled calibration of the assessments to the observed range of skill levels, paying particular attention to avoid floor effects (where scores are too low to obtain meaningful measurements) and ceiling effects (where too many respondents achieve maximum scores) at later evaluation points. Some further logistical adjustments were made to the learning assessments following the pretesting (shortened to achieve a more reasonable time per assessment).

A five-day training of the 42-member (12 females, 30 males) quantitative field team took place from November 11-15, 2019 in Freetown (all team members were present, including the qualitative team which is discussed in the qualitative section). The enumerators were oriented on the finalised quantitative survey tools and then conducted one day of piloting in 14 communities accessible from Freetown. Under guidance from both IRC and the local partner, piloting took place within 15 communities in Western Area Rural, allowing for easy access from the training site. The communities for piloting were selected also because they were more rural environments similar to the EAGER project communities.

Communities accommodated both qualitative and quantitative teams. The international members of the evaluation team accompanied the field staff in the field during piloting with additional observations from the CCU and used the final day of the training to debrief and use the feedback to adjust the tools prior to full data collection.

Several factors necessitated discussion of Do Not Harm practices throughout the training: both as an overarching topic and given the sensitive content discussed with beneficiaries. IRC led an initial discussion of research ethics and proper codes of conduct to follow. Protocols regarding consent and assent were discussed with enumerators, emphasising the importance of respecting any respondent the right to refuse any question, tool, or overall participation, and the importance of consent obtained by guardians. Privacy was discussed to ensure enumerators understood that interviews should be held in places that could ensure privacy of responses, but also the safety and comfort of respondents. The training also discussed at length intersecting age and gender power dynamics of interviews: because many enumerators were male, discussions about how to professionally and respectfully ask questions of a sensitive nature, especially regarding sexual and reproductive health, were paramount to ensure the actual and perceived safety and comfort of any respondents. Enumerator teams were permitted to allow male enumerators to complete less sensitive tools (such as literacy and numeracy) and female enumerators to complete more sensitive tools (such as the life skills tool). Confidentiality of information was also discussed as paramount, to ensure that information shared with enumerators could not intentionally or unintentionally be shared with any other person. All personal information was only recorded in digital secure forms. In addition, topics such as obtaining community consent, privacy and photography protocols, and opportunities for additional information about the project were discussed.

Figure 3: Communities where piloting took place

Communities	
Kwama	Matienkay
Tegbeh*	Molambay
Bolima	Joe Town*
Mabureh	Mabrone
Mango Farm*	Five Mile
CDE Town	Six Mile
Campell Town	Newton

*Included Qualitative piloting as well in community.

The training focused on providing the enumerators an in-depth understanding of all evaluation tools and processes and included role-playing exercises to improve inter-rater reliability. The training covered the following key areas:

- **Introduction to the research:** Overview of the EAGER project, purpose of the baseline evaluation and research, Main research questions, Objectives of the baseline evaluation;
- **Research ethics and code of conduct in communities (led by IRC):** Child protection and treatment of children during interviews; safeguarding processes; informed consent/assent; confidentiality; Do Not Harm Practices;
- **Details of fieldwork:** Sampling strategy, in-depth review of tools, process for entering communities;

- **Methods Training:** Use of mobile devices data entry and troubleshooting; all quantitative tools; consent/assent process; process for selecting respondents; and,
- **Developing translation guide** for key terms in relevant local languages.²⁷

Data Collection

Quantitative data collection was undertaken over a four-week period from November 18 - December 20, 2019. All quantitative tools were administered during the same visit to each community. The data collection was undertaken by 39 enumerators that were divided into teams of three, with one senior research appointed the field supervisor on each team (for a total of 42 field staff). The field teams were overseen by Dalan's Project Manager and Managing Director, as well as the IMC Worldwide quantitative specialist. A quantitative data collection schedule detailing the communities selected and the dates of data collection for each can be found in Annex 15. The survey tools were digitised (using the Open Data Toolkit – ODK – format) and all quantitative data was collected electronically via handheld smartphones. To ensure optimal comfort of beneficiary girls during the assessment process, the learning assessments were provided to the girls in a hard copy paper version. They provided answers verbally to the enumerators who then electronically recorded responses into the ODK versions.

A schedule for quantitative data collection can be found in Annex 15 which details the communities selected for each District and the dates of data collection for each district.

Quality Control of Field Data

The evaluation team conducted quality control activities during and after data collection.

The survey tools were digitised (using the Open Data Toolkit – ODK – format) and all quantitative data was collected electronically via handheld smartphones, facilitating the following primary quality assurance mechanisms:

Uploading surveys to electronic devices using the ODK platform permitted automated skip logic, calculated fields, and error-checking, thus reducing possibility of inaccurate or incorrectly entered information that did not align – for example, incorrect ages or genders.

An online survey data solution, ValiData, was used to securely and rapidly collate and cross-check data in real-time and immediately alert field supervisors to issues or problems that needed to be addressed. ValiData uses statistical criteria and validation rules to ensure that all survey responses are within expected parameters. It also conducts cross-checks on data entry, flagging inconsistencies or outliers. Parameters assessed for quality control included:

- Survey duration (including survey start and end times);
- Total number of surveys conducted by enumerator and by team;
- Key filter questions and demographic ratios;
- Unique enumerator ID numbers to match surveys to individual enumerators;
- Unusual response patterns by enumerator;
- Unusual missing data patterns; and,
- Response outliers.

²⁷ While concerted efforts will be made to match enumerators to communities based on language mapping, in situations where the participant's primary spoken language is not spoken by enumerators, EAGER partners will link enumerators with individuals who can act as translators. This case will be rare and may arise in communities where girls speak several different languages or where a parent may be from a different area and not speak the local language.

Data for the learning assessments were entered into the mobile devices and scored during the assessments. Data entered was spot checked by supervisors and the quantitative specialist for errors. Field supervisors ensured that all data was uploaded at the completion of every day, assuming internet connectivity²⁸.

The quantitative specialist accompanied the field teams for the initial period of data collection, and subsequently monitored real-time data entry remotely via the ValiData platform.

Throughout the data collection period, the quantitative team communicated via mobile telephone group messaging, provided daily updates on progress and submitted questions for immediate resolution. The field supervisors also provided daily progress updates. Use of group messaging allowed immediate dissemination of updates/guidance in both directions and rapid responses to unforeseen issues based on enumerator feedback and analysis of ValiData checks.

The use of an online mobile-based data solution also added levels of safety and security to the data collection process. Absence of paper-based data forms and real-time uploading of completed surveys minimised the risk of loss of data and/or access to data by unauthorised individuals.

The need for access to mobile data (or other internet access) did present a challenge, particularly in remoter locations, but all enumerators were briefed regarding the need to regularly return to locations with internet access.

Some enumerators experienced delays of several days before uploading, but these instances were flagged as they happened by supervisors and communications issued to enumerators to prioritise uploading.

Quantitative data cleaning and storage

On completion of data collection, the enumerator teams, the quantitative specialist and IMC Worldwide's senior analyst (an internal team member at IMC) undertook an iterative process of cross-checking and cleaning. The different instruments (which yielded over 2 million separate data points) were matched using beneficiary identification numbers, names, and demographic information. All beneficiary-identifiable data were aggregated into a single dataset and verified with the EQUALS reverification data set.

As described above, all survey and learning assessment data was collected in real-time on handheld mobile devices using ODK versions of the quantitative survey tools. Raw data was uploaded to secure Validata servers daily. Data consistency was monitored in three ways during the data collection process:

- (1) By direct supervision of enumerators by team leaders;
- (2) By automated machine learning algorithms completed by ValiData, which automatically flag observations that have abnormal response patterns, skip patterns, or time durations; and,
- (3) By the quantitative specialist, who would download the data at minimum twice per week to ensure consistency and identify any unusual responses or patterns.

On conclusion of the data collection, the Dalan project manager cross-checked the full combined dataset for inconsistencies, missing values or missing data blocks. This process was supervised and further cross-checked by the quantitative specialist.

²⁸ Due to connectivity issues- some data was not uploaded for over a week which made it difficult to track the number of surveys undertaken with each respondent.

In some cases, this process identified additional data on devices that had not yet been uploaded – this was subsequently completed and a full, cleaned and checked dataset was prepared for subsequent analysis by the end of December 2019. Because the data were carefully coded and used common variable and value definitions during their ODK coding, the multiple tools generally merged together for straightforward analysis. The clean and secured raw dataset will be provided to IRC as part of the assignment deliverables.

Quantitative data analysis

Once collection was completed, data from the separate tools were linked based on the unique IDs analysis commenced using the STATA analysis software per the guidance provided by GEC and the project MEL Framework and Logframe. There were two common concerns by enumerators in the field:

1. While the OLA was designed to be relevant at a range of literacy levels, some enumerators were concerned it was unproductive or unreasonable to ask test-takers with no literacy skills to attempt the literacy test, even though it was designed to end early for those who could not complete early tasks.
2. The tools were designed with the assumption that project implementation would follow immediately after baseline data collection, and that project participants would be familiar with the project modalities and activities. However, this proved not to be the case, with several sections about participant experiences that were not relevant due to unfamiliarity with safe spaces (provision of which is a project activity).

Confusion around which activities were relevant and which were not led to one team skipping application of the girls' combined survey (see discussion in the Challenges section below).

A further challenge noted during initial data analysis was that of matching the different tools together to form a complete observation for each girl. Although unique identification numbers were used, data entry errors by enumerators (albeit minimised via a requirement to input the number twice) resulted in an eight percent unmatched rate within the raw (uncleaned) dataset. Manually correcting unique identification numbers reduced the percent of unmatched observations to two percent, within acceptable margins. At the midterm IMC will pre-populate the IDs to avoid data entry errors.

Learning tests and other Quantitative Tools

Enumerators administered all quantitative tools orally and recorded responses electronically. All instructions and items were given in the language of preference of the respondent, with the exception of the listening comprehension and dictation sentences of the literacy assessment. While the learning assessments included paper supplements for test-takers to interact with (such as passages to read or lists of numbers), the only item that respondents interacted with was a pictorial diagram to help them answer Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) questions. This section provides an overview of the quantitative tools for this baseline²⁹.

Note that versions of the learning assessments used for the baseline research can be found in Annex 7.

²⁹ Great detail is provided for the life skills tool, in particular, in response to requests from IRC.

Immediately prior to each assessment, the enumerators administered a brief vision test to the respondent to see if she could clearly see a graphic (a bag with the word “rice” written on it in very large print - note that literacy ability to read the label was not a factor, merely the ability to distinguish the details). Girls who were unable to read even very large print were not given the reading assessment, but they were asked about completion of all other tools, and included in scores for those tools. Three percent of respondents replied that they were unable to make out the print. However, of those who said they couldn’t make out the print, 93 percent of girls did say that they had no difficulty seeing, it may not serve well as a functional visual ability test. Over half of these cases took place in the first week of collection: data quality controls in the first week identified the problem and all enumerators were contacted (and those with the highest rates were individually contacted) to ensure that they make clear this was a vision (and not reading) test, and to encourage respondents to not say no exclusively because of their literacy abilities. To accommodate for some disabilities, all printed materials were made in large text to reduce barriers for those with limited vision, and girls throughout the test were encouraged to take breaks to reduce anxiety levels or any other needs.

Out-of school Learning Assessment (OLA)

Similar to the better-known Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), the OLA is specifically tailored for older youth and includes subtasks for testing functional literacy (EAGER outcome 1).

Girls being assessed completed question items related to letter naming, word reading, real life reading, an oral reading story and a comprehension story. Respondents were provided a paper copy to read and the enumerators entered verbal responses into their mobile device. The OLA was designed in English but was translated to local languages by the enumerators except for specific reading or writing tests as the OLA is not intended to assess English language skills. The OLA contained the following subtasks:

Subtask 1: Listening Comprehension

Subtask 2: Real Life Reading

Subtask 3: Letter Naming

Subtask 4: Word Reading

Subtask 5: Oral reading and comprehension

Subtask 6: Writing from Dictation

Due to the wide range of expected literacy skills among the beneficiary population, the subtasks comprised a range of simple through to very difficult subtasks. Following pretesting, administration of the test allowed test takers who could not complete one task to not take more difficult tasks that required that skill set. If the following test could not be completed, the assessment was concluded. For example, if a test-taker could not read any of the first four letters of sub-test 3, the enumerator was instructed to thank the girl and continue to sub-test 4. If a test-taker could not read five words on sub-test 4, they were thanked and the assessment ended. For reading passages, the number of correctly read words was measured after 30 seconds for the easy passage and 60 seconds for the more difficult passage. Girls were then given additional time to finish reading the passage if they wished and asked the questions. If a girl was unable to read 10 correct words on the easy reading passage, the assessment ended after the easy passage’s comprehension questions. If a girl was unable to read 10 correct words on the difficult passage, they were thanked and the assessment ended. All beneficiary girl respondents were given the same version of the OLA. The two other versions assessed for comparability in the pretest period were saved to be used at the midline and endline.

Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA)

The EGMA numeracy tests were also related to measurement of EAGER Outcome 1. The evaluation team used an adapted version of the standard EGMA tool that included functional numeracy questions, such as manipulating contextually relevant counters and calculating local currency. As with the OLA, to facilitate the comfort of the participants, the participants were provided paper versions of the tests and enumerators entered results directly into mobile devices upon completion of each assessment.

The following subtasks were included:

Subtask 1a: Visual Number Identification

Subtask 1b: Number Identification

Subtask 2a: Money Discrimination

Subtask 2b: Number Discrimination

Subtask 3: Addition

Subtask 4: Subtraction

Subtask 5: Addition and Subtraction of Large Numbers

Subtask 6: Addition and Subtraction in a Story

All beneficiary girls undertaking the numeracy testing were given the same version of EGMA. They were administered all subtasks unless they answered three or four questions in a row incorrectly (depending on the subtask). If the girls stopped on a specific question for more than 10-15 seconds (and in sub-task 6, 30 seconds) she was asked to move onto the next question. Because subtasks were not interdependent, all subtasks were attempted.

Girls Combined Survey

The Girls' Combined Survey was administered to all beneficiary girls in the baseline sample. This survey collected data related to Outcome 1.3; Outcome 2; Intermediate outcome 4.1; Intermediate outcome 4.2. Data related to transition was collected related to girls' empowerment in their households and communities.

General demographic data was collected related to the girl including the Washington Group questions on disability status and their employment status. There were also several questions regarding safe spaces, which were not yet relevant for most girls as the safe spaces had not been opened. It was administered by enumerators electronically following the learning assessments. Girls were given the option to answer strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree, or no answer for questions that asked for their opinion. The survey was adapted from the wider overall GEC programme tool prepared and disseminated by the Fund Manager and contextualised for the EAGER project logframe.

Life Skills Survey

The Life Skills tool was administered to all beneficiary girls who completed the learning assessments and collected data related to Outcome 1.3. It collected data related to the life skills and social-emotional learning components, girls' thoughts on gender norms and healthy relationships, as well as collected data related to their knowledge of sexual and reproductive health, hygiene and nutrition issues to be in line with the Life Skills curriculum.

The survey was administered by the enumerators on a mobile electronic device and girls were provided with a visual scoring scale (a picture of glasses filled with various levels of water) to

determine if they strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree. Girls could also opt to provide no answer if preferred. Due to its cross-cutting nature, specific findings regarding life skills are discussed throughout the learning outcomes and intermediate outcomes sections. This section focuses on the concepts and tools measured during baseline, and summarises key findings discussed above.

The Life Skills indicator is an index of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and resources in seven categories developed in close concertation with IRC during the inception process. For each of the seven categories, a subindicator was calculated based on respondent responses to a series of items. Each of the subindicators was then converted to a 100-point scale and averaged together, giving equal weight to each of the seven categories.

The categories are:

- Hostile Attribution Bias
- Emotional Dysregulation
- Conflict Resolution
- Self-Efficacy
- Social Resources
- Supportive Relationships
- Health Knowledge & Practice

The Life Skills Tool includes a series of scenarios that involve conflict between two people. The brief stories are read to respondents, after which they are asked how they would react in that case. These responses inform the Hostile Attribution Bias, Emotional Dysregulation, and Conflict Resolution subindicators. The remaining four categories have separate designated sections in the Life Skills Tool.

Hostile Attribution Bias

This section is part of the SERAIS tool. This category measures beneficiary's attitudes towards conflict and presumed intent of people they have to interact with.

The scenarios are designed so that it is not stated whether the conflict was a case of a misunderstanding or accident but could theoretically be due to another person's malicious intent. The hostile attribution bias question asks the respondent what they think happened. This sub-indicator measures the percent of girls who do not attribute the issue to hostile intent.

Emotional Dysregulation

This section is part of the SERAIS Tool. This section measures whether a respondent has the skills necessary to moderate their initial emotional reaction when they face a challenge.

After each story is read to the respondent, they are asked what their immediate reaction would be, and whether it would include sitting down and hiding their face and crying or becoming verbally or physically aggressive. This sub-indicator measures the percentage of girls who said they would do each: questions were coded as a 2 if they say they would not act out in a dysregulated way; 1 if they said they maybe would act in a dysregulated way, and 0 if they said they would not.

Conflict Resolution

The conflict resolution subtask is designed to measure the skills that respondents have to negotiate and resolve conflicts. When girls were asked what they would do to resolve the conflict in the story, they were coded into seven categories (below). The sub-indicator scores were calculated as the means of the responses, and converted from levels 0-1. This is based on the SERAIS scoring method, which measures reactions into problem solving, appeals to authority, disengagement, and aggression. While typically these dimensions are plotted separately, because the Life Skills Index requires conversion to a single scale, responses were scored so that girls got the highest score for problem solving responses, and the lowest score for aggressive responses. The more common method of applying the SERAIS tool would give full points for only one dimension. A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to compare using exclusively the problem solving scores to giving partial points to non-aggressive but non-problem solving approaches. Lower scores on both the Akaike and Bayesian Information Criteria (and almost equal R-squared values) suggest inclusion of the partial credit scores improves goodness of fit (See Annex 19: Annexed tables). The scores for the conflict resolution responses for the three stories were averaged together and converted to a 100 point scale.

Figure 4: Conflict Resolution Item Scoring

Conflict Resolution Item Score ³⁰	Reaction Categories
0	Verbal & Physical Aggression
0.5	Disengage
	Appeal to Authority
1	Problem Solving (asking for reasons, engaging other person)

Self-Efficacy

The *New General Self-Efficacy Scale* by Chen, Gully, and Eden was suggested by the Fund Manager to measure a respondent's ability to face challenges in life: these may be considered skills in terms of reported abilities, or attitudes because they are self-reported perspectives of the respondents. The set of questions consists of asking the girl to respond on a five-point Likert scale on how strongly they agree or disagree to eight statements (below). The sub-indicator was created by calculating the mean response across all respondents and items on the eight-question scale.

For example, a girl who answered Strongly Agree to all eight questions, they would receive a 5; a girl who answered Strongly Agree to seven questions and Strongly Disagree to one question would receive a 4.5. See Annex 19, figure 5 for the Self-Efficacy Scale.

Social Resources

This section was added at the request of the EAGER project implementing partners and was adapted from the Girls' Empowerment endline survey. Girls were asked a series of yes/no

³⁰ Adapted from: International Rescue Committee (2019) Social-Emotional Response and Information Scenarios User Guide.

questions about the status of their social safety net. The subindicator is calculated as the mean number of questions the girl answered affirmatively to. Please see Annex 19, figure 6 for the Social Resource Questions.

Supportive Relationships

The Supportive Relationships section also includes a series of statements on a five-point Likert scale about healthy power dynamics in romantic and household relationships. As with the Self-Efficacy section, the mean score among all questions was calculated, with desirable responses receiving higher scores. Unlike previous sections, in some statements the preferred response was agreement, and other statements the preferred response was disagreement. The preferred response always received a higher score. Please see Annex 19, figure 7 for the Support Relationship statements.

Health

These questions were adapted from the Nepal Life Skills Tool from another LNGB project in Nepal that was shared by the FM with input from the EAGER team and Marie Stopes Sierra Leone. The sub-indicator makes use of nine items demonstrating knowledge about health and one on recent practice. For the knowledge items, each score is calculated based on the percentage of respondents that correctly answered the question. For the item on last used effective birth control, the percentage of respondents who answered that they did not want birth control and answered what type they used. Effective birth control methods include: IUDs, other modern methods, injectables, implants, birth control pills, condoms, and emergency contraception. Methods not considered effective include other traditional methods, lactational amenorrhea, and withdrawal. Respondents were not included in analysis of this question if they (1) said they didn't know or couldn't remember what type of birth control they used the last time they had sex, (2) were trying to conceive, or (3) said they were not having sex. Please see Annex 19, figure 8 for the Sexual and Reproductive Health questions.

Once a score was calculated for each section of the Life Skills tool, they were averaged together to calculate a final Life Skills Index value (out of 100). Overall, the Life Skills Index is a thorough tool based on other proven tools. It covers an appropriate set of concepts that are well linked to the goals of the project.

Head of Household and Caregiver Surveys

The head of household survey included questions about economic status, decisions, and gender norms of the person who makes major decisions in the household. The caregiver survey includes questions that are asked of the adult person who mainly cares for the beneficiary on a day-to-day basis. In some cases, the head of household and caregiver are the same person. In some cases, a beneficiary is their own caregiver or head of household.

This survey collected data related to transition (Outcome 2) and dialogue surrounding issues relating to girls' education and empowerment from heads of households and primary caregivers in the project communities (related to Intermediate Outcome 4). Specifically, the caregiver survey collected data related to Outcome 2; IO 4.1; and Outcome 3.1; whereas the head of household collected data for Outcome 2; IO 4.2; IO 4.1; and Outcome 3.1.

The head of household survey asked questions about economic decisions in the household (and gender norms/opinions of the economic decision-maker), the caregiver survey is about the girl and issues/challenges they face.

The survey tools were administered to the head of household and/or the primary caregiver (which could have been the girl herself) residing in the household of the beneficiary girl. It was administered via mobile devices. The tools were adapted from the GEC LNGB Household survey tool.

Programme Data Sheet

The Programme Data Sheet is an adapted version of the GEC Head Teacher Survey that records learning spaces-provided information related to enrolment, number of facilitators and mentors as well as other site-specific details, such as toilet access. The tool also includes spot checks related to attendance to verify reported attendance. This form was completed electronically by the enumerators in each community visited. While collected, their data were highly subject to change, as the physical spaces, project enrolment data, were subject to change before learning sessions began, and attendance could not yet be measured.

Session Observation tool

The learning session observation tool was designed and enumerators were trained in its use. However, because the commencement of learning sessions was delayed until after data collection, observations were not possible. The Session Observation tool will collect data at midterm for Intermediate Outcome 2 related to the inclusivity of instruction in BLN, life/SEL skills, financial literacy and (self-) employment skills. It will also be used to assess mentor and facilitator use of inclusive learning methods. The digital tool measures 17 dimensions of facilitator's teaching practice on a four-point scale, and identifies any barriers that girls with disabilities may be encountering in the learning or safe space.

How the tests were modified for girls with disabilities

All materials used large fonts to ensure it would be easy to read by any girls with difficulty seeing. No other modifications were made. Girls who exhibited signs of stress during the examination were encouraged to take brief breaks, especially between assessments.

Parameters

The minimum sample size was determined using the parameters described in the Figure below. Based on these parameters, the total number of observations required was 2,156, all of which were from cohort 1.

Figure 9: Assessment Parameters

<i>Assessment Parameters</i>	
Leave No Girl Behind MEL Guidance	
Significance Level(α)	.05
Power (β)	.80
Intra-Cluster Correlation (ρ)	.10
Attrition Rate	30%
Software Used	Stata
Project-Specific Parameters	
Estimated Learning Proficiency at Baseline	50%
Minimum Detectable Effect: Learning Outcome	8%
Estimated Successful Transition at Baseline	30%
Minimum Detectable Effect: Transition Outcome	10%

To estimate the minimum sample size for transition outcomes, we used the same assumptions as those in the original proposal: that the current level of successful transition outcomes is 30 percent, and we wanted to be able to detect if 40 percent or more of beneficiaries have successful outcomes.

To estimate the minimum sample size for learning outcomes, we adopted the methodology from the modified LNGB guidance. We assumed that 50 percent of the sample will meet a minimum learning threshold at baseline, and we wanted to be able to detect if 58 percent or more girls pass the minimum learning requirement. We therefore used a one-sample, two-way t-test. In this case, the minimum sample size was 172 observations. The minimum joint sample size was 305 observations. To account for 30 percent attrition, a minimum of 436 girls needed to participate in the baseline. Once accounting for the cluster effects of using 10 girls per community, the minimum sample size was 760 girls for each population of interest.

Steps taken to ensure the sample suitably represented the direct beneficiaries (including characteristic subgroups) and indirect beneficiaries

To be able to test the same minimum effect size originally intended for the whole sample, each subgroup would have to include the same minimum sample size as originally intended. This would require substantially increasing the sample size. Assuming that the original plan of collecting data from 10 girls per community would continue, the below figure outlines the number of additional observations that would be required.

Figure 10: Subgroup Sampling

Subgroup	Estimated prevalence ³¹	Average number per sampled subgroup	Included in Original Sample	Additional Sample Required
Girls with disabilities	20%	760	152	608
Girls who are married	17%	760	129	631
Girls who have children/are pregnant	12.5%	760	95	665
Girls working outside of the home	78%	760	593	167
Total				2,071

This approach therefore in theory required a total of 2,071 observations. However, this does not account for the fact that girls who are members of one subgroup can also be members of other subgroups. By constructing a population model that assumes independent likelihood to be in more than one group, the evaluation team calculated that the “average” girl that is part of one of these marginalised groups would be part of 1.48 marginalised groups. As a result, an additional 1,396 observations were required to fulfil the requirement for all four subgroups. This resulted in a total sample size of 2,156 girls, all of which were from cohort 1.

The evaluation team was provided a database of communities and individual girls selected for participation in cohort 1, with information on age, disability, education attainment, marginalisation factors, etc. The evaluation team used a stratified sampling procedure to ensure representation of girls from EAGER target groups, as follows (in order of priority):

- Urban/rural (in community selection)
- Age: 13-15, 16-17
- Married/unmarried
- Disability/no disability
- Children/no children³²
- Education level: Never been to school/dropped out in lower primary/dropped out later
- Working outside the home

Learning Spaces (i.e. Safe Spaces)³³ established by the project in the sample communities were stratified by district. Randomisation was conducted before data collection begins, stratifying according to the priorities mentioned above to the greatest degree possible. The figure below shows the number of safe spaces per district and the number of girls selected per district.

³¹ Estimate sources: Disability estimate from past LNGB group in Sierra Leone; Marriage and parental status data from DHS 2013; Working Outside the Home estimate from OOSC Quantitative Survey Data, 2016.

³² The question "Are you a mother" was asked of respondents. Enumerators were trained to include women/girls who are pregnant or/and have children already.

³³ Safe spaces are girl-only spaces that will be used for life skills sessions (all mentors are female). Where the facilitator is female, these spaces are also used for BLN; where facilitator is male, separate learning spaces were identified.

Figure 11: Quantitative Sampling by Location

Districts	Original Design ³⁴		Modified Design		Results	
	Sample	Safe Spaces	Sample	Safe Spaces	Sample	Safe Spaces
Bo	240	24	240	24	237	24
Kailahun	210	21	210	21	210	21
Kambia	210	21	210	21	209	21
Kenema	220	22	220	22	211	22
Koinadugu	210	21	210	21	209	21
Kono	230	21	230	21	208	21
Port Loko	210	23	210	23	226	23
Pujehun	210	21	210	21	212	21
Tonkolili	210	21	124	13	134	
WAU	210	21	210	21	206	
Total	2,160	215	2,074	208	2,073	

Using the list of beneficiaries for cohort 1, the quantitative specialist created ordered lists of the 25 girls per safe space cohort. Girls were randomly selected, but the first ten were ordered to ensure representativeness of the groups of interest. Based on the beneficiary list, a girl was randomly selected based from those with a disability; then among those who had children; then among those who had marriage status; then work status, until the group of the first 10 beneficiaries were selected such that all communities were as close to the whole sample in terms of demographics as possible. Next, the remaining 15 girls were randomly sorted to serve as alternates in cases where beneficiaries were no longer enrolled in the programme or it was otherwise impossible to include them in the sample.

Desk-based selection of girls for the sample on the basis of the project beneficiary lists (which provided the basis for the field research) did not match up to the actuality of field exposure. On initial visits to communities, enumerators sought to identify the specific girls sampled but realised that the beneficiary list was inaccurate or insufficient - some sampled girls were no longer intending to be part of the project or simply not available for data collection³⁵ Baseline collection was originally scheduled to take place at the very beginning of implementation such that learning outcomes would not be changed, but activities such as session observations could be conducted.

Delays in project activities³⁶ meant that many communities did not have Safe Spaces available to be used for the data collection process and lessons were not underway, which made it difficult to identify and engage selected respondents.

³⁴ Original design here refers to agreed-upon proportionality before commencement of data collection. Earliest drafts of the sampling plan had different proportions by district due to incomplete beneficiary data provided by implementation partners, but all agreed to the goal of proportionality by beneficiaries per district. Modified design refers to agreed-upon reduction in collection in Tonkolili due to Lassa Fever outbreak (see below).

³⁵ Some girls had left the community or were not available for research due to their responsibilities (Household and working, etc.). The beneficiary list was outdated when the sampling was done due to the time lag (see below)

³⁶ The project delays were due to the following: 1. Rainy season impacted mapping process, renovation of safe spaces/ Budget adjustments delayed procurement of materials for safe spaces and learner materials. The aim was to start in

The resulting challenge in locating the originally-sampled individuals led to a revision of the sampling procedure whereby the field teams utilised a ranked list of all cohort 1 girls for each community. The enumerators worked through the list and if a given girl was not available, they would move to the next. Based on enumerator reporting, the almost exclusive challenge in identifying alternates was the high prevalence of girls who were no longer enrolled in the programme -- the sample was based off of beneficiary mapping and selection database, not the client register, as activities had not started at baseline and the client register had not been finalised. While we expect that most enrolment changes took place in the period between populating the original client register and the baseline data collection, and not in the period between baseline and the beginning of implementation, this can only be confirmed by the CCU. A cross-check of girls that completed the baseline against the final register of enrolled girls will be conducted to verify this.

Different characteristic subgroups of girls evaluated for different outcomes and intermediate outcomes

All subgroups of girls engaged in the baseline evaluation were evaluated for the same outcomes and intermediate outcomes using the same quantitative tools. There were no adjustments made based on the sub-group characteristics.

Indirect beneficiary groups included in the evaluation

Key indirect beneficiary groups were included in the evaluation. For the quantitative data collection, surveys were undertaken with heads of households and/or caregivers related to the sampled beneficiary girls undertaking the learning assessments, life skills survey and girls' combined survey. In 99 percent of caregiver cases and 96 percent of head of household cases this was possible. Details on the indirect beneficiaries included in qualitative data collection can be found in the qualitative sections of the report.

Quantitative sample sizes

Data was collected as planned for most of the tools. An exception to this was a disruption to data collection resulting from a Lassa Fever outbreak in Tonkolili (two teams were undertaking data collection in this district when the outbreak was declared). The evaluation team notified IRC and agreed to withdraw the team permanently from Tonkolili on safety grounds. This resulted in cutting data collection short by several days (around 2-4 depending on the team) in that district. To learn more about the impact the Lassa fever and decision to withdraw the data collection teams from the district had on the sampling approach, please refer to the Challenges Section below which has more details.

Since the skipped communities in Tonkolili were not replaced, the total sample size fell from 2,156 to 2,084. To obtain sufficient statistical power to measure an 8 percentage point increase in the assessments, a minimum sample of 760 girls is required: as a result, the reduction of girls surveyed in Tonkolili did not reduce the ability to measure the desired minimum detectable effects in the whole sample. Based on the revised sample size of 2,084, most tools met the sample size agreed upon in the MEL framework except for the Girls' Combined Survey (see explanation for the missing surveys in chart below).

late October 2019 – these delayed activities until late Nov/Dec 2019 – at which time secret societies are most active, and would have impacted both attendance and safety of project staff. Therefore, there was a decision to postpone start of activities until after Christmas Break to minimise disruption at beginning.

The agreement and actual samples are listed below for each tool:

Table 6: Quantitative Sample Sizes

Tool name	Sample size agreed in MEL framework	Actual sample size	Remarks on why anticipated and actual sample sizes are different
Life skills survey	2156	2082	Difference due to withdrawing team from Tonkolili due to Lassa Fever outbreak
Caregiver Survey	2156	2041	Difference due to withdrawing team from Tonkolili due to Lassa Fever outbreak
Head of Household Survey	2156	2036	Difference due to withdrawing team from Tonkolili due to Lassa Fever outbreak
OLA	2156	2084	Difference due to withdrawing team from Tonkolili due to Lassa Fever outbreak
EGMA	2156	2079	Difference due to withdrawing team from Tonkolili due to Lassa Fever outbreak
Girls' Combined Survey	2156	1976	The shortage of Girls' Combined surveys in Tonkolili (77 surveys), Kono (22 surveys), and Kambia (30 surveys). After speaking with the enumerators it seems there was confusion about using the tool in communities where there were no safe spaces yet established by EAGER since several of the questions were focused on them. Additionally, due to connectivity issues, data from some teams did not upload onto the servers until they returned back to Freetown so the missing GCS were not caught while they were in the field. Finally, in the daily updates provided to the Quantitative Specialist via WhatsApp, one team would only provide the number of respondents surveyed, but not the breakdown of surveys per respondent (and had not administered the GCS). ³⁷ Disability data for observations missing this survey was supplemented with information from beneficiary identification period, resulting in more a more complete analysis.
Project data sheet	210	203	Differences due to withdrawing team from Tonkolili due to Lassa Fever outbreak
Observation survey tool (not used at baseline)	0	0	Designed for use but cancelled as the project had not begun implementing at the time of baseline collection.

³⁷ IMC and Dalan offered to re-field a team to collect the missing GCS however IRC opted to not do so.

Representativeness of the sample

Table 7: Sample Breakdown by Intervention Pathways

Intervention pathway (adapt as required)	Sample proportion of intervention group (%)
E.g. ALP and life skills class to enrol back into school	N/A- there is only one intervention pathway equally available to all girls
E.g. ALP and life skills class to enrol into non-formal education or gainful employment	N/A- there is only one intervention pathway equally available to all girls

Table 8: Sample breakdown by regions

Region	Sample proportion of intervention group (%)
Bo	11.4%
Kailahun	10.1%
Kambia	10.1%
Kenema	10.2%
Koinadugu	10.1%
Kono	10.1%
Port Loko	10.9%
Pujehun	10.2%
Tonkolili	7.1%
WA Urban	9.9%

Source: Aggregate Survey Data, N = 2084

The sample breakdown tracks with the original design, which was designed to match the original beneficiary lists. The only exception to the case is Tonkolili, fell from 10.3 percent of the sample to 7.1 percent. This variation is not expected to have a substantive effect on findings.

Table 9: Sample Breakdown by Age

Age	Beneficiary List Provided	Sample proportion of intervention group (%)
Age 11	3.7%	3.0%
Age 12	3.6%	2.4%
Age 13	5.8%	4.4%
Age 14	6.8%	6.0%
Age 15	14.1%	15.0%
Age 16	25.2%	24.7%
Age 17	40.6%*	41.4%
Age 18	0.1%	1.9%
Age 19	0.0%	0.3%
Age 20	0.0%	0.1%
Age unknown	0.0%	0.8%

Source: Caregiver Survey; Supplemented by Girls' Combined Survey N=2,063

*** Note:** During the mapping and selection phase, older girls that would no longer be eligible for selection in cohort 2 and 3 due to their age being above that of the target group were prioritised for selection and enrollment in cohort 1, hence the over-representation in the beneficiary database. Older girls are also more likely to be OOS.

In terms of age, the sample closely corresponds to the beneficiary mapping and selection database made available to the evaluation team. Girls under 14 comprise 5.8 percent and 4.4 percent of the available beneficiary list and sample, respectively. There is some relative divergence as ages increase, potentially caused by uncertainty in age (which is widespread, and often disagreements even among family members over the age of a child), and lack of representativeness (e.g. there are seven observations in the sample who reported their age to be 19 or 20, but only one beneficiary reported their age as 19, and zero as 20 in the beneficiary list). It may also result from lower reported ages during beneficiary identification to ensure qualification for the project; it is impossible to know which data more accurately represents ages (please also note that the data presented above differs from the final database of enrolled girls, which was not finalised until February 2020). The differences among ages are small enough that they are unlikely to affect results.

Table 10: Sample breakdown by Disability

Domain of difficulty	Proportion in Original Beneficiary List	Sample proportion of intervention group (%)
Seeing	0.6%	0.8%
Hearing	0.5%	0.7%
Walking	0.7%	0.9%
Self-Care	0.4%	0.3%
Communication	0.7%	0.5%
Learning	N/A	1.7%
Remembering	N/A	1.7%
Concentrating	N/A	1.0%
Accepting Change	N/A	1.4%
Behaviour	N/A	1.1%
Making Friends	N/A	1.7%
Anxiety	N/A	7.3%
Depression	N/A	4.9%
Single Disability Domain only	N/A	9.2%
Multiple Disability Domains only	N/A	5.4%
Beneficiaries with any Disability (one or more)	N/A	14.6%

Source: Girls' Combined Survey: Supplemented with Beneficiary Identification Data

N = 2,033

Notes: (1) Sum of individual disability domains is greater than overall disability prevalence due to children with multiple disabilities. Overall disabilities rate not calculated for beneficiary register due to missing data on multiple types of disabilities; (2) Single, Multiple, and Overall disability levels cannot be compared, as the baseline survey includes additional forms of disability excluded from the beneficiary register.

All disability definitions were calculated according to disability guidelines. Anxiety and depression are measured as those who feel very anxious or worried on a daily basis and those who feel very sad or depressed on a daily basis.

All others were calculated according to whether they find completing tasks relevant to the disability type very difficult or they cannot do at all (while controlling for supports)³⁸. Of all respondents, 5.3 percent fall into more than one category of disability, with anxiety and depression being the most common individual symptoms and the most common two for girls with multiple disabilities.

Figure 12: Characteristics and sample

Characteristics from MEL Framework	Proportion of sample	Estimated Prevalence in MEL Framework
Beneficiaries with Disabilities Overall	14.6%	20%
Working outside the home	38.8%	78%
Married	44.1%	17%
Has Children³⁹	57.5%	12.5%
Source: Girls' Combined Survey; Caregiver Survey		
N = 2041		

The original MEL Framework made some estimates on prevalence of subgroups of interest to ensure a sufficiently large sample size. However, these estimates were made with severely limited information. Prevalence of disabilities was based on incomplete information: at the time of sample design, there was no information about disability prevalence among the potential beneficiaries: instead, prevalence was estimated based on experience with other ongoing girls' education projects in Sierra Leone. It should be noted that available data on disability prevalence is extremely limited and is constrained by a lack of complete understanding of different types of disability. The estimated prevalence of girls working outside the home was based on early project registry data, but asked the question about girls working outside the home in a very different way. During programme registry "outside the home" could have been interpreted as outside the physical structure or formal employment. The survey allowed for those who are self-employed (such as selling) or contributing to household income (such as through agriculture). When asked about formal employment, only 0.3% of girls responded affirmatively. When asked simply if they work, 38.8% responded affirmatively. This discrepancy is surprising, and its sources are unclear. However, this difference may very well be conceptual. The concepts of work and chores are highly gendered, as often men's productive activity is treated as *work* and women's as *chores* or household contribution. If the primary concern is demands for economically productive work that are placed on the beneficiaries, this fact remains a high proportion of beneficiaries: 67 percent of girls either have a high chore burden or are working. The much higher percentage of beneficiaries reporting being married and those having children is significant and surprising. While the project

³⁸ For more information, see *LNGB Baseline Report Template*.

³⁹ Girls were asked if they had children and could reply positively if they were pregnant and/or already had children. Respondents were not asked if they were pregnant during the time of the interview.

already includes plans to accommodate such situations, further strengthening these plans may be helpful.

For example, there is a qualitative difference from encouraging the one or two girls with small children to bring them to the safe space and having the majority of beneficiaries with children. Given the wealth of information available from the sample, the sample likely includes a much more representative wealth of information about the actual prevalence of the beneficiaries than the estimates made during the sample design phase.

Consistency of Assessments

Interitem reliability scores on the literacy (figure 13) and numeracy assessments (figure 14) are very high, both within each subtask and overall. Overall reliability on the literacy assessment results in a Cronbach's alpha of 0.9917; the numeracy assessment has an overall alpha 0.9735. Such high scores are often suggestive of redundancy in an assessment -- that is, that the tool includes more items than necessary to determine a score. This is unsurprising given the desire for these two assessments to examine both a very broad level of skills and a high degree of accuracy within each skill. Generally, a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.6 is a minimum acceptable level of inter-item reliability for a tool.

Figure 13: OLA and Cronbach's Alpha

OLA	Cronbach's Alpha
1. Listening Comprehension	0.8813
2. Real Life Reading	0.8979
3. Letter Names	0.9901
4. Familiar Words	0.9849
5. Oral Passage Reading and Comprehension	0.9893
5a. Oral Reading Passage 1	0.9571
5b. Reading Comprehension 1	0.7949
5c. Oral Reading Passage 2	0.9910
5d. Reading Comprehension 2	0.7664
6. Dictation	0.8345
Overall Score	0.9917

Figure 14: EGMA and Cronbach's Alpha

EGMA	Cronbach's Alpha
1a. Counting	0.8657
1b. Number Identification	0.9444
2a. Money Discrimination	0.7950
2b. Number Discrimination	0.8719
3. Level 1 Addition	0.9189
4. Level 1 Subtraction	0.9356
5. Addition & Subtraction of Large Numbers	0.9071
6. Word Problems	0.8323
Overall Score	0.9735

Reliability scores on the Life Skills tool are much lower (see figure 15), but the overall Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.69 passes minimum acceptability. The low scores on individual sections are not very surprising for two reasons. First, reliability scores measure the degree to which items covary: this makes sense for a literacy or maths assessment, where skills are interrelated. However, the Life Skills assessment measures knowledge, skills, and abilities, which are not related. There is no reason, for example, to believe a beneficiary with a high degree of knowledge in reproductive health would also have high self-efficacy, or that a girl with beliefs in equitable gender norms in relationships would also have a strong ability to regulate her emotions.

Secondly, Cronbach's Alpha statistics are much more likely to be lower when there are few items, as there is less room for minor variation. The structure of the first three subtasks are very different from all other aspects of the surveys and assessments, and require reading stories and answering a few questions.⁴⁰ For example, because the OLA letter names subtask makes use of 100 items of information, random variation in one (or 10) of them will have little effect. The first three sections of the Life Skills tool have a markedly different measures than the remainder of the assessments and surveys: they rely on reading a beneficiary three stories, and after each story asking five questions (one for hostile attribution bias; two on emotional regulation; and one on conflict resolution strategies). Even minor variation in responses among only three or 6 items will result in low reliability scores. The low reliability scores among the healthy relationships section is also of interest.

The supportive relationships section includes 10 statements to which beneficiaries are asked to respond *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. For seven questions, the desired response is *strongly agree* (such as "*Men's and women's roles in society can change over time*"). For three questions, the desired response was *strongly disagree* (e.g. "*A man can beat his wife if she does not agree to have sex with him*"). While the index measures desired responses, many girls appear to have followed patterns of repeating agreement, even on questions that were at odds with other agreement questions. While alternating desired responses is good practice, it reveals cases where response patterns are likely rote. Repetitive and rote response patterns are always an issue when using repetitive question structures, and are likely also endemic to tools like the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale and Jerusalem and Schwarzer Self-Efficacy scale: however, because those scales use a single question structure (where *Strongly Agree* responses are always desirable), repetitive answers only inflate their reliability scores. In the case of the Supportive Roles section, using varying response structures simply uncover it. Additional training will be conducted at midline and endline to ensure that enumerators minimise rote responses.

While hostile attribution bias and the conflict resolution strategies sections have a low Chronbach's Alpha statistic, it is likely because it is an inappropriate statistic for this subtask. Cronbach's Alpha scores by calculation are low when there are few items, and are generally considered inappropriate to be applied to 10 or fewer items⁴¹. The hostile attribution bias subtask only includes three items, and they are all binary variables, which further limits the ability to measure variation. It is further limited by the fact that those three items are binary variables, which allow for less variation than a five-point Likert scale or other form of item.

⁴⁰ These subtasks also originate from the SERAIS tool.

⁴¹ Sijtsma K (2009). "On the Use, the Misuse, and the Very Limited Usefulness of Cronbach's Alpha." *Psychometrika*;74(1):107–120; Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

When Alpha scores are low for low-item groups, a more appropriate measure reliability among a few items is average inter-item correlation, which should be at minimum 0.15⁴². The mean inter-item correlation of the hostile attribution bias questions is 0.22. The conflict resolution strategies subtask, which also only includes three seven-category items, has a mean inter-item correlation of 0.33. The Emotional Regulation subtask, which includes six items, also has a mean inter-item correlation of 0.33.

Figure 15: Life Skills and Cronbach's Alpha

Life Skills	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1. Hostile Attribution Bias	3	0.4601
2. Emotional Regulation	6	0.6332
3. Conflict Resolution	3	0.4654
4. Self-Efficacy	8	0.8301
5. Social Resources	7	0.7964
6. Supportive Relationships	10	0.5736
7. Health	11	0.7706
Overall Score	44	0.6924

Challenges in baseline data collection and limitations of the evaluation design

The chart below presents the key challenges faced during the baseline evaluation related to quantitative data collection, as well as the mitigation measures the evaluation team had in place and solutions identified for the baseline and future evaluation activities. Although a longer version of the Washington Group questions was asked during the baseline research, those that overlap with those from the initial beneficiary list are broadly in line.

Figure 16: Limitations to Quantitative Data Collection

#	Limitations Encountered	Mitigation Strategy	Outcome
1	Difficulty communicating to beneficiaries and respondents the day of the quantitative teams' visit	The evaluation team had planned on having Safe Spaces to hold the interviews and surveys with girls and other respondents assuming the project was underway during baseline.	(1) Earlier development of work calendar, obtaining updated staff contact list from IRC; (2) propose communicating primarily with project officers and also facilitators, or mentors. (3) Save a few hours during the training week for contact with project staff prior to data collection.
2	Lack of trust about the project actually existing given the delay in start of project- resulting in refusals to participate in data collection	The evaluation team believed that EAGER would be underway by the time the baseline started.	None- potentially having IRC reach out to EAGER partners to have them inform the District Supervisors again of the research and announce to the communities in advance. The evaluation team informed IMC of this issue and the EAGER project staff held a re-engagement meeting in December with all the girls as a chance to gather them together and keep them

⁴² Clark, L. A., & Watson, D. (1995). Constructing validity: Basic issues in objective scale development. *Psychological Assessment*, 7(3), 309–319

			updated on the timeline for activities. This was held after the baseline. Although enumerators reported occasional beneficiaries refusing to participate, they reported it was typically due to having work or other responsibilities.
3	Quantitative Sampling: Beneficiaries selected for quantitative sampling (10 girls 4 backup girls per community) were no longer in the project or had gone back to school making it difficult to find enough girls to collect data from in some communities related to quantitative data collection	The evaluation team made sure to include 4 backup options per community to ensure that at least 10 beneficiary girls could partake in the survey.	The evaluation team re-did the sampling once this became an issue, and included all beneficiary girls from each community (around 25) in a list for Enumerators to work off of starting from the top to ensure that they got 10 from each community.
4	Some of the EAGER Staff and community members, specifically in Kailahun, said they were not aware of the research and too busy to help facilitate	The evaluation team provided IRC and EAGER partners with the timing of data collection per community so they could inform community members and EAGER project staff that data collection would be taking place there and when prior to beginning field work.	IRC followed up with them and will ensure to provide ongoing communication with partners and community members during the midline.
5	Lack of awareness of what the Safe Spaces are in the communities and there were several questions in the survey tools/quantitative tools that were about Safe Spaces.	N/A	The evaluation team informed EAGER partners of the findings during the debrief at the end of the first week of data collection so that they could speak with project staff in the communities about the Safe Spaces. It should be noted that many of these girls differed from those engaged during the mapping process and were recruited at a later date, missing earlier informational meetings. The EAGER project held a re-engagement of the girls, facilitators and mentors ahead of the start of the programme (but after the baseline) in order to prepare them and re-sensitise them ahead of programme start. At midterm this should not be a challenge because the project will have been active for several months.
6	Quantitative teams struggled to get interviews with heads-of-households and caregivers of the beneficiary girls because they were at work.	N/A	Once the girls in the community are identified, begin with HoH/caregiver surveys so they can go work. Interview the girls after interviewing caregivers/ HoH.

7	Lassa fever outbreak in Tonkolili	Daily communication with Dalan and evaluation team in place in order to respond to disease outbreak or natural disaster, etc.	After consulting with IRC, the evaluation team asked Dalan to stop data collection in Tonkolili which resulted in the withdrawal of two quantitative teams from Tonkolili. While some quantitative data was undertaken, the remaining surveys in the District were not completed resulting in a smaller sample size as a result.
8	Issue with communication (specifically lack of communication) with EAGER project staff prior to the field team arriving to their community for data collection.	Dalan and the evaluation team prepared a schedule for both quantitative and qualitative data collection teams that included the dates each team would be in selected communities for data collection. This was provided to IRC for distribution to EAGER partners. Additionally, prior to arriving to the community, the data collection teams would call EAGER project staff to let them know when they would be there.	Require field supervisors on each sub-team to provide daily updates to the evaluation team regarding which EAGER project staff they communicated with prior to arriving to community for data collection.
9	Issue with holding girls' longer than necessary and disrupting their days in one community.	During the training of field staff, the evaluation team made it clear that the data collection process should not disrupt the girls' days or prevent them from undertaking their responsibilities (work, household chores, childcare, etc.).	The evaluation team reminded the field supervisors while they were in the field that they should undertake data collection with the least impact on girls' schedules. This was communicated multiple times and after the initial reminder there were no other issues.
10	Issues of missing Girls' Combined Surveys from three communities (Kambia, Kono and Tonkolili). Enumerators only provided number and types of stakeholders they engaged, but not the number of surveys per stakeholder (i.e. said met with 10 girls but didn't clarify what surveys they did). Given the delay of uploading the data, this gap was not noticed until after the team left the field. Confusion on how to administer the Girls' Combined survey given many questions were designed	The Girls Combined survey's administration was explained during the training and all field staff were told to administer all survey tools. The quantitative team had a WhatsApp chat that was established to provide field staff the opportunities to ask questions while in the field and for the quantitative expert to provide support and oversight. Enumerators	At midline the evaluation team will have enumerators provide breakdown of number of Survey and Type of surveys per Stakeholder per Day via WhatsApp. Additionally, the field staff will upload data collected via surveys every 5-7 days so the Quantitative Specialist can review more regularly. The quality assurance process related to this is as follows: Dalan- Will create a standard reporting format capturing all tools required for the evaluation, implement and ensure the format is populated and send to the WhatsApp platform on daily basis

	assuming implementation would have begun already	were requested to provide daily updates on how many surveys were completed per community.	indicating accomplished and non-accomplished tools. Evaluation team- to enforce real time monitoring and feedback on the quality and completeness of the dataset on daily basis (as much as possible). Dalan - To track all data accomplished by tools on daily basis. Dalan - To verify tracked data with dataset received by the server.
11	Difficulty getting final count of number of quantitative surveys completed due to lack of connectivity and technical issues uploading data off select phones.	At the training, the field staff were told to upload there data whenever possible so that the quantitative specialist could review more regularly.	Request all data sets to be uploaded at least 1 time a week and account for this when planning the data collection schedule (to ensure that enumerators are in areas where they will have connectivity). For phones that had technical issues, Dalan restarted the phones and eventually all data was retrieved.

Of all the challenges list above, only two had impact on the robustness, reliability, and comparability of findings. This is discussed below.

Impact of Lassa Fever outbreak

Due to the Lassa Fever outbreak in Tonkolili, two quantitative data collection teams were removed from the district and did not complete data collection there. IRC did not want to re-field the team after conversations with the Fund Manager. In the original sample design, each district was sampled proportional to the provided beneficiary list. Given that 9.7% of beneficiaries on the beneficiary list are in Tonkolili, 9.7 percent of the safe spaces in the final sample (21 of 216) were from Tonkolili and approximately 210 girls from Tonkolili were in the sample. At the time that teams were recalled from Tonkolili due to the Lassa fever outbreak, their teams had submitted data from 124 girls in Tonkolili. This resulted in a deficit of 86 girls from that district. Since we did not add any additional communities to the sample, the decision to end data collection in Tonkolili early had a small, but measurable effect on the representativeness of the sample. With no communities added, Tonkolili fell from comprising 9.7 percentage of the sample to 6.0 percentage of the sample.

Effects on statistical power

The original sampling plan was designed to measure a minimum detectable effect of an 8 percentage point increase on literacy and numeracy scores among both the entire sample and independently for the subgroups of girls who are married, parents, working, or have disabilities. The statistical power for the full sample was not affected by withdrawing teams from Tonkolili because of such large amounts of oversampling of groups of interest. Based on the initial assumptions in the sample design, the minimum detectable defect on assessments may change from 8.0 percentage points to 8.3 percentage points for the smallest subgroup of interest.

Since the communities in Tonkolili were not replaced, the total sample size fell from 2,156 to 2,084. To obtain sufficient statistical power to measure an 8 percentage point increase in the assessments, a minimum sample of 760 girls is required: as a result, the reduction on girls in

Tonkolili did not reduce the ability to measure the desired minimum detectable effects in the whole sample.

The minimum sample was set to 2,156 to increase the number of girls in the sample of demographic groups of interest: such as girls that are married, parents, working, or have disabilities. Assuming (1) the calculations in the original design were correct for oversampling, and (2) the subgroups of interest were distributed at the same level in Tonkolili as the rest of the districts, the reduction in the sample resulted in a reduction of each subgroup of interest by 5.7 percent, reducing intended subgroup minimum samples to 718.

Once controlling for clustering and presumed 30 percent attrition, this is the same as reducing the effective statistical power from 305 to 285 observations, which increased the minimum detectable effect at a power of 0.8 and alpha of .05 from 8.0 percentage points to 8.2 percentage points.

Effects on representativeness

Since no communities were added to the sample, this had a small but measurable effect on the representativeness of the sample. Specifically, Tonkolili falls from comprising 9.7 percent of the sample to 7.1 percent of the sample.

Shortage of Girls' Combined surveys (GCS)

As discussed above, given the delay in programme start some enumerator teams skipped the Girls' Combined surveys in error. On identified shortfall during the data collation period, the evaluation team, in discussion with IRC, opted to not re-field a team given the impact on timeline and the lack of impact the shortfall had on the statistical validity of the dataset. The enumerator teams did conduct assessments via the EGMA and OLA for each girl, hence the evaluation team does not see the shortage of GCS as preventing the delivery of high-quality findings. The evaluation team during analysis was able to match learning test scores with beneficiary data (which was collected during the project mapping process via beneficiary girl selection forms) for girls who did not complete a girls' combined survey, but completed the learning tests using their unique IDs that were assigned to them during the evaluation.

Challenges faced recording the correct age of beneficiaries

Girls' reported age should be understood to have some flexibility; a person's age is often not known by themselves or their caregivers. Because most of the beneficiaries are old enough to know their age if it is known, reported age was first relied upon based on self-report. In cases where a beneficiary did not know their own age, their caregiver's response was used. Ages especially among those outside of the project's intended age range of 13 to 17 should especially be treated with flexibility. Among those whose reported age is outside that age range, 20 percent of the time caregivers reported a different age that was closer to the intended project age group.

How challenges are highlighted in the report

The impact of some of the challenges listed above were discussed in Section 4.3 Quantitative evaluation methodology, and include issues related to sampling (i.e. beneficiary girls selected for the sample no longer in project, Lassa Fever outbreak, and issue of girls' combined survey shortage). This is also captured in Table 6: Quantitative sample sizes which presents the intended sample size per tool and actual.

Cohort tracking and next evaluation point

Beneficiary girls were assigned unique respondent IDs that will allow the evaluation team to track down the same respondents and midterm and final evaluation points. At the end of each

evaluation point the evaluation team is able to sort data by the respondent's unique ID producing a longitudinal data set for each beneficiary.

In developing the sampling, the Quantitative Specialist accounted for attrition (assuming a 30% attrition rate) and therefore ensured the sample size will still be representative of the beneficiary population as a whole even if some beneficiaries drop out of the project over the project implementation. Additional information, including names, ages, and facilities can be used to ensure unique IDs are matched to the correct person.

Outcomes and intermediate outcomes at midterm and endline

The midterm evaluation will also focus on the same intermediate outcomes and outcomes as the baseline as according to the EAGER logframe in order to result in longitudinal data sets, but will include more focus on Business Skills Improvement (Outcome 1.4).

However, the endline evaluation will not measure numeracy and literacy skills given that the literacy and numeracy curriculum will be completed at midlines for cohort 1⁴³. As such, the endline evaluation will not collect data related to Outcome 1.1 and 1.2.

Use of comparison group

All evaluation points focus on cohort 1 and will not engage beneficiary girls from the other two cohorts or use a control group.

4.5 Qualitative evaluation methodology

Qualitative data collection tools

Focus group discussion and Key Informant Interview Guides were developed for qualitative data collection. Several versions of each were created for the various respondent groups which included direct beneficiaries (i.e. beneficiary girls) and indirect beneficiaries (i.e. caregivers, partners of beneficiary girls) and stakeholders (i.e. community leaders). The KII and FGD guides can be found in Annex 7. Please note that while when the baseline started the MSWGCA was one government ministry but it has now been split into two ministries. The EAGER project will work with the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs (MGCA) along with the MBSSE for all midterm and final evaluation activities related to government officials.

Table 11: Qualitative Evaluation Tools

Tool name	Relevant indicator(s)	Who developed the tool?	Was tool piloted?	How were piloting findings acted upon (if applicable)	Was FM feedback provided?
FGD guide: Girls 13 – 17 (beneficiaries)	Outcome 1 – all indicators; Outcome 2 – all indicators; Outcome 3 – indicators A and B; IO1 – all indicators; IO2 – all indicators; IO3 – all indicators; IO4 – all indicators	Evaluation Team	Yes	Minor changes to questions; additional review and training for data collectors	Yes
FGD: Boys 13 – 17 (community members)	Outcome 1 – all indicators; Outcome 2 – all indicators; Outcome 3 – all indicators; IO3 Indicator A; IO4 – all indicators	Evaluation Team	Yes	Minor changes to questions; additional review and training for data collectors	Yes
FGD Guide: Caregivers	Outcome 1 – all indicators; Outcome 2 – all indicators;	Evaluation Team	Yes	Minor changes to questions; additional	Yes

⁴³ This decision is to be confirmed by IRC and the Fund Manager.

	Outcome 3 – all indicators; IO2 – all indicators; IO3 – all indicators; IO4 – all indicators			review and training for data collectors	
KII guide: BLN Facilitator	Outcome 1 – all indicators; Outcome 2 – all indicators; Outcome 3 – all indicators; IO2 – all indicators; IO3 – all indicators; IO4 – all indicators	Evaluation Team	No – piloting site was not an EAGER site – no staff were available	N/A	Yes
KII guide: LBS Mentors	Outcome 1 – all indicators; Outcome 2 – all indicators; Outcome 3 – all indicators; IO2 – all indicators; IO3 – all indicators; IO4 – all indicators	Evaluation Team	Same as above	N/A	Yes
KII guide: Project staff	Outcome 1 – all indicators; Outcome 2 – all indicators; IO2 – all indicators; IO3 – all indicators; IO4 – all indicators	Evaluation Team	Same as above	N/A	Yes
KII: Girls (beneficiaries)	Outcome 1 – all indicators; Outcome 2 – all indicators; Outcome 3 – all indicators; IO1 – all indicators; IO3 – all indicators; IO4 – Indicators C & D	Evaluation Team	Yes	Minor changes to questions; additional review and training for data collectors	Yes
KII: Male partners of participating girls	Outcome 1 – all indicators; Outcome 2 – all indicators; Outcome 3 – all indicators; IO3 – all indicators; IO4 – Indicators C & D	Evaluation Team	Yes	Minor changes to questions; additional review and training for data collectors	Yes
KII: Community leaders	Outcome 1 – all indicators; Outcome 3 – all indicators; IO4 – all indicators	Evaluation Team	Yes	Minor changes to questions; additional review and training for data collectors	Yes
KII Guide: Local-level MBSSE or MSWGCA Official(s)	Outcome 1 – all indicators; IO4 – all indicators; IO5 – both indicators	Evaluation Team	No – same officials as those for the actual data collection	N/A	Yes
KII guide: National MBSSE or MSWGCA Officials	Outcome 1 – all indicators; IO5 – both indicators	Evaluation Team	No – Project told to wait for midline (see challenges)	N/A	Yes
Community Survey sheet	All (provides general background)	Evaluation Team	No – due to time constraints on the day of piloting	N/A	No

Qualitative sample selection and sample sizes

One community per EAGER district was sampled purposively, so as to optimally represent the geographical spread of communities participating in the EAGER project. Within this, sampling took into account specific community location (rural-remote, rural non-remote, urban) and demographic considerations (strict Muslim, mining industry, agriculture industry, and proximity to country border). The EE relied upon CCU recommendations for sample sites, for instance, a particularly strict Muslim community where start-up had been challenging, as well as cartography and World Bank data.

In addition to assuring balance across EAGER partners, the figure below demonstrates how the sample met the stated criteria. Numbers in parenthesis in the second row indicate the target

number of communities per criterion while the final row shows the number achieved. Target numbers reflect the desire to have a balanced geographic distribution while having at least one community align with the categories.

The actual sample was aligned with expectations, and as could be expected, had greater representation from agricultural communities given that rural often equates with farming activities.

Figure 17: Sample by District Selection Criteria

Partner	District	Geography			Other demographic features			
		Rural Remote (3)	Rural (3)	Urban (4)	Strict Muslim (1)	Mining Industry (1)	Agriculture Industry (1)	Proximity to country border (1)
IRC	Bo			X				
Restless Development	Kailahun	X			X		X	X
Restless Development	Kambia		X				X	X
IRC	Kenema			X				
Restless Development	Koinadugu		X				X	
IRC	Kono		X				X	
CWW	Port Loko			X				
Restless Development	Pujehun	X					X	
CWW	Tonkolili	X				X	X	
CWW	WAU			X				
Total	10	3	3	4	1	1	6	2

In total, the qualitative field team reached 441 individuals (247 females and 194 males, including 144 girl beneficiaries) via key informant interview and focus group discussions. Numbers in table 12 include a double-count of girls who participated in both KIIs and FGDs, 20 in total.

Table 12: Qualitative Sample Size

Tool (used for which outcome and IO indicator)	Beneficiary group	Sample size agreed in MEL framework	Actual sample size	Remarks on why there are major differences between anticipated and actual sample sizes (if applicable)
FGD	Mothers or Female caregivers	10 FGD with 6 - 12 participants (60-120)	65	Met anticipated size
	Fathers or Male caregivers	10 FGD with 6 - 12 participants (60-120)	60	Met anticipated size
	Girls (treatment)	20 FGD with 6 - 12 participants (120-240)	144	Met anticipated size
	Boys (community)	10 FGD with 6 - 12 participants (60-120)	68	Met anticipated size
KII	LSB Mentors	10	16	Exceeded anticipated size
KII	BLN - facilitators	10	10	Met anticipated size
KII	Girls	20	20	Met anticipated size
KII	Project staff	10	10	Met anticipated size
KII	Youth Leaders	10	10	Met anticipated size
KII	Mammy Queens ⁴⁴	10	10	Met anticipated size
KII	Community Leaders/Heads	10	10	Met anticipated size
KII	Local government officials (MBSSE and MSWGCA)	20	14	Officials were unavailable for various reasons, including being out of town as well as having resigned

In addition, indicative quotas related to age, socio-economic status, education, marital status, and parenthood status also informed the selection of participants to the extent possible in the field. Similar to the quantitative sample, there are higher proportions of girls married and with children within the qualitative sample than had been anticipated in the MEL framework. In total, 69 (47.9 percent) of the girls in the qualitative sample were married, 88 (61.1 percent) had children and only two expressed having a disability. Of those with disabilities, one identified having had polio and continued difficulties standing for long periods of time and walking long distances. The other,

⁴⁴ A Mammy Queen is a position for a prominent female leader within the community who represents the women of that community.

while not self-identifying as having a disability, exhibited strong emotions of sadness and loneliness, consistent with the definition above for depression. Both girls participated in individual interviews.

Qualitative field researchers

As with the quantitative data collection team, national partner Dalan Consultants was responsible for recruitment of qualitative data collectors. A total of 14 field researchers (in three groups of four, plus two backup researchers) as well as a senior qualitative researcher were retained for field work. Recruitment and selection of the individuals was on the basis of:

- Previous experience conducting qualitative interviews and focus groups;
- Education level of bachelor's degree or higher;
- Local language skills - critical to conducting focus groups and interviews with the target stakeholders; and,
- A gender balance within teams (i.e. two female and two male data collectors) in accordance with good practice of research of this nature (and FM requirements).

Training of qualitative data collectors took place simultaneously with the quantitative team. The two groups were trained where content was common to both⁴⁵. As noted above, two backup researchers were fully trained and kept available in case a primary researcher became unavailable during the data collection. The training addressed the following:

- ***Introduction to the research:*** Overview of the EAGER project, Purpose of the baseline evaluation, Main research questions, Objectives of the baseline evaluation.
- ***Research ethics and code of conduct in communities (led by IRC):*** Child protection and treatment of children during interviews; safeguarding processes; informed consent/assent; confidentiality).
- ***Details of fieldwork:*** Sampling strategy, in-depth review of tools, process for entering communities.
- ***Tool review:*** Discussion of stakeholder types, review, clarification and revision of tools;
- ***Methods training:*** Review of qualitative methods, focus on participatory methods, notetaking and recording, process for contacting respondents and entering the field, assent/consent processes.
- ***Team planning meetings:*** Groups met together to identify appropriate terms in local languages, discuss roles, and plan logistics; and,
- ***Debriefing protocols, data quality control and remote support (safety/security and communications).***

The five days of data collector training also included one day of piloting, coordinated with the quantitative teams. Piloting took place in three communities located within Waterloo and Hastings on the outskirts of Freetown: Joe Town, Mango Farm and Tegbeh. These three communities were part of the group of communities chosen for piloting (see Quantitative Methods section above). The choice of these three, in particular, relied upon their proximity so that the team leader and qualitative researcher could rotate to provide adequate oversight. Quantitative tools were also piloted in these communities. The international members of the evaluation team from IMC Worldwide accompanied the data collectors to the field pilot locations, providing oversight and on-

⁴⁵ Training took place November 11-15, 2019 in Freetown at the Grassroots Gender Empowerment movement.

the-spot guidance and training. The fourth day of training focused on debriefing and reinforcement of capacities while the fifth day focused on planning for fieldwork.

Qualitative data collection

Data collection took place over ten days between November 18-27. The schedule for data collection can be found in Annex 15. Teams were allocated geographical regions in line with their language skills for specific communities. The four-person teams divided up the interviews taking into account the need for gender-same interviews, specifically with girls, boys, parents and male partners. All focus groups benefitted from a facilitator and notetaker as did most interviews. As needed, individual data collectors met with individual participants for interviews. In these cases, the data collector both facilitated and took notes. Like with all interviews, an audio recorder was used; it was especially useful for these single interviews. While data collection began at the same time as quantitative counterparts, it ended earlier due to the smaller sample size. The qualitative data collection schedule is presented below.

Quality Control

The senior qualitative researcher travelled between field teams over the course of the data collection period to provide guidance, support and check the quality of data. Further, the field teams sent daily debriefs and check-ins via mobile text messaging to ensure safety, compliance with schedules and address any quality issues during data collection.

Photos of field notes were uploaded via mobile internet daily to the evaluation team (specifically the team leader who lead the qualitative component). Each KII/FGD cover sheet had a field for notes on data collector reflections. The team leader reviewed these field notes, providing guidance on areas to strengthen as well as feedback on where to probe in future interactions. Each field team appointed a leader as the main point of contact for the evaluation team's team leader.

Qualitative data handling and analysis

Dalan Consultants assigned a specific team of transcription specialists for interviews and focus group discussions notes and recordings from the interviews/focus groups were provided by the field teams on their return to Freetown. Notes were translated and transcribed directly from local languages into English. Senior Dalan staff reviewed the transcriptions, and the final versions were uploaded to a secure online shared database for review by the IMC Worldwide international team members. The transcripts were then further reviewed for clarity, comprehensiveness, identifiable information removed and data was pre-coded under subheadings by research question.

The cleaned and categorised data was saved in an Excel database organised by location/community, group type (e.g. girl, boy, caregiver), discussion question asked, the general topic of the question (e.g. Learning, Transition, Sustainability), and subtopics (e.g. Barriers to Education, Desired Skills, Supportive Relationships). On occasion, direct quotes from transcripts required additional editing for legibility purposes in English. This was appropriate as most interviews were either in Krio or in another national language and were already a translation.

The qualitative analysis team (baseline evaluation team leader and technical specialist) then coded all data associated with a particular subtopic. Initial codes were assigned to ensure the team captured key perspectives that would be useful to inform Outcomes, Intermediate Outcomes, and Outputs (e.g. parent codes for "transition: desired skills" or "sustainability: gender norms"). As the notes were reviewed iteratively in more detail, additional sub-codes were

assigned (e.g. “transition: desired skills: tailoring, soapmaking, cosmetology” or “sustainability: gender norms: preference boys or girls in education”). As appropriate, sub-sub codes were created (e.g. “sustainability: gender norms: preference boys or girls in education: preference girls because girls will take care of family” or “sustainability: gender norms: preference boys or girls in education: preference boys because boys are more serious.” When a new code was created, all lines of data related to that theme were revisited to determine whether the interview contained that perspective or not. When it did, an identifier was placed in the appropriate cell. When the questions related to a sub-topic were fully coded, and the team was confident that saturation was reached in terms of capturing the types of responses within the transcripts, the team moved onto another sub-topic.

By conclusion of the coding process, the team had assigned 150 unique codes across all transcripts. When the team had addressed all sub-topics, they undertook a final round of cleaning such that the database reflected the unit of the interview rather than the number of times a perspective may have arisen within a focus group (to avoid double-counting). The team then created pivot tables for each of the subtopics to plot/quantify the presence of perspectives for each interview and to allow disaggregation by (as appropriate) gender, group type, and community. This allowed the team to give a precise number of groups who reflected a certain perspective or not, and also enabled the team to identify trends and outliers by gender, group type, and community.

Synthesis of qualitative and quantitative data

When available, the team relied upon quantitative analysis to inform Outcome and Intermediate Outcome indicators as such data maximises representativeness of the whole community, rather than a single respondent, as is the case for the qualitative data.

Qualitative data supplemented that analysis, both in terms of providing additional nuance to contextualise statistics, and also to provide additional anecdotal information related to outcomes or indicators that was not captured by the surveys. *Quantitative* analysis of the *qualitative* data (via pivot tables and charts) was used only if it provided additional information not captured by the quantitative, with the clear caveat that such analysis has limited representativeness of the wider population but reflects distributions of perspectives among the beneficiary population. In addition, in instances where quantitative and qualitative data conflicted, both sets of findings were explored. The evaluation team has taken note of these instances and flagged them for additional investigation at midline. One example of such a conflict is the differences in attitudes towards inclusion of girls with disabilities attending the safe spaces (see IO4). FM guidance on qualitative analysis was followed during the data cleaning, coding, and synthesis.

Qualitative analysis is relied upon where no complementary quantitative data was obtained, for example, among beneficiaries and stakeholders who were not administered the survey (e.g. facilitator, mentors, project staff, government officials, community leaders, etc.).

Finally, the qualitative team reviewed all coded qualitative data by community to highlight important differences between stakeholder types (e.g. interviews with facilitators, mentors, community leaders, etc.), along with community surveys. These data combined to inform the community-level case studies (see Annex 18), which the evaluation team will update over the life of the project (i.e. at midline and endline), complementing and supporting with quantitative data on project outcomes and impact.

Challenges in baseline qualitative data collection, handling and analysis and limitations of the qualitative aspects of the evaluation design

Below we present the key challenges encountered during qualitative data collection, the mitigation strategy that was in place and the outcome/solution related to the challenge.

Figure 18: Challenges during Qualitative Data Collection

#	Limitations encountered	Mitigation strategy	Outcome
1	Due to a ministerial reshuffling immediately prior to data collection, specific points of contact within the ministries (MBSSE and MCGWA) had not yet been identified at the time of data collection. Interviews with national level representatives were not possible.	Qualitative data from national representatives will not be collected at baseline.	Analysis of local level representatives will be included within report instead, though not as specific to indicators. Efforts would be made at midline to hold interviews with national representatives.
2	Qualitative printed materials did not make it correctly into bags of some data collection teams, after at least one had left for the field.	Sent Dalan the qualitative materials labelled and identified which items each qualitative researcher should have.	Dalan re-printed materials to send with the team leader who would be meeting two teams within the field. They sent additional files for print to District town for the remaining team. For future, the evaluation team will compile a PDF for each team with all necessary materials in one file for KIIs/FGDs within one community. Also, plan on doing the printing one day before training ends - review with teams on last day of training.
3	Beneficiary lists provided by EAGER did not always match the girls gathered at safe spaces to meet with qualitative teams. The teams learned that the lists were outdated. This was primarily due to the time-lag between beneficiary mapping and the start of sessions due to reasons previously outlined. Whenever possible, project staff provided teams with updated lists.	Teams took pictures of list to share with team leader. To the extent possible, teams worked off of the updated lists to assure that caregivers and partners were linked to EAGER beneficiaries.	At midline, evaluation team will work with IRC to be sure to have the most updated lists possible. As the project will be underway at that point, it is likely this issue will not be as challenging at that evaluation point. Greater accuracy of lists will also help select girls for even more targeted interviews, for instance, girls with disabilities.
4	Girls and caretakers in communities display lack of trust about the project actually existing given the delay in start of project resulting in refusals to participate in data collection.	The evaluation team believed that EAGER would be underway by the time the baseline started.	None- for future districts, potentially having IRC reach out to EAGER partners to have them inform the District Supervisors again of the research and announce to the communities in advance.

5	Challenges and difficulties contacting District Representatives/officials. Only 14 of 20 officials were available or willing to participate in research. The most often cited reason for not participating was travel although in other cases, it was impossible to join these stakeholders. Only the official from Port Loko was female, all 13 others were males. No official was available for interview in Kono.	The evaluation team requested a list of key district representatives/officials from the EAGER consortium that should be engaged during data collection. From this list, the evaluation team selected two from each community for qualitative data collection and had IRC review those selected to ensure they were the most appropriate to engage.	Data collectors made up to three attempts to contact officials, including offering to meet them in Freetown upon their return or to hold phone calls. The evaluation team will concentrate on pursuing these interviews at midline, along with national representatives.
6	Issue of duplicate transcripts. Dalan had some difficulties organising and tracking transcripts and in some cases, duplicates were uploaded to Google drive making it challenging for IMC to maintain their inventory of transcripts received. On two occasions, transcripts had to be resent during the coding process when duplicates with different file names were found.	The evaluation team designed a template for the transcripts and also a process for labelling them for easy sorting.	While all transcripts were eventually received, at midterm, the evaluation team will plan a session with Dalan to review the transcription and uploading process to assure necessary efficiency.
7	Findings from qualitative data are not representative as the sample was chosen purposefully.	Care must be taken in analysis.	Analysis underlines that qualitative data relate to one particular community with a sample. Identified as a limitation.

The majority of these challenges were logistical in nature and, once mitigated, did not affect findings. One of the more significant challenges is that of the lack of national representatives within the sample of interviewees. These are the sole stakeholders that could have informed data relevant to IO5: Government supported to achieve strategic outcome for increased literacy for out-of-school (OOS) youth (aligned to updated ESP 2018-2020)⁴⁶. Commentaries in relevant sections of the report provide reminders of this challenge as well as an explanation of data that may nonetheless help to provide some useful context and information for EAGER’s work moving forward. Another important limitation to note is that the community-level data from the qualitative sample is not necessarily representative. Analysis must be interpreted with care. While insights may extend beyond this community and perhaps even beyond the district, data are not intended to be generalisable. Similarly, selection bias may also factor into both quantitative and qualitative findings as the majority of stakeholders involved in community-level interviews are individuals connected to the programme, and thus, already interested in improving girls’ education.

Approach at midline evaluation

The midterm evaluation will use the same approach both in terms of the design and sampling as well as the same tools and evaluation questions (with slight changes to wording to reflect that the project is now ongoing). The midterm will also focus on cohort 1.

⁴⁶ This may be reformulated depending on the direction the new Ministry will give to this Minister. IRC is starting to engage now with them as these new officials have only sworn in January 2020.

The main changes will be the inclusion of additional tools such as the observation tool for quantitative data collection as well as additional question items and discussion questions for existing tools. One example is adding in a couple of additional questions to the Life Skills tool that will collect data related to how girls are applying the new life skills they have learned. Additionally, at midterm guides specific to indicators concerning community discussions and radio programming will be further refined. The evaluation team will also add in questions related to why girls who left the EAGER project decided to do so, and questions related to business skills and financial literacy. Additionally, the midline evaluation will also explore trends relating to age (e.g. comparing scores of younger girls at midline to older girls at baseline) and a greater focus on engaging government officials at the national and district levels. Additionally, rather than repeating full set of Washington Group questions at midline the evaluation team will repeat those relating to emotion dysregulation (anxiety and depression), to see how prevalence of this may have changed since baseline. A greater emphasis will also be placed on identifying girls with disabilities for participation in qualitative research.

In terms of logistics, most of the changes that will be made at midline are noted in Outcome column in the Challenges sections above (figures 16 and 18) for both qualitative and quantitative data collection.

5. Key characteristic subgroups and barriers of baseline samples

5.1 Educational marginalisation

The LNGB standards request analysis of subgroups into two groups: by characteristics and barriers. After reviewing data based on the requested subgroups and other groups identified by the evaluation team, this section identifies the most relevant subgroups of interest for analysis: in some cases they are remarkable because of their differences in outcomes, and some are remarkable for the lack of differences. Subgroups are divided into characteristics and barriers. Characteristics are defined as qualities that may not necessarily be forms of marginalisation; barriers are defined as qualities that would be expected to serve to marginalise beneficiaries from traditional routes to achieve their learning and transition goals. In reality, however, there are few cases where a subgroup is inarguably a characteristic and not a barrier, or vice versa. Detailed information about characteristics and barriers by region can be found in Annex 19.

Within the subgroups described below there is a high prevalence of girls that are married (44.1 percent of the sample) and those that have children (57.5 percent of the sample). While there is considerable overlap between two subgroups, it is important to distinguish between them during analysis: 83 percent of mothers are married, only 63 percent of girls who are married are mothers. Subgroups regarding disability and age have been discussed in tables 9 and 10 above. These characteristics may serve as important challenges to girls succeeding in the EAGER project and require special consideration in project implementation. The project has explicitly considered these challenges in its design by allowing beneficiary groups to set their own learning times to minimise project burden. Nonetheless, there will likely continue to be risk of dropout due to competing demands for girls' time.

Closer analysis of characteristics by district (see Annex 19 figure 57) show that prevalence varies greatly in some cases. For instance, girls in WAU are between nearly 20 and 45 percentage points more likely to be live in a household where the head is female than all other districts. At the same time, girls in WAU are least likely to be married (11.2 percent) compared to 61.9 percent in Kambia and 65.4 percent in Tonkolili. The percentage of girls with children also varies widely by district. After WAU, which has the lowest percentage of 28.6 percent, the proportion of girls in other districts with children ranges from 42.0 percent in Koinadugu to 75.0 percent in Bo.

Table 13: Characteristic Subgroups

Characteristic	Proportion of sample affected by this barrier
Beneficiaries with Disabilities	
Overall	14.6%
Under 15	15.9%
15 to 16	40.0%
17 or more	44.1%
Female Head of Household	33.4%
Married	44.1%
Has Children ⁴⁷	57.5%
Source: Girls' Combined Survey; Caregiver Survey	
N = 2041	

As with characteristics, identifying the barriers faced by beneficiaries and their prevalence are important to understanding both common challenges faced by beneficiaries, but also how to implement the project in a way that ensures their needs are met, and barriers removed or minimised.

Work: A notable difference between data collected during the beneficiary identification period and the baseline survey is the concept or definition of “work”. Work is not a consistently defined concept and definitions or perceptions of work are frequently gendered. For example, a man working in a field may consider himself as a labourer or self-employed (and thus engaged in “formal” work), but a woman doing the same work may be considered to be doing household (and hence “informal”) work. Much of the labour undertaken by women does not directly result in cash remuneration, but maintains the household so that other members can work for such income.

According to the EAGER beneficiary identification dataset, girls were asked if they did “work outside the home,” with 78.8 percent of beneficiaries saying they did. However, the baseline research found that 38.8 percent of respondents indicated that they had formal, informal, self-employment or contributed to household income-generating activities. Of that, 31.7 percent identified as self-employed, 4.5 percent as informally employed, and 2.3 percent contributed to household’s income-generating activities, and 0.3 percent had paid formal employment. A possible reason for the discrepancy between the two datasets is that enumerators may have been unable to locate girls in the sample who were working to interview for collection (thus introducing bias into the sample). However, enumerators reported little difficulty locating sampled girls during quantitative data collection. The discrepancy between the beneficiary identification data and the sample data is therefore likely a result of differences in concepts of work among beneficiaries: many girls who work outside the home could do so for household activities, including non-income generating ones: agricultural work, fetching water, or other productive activities outside the home often not defined as work could make up the discrepancy.

⁴⁷ Girls were asked if they had children and could reply positively if they were pregnant and/or already had children. Respondents were not asked if they were pregnant during the time of the interview.

Given that the project has a focus on business skills and economic generation, it will be important to monitor; it may be worth asking both versions of the question at midline and endline to different respondents (such as caregivers and girls).

Schooling. A high proportion (45.3 percent) of girls surveyed never attended school. A further 45.2 percent attended school at some point but dropped out after attending for six or fewer years, leaving less than 10 percent of the sample to have attended beyond primary school⁴⁸. Those that did attend school did so for an average of 4.8 years, indicative of a significant difference between beneficiaries who never attended and those that did.

Poverty. As there is no single adequate measure for poverty, two were included in the analysis, based on responses from the household head. The first, called *Impoverished*, is whether the head of household reported inability to “afford basic household necessities” without aid or assistance. The second, *Food Insecure*, is defined as households where members go to bed hungry many or most nights in the past year⁴⁹. Both have high prevalence among the beneficiary group. These two barriers do not completely overlap and comprise somewhat different groups: one third of those hungry do not consider themselves impoverished; 30 percent of those who consider themselves impoverished do not meet the qualifications for food insecurity.

One vulnerable group that emerged from the analysis was beneficiary girls who identified themselves as the head of their own household (those who make the main economic decisions for their household). This groups comprises 9.2 of all respondents, with 59.8 percent of them reporting their households as experiencing impoverishment, and 51.2 percent reporting themselves as food insecure.

Low Caregiver Support. Low caregiver support is defined as those whose caregivers disagreed with one of the following statements: “Even when funds are limited, it is worth investing in <beneficiary girl’s> education” or “A girl is just as likely to use her education as a boy is.” Because questions like this may result in respondents giving responses they believe the enumerator desires to hear, actual caregiver support may be lower than is measured by these tools. One subgroup of interest related to low caregiver support included those girls who do not live with both parents. However, this is, in fact, the norm among those in the sample: only 23.8 percent of beneficiaries live with both parents. Analysis of key outcomes were not significantly different for those living with two parents or not.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ The instruments don’t ask the highest level of completion, but the number of years they attended school. Lower primary attendance is defined as those who attended for 1-3 years; upper primary 4-6 years; secondary school 7 or more years.

⁴⁹ The midline evaluation of EAGER will be at a similar time of year (September/October 2020) which may allow for comparisons.

⁵⁰ Additional analysis found that girls living with one parent had higher literacy scores than those with two or zero parents, but that difference disappears once controlling for regional variation.

Table 14: Barriers

Barrier	Proportion of sample affected by this barrier
Paid or Self Employment	38.8%
Works Full-Time	24.3%
High Chore Burden	41.0%
Never went to school	45.3%
Impoverished	43.1%
Food Insecure	45.5%
Beneficiary is Head of Household	9.2%
Low Caregiver Support	6.3%
Source: Girls' Combined Survey N = 1952	

District-level analysis shows similar variation in barriers affecting girls' education as does the analysis of characteristics above (See tables in Annex 19 figure 58). Two barriers in particular show wide ranges: girls with paid of self-employment and girls who never went to school. Rates of paid or self-employment are lowest in WAU (18.7 percent) and highest in Kambia (88.3 percent) with an overall proportion of 38.8 percent. Similarly, the lowest proportion of girls who have never been to school was identified in Port Loko (22.0 percent) and highest in Koinadugu (80.3 percent). These variations may also signify differences in recruitment strategies across programme partners.

5.2 Intersection between key characteristics subgroups and barriers

Table 15 presents an analysis of specific subgroups by barriers to education. For example, according to Table 14, 45.5 percent of the sample is food insecure, and 14.6 percent of beneficiaries have a disability. Table 15a shows that 60.7 percent of beneficiaries with a disability live in a food insecure household, significantly higher than those without a disability⁵¹. Beneficiaries with disabilities are also significantly more likely to be the head of their own household.

While disabilities are often treated as external and immutable factors, this obscures that many disabilities are situationally caused (just as marginalisation of people with disabilities are situationally created).

The majority of girls who qualify as having a disability do so in part because of reporting daily experiences of anxiety or depression. Further analysis finds that those in impoverished or hungry have higher rates of anxiety or depression than those not. Rates of anxiety or depression are double among those who report having employment. It is possible that feelings of daily anxiety or depression are the result of living in incredibly challenging circumstances. While accommodation of any disability is a morally vital component of the project, eliminating the factors that lead to the disability may be an important part of an effective strategy as well.

⁵¹ Asterisks denote where those who have a particular characteristic experience a barrier at a significantly different rate than the rest of the sample.

Even though beneficiaries who are the head of their own household are significantly more likely to be impoverished than those who are not their own head of household, and slightly (but not significantly) more likely to work full time, they are less likely to report having paid or self-employment outside of the household.

Overall, younger beneficiaries are significantly less likely to have attended school than older beneficiaries, with the proportion of those reporting they never went to school increasing as the age profile increases.

Table 15a: Prevalence of barriers to education by characteristic subgroups

Characteristics	Barriers			
	Paid or Self Employment	Works Full-Time	High Chore Burden	Never went to school
Disability (All)	53.6%**	29.9%	43.2%	48.7%
Under 15	29.5%	20.7%	31.7%	61.8%**
15 to 16	40.5%	25.2%	42.6%	44.4%
17 or more	40.8%	24.8%	43.7%	39.9%
Female Head of Household	33.2%	25.3%	40.8%	45.5%
Married	48.5%**	25.5%	42.4%	49.3%
Has Children	43.7%**	25.8%	43.9%*	42.0%
Overall	38.8%	24.3%	41.0%	45.3%

*Single asterisks denote where those who have a particular characteristic experience a barrier at a significantly different lower rate than the rest of the sample; double asterisks denote where those who have a particular characteristic experience a barrier at a significantly different and higher rate than the rest of the sample.

Table 15b: Prevalence of barriers to education by characteristic subgroups (continued)

Characteristics	Barriers			
	Impoverished	Food Insecure	Beneficiary is Head of Household	Low Caregiver Support
Disability (All)	56.3%**	60.7%**	17.9%**	7.1%
Under 15	50.3%	51.3%	6.9%	5.1%
15 to 16	43.5%	47.4%	9.3%	7.7%
17 or more	40.2%	41.6%	10.1%	5.4%
Female Head of Household	48.3%**	52.4%**	8.1%	7.2%
Married	38.9%	41.1%	10.5%	6.6%
Has Children	42.6%	45.4%	10.8%	6.8%
Overall	43.1%	45.5%	9.2%	6.3%

*Asterisks denote where those who have a particular characteristic experience a barrier at a significantly different rate than the rest of the sample

The tables above denote the prevalence of barriers by characteristics. For example, 29.5 percent of girls under 15 have paid or self-employment. The remainder report that they are not employed.

One-quarter (25.5 percent) of girls who are married report that they work full time, and the remainder work part time or do not work.

5.3 Appropriateness of project activities to the characteristic subgroups and barriers identified

The barriers and characteristic subgroups generally correspond well with those identified by the project theory of change. At this starting point in the project life cycle, the baseline assessment is not able to comment on how project interventions address barriers (as interventions had not yet started at the time of this writing). This will be a focus of the midline assessment once project activities have started. The project has recognised the issues surrounding marriage, parenting, and never attending school, which are the most prevalent areas of concern and made accommodations. For example, the flexibility and pace of the learning programmes meet needs of those members of these groups, although additional support for psychosocial health issues may merit consideration. Given that beneficiaries that are married and parents are prevalent, additional consideration of methods to remove barriers for those two groups -- such as greater child care accommodation -- may be warranted both during the safe space sessions and to give time for women to focus on their business endeavours⁵².

While the list of subgroups presented above describes the beneficiary population well, an additional subgroup of interest not originally included is beneficiaries who are heads of household, comprising 9 percent of beneficiaries.

The transition and economic aspects of the theory of change require particular attention. Economic empowerment requires economic opportunity, and the current theory of change assumes that there are economic opportunities for beneficiaries that simply required the support that facilitators and mentors can provide. A more complete discussion of feasibility of transition is discussed in section 6, but primarily relate to three concerns: (1) limited unrealised local economic opportunity; (2) economic opportunity limited by traditional gender roles, and, (3) limited capacity of qualified mentors and facilitators to help girls realise their transition goals.

Local opportunities for economic empowerment may require girls to enter spheres generally controlled or predominated by men. While the theory of change and learning programme encourage girls to think beyond traditional opportunities, there are limited methods to encourage community opinions change. During focus group discussions, few stakeholders could identify concrete opportunities for girls within their communities. As discussed elsewhere in the report, community-level discussions of gender roles, which may incorporate the radio programme, may be an effective way to modify the programme. Encouraging 25 girls to develop businesses in small local communities without expanding the boundary of what economic opportunities are available to them may limit their success. Greater focus on encouraging community social norms change will likely be a necessary part to ensure girls have access to successful transitions.

As discussed in section 6, discussions with mentors suggest that they do not have many of the skills necessary to help beneficiaries successfully identify and take advantage of economic opportunities. Without greater support, it will be difficult for beneficiaries to identify avenues for new transition opportunities. Given relative basic business experience and youth evidenced by mentors during interviews, reinforce transition coaching for girls and mentors' training in life skills through additional training sessions and anticipate weekly coaching for mentors in life skills as well as gender sensitivity.

Project Response

The project will make the following revisions to the ToC based on these findings. In terms of characteristic subgroups, as suggested, girls who are their own head of household will be included as a key subgroup, whilst consideration will be given to the framing of employment (informal vs formal, paid vs unpaid) and whether a high chore burden should continue to be defined as a barrier given that it was associated with higher, rather than lower learning outcomes. The project would like to note that beneficiary mapping, which was completed in August 2019, identified a high prevalence of girls with children; over 50%, significantly higher than estimates outlined in the MEL framework (which were based off population-level data rather than OOS girls, as this was unavailable), and much closer to the evaluation sample for this subgroup. As this data was obtained prior to the beginning of any activities, the implementation design was with this subgroup in mind. Specific examples include flexibility around scheduling of sessions to best suit girls and their childcare needs. One-on-one meetings with both girls and caregivers were also completed with all beneficiaries prior the beginning of implementation with a purpose of identifying potential barriers to implementation and coming up with solutions to mitigate said barriers. During these meetings, concerns around childcare were frequently raised, and together with project officers, solutions were identified (e.g. seeking support from other members of the household). For girls with younger babies, there is no issue with bringing these to the sessions, and mentors and facilitators have been instructed to ensure girls with babies are encouraged and facilitated to participate fully in sessions – something that is assessed during session observations, and that feeds into the rating given for inclusive instruction in the project logframe. The project will ask for feedback on how the presence of babies impact on sessions, particularly when large numbers may be present, and consider alternative solutions if it is deemed to be a major barrier to full participation in the sessions.

In terms of adjustments to the theory of change more broadly, this will be updated to align with the project's revised and broadened approach to transition and rethink what may be feasible for girls to achieve based on the evaluation findings, whilst adjustments are also required for outcomes at a sustainability level, including a recent commitment to make the EAGER curricula for both life skills and functional literacy and numeracy available for use in the GoSL's own OOS adolescent programming.

6. Outcome findings

6.1 Learning outcomes

Learning levels at baseline (Project Input)

Beneficiary girls recruited for the project were expected to have very basic or no proficiency in literacy and numeracy, specifically not exceeding a Class 2 academic level. Girls that had never attended school or that had dropped out of lower primary school (up to Class 3) were prioritised for enrolment in the project. Those that dropped out in upper primary school (Class 3/4 or above) completed a basic screening assessment to gauge their ability and ensure that it did not exceed the levels of learning to be covered in the project curricula. Of the girls that completed this screening assessment, 93 percent did not pass and were enrolled in Cohort 1. By the next evaluation point (midterm), the basic literacy and numeracy learning programme will be completed and girls are anticipated to have met the following learning milestones:

Literacy:

Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise the letters of the alphabet. • Recognise common words and sight words. • Read decodable words and sentences. • Use prior knowledge to support reading comprehension. • Make meaning from authentic texts. • Read to understand essential information. • Answer questions about a text or authentic reading material.
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write the letters of the alphabet in lower and upper case. • Write own name. • Write sight words and thematic vocabulary words. • Write simple sentences. • Use basic punctuation. • Complete a basic form, list or template.
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask and respond to simple greetings. • Provide basic information about oneself. • Ask and answer questions about a familiar topic. • Use common vocabulary to discuss a familiar topic. • Participate in a simple conversation with peers about a familiar topic. • Role-play a scenario or dialogue.
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the different letter sounds and their position within a word. • Follow simple instructions. • Understand and respond to simple questions. • Listen for information and ask for clarification when one does not understand. • Understand the main points of a dialogue or narrative about a familiar topic.

Numeracy:

Number Sense	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read, write, and understand the value of numbers up to the 100,000s• Count and skip count• Compare and order numbers• Identify and complete patterns (shapes and whole numbers)• Make estimations of quantity and units of measurement• Count and understand the value of money• Fractions (basic; benchmark fractions like $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$)• Percent (basic; whole number percentages)
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solve basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems on whole numbers without a calculator• Add, subtract, multiply and divide any whole numbers using a calculator• Find estimates by rounding numbers and applying operations• Apply operations to money (e.g. giving change, calculating profit)• Apply operations to units of measurement
Measurement & Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measure and compare length and distance in whole numbers (km, m and cm)• Understand and compare weight (kg, g, mg)• Understand and compare volume/capacity (l, ml)• Tell time and date• Understand and compare time elapsed (minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years)• Create and interpret a table of data• Create and interpret a chart
Geometry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draw and identify shapes (square, rectangle, triangle, circle)• Draw and read maps• Interpret scale on a map• Apply scale to draw pictures of objects and maps

As the focus of literacy and numeracy in the EAGER project is on functional instruction rather than alignment to a formal curriculum, and because it is not envisaged that girls will return to formal schooling on completion of the project (due to a combination of them far exceeding the appropriate age per grade, financial reasons, and a lack of educational opportunities in the areas where they reside), benchmarking was not used in this project. Instead, learning targets were set based on the OLA (literacy) and EGMA (numeracy) assessments. The following analysis proposes targets based on the baseline assessment values for consideration by EAGER.

Outcome Indicator 1A. Percentage of EAGER Research Participants with improved learning outcomes in literacy

Headline results

Results in this section directly address literacy scores (from assessments) as well as desired literacy skills. The data show where girls are at EAGER start in terms of reading skills, with the project's theory of change positing that, should the project meet its intermediate outcomes related to attendance (IO1) and sufficient quality of instruction (IO2) in later sections, the outcome of girls' overall improved literacy rates will be achieved.

Headline results related to girls' literacy levels at baseline are:

- Most beneficiaries appear to fit into one of three categories from literacy skills results:
 - (1) those with no measurable reading skills (who are typically non-learners on all reading subtasks);
 - (2) those who display pre-reading skills of basic letter recognition (typically emergent learners, but are non-learners on comprehension questions); and,
 - (3) those who were able to read passages and comprehend some information from reading (typically emerging or higher learners, and able to answer at least some comprehension questions).
- Throughout interviews, stakeholders (girls and caregivers, in particular) unanimously responded that they desired literacy skills.
- There are no observable ceiling effects. It is reasonable to expect most of the gains will be in pre-literacy skills to basic oral reading passages.
- Scores became progressively poorer as girls moved through literacy tasks. While many test-takers demonstrate pre-literacy skills, 88.9 percent of respondents achieved a 'non-learner' score and only 1 percent achieved a 'proficient learner' score on the final test (dictation).

Table 16: Foundational literacy skills

Categories	Mean	SD	Non-learner	Emergent learner	Established learner	Proficient learner	Total
1. Listening Comprehension	43.4	41.5	40.2%	15.8%	17.4%	26.6%	100%
2. Real Life Reading	25.5	29.7	40.3%	35.0%	15.0%	9.7%	100%
3. Letter Names	27.5	36.5	41.2%	29.1%	12.2%	17.6%	100%
4. Familiar Words	9.3	19.2	63.3%	29.2%	5.8%	1.7%	100%
5. Oral Passage Reading and Comprehension	8.3	19.9	82.1%	7.7%	8.8%	1.4%	100%
5a. Oral Reading Passage 1	4.1	10.9	84.1%	14.9%	0.8%	0.3%	100%
5b. Reading Comprehension 1	12.7	30.2	83.2%	2.0%	7.4%	7.4%	100%
5c. Oral Reading Passage 2	6.2	19.6	86.6%	7.4%	3.2%	2.8%	100%
5d. Reading Comprehension 2	8.9	24.3	86.4%	1.9%	8.3%	3.4%	100%
6. Dictation	5.8	18.2	88.9%	3.6%	6.4%	1.0%	100%
Overall Score	19.2	21.4	22.9%	62.0%	13.0%	2.1%	100%

Calculation. Per the baseline research guidelines, all the subtask results are presented according to four skill categories: non-learner, emergent learner, established learner, and proficient learner, based on the percentage of questions correctly answered in each subtask. Per LNGB Guidelines, the four categories are calculated as Non-Learner (0 percent correct); Emergent (1-40 percent); Established (41-80 percent); Proficient (81-100 percent).

The oral reading passages are calculated in correct words per minute, and their four skills categories differ slightly. The complete adjustment of ranges is: Non-Learner (0-5 correct words per minute, or cwpm); Emergent (5-44.9 cwpm); Established learner 45-80 cwpm; Proficient Learner (80.1 or more cwpm). For example, 40.3 percent of the test-takers answered none of the Real Life Reading questions correctly, thus they were deemed as non-learners, while 9.7 percent of the test takers answered 80 percent or more of the questions correctly. As with numeracy and life skills, the overall literacy scores are measured as an unweighted average of the subtasks. The oral reading passages and reading comprehension passages are treated as a single subtask for two important reasons: (1) the skills as measured are nested within each other: one cannot succeed at the comprehension questions if they cannot obtain the information from the reading passages; (2) treating the subtasks as two or four separate subtasks results in the reading passages, comprehension, and dictation comprising three-sevenths or five/ninths of the overall literacy score, despite 80 percent of the test-takers being unable to complete a question on even the easiest of those activities. To ensure an aggregate literacy score that varies most around the average reading scores, it is best to treat the reading passages and comprehension as a single subtask.

The listening comprehension subtask involved reading a story aloud to the girl and then asked them three questions about the story: it was meant to serve as a baseline of understanding and test-taking, as well as identify whether there was a significant language barrier between the language girls spoke in the home and the language of the literacy assessment (English). While 38.7 percent could not answer any of the listening comprehension questions correctly, this should not be taken to signal that they have no English literacy skills at all: one-third of them correctly answered at least one of the real-life reading questions.

While 41 percent of girls could not read any letters, those who could read at least one letter read on average read 26 correct letters in a minute, and seven familiar words in a minute. This suggests that a substantial portion has substantial foundations of preliteracy skills to rely on in their studies, which increases their likelihood of being able to progress quickly to a degree of functional literacy. A third group, 14.4 percent, were able to read the same passage and answer at least two of the four comprehension questions.

Difficulty. A key consideration of tool design was that the tools capture a broad range of skill levels given the diverse education backgrounds and ages of the beneficiaries and reflect the curriculum of the programme. The tools successfully capture variation in ability, and the cases of low scores indicate girls with no or almost no pre-literacy skills. There is no concern for ceiling effects, as very few girls were able to complete any of the most difficult subtasks. In fact, mean scores would need to improve by at least three standard deviations before ceiling effects would likely affect even 5 percent of the sample. By capturing the breadth of the curriculum, the assessment demonstrates that the curriculum's goals for girls' learning may be too optimistic.

For example, while over 80 percent of test-takers qualified as non-learners on the easy oral reading passage, 14.4 percent were able to read the same passage and answer at least two of the four comprehension questions. The difficult reading passage was very challenging for the majority of test takers at baseline, but its average correct words per minute score was actually higher than the easy passage. This may be because it contained more words, and girls' reading pace increased after they began, but average scores were low on both oral reading passages.

Having both an easy and a difficult reading passage will allow the measurement of more substantive differences between advanced and early readers at midline and endline.⁵³

Targets. Per the MEL Guidelines provided by the FM, learning targets are set in terms of an improvement in the aggregate score in each learning area (literacy, numeracy, life skills, and business skills); it is set as a 0.2 standard deviation improvement over the baseline score, per year of implementation. The project only includes nine months of literacy and numeracy training, or 0.15 standard deviations. This results in a target of improvement of 3.2 points to 22.4.

Detailed findings

The following sections detail specific findings that lead to the headline findings above.

Girls' assessment of their reading

Responses to the combined girls' survey provide additional insights into girls' own opinions of their literacy abilities and reading practices. When asked, "can you read?" 82.1 percent of girls replied "no" while 17.0 percent of girls replied that they could. Disaggregation by age of respondent indicates that approximately three percent fewer younger girls (under 15) reported being able to read than older girls.

Figure 19: Responses to the question "Can you read?" (N=1,954)

Categories	No	Yes	Refusal	Don't Know
Under 15	85.0%	14.7%	0.3%	0.0%
15 to 16	81.7%	17.0%	0.3%	1.0%
17 or more	81.5%	17.8%	0.1%	0.6%

Among those who say they can read, less than half (41.98 percent) say that they spend time reading. Again, age seems to distinguish the sample as older girls read slightly more than younger girls (approximately five percentage points). Across the sample, one quarter (25.8 percent) of all girls who replied they can read say that they lack things to read; another quarter (23.9 percent) say they lack leisure time to read; and another quarter (25.5 percent) say they lack help or support. Less than one tenth (9 percent) say they lack motivation or don't want to read.

Figure 20: Responses to the question "Do you spend time reading?" (N=324)

Categories	Yes	No	Refusal	Don't Know
Under 15	39.1%	50.0%	8.7%	2.2%
15 to 16	39.4%	52.3%	6.1%	2.3%
17 or more	45.2%	53.4%	1.4%	0.0%
Total	42.0%	52.5%	4.3%	1.2%

⁵³ Note that girls demonstrating inability to complete simpler tasks were not asked to complete more difficult tasks: for example, test-takers who could not read any of the first line of the familiar word score were not asked to try to read the oral reading passage, and automatically received a zero.

Desired literacy skills

Focus groups and interviews also explored girls' desires to improve their skills as well as parents' hopes for their children. Both girls and caregivers (male and female) strongly indicated that they would like the girls to learn to read. Most of the specific examples provided related to reading signs, text messages, documents for signature, and reviewing children's progress in school without having to ask others for help. While girls within focus groups often spoke about general skills they perceived important to achieve their goals interchangeably, they clearly articulated improvements in their general learning skills as an opportunity to gain independence, to support their family and their parents, and to keep themselves from being fooled ("bluffed") by others:

"I want to know how to read and write so that I will not give my child's report card to some[one] to read and explain to me. I will follow up on the progress of my child without involving a third party." (Girls, FGD, Kono)

The advantages of literacy to performing vocational skills were frequently noted, for example in tailoring (a commonly sought-after vocation).

"When you want to design a dress for someone, there are things you should take note of: first of all, you need to write down the name of that individual and write his/her measurement as against the name. Now tell me, if you cannot read and write, how are you going to achieve this?" (Girl, FGD, Koinadugu)

The following quote provides the perspective of a mother, who speaks from her own experience. The issue highlighted, of male partner infidelity, was a recurring one among focus groups.

"I say it is important for a married woman or girlfriend to be educated because when you are educated, the man will not cheat on you... When a text gets in his phone, I can easily read and know the content but if I, as a married woman, am not educated, even if they are signing my death warrant, I will be the one they will give the letter to carry because I don't know what is in there." (Female caregiver, FGD, Pujehun)

Outcome Indicator 1B. Percentage of EAGER Research Participants with improved learning outcomes in numeracy

This section provides baseline numeracy scores as well as stakeholder rationale for their interest in numeracy skills. As with the literacy scores above, data from focus groups provide additional context on girls' motivations as well as possible real-world applications of skills. IO1 (attendance) and IO2 (quality of instruction) findings in a later section extend these results and offer insights into how improved learning outcomes in numeracy may be achieved.

Headline results are:

- Girls performed best in the subtasks of counting, money & number discrimination, and word problems. On average, test-takers performed equally or slightly better on the real-world settings items.
- Those who attended formal school and dropped out scored only 3 percentage points higher on the money discrimination subtask than the number discrimination subtask; those who had never attended school on average scored 9 percentage points higher. This suggests that by measuring abilities using both real-life examples as well as more traditional assessment methods capture abilities of out-of-school girls.

- Although while not as strong as stakeholders' desire for literacy skills, assessment participants almost unanimously confirmed their interest in developing numeracy skills (girls, caregivers, and boys).
- Mean scores, non-learner rates, and proficient learner rates suggest no floor or ceiling effects.

Table 17: Foundational numeracy skills

Categories	Mean	SD	Non-learner 0%	Emergent learner 1%-40%	Established learner 41%-80%	Proficient learner 81%-100%
1a. Counting	79.0	32.0	8.9%	2.4%	16.0%	72.7%
1b. Number Identification	38.1	32.5	26.3%	26.9%	32.5%	14.3%
2a. Money Discrimination	53.6	34.8	18.7%	9.1%	34.4%	37.8%
2b. Number Discrimination	47.6	33.3	20.6%	19.0%	43.4%	17.0%
3. Level 1 Addition	45.2	38.0	28.3%	20.9%	25.6%	25.2%
4. Level 1 Subtraction	37.3	38.9	42.9%	13.7%	22.9%	20.5%
5. Addition & Subtraction of Large Numbers	29.2	34.0	46.9%	23.0%	17.8%	12.2%
6. Word Problems	49.0	34.5	21.0%	20.0%	30.4%	28.6%
Overall Score	47.3	27.4	5.4%	36.8%	42.9%	15.0%

As indicated above, per LNGB guidelines for literacy scores, the analysis divides each subtask's results into four categories; non-learner (0% correct), emergent learner (1-40%), established learner (41-80%), and proficient learner (81-100%), based on the percentage of questions they correctly answered in each subtask. For example, 72.7 percent of the sampled beneficiaries scored above 80 percent on the counting subtask, while 8.9 percent of the sample did not get any questions correct. Mean scores represent the average percent correct.

Progression of Difficulty. Girls performed best in the subtasks of counting, money & number discrimination, and word problems. As described above, subtasks were designed to progressively increase in difficulty. The only exceptions are that money discrimination is meant to measure the same skills as number discrimination in real-world scenarios, and that word problems utilise level 1 addition and subtraction but require the ability to apply those skills in real-world scenarios.

Depending on the test-takers' experience, applying maths skills to real-world scenarios may be easier or harder than completing an assessment. In both cases, test-takers performed, on average, equally or slightly better on the real-world settings items. Although the analysis does disaggregate by subtask and barrier group, results suggest that having both versions successfully captured skill levels among girls without formal schooling.

Those who attended formal school and dropped out scored only 3 percentage points higher on the money discrimination subtask than the number discrimination subtask; those who had never attended school on average scored 9 percentage points higher.

Unfamiliar test-taking. As discussed, the beneficiaries are primarily comprised of girls and young women with minimal formal schooling: 45 percent never attended school, and 45 percent dropped out during primary. Even though the assessments were designed to be more appropriate for out-of-school girls, respondents' lack of familiarity with the experience of being assessed may explain the higher-than-expected levels of zero scores on the first two subtasks.

Targets: Per LNGB guidelines, targets are set at 0.2 standard deviations after one year of support. Assuming the project is treated as 9 months of numeracy support, the target would be .15 SD above the mean. This yields an improvement of 4.1 points, or a target of 51.4, which seems reasonable and achievable.

Desired numeracy skills

As with literacy, girls and their caretakers expressed a clear desire to learn numeracy skills during focus group discussions. At the same time, participants provided fewer real-life examples of the potential use of these skills than they did for literacy skills. Those examples provided included counting money, giving change, keeping track of finances, recording measurements and using the telephone. Relevant illustrations of participant perspectives are below, drawing from girls but also from caretakers and boys.

“One can do business if he/she knows how to calculate well. If you are supposed to give someone Le 1,000 change but you give the person Le 9,000 change then, you are making a loss. This project should come and teach us how to read and write, calculate so that we can be able to support our families and make profit in doing business.” (Girl, FGD, Kono)

A female caregiver cited the need to know how to calculate properly as part of a business:

“I want to learn how to calculate because after doing my business I will not go and meet another person and say, ‘calculate for me this thing, please.’” (Female caregiver, FGD, WAU)

Finally, a participant in a boys' focus group also spoke about handling money:

“For me, it is because I do not want to give extra money to customers. For example, if someone buys and gives five thousand Leones and I am not numerically capacitated I may give more than what he gave me. Therefore, I want to protect my business. That's why I am interested.” (Boy, FGD, WAU)

Outcome Indicator 1C. Percentage of EAGER Research Participants with improved learning outcomes in life skills

The foundational life skills component of the baseline study assesses girls' proficiency on seven sub-topics. The table below presents the aggregate scores for each sub-topic, and the analysis also discusses areas that the project may wish to emphasise during instruction. Primary findings are that:

- In general, girls demonstrated a weak to moderate awareness on the wide range of knowledge, attitudes and skills assessed by this tool. Analysis of sub-tasks show that the majority of girls (58.8 percent) identified hostile intent in response to story prompts, but a much smaller percentage of girls say they would act out towards the individual and a higher proportion of girls demonstrated a tendency towards problem-solving.

- Results on the life skills assessment show that while girls demonstrate substantial knowledge on some health topics, there is significant room for improvement.
- Stakeholders displayed poor understanding of the term, “life skills,” and were unable to offer any illustrative examples.

Figure 21: Foundational life skills

Categories	Mean	SD	Non-learner 0%	Emergent learner 1%-40%	Established learner 41%-80%	Proficient learner 80%-100%	Total
1. Hostile Attribution Bias	41.1	34.2	29.8%	30.7%	25.7%	13.8%	100%
2. Emotional Regulation	77.9	23	0.9%	6.5%	33.8%	58.8%	100%
3. Conflict Resolution	80.3	19.6	0.1%	3.2%	33.3%	63.4%	100%
4. Self Efficacy	73.2	15.1	0.1%	3.2%	65.2%	31.5%	100%
5. Social Resources	75.7	25.9	2.6%	7.4%	32.9%	57.2%	100%
6. Supportive Relationships	50.2	12.9	0.0%	24.8%	73.8%	1.3%	100%
7. Health	61.2	25.5	2.2%	22.0%	49.7%	26.2%	100%
Overall Score	65.9	10.2					

Calculation.

A thorough discussion of the Life Skills calculation method can be found in the quantitative methods section above. The Life Skills assessment, like the literacy and numeracy skills assessments, comprised several subtasks, each of which is averaged together to create an overall index. The high average scores (in comparison with literacy and numeracy) is largely due to the many ways that items allow for partial credit. For example, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree questions that predominate self-efficacy, social resources, and supportive relationships items are such as “I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks,” a girl receives a 1 point for strongly agreeing, but still receives 0.25 points for the response of disagree, because it is preferable to a response of strongly disagree (0 points). This is a stark contrast to either being able to calculate a math problem for a point or not (0 points). This results in few girls receiving score below 10 percent of above 90 percent, but a much more nuanced result by capturing degrees of agreement or disagreement. This results in lower standard deviations, which also means that targets are smaller in actual number of points, but are the appropriate magnitude for the test.

Despite a high mean index score, the low standard deviation of the index demonstrates that there is sufficient room for improvement over time: floor and ceiling effects are absent (see histogram figure 61 in Annex 19: Annexed tables). Low standard deviations do not suggest that the index lacks nuance, simply that changes that appear small numerically may in fact be very substantial. Subtask scores are calculated using all observations of that subtask, including those that may not have attempted all of the other subtasks. The overall score is calculated based only on girls who attempted all subtasks. Seven percent of respondents who started the assessment chose to stop the assessment before completing all seven subtasks: this is believed to be primarily due to the

substantial time burden of all combined assessments and the Life Skills being the final assessment.

Unlike the other learning outcomes assessments, the categories of subtasks represent different aspects of life skills, and not in terms of increasing difficulty. For example, while letter recognition is foundational to word reading, one's health knowledge is entirely independent of one's opinions on self-efficacy. Unlike how some literacy skills serve as building blocks for others, the life skills measured are much more discrete. For example, the high percentage of girls rated as proficient in self-efficacy, and social resources are the result of giving a high percentage of "Agree (which would count as a score of 80 percent) and "Strongly Agree" (which would count as a score of 100) on questions in which those responses are desirable. Changing attitudes on such areas as gender norms in relationships, however, may be more challenging, but may be more important.

Main findings.

Given that the life skills index measures numerous different forms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, and those concepts are often more abstract than an ability to complete math problem or read words, caution should be taken in interpreting scores at baseline. Results will be much more insightful to compare changes over time at midline and endline. The highest life skills subtask score is of conflict resolution, with 63.4 percent of respondents engaging to resolve conflict in at least two of the three scenarios (yielding a proficient score). Generally, girls sampled show weak to moderate awareness concerning several knowledge, skills and attitudes. In the health section, 2.2 percent answered none correctly, and 22.0 percent answered fewer than 40 percent correctly. Just under one fourth (24.8 percent) scored 40 percent or lower on the supportive relationships questions, which suggests more disagreement than agreement with gender-positive statements. These findings provide indication of where mentors may need to place more emphasis in their life skills instruction.

Further analysis

As described in the methodology, Hostile Attribution Bias, Emotional Dysregulation, and Conflict Resolution questions were adapted from IRC's SERAIS tools. Their calculation is described in the quantitative methodology section.

The first aspect measured by the life skills assessment, Hostile Attribution Bias, is based on telling a story where a conflict takes place where it is unclear whether there was hostile intent by someone else or not.⁵⁴ The girl is asked what they think caused the incident, and their response is coded into intentional hostile intent by the person or accidental intent. On the first story, 59.6 percent of respondents assumed hostile intent, and results were consistent across the three stories. To convert to a score for the life skills index where 100 is the most desirable score, the score of 41.1 suggests that the average girl did not assume hostile intent in 41 percent of the cases.⁵⁵ As discussed in the methodology section, the SERAIS-related sections of hostile attribution bias, Conflict resolution strategies, and emotional dysregulation, have low Cronbach's alpha scores due to only having three to six items each, their interitem correlation is high. While additional items would have been desirable, piloting suggested there was a substantial risk of respondent fatigue, so the time-intensive stories were reduced to three.

⁵⁴ See quantitative methodology section and attached tools for a more thorough explanation.

⁵⁵ In this case, $100 * (3 - 1.77) / 3 = 41$

Given that these tools have been used effectively elsewhere by IRC and the similar prevalence rates across the three stories is suggestive that the items are consistently measuring the same concept.

Figure 22: Findings related to Hostile attribution bias

Category	Cronbach's Alpha	Story 1	Story 2	Story 3	Average hostile attributions (of 3)
Hostile Attribution Bias	0.54	59.6%	57.9%	59.3%	58.9%

Secondly, emotional dysregulation is calculated based on two other questions after the conflict story is read. The respondent is asked “What would be your first reaction? Sit down and hide your hands and cry? Would you shout and go after the person?” Independent responses are recorded for each question. On each story, 21.1 to 39.1 percent of respondents said that they would shout or go after the person, and 3.4 to 5.5 percent said they maybe would shout or go after that person. Dysregulation scores were scored as 1 for each “yes” response, 0.5 for each “maybe” and 0 for each “no” response. The average girl scored a 1.0 on anger dysregulation, which is equivalent to two “maybe responses or one “Yes” response. The average girl scored 0.3 on the sadness dysregulation. For the purposes of the life skill index, these questions were converted into an average score on a 100 point scale, where a score of 0 indicated answering yes to all anger and sadness dysregulation questions, and 100 indicated answering no; maybes were assigned a 0.5 value.

Overall, this subtask has some weaknesses as a measure of emotional regulation. First, it is susceptible to a desirability bias: if respondents believe that the desired response is to not have a dysregulated reaction, they are very unlikely to admit if they would. Second, even if a respondent was inclined to give an honest opinion, it requires a degree of honest self-perception that respondents may not possess. If the life skills training strengthens girls’ ability to understand and describe their emotional inner world, they may be more likely to answer honestly and affirmatively if the life skills training is effective. Another option would be to ask the question retrospectively about past behaviour, instead of hypothetical behaviour. However, because it is part of the adapted from the SERAIS tool, it may be preferable to keep the same question if comparability with other projects is a priority.

Figure 23: Findings related to Emotional Dysregulation

Category	Cronbach's Alpha	Response	Story 1	Story 2	Story 3	Score (0-3)
Angry: "Would you shout and go after the person?"	0.61 ⁵⁶	Yes (1)	21.1%	39.1%	31.9%	1.0
		Maybe (0.5)	3.4%	4.8%	5.5%	
		No (0)	75.5%	56.1%	62.6%	
Sad: "Sit down and hide your hands and cry?"	0.61	Yes (1)	11.5%	10.5%	7.5%	0.3
		Maybe (0.5)	2.3%	3.3%	2.3%	
		No (0)	86.2%	86.2%	90.2%	

After each story, respondents are asked what they would do next in the situation, in an open-ended format, without suggesting possible solutions. Enumerators then coded girls' proposed reaction into a variety of potential responses, including (i) physical and verbal aggression, (ii) disengagement, (iii) problem solving with the other person in ways to influence them or ask what happened, or (iv) find an authority to resolve the conflict. If respondents provided multiple answers, enumerators ask which is the first and most important thing they would do. On average, respondents suggested a problem-solving approach on two out of three questions. To convert to the life skills index subtask, girls were given a score of 1 for problem solving approaches to the resolution (such as asking the other person what happened), a score of 0 for physically or verbally aggressive responses, and a 0.5 response for responses are neither aggressive nor an attempt to resolve them (such as disengagement or authority seeking⁵⁷). The mean index score calculated for the conflict resolution subtask of 65 suggests there are no concerns for floor or ceiling effects.

Overall, a high percentage of girls suggested problem solving conflict resolution methods, such as telling the person how they felt or ask for their reasons for their actions: on average two thirds of the responses were problem-solving strategies. While physical or verbal aggression were comparatively a small percentage of the responses (4.3 percent on average), it is worth noting that 10.0 percent of respondents suggested an aggressive strategy on at least one story.

Figure 24: Findings related to experiencing conflict

Category	Story 1	Story 2	Story 3	Stories Average
Aggression	3.8%	6.0%	3.4%	4.3%
Disengagement	22.7%	21.7%	3.8%	14.7%
Seek Authority	8.9%	18.4%	14.5%	13.3%
Problem Solving	64.6%	53.8%	78.3%	67.7%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

⁵⁶ A more thorough investigation of reliability of the assessments overall can be found in the quantitative methodology section.

⁵⁷ While authority seeking may in some instances be a form of problem solving, stories are chosen where active engagement with the other person is a reasonable course of action.

Finally, health questions demonstrated substantial health knowledge, but with significant room for improvement. Girls most strongly expressed the ability to name two times when handwashing is important followed by their knowledge of sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention. Three-quarters of girls (74.9 percent) could name one place to get STI testing, and 71.0 percent could name a place to get family planning services. Despite knowing about community resources, very few could name STI prevention methods: only 18.4 percent of respondents could name two methods. The most common methods named were male condoms (44.6 percent), female condoms (16.0 percent), and abstinence (11.1 percent). No other forms of birth control were mentioned more than 4 percent of the time. Forty-five percent of respondents could not name two healthy ways to manage stress in their life, which may be related to the high prevalence of anxiety and depression. Of those who could name at least one healthy response to stress, the most commonly named strategy was talking with a friend (46.6 percent).

The health subtask index score was calculated as the mean of the health knowledge/practice items for each girl.⁵⁸

Figure 25: Findings related to health knowledge

Health Knowledge / Practice	Mean
Can name at least 1 healthy response to stress in life	54.5%
Understands the link between the onset of periods and pregnancy	68.4%
Can name at least one contraception method	64.1%
Can name one benefit to contraception	67.9%
Can name one place to get family planning services	71.0%
Can name two or more STI prevention methods	18.4%
Can name one place to get STI testing	74.9%
Reports using at least one effective contraceptive method ⁵⁹	77.8%
Can name two or more times when it is important to wash hands	78.7%
Can name two nutritious food groups	63.1%
Can name two types of food to avoid	28.5%
Overall Health Index	61.2

The Self-Efficacy scores are described in detail in the context of a broader discussion of girls' abilities to achieve goals under intermediate outcome indicator 3. The discussion of girls' opinions around gender norms and supportive relationships are discussed in the context of overall community gender norms in the discussion of intermediate outcome indicator 4.

⁵⁸ Girls who are not sexually active or are trying to conceive a child did not have that item averaged into their health index scores. Girls who could name one STI prevention method but not two were given half credit on that item to account for partial knowledge and allow for improvement despite its low mean.

⁵⁹ Only included for girls and women who are not sexually active or are sexually active but trying to conceive a child. This item is not calculated in the overall health index score for respondents for whom it is not relevant.

Qualitative focus on life skills

In order to supplement findings from the life skills assessment as well as to access multiple stakeholder viewpoints, several qualitative instruments addressed life skills. Tools explored life skills through discussions with LBS mentors and programme staff about their knowledge of life skills and their related teaching backgrounds. Analysis looked to identify if participants identified any life skills as key elements they wished to learn as part of the EAGER programme. Participants rarely made mention of the phrase “life skills” or topics the evaluation team could identify as life skills when asked about skills they hoped EAGER will cover, due perhaps to the ‘soft’ nature of life skills compared to literacy, numeracy and business⁶⁰. Within one focus group where the facilitator provided an example of teaching menstrual hygiene, female caregivers expressed support towards the provision of such skills.

Caregivers, girls and boys focus groups also responded to questions about the skills developed through the programme. Per guidance from the FM, an interview question was added to the girls’ KII protocol that focuses specifically on relationships with peers: “Please describe your relationships with other girls of your age group who live in your community. What are some of the benefits of these relationships? What are some of the challenges?” As findings for IO3 Indicator B demonstrate below, girls had generally mixed experiences with friends with 11 of 20 girls identifying positive experiences.

(See sections IO2, IO3 for further discussion of life skills indicators and 7.2 for the EE’s assessment of EAGER’s life skills approach.)

Target. The proposed target for increasing the average life skills index score is 0.2SD (or 2.0 points out of 100), which is reasonable by project completion. A regression analysis on the life skill index suggests that for every year of age, respondents score 0.7 percentage points higher. As a result, the target of a 2.0 point increase may be slightly conservative due to the natural progression of acquiring life experience, regardless of the project. A target of 2.7 is worth consideration. The midline will explore trends relating to age, comparing scores of younger girls at midline to the older girls at baseline.

Outcome Indicator 1D. Percentage of EAGER Research Participants with improved learning outcomes in business skills

The business skills training component will not begin until after the project midpoint and, as such, it was decided to wait to administer baseline business skills until the next external evaluation point, which will immediately precede business skills training. Notwithstanding this consideration, the evaluation team has conducted some illustrative analysis of girls’ existing knowledge of business skills drawing from both quantitative and qualitative data sets. Headline findings are:

- Less than one-fifth of girls (14.6 percent) of girls have attended courses or classes to learn special skills related to a job/business or livelihood with lower proportions for younger girls.
- The majority of focus groups with girls identified business skills as desirable, particularly in relation to key trades: tailoring, hairdressing, soapmaking, gara tie dying and catering.

⁶⁰ Please note that this occurred in communities where there were no other projects being implemented, so the girls were not exposed to such concepts before. There was no introductory meeting at this point related to EAGER’s life skills programming.

Main findings

According to girls' combined survey results, a small minority (14.6 percent) of girls have attended courses or classes to learn special skills for job/business/livelihood. The proportion is much higher in Kailahun (27.9 percent) and Kenema (29.9 percent); and much less in Koinadugu (5.3 percent), Port Loko (6.6 percent), Tonkolili (1.4 percent) and WAU (5.6 percent). The causes of this variation are unknown, but may be due to past programming in these districts.

Figure 26: Percentage of girls that have attended a course or class to learn special skills for a job/business/livelihood (by district; N=1957)

Categories	Yes	No	Don't Know
Bo	13.5%	85.7%	0.8%
Kailahun	27.9%	53.8%	18.3%
Kambia	15.6%	74.4%	10.0%
Kenema	29.9%	51.2%	19.0%
Koinadugu	5.3%	93.8%	1.0%
Kono	12.4%	86.7%	1.0%
Port Loko	6.6%	92.5%	0.9%
Pujehun	19.8%	78.3%	1.9%
Tonkolili	1.4%	98.6%	0.0%
WA Urban	5.9%	94.2%	0.0%
Total	14.6%	80.0%	5.4%

Disaggregation by age shows that younger girls (under 15) girls have attended trainings less often than their older peers, a difference that grows as the age gap increases. In addition, prevalence of girls who have attended such classes varies substantially by district, which may be due to variations in opportunities, for instance NGOs offering vocational or training programmes in some districts but not all.

Figure 27: Percentage of girls that have attended a course or class to learn special skills for a job/business/livelihood (by age group; n=1954)

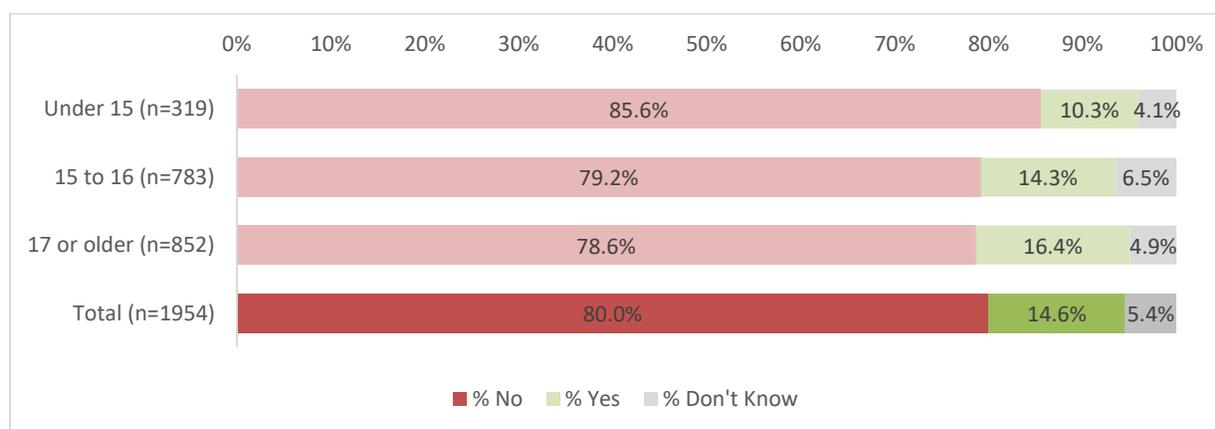
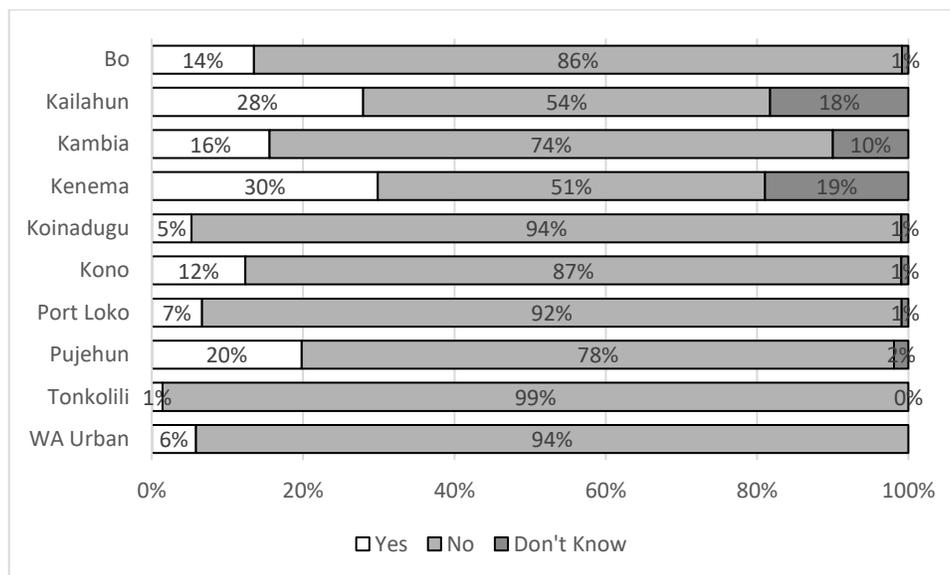


Figure 28: Percentage of girls that have attended a course or class to learn special skills for a job/business/livelihood (by district; n=1958)



In addition to survey results, among the 20 girls' focus groups, the desire to learn business skills was noted in 13. Although not always articulated as a "business" activity, even more focus group (nearly all, 18) identified trades such as tailoring, hairdressing, soapmaking, gara tie dying and catering. These trades surfaced so regularly within discussions that it seemed that participants felt that learning these skills naturally leads to viable employment.

All of these trades also fall along the lines of gendered roles; the girls and caregivers identify trades that they already understand to be typically female. This finding indicates the need for greater attention on teaching girls about entrepreneurship more broadly and helping girls to identify alternative opportunities within the community. In general, girls saw business as a way to better support themselves and their families (the latter a desire for 11 of 20 focus groups).

"I voted for the education that teaches me business because if for example today I don't have something to eat, I will take from my business for my survival." (Girl, FGD, Kambia). While not detrimental to focus on existent opportunities, it bears mention that this approach is GESI accommodating rather than GESI transformative⁶¹. The project might consider ways to help girls explore alternative opportunities, including entrepreneurship, particularly if saturation of existing possibilities may be a concern.

⁶¹ EAGER's completion of the GESI Assessment tool indicates that the project will have an approach at times accommodating and at times transformative.

6.2 Characteristic subgroup analysis of the learning outcome

The table below presents the results of the literacy, numeracy and life skills surveys disaggregated by subgroup and barrier.

Table 18: Learning scores by key characteristic subgroups and barriers⁶²

	Average literacy score	Average numeracy score)	Average life skills score
All girls	19.2	47.3	65.6*
Disability subgroups:			
Any Disability	16.4	41.5*	61.1*
Seeing	17.1	35.6	62.6
Hearing	10.4	28.2	53.6*
Walking	11.4	31.2	61.6
Self-care	18.7	39.5	50.1*
Communication	5.9	31.3	49.2*
Learning, Remembering and Concentrating ⁶³	11.4	30.6*	56.8*
Accepting Change, Controlling Behaviour and Making Friends	14.7	36.8	54.2*
Mental Health (Anxiety and Depression)	15.7	40.3*	61.8*
Project specific subgroups:			
Under 15	16.9	39.9*	63.0*
15 to 16	19	47.3	66.0
17 or more	20.4	50.2**	66.4
Female Head of Household	22.5**	48.9	66.7**
Married	15.8*	44.7*	66.3
Has Children ⁶⁴	19	47.7	64.8*
Barriers			
Paid or Self Employment	18.9	46.3	64.9*
Works Full-Time	18.6	50.6	66.5
High Chore Burden	21.3**	51.4**	67.9**
Never went to school	9.3*	36.1*	64.6*
Impoverished	19.3	44.6*	65.2
Hungry	19.1	43.7*	64.8*
Beneficiary is Head of Household	16.6	43.3	62.8*
Low Caregiver Support	19.8	42.4	66.1
Source: OLA, EGMA, Life Skills Assessments	N=2084	N=2079	N=2082

⁶² Per request, single asterisks indicate significantly different and lower. Double asterisks indicate significantly different and higher.

⁶³ Combined disability scores calculate the average score for each specific subgroup and average them together, per template guidelines.

⁶⁴ Either has children or could be pregnant.

Disability. Beneficiaries with disabilities in the sample have lower average scores than those without a disability on all three assessments. Literacy scores are not significantly lower than average among any specific disability group, but the lack of significance may be in part due to the small number of children with any particular disability in the sample. For example, despite communication disabilities having a much lower score than average, because there are so few with a communication disability, there is not enough statistical power to determine significance.

Numeracy scores are significantly lower overall and among girls who have difficulties in learning, remembering, or concentrating.

Of the three assessments, the differences in scores of the life skills assessments are most significant among those with a disability. In half of the categories of disability and overall, life skills scores are significantly lower than those not in that category. Beneficiaries with disabilities scored significantly lower on the sections on Emotional Regulation, Self-Efficacy, Social Resources, Supportive Relationships⁶⁵, and Health than those without a disability. Although it is difficult to generalise by any individual disability type due to their small proportion of the sample, the lowest life skills index scores by disability are due of beneficiaries with communication, self-care, and hearing disabilities. These include the majority of the questions on opinions and attitudes. Lower scores on social resources seems particularly worth noting, as these questions reflect the availability of/access to support structures in the community.

Age Groups. Among all three assessments, average scores increase among age groups. However, this is primarily due to education experience. When controlling for years in school, older girls do not have higher scores than younger girls: for every year of age, girls on average score half a point higher on the EGMA, half a point lower on the OLA, and sixth-tenths of a point higher on the Life Skills assessment.⁶⁶

Head of Household. As mentioned above, 9.2 percent of beneficiaries interviewed reported that they are their own head of household. They on average scored slightly lower scores, but only to a statistically significant degree in the life skills. Being the head of household likely indicates greater socio-economic/work burdens, making completion of the EAGER learning activities more difficult, but this also suggests greater potential benefit from participation in the project, as they have greater need for economic self-sufficiency and more responsibilities for others. This group merits specific monitoring over the course of the project to ensure any challenges with respect to participation are mitigated and additional indirect or unintended benefits are captured.

Marriage and Children. Married girls have significantly lower scores across all three assessments, an important consideration as married girls comprise 44 percent of the sample (and a similar proportion of the beneficiaries overall). Interestingly, beneficiaries who have children do not have significantly lower scores than those who do not. These results do not imply that having children will not pose challenges in participating in the project, but suggests that their starting point is on par with the other girls targeted for the project.

⁶⁵ The Supportive Relationships section relates to gender norms in romantic and intra-household relationships.

⁶⁶ When controlling for education level, the OLA and Life skills differences by age are statistically significant; the EGMA difference is not.

Work & Chore burden. This group is divided into two specific subgroups: those working and those with a high chore load. Currently, these groups have scores in line or above the averages of the sample, which invites the question of if a high chore burden is effectively a barrier to learning performance. There are two reasons to consider work and chore burden a barrier, however. First, higher scores may be in some part due to on average being slightly older and slightly more educated than those who do not work. Second, their ability to improve their scores through the project may face specific challenges, as will measurement of the project outcomes across the subgroups. Firstly, subgroup members may change as some beneficiaries reduce workloads to accommodate project activities. Secondly, progression may be hindered among those whose work and chore loads remain high once the project has started. It will be important to monitor how their scores improve over baseline scores, as opposed to comparing them to average scores of the overall sample. In addition, as the evaluation will track a cohort of girls, specific analysis at midline of cohort members that reported a high workload at baseline is merited. Analysis only of average scores of those with a high workload at baseline vs. average scores of those with a high workload at mid/endline may mask mobility of individuals in and out of these groups.

Education. Unsurprisingly, girls that never attended formal schooling scored lowest among the literacy and numeracy assessments. Among the listed subgroups of interest, they have the lowest average scores on both literacy and numeracy. Given that they comprise 45 percent of the beneficiary sample, this underlines the importance that the project is designed to meet the needs of those with no formal education experience.

Poverty. Among both impoverished and food insecure subgroups, significantly lower scores were only seen in the numeracy assessments. As with other groups, while their baseline levels may not be substantively different, they are worth tracking as a group to monitor if they face greater barriers to improving scores over the course of the project.

Figure 29: Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills Scores by district⁶⁷

District	Average literacy score	Average numeracy score)	Average life skills score
Bo	16.2*	44.1	63.7*
Kailahun	19.4	50.9**	65.0
Kambia	17.4*	46.4	60.6**
Kenema	13.9*	47.2	68.1*
Koinadugu	5.8*	34.2*	63.2*
Kono	27.5**	60.6**	71.2**
Port Loko	33.7**	59.8**	68.8**
Pujehun	11.8*	39.4*	60.4*
Tonkolili	14.5	33.9*	65.4
WA Urban	29.0**	52.4**	69.9**
All	19.1	47.3	65.6
Source: OLA, EGMA, Life Skills Assessments	N=2084	N=2079	N=2082

⁶⁷ Per request, single asterisks indicate significant difference and less than mean; double asterisks indicate significant difference and greater than mean.

The analysis has identified significant variation in scores across districts. In almost every case, each district's scores are significantly different from those not in that district: geographic differences have more explanatory power than almost any other difference identified. While some regional variation is to be expected, these differences are important to consider both programmatically and in terms of the evaluation. Programmatically, this suggests that how the curriculum for learning outcomes should be implemented will likely vary significantly between geographical areas. Port Loko, Kono, and Western Area Urban have higher averages across all assessments; Koinadugu and Pujehun have lower averages across all assessments. Regional variation may explain up to 12 percent of the variation of literacy and life skills scores and 10 percent of the variation of numeracy assessments⁶⁸.

While variation between locations is easier to implement than variation of needs within training sites, it does suggest that solutions and customisations will likely need to be geographically specific. In terms of the evaluation, it merits consideration that both scores and improvement may vary significantly between areas, and that this does not imply variations in the quality of project implementation, but variation in their starting points. For example, even with careful calibration of an instrument to show variation and be of the appropriate overall difficulty level, 100 hours of highly effective support to beneficiaries with high pre-literacy skills may translate to a 10 percent improvement in their ability to read correct words per minute; but the same amount of support for girls with no pre-literacy abilities may only have a 5 percent improvement, or vice versa.

⁶⁸ Based on R-squared values of regressions of outcomes on binary district variables alone: other factors may be correlated to regional variation, confounding results.

6.3 Transition outcome

The logframe describes Outcome 2 as the *number of marginalised girls who have successfully implemented their transition plan*. This section presents the transition pathways identified by the project as well as mixed-methods analysis of girls’ backgrounds and ideas for transition. At baseline, although the project has not commenced any activities on transition plans for the girls, it is helpful to consider a) what sorts of livelihood strategies they are presently involved in and b) the degree to which they feel confident that they have the knowledge and skills to pursue the type of job or livelihood that they desire. Findings on barriers provide information about challenges girls have encountered in the past. Further below, sections relevant to IO2 and IO3 present findings concerning facilitator capacity and more detailed perspectives on various facets of transition, exploring assumptions behind the project theory of change.

Table 19: Transition pathways (completed by project)

Intervention pathway tracked for transition	Please describe the possible transition pathways for this group	Aim for girls transition for next evaluation point	Aim for girls transition level by the time project stops working with cohort
cohort 1 (all girls)	<p>The project frames transitions in terms of “empowerment” and considers, economic, learning, household, community, and personal (self-esteem) as five types of empowerment. All girls will develop an individual transition plan and set goals for themselves under one or more of the specified areas. Girls will receive support and individual mentoring to develop and implement this plan over a 4-month period at the end of the learning phase.</p> <p>Economic empowerment refers to steps taken towards achieving employment, or self-employment. A number of Business-start up grants available for girls to apply for to initiate their plan. Where possible, girls will be linked with experts in their area of interest to provide further guidance and coaching. Learning empowerment refers to steps taken towards further learning, either in education (which is a less likely outcome but may be possible for a small number of girls), or training, such as learning a skill or vocation. Efforts will be made to link girls with experts in their</p>	<p>The girls’ will not set out their individual transition plan until after the midline assessment has taken place (i.e., after all literacy, numeracy, business and life skills sessions have been completed). For this reason a formal assessment of transition will not take place at midline.</p>	<p>This is still TBC, but one approach that may be taken is that the project set interesting targets— e.g. 50% fully transitioned, 30% partially, 10% in early progress, 10% no progress. If the definition envisaged above is adopted, with 5 empowerment categories, end goals to be chosen for each (as appropriate), and 3-5 steps to be created toward each goal, the project could match each of the above categories to achievement along these pathways (e.g. fully achieved goal = fully transitioned, at least 60% of steps to goal achieved = partially, only 1-2 steps = early progress, 0 steps = no progress).</p>

	<p>communities with whom they can undergo apprenticeships and funds will be available to support this. Empowerment in the community refers to taking on a greater role, either within an existing group (e.g. women's group, youth group), or starting a new initiative, for example to advocate for girls' education or empowerment. Empowerment in the household could be either with parents and immediate family, or with a partner, with goals such as greater decision-making power or independence set. Finally, personal empowerment may relate to any personal goals such as improved confidence or self-esteem, and progress could be reported against SEL measures.</p>		
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Pathway analysis

Appropriateness of proposed pathways

This section provides a response to the table above developed by the project. EAGER identifies broadly five types of empowerment, all of which are complex to measure. The cornerstone of the project transition is that girls identify goals for themselves that are tailored to their needs and options that are available within their communities and work towards them.

Discussions with the project that underline that transition should be understood as the beginning of a process, a nuance that could be further articulated in the project's pathways description above. With this understanding in mind, and given the findings below, the evaluation team found that choice of pathways is realistic for girls' skillsets and their environments. This approach provides girls alternative definitions for success from formal schooling and economic empowerment. There is expectation that opportunities will vary extensively across communities and be dependent upon each girl's unique background and skillset. The quality and effectiveness of the transition plan will heavily depend on the ability of facilitators and mentors to empower beneficiaries to develop actionable and reasonable plans for success. That success shall be defined according to personally articulated goals, while appropriate, will require close monitoring as well as qualitative investigations during the endline evaluation.

Feasibility of proposed pathways

The project identifies five possible empowerment transition pathways:

1. **Economic:** One-third of girls (33.2 percent) within the sample already identify themselves as being employed or having self-employment. The feasibility of girls beginning to improve their current economic situation will be dependent upon identifying appropriate opportunities and providing girls with the necessary support and resources to make realistic gains in a short four months.

Qualitative interviews with mentors, project staff and community leaders rarely identified opportunities beyond what girls may already be doing. Discussions with EAGER underline the project's continued dedication to developing a market analysis, as indicated within the project's theory of change. According to communications with the project, programme staff will carry out these analyses building upon similar previous exercises by BRAC and IRC. The project will, in turn, need to reinforce mentors' skills and awareness of opportunities at the local level, through local market assessments, in order for economic empowerment to be a beneficial and feasible transition pathway. Pairing girls with skilled tradespeople may be a very meaningful experience for the girls if the trades people are able to buy-in to EAGER⁶⁹. Where feasible, mentors and facilitators may support girls to link up with local markets and opportunity with support from the project staff.

2. **Learning:** The evaluation team is in agreement with EAGER's revised transition description that shifts some emphasis away from girls re-entering formal schooling to other transition pathways. Findings indicate that continuing formal schooling will not be a viable option for most girls. Although the possibility of returning to school came up in nearly half of focus groups with girls (8 of 20), girls also clearly spoke about discomforts at school, including being older and being teased for having children. Attending primary school, even for the youngest girls (age 13) would be challenging, particularly given the low learning scores identified above (19.1 percent in literacy, 47.4 percent in numeracy overall). Many girls would need to be placed in the lowest grades, which would be inappropriate given their age. Rather, skills training is the most likely type of learning in which girls might engage. Some focus group discussions identified active vocational education projects in their communities that they see as future possibilities, for instance, an ongoing Oxfam vocational education programme in a WAU community.
3. **Household:** Additional decision-making power within their household may be feasible for some girls, but not all. Nine percent of girls sampled identify as being the heads of household and likely already experience a high degree of empowerment within the household. Discussions on gender norms revealed the general sense that while men in the community (male partners specifically) are interested in girls gaining further education and thus contributing more substantially to household expenses, many of them also caveated that women should not be more educated than men; in short, empowerment will likely be limited to within existing gender norms, which, though evolving, remain largely traditional and discriminatory in nature. While possible in some cases, this transition pathway may be quite challenging for many girls within the project timeframe.
4. **Community empowerment:** Girls taking on a greater role, either within existing community structures, such as a women's or youth group, or starting a new initiative related to actively promoting girls' education and may be a realistic and meaningful way for some girls to transition. EAGER's efforts to develop community dialogues and any subsequent activities may offer girls with particularly useful opportunities to increase their responsibility and activism. The greatest challenge will be ensuring that girls have access to the resources and to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to become empowered and take a larger role in their community. This, like the others, will require ensuring that facilitators and mentors have the skills necessary to help the girls.
5. **Personal empowerment:** This may be the most difficult to measure but could be an important potential element within transition. As with the other empowerment pathways,

⁶⁹ Project note: This is planned and budgeted for as part of transition activities.

the greatest challenge will be ensuring that facilitators and mentors have the skills necessary to help girls empower themselves personally.

Gaining greater autonomy and decision-making power within a household is a challenge that requires substantial community change and may not be something that a girl can affect. EAGER will be engaging communities through dialogues as well as radio programming. Midline and endline evaluation activities should shed further light on the effectiveness of these methods to produce changes in attitudes and behaviour.

GESI responsiveness of proposed pathways

The degree to which individual transition pathways challenge or replicate current gendered norms will largely rely on the degree to which the girl is encouraged to challenge those norms either based on her own experience, is encouraged to do so in the 11 months of time at the safe space, and believes that she will have the support to make the changes that she wishes. While there is a year until this aspect of the project takes place, there is little evidence at the current time that the project yet has the infrastructure and resources for challenging and norm-changing pathways.

Suitability of project design with proposed pathways

While the 11 months of the project's structured learning project provide a broad base of knowledge and prepare beneficiaries to consider possibilities for their personalised transition plan, finding mentors and preparing clear plans on how community resources, networks, and skills and knowledge necessary for the five named types of transition will require considerable planning and resource building in the first year of the project. In addition, discussions with EAGER further clarify that the approach to transition will be seen as an ongoing process that is longterm and will likely continue after a participant completes the programme. While the contextualised individual approach may be an effective tool to achieve the desired outcome, it is a significant challenge to use individualised plans as an outcome indicator. This will require considerable discussion and development with the EE and FM to ensure the template for individualised plans articulates unambiguous definitions of "successful," "partially successful," and "unsuccessful" transition. The template will also need to shift the burden of clear definitions to the girls, mentors and facilitators. Effective preparation will be especially important, as both transition plan writing and completion will be conducted between the midline and endline.

Headline analysis

- Quantitative data show that just over half of girls (51.8 percent) have ever attended school.
- Over half of girls are not employed (57.5 percent) and 41 percent of girls have a high chore burden.
- Difficulties paying school fees is the most common reason reported (72.2 percent) barrier to girls attending school.⁷⁰
- Qualitative data identify overlaps between poverty and other factors.

⁷⁰ Since 2018, under the Government of Sierra Leone Free Quality Education (FQE) programme, fees are no longer required. Note that this option only pertains to "approved schools" and that in those schools that have not received official government approval, teachers often do not receive government salaries and schools may require fees in order to compensate the teachers. This may possibly explain these findings, along with the fact that for many girls, the decision not to enroll or to leave school may have been made before the FQE came into effect.

Table 20: Status at baseline

Status	Intervention (%)
Never been to school (%)	45.3%
Been to school, but dropped out	51.8%
Currently enrolled in formal school	2.8%
Currently employed by others	4.5%
Self-Employed	29.7%
Contributes to household income generation	2.2%
High Chore Burden (35+ hrs/wk)	41.0%
Source: Girls' Combined Survey N = 2,038	

Characteristic subgroups and barrier analysis

A discussion of the interaction of characteristics and barriers is presented in section 5.2. As discussed throughout the report, beneficiaries with children make up a significant portion of the sample (and overall cohort). On average, beneficiaries who are mothers are slightly older, are more likely to work, and have a higher work/chore burden. Interestingly, they are significantly more likely to be married and while they are less likely to be in a female-headed household overall, they are more likely to be their own head of household. Overall, these correlations suggest very busy lives with significant expectations and responsibilities.

Table 20 highlights that 2.8 percent of the sample were enrolled in school at baseline. This is contrary to beneficiary participation criteria (out-of-school girls only) and may signal that girls and their families saw EAGER as a competitor to formal schooling. The in-school beneficiaries may be girls who originally intended to be in the EAGER project and had found a way to continue with formal schooling, but had not yet communicated this fact to the project team. Discussions with EAGER staff about this observation affirmed the project's commitment to work with out-of-school youth, not to be seen as an alternative to formal schooling. The project's delayed start may have a positive unexpected side effect in inadvertently allowing for some girls to continue with formal schooling. The EE anticipates that girls attending school will not be able to remain in the programme and that this result drops to 0 percent at midline.

Extant Livelihoods Strategies

An investigation of girls' livelihoods strategies at the time of research allows for greater understanding of the background knowledge and experiences that girls will build upon as they develop and implement their transition plans. Data from the girls combined survey indicate that the majority of girls are not employed (57.5 percent) at baseline while 4.5 percent are employed by others and 29.7 percent are self-employed.

The table below identifies district-level distinctions and how self-employment is more common in Kambia (60.0 percent) and Kenema (46.7 percent) but less common in WAU (8.3 percent), Port Loko (15.0 percent) and Kailahun (20.0 percent). Girls indicated that informal employment was almost non-existent among girls, except in Kambia, where 28.3 percent said they were informally employed.

This may be due to qualitative differences in local economies and productive activities: if a high proportion of self-employment is in agriculture, for example, it is unsurprising that levels are lower in Western Area Urban. Even though employment levels are low, productive work appears to occupy a preponderance of girls' time. Analysis shows that 41 percent of girls spend 35 or more hours per week on household tasks, within the definition of a high chore burden. Additionally, 92 percent of girls report working in agriculture - including 83 percent of beneficiaries who claimed that they were not employed or working in any way. Overall, beneficiaries appear to rely on others for income, even though they spend significant time contributing to household productivity. This provides good evidence of the appropriateness of a project aimed at encouraging economic generation.

By age group, older girls are more often self-employed than younger girls. There are no significant differences by age group in the other employment categories.

Figure 30: Girls' descriptions of their employment (by district and age group; N=1956)

	Formal Employment	Informal Employment ⁷¹	Self-Employment	Household Generating Activities	Not Employed	Don't Know
All	0.3%	4.2%	29.8%	2.2%	57.5%	6.1%
Districts						
Bo	0.4%	0.9%	36.4%	0.4%	61.4%	0.4%
Kailahun	0.0%	0.5%	20.8%	0.0%	34.5%	44.2%
Kambia	0.0%	28.3%	60.0%	0.0%	11.7%	0.0%
Kenema	0.0%	3.3%	46.7%	5.7%	40.6%	3.8%
Koinadugu	0.5%	1.0%	23.0%	0.5%	72.7%	2.4%
Kono	1.0%	0.0%	30.5%	1.0%	63.3%	4.3%
Port Loko	0.4%	0.9%	15.9%	9.3%	71.8%	1.8%
Pujehun	0.0%	0.5%	27.0%	0.0%	72.5%	0.0%
Tonkolili	0.0%	0.0%	37.1%	2.9%	60.0%	0.0%
WA Urban	0.0%	7.8%	8.3%	2.0%	78.9%	2.9%
Age Group						
Under 15	0.3%	5.4%	19.8%	2.2%	66.0%	6.3%
15 to 16	0.3%	4.1%	32.0%	1.8%	56.1%	5.7%
17 or more	0.2%	3.9%	31.5%	2.6%	55.4%	6.5%

In terms of sectors of activity the largest proportion of girls surveyed (42.4 percent) replied that they have no set occupation. Of those girls who identified an occupation, 80.0 percent are involved in farming and/or fishing. There are no significant differences between girls with or without disabilities, nor based on age of the girl, in terms of their relative degree of farming for subsistence versus for income.

⁷¹ In line with the LNGB template, the evaluation team allowed respondents to make the distinction of whether they were informally employed or not. We see the benefit as including those who may not have regular pay, work, titles, or positions, but do work for money or other benefits

Among those without an occupation, most (50.8 percent) report spending most of their time doing unpaid work for the household followed by 24.7 percent saying they spend time on fishing/farming for subsistence for the family; 18.4 percent say they “don’t know.”

Figure 31: Girls’ main occupation (N=1956)

Categories	Proportion of sample
Farming/fishing primarily for subsistence	40%
Farming/fishing primarily for income	6%
Farm labourer (work on someone else's farm)	1%
Mining	1%
Artisan and craft workers (e.g. potter, weaver, carpenter, leather worker, shoemaker, food processor)	3%
Other paid labour	1%
Does not have an occupation ⁷²	42%
Other	5%

The girls’ survey also reported on the activities of girls who describe themselves as not employed. Over half (51.0 percent) spend most of their time doing unpaid work (household chores). Girls with disabilities more often report that they are unable to work due to disability or health condition but spend a similar amount of time doing household tasks as compared to girls without disabilities.

Figure 32: If you are not employed, which of the following statements is most accurate?

	Disability	Under 15	15 to 16	17 or more	All
I spend most of my time farming/fishing primarily for subsistence	13.9	15.8*	24.1	29.2	24.7
I spend most of my time doing unpaid work for the household (preparing meals, cleaning)	53.9	50.3	47.8	54.1	50.9
I am unable to work (e.g. due to a disability or health condition)	4.4*	0.0	0.2	0.7	0.4
I spend most of my time employed but am currently unemployed	2.6	1.0	0.7	1.1	0.9
Other	6.1	7.9	4.0	4.0	4.7

⁷² Note: question on employment arrangement and employment sector questions were asked of all respondents: many who said that they were self-employed or not employed. 17 percent of those who were not employed (nor self-employed) work in farming or fishing for subsistence; 1.5 percent who were not employed nor self-employed reported working in other sectors.

Girls most often spend at least some time fetching water (88.5 percent) and doing housework (88.3 percent) regardless of age. Older girls spend more time caring for younger or older family members and also more time on agricultural work as compared to younger girls. Nearly a third of all girls across all age groups help with a family business or work outside the home.

Figure 33: Beneficiaries who report having to help out with following tasks, by age (N=1,957)

Activity	Under 15	15 to 16	17 or older
Child Care	50.6%	63.6%	72.8%
Housework	82.5%	87.8%	91.0%
Fetching Water	89.7%	88.7%	88.0%
Agricultural Work	42.0%	58.0%	62.7%
Non-agricultural business/work	28.5%	30.4%	31.9%

Girls' confidence in their skills and knowledge to pursue jobs in the future

Most girls surveyed expressed at least some confidence in their skills in response to the combined girls' survey question, "Do you feel you have the skills and knowledge to do the kind of job you would like to do?" One quarter of respondents (25.9 percent) expressed confidence that they have the requisite knowledge and skills "to a great extent", while nearly half (45.0 percent) responded "to some extent." Less than one-fifth of respondents (18.9 percent) answered "not at all".

These results suggest that most girls feel they already have a strong foundation to be successful in their pre-project envisioned transition. These data do not correlate well with the girls' vulnerability profiles but perhaps are indicative of optimism for the future. This finding may also indicate that girls are not aware of possibilities beyond what they immediately already know and presents an opportunity for EAGER to broaden their knowledge and skillsets. There is no significant difference between girls with or without disabilities. Younger girls, however, those under 15, feel less confident than older girls, as might be expected.

Figure 34: Responses to "Do you feel you have the skills and knowledge to do the kind of job you would like to do?" by age

Do you feel you have the skills and knowledge to do the kind of job you would like to do?	Under 15	15 to 16	17 or older
Not at all	24.1%	18.9%	16.8%
To some extent	39.5%	45.7%	46.5%
To a great extent	24.5%	25.6%	26.7%
Don't know	11.9%	9.9%	10.0%

Disaggregation at the district level shows that there are significant differences between relative confidence in personal skills and knowledge by district, with respondents in Tonkolili feeling much less confident (only 37.1 percent feeling at least "to some extent"), followed by Kailahun (54.3 percent combined). Levels of confidence are highest in Bo (85.7 percent) and then, Port Loko (80.4 percent).

Figure 35: Responses to “Do you feel you have the skills and knowledge to do the kind of job you would like to do?” by district

	Bo	Kailahun	Kambia	Kenema	Koinadugu	Kono	Port Loko	Pujehun	Tonkolili	WAU	Total
Not at all	30	24	28	20	36	71	35	45	44	37	370
	12.66%	12.18%	15.56%	9.43%	17.22%	34.13%	15.56%	21.23%	62.86%	18.05%	18.93%
To some extent	126	61	111	72	124	76	136	79	17	77	879
	53.16%	30.96%	61.67%	33.96%	59.33%	36.54%	60.44%	37.26%	24.29%	37.56%	44.96%
To a great extent	77	46	8	79	41	59	45	80	9	61	505
	32.49%	23.35%	4.44%	37.26%	19.62%	28.37%	20.00%	37.74%	12.86%	29.76%	25.83%
Don't know	4	66	33	41	8	2	9	8	0	30	201
	1.69%	33.50%	18.33%	19.34%	3.83%	0.96%	4.00%	3.77%	0.00%	14.63%	10.28%
Total	237	197	180	212	209	208	225	212	70	205	1955
	100.00%										

Barriers to education

The caregivers’ survey provided an opportunity to better understand why sampled girls may have not gone to school or left school and how this may differ across subgroups. Caregivers most commonly attributed their daughters’/ wives’ absence of schooling to not having enough money to pay fees (72.2 percent). The next most common reason was that the girl needs to work/earn money or help around the house (23.4 percent) or the girl has a child or is pregnant (18.9 percent). Closer scrutiny reveals important district-level differences in barriers to education (a complete list of barriers is available in Annexed figure 60). As indicated in figures 36a and 36b, there are intriguing differences across districts. In Kambia, respondents are much more likely to say the girl needs to work to earn money or help at the house (58.1 percent) which was said to be much less likely in Pujehun (1.9 percent) and Koinadugu (5.4 percent). School dropout due to pregnancy or existing children was far more prevalent in Tonkolili (43.2), Bo (32.9 percent) and Kenema (31.9 percent) but was relatively rare in Koinadugu (1.5 percent) and WAU (4.4 percent). Safety issues were reported most often in Kambia (20.0 percent reporting issues to/from school and 13.8 percent reporting issues in school) and Kenema (16.4 percent reporting issues to/from school and 14.5 percent reporting issues in school).

Figure 36a: Caregiver responses for the question: “What are/were the main barriers to education for the girl?”

	Bo (n=237)	Kailahun (n=207)	Kambia (n=210)	Kenema (n=207)	Koindugu (n=205)	All Districts (n=2039)
Economic Barriers						
There isn't enough money to pay the costs of girl's schooling	62.0%	71.5%	68.1%	57.7%	42.4%	72.3%
Girl needs to work, earn money or help out at home	19.0%	11.1%	58.1%	36.2%	5.4%	23.5%
Travel						
Transport services are inadequate	3.4%	6.8%	17.1%*	23.2%**	3.4%	9.7%
It is unsafe for girl to travel to/from school	1.3%	8.7%	20%*	16.4%**	2.4%	6.3%
No one available to travel with girl to/from school	3.4%	3.9%	11.9%*	13.5%**	1.5%	5.5%
School is too far away	6.4%	7.7%	27.6%*	18.4%**	2.0%	8.9%
Personal						
Girl has a child or is about to have a child	33.1%**	19.3%	8.6%	31.9%*	1.5%	18.8%
Girl is not interested in going to school	18.2%**	11.1%	5.2%	10.1%	0.5%	10.1%
Girl is married or about to get married	17.8%**	4.8%	3.3%	17.4%**	2.4%	9.2%

Figure 36b: Caregiver responses for the question: “What are/were the main barriers to education for the girl?” [Continued]

	Kono (n=205)	Port Loko (n=203)	Pujehun (n=212)	Tonkolili (n=146)	WAU (n=206)	All Districts (n=2039)
Economic Barriers						
There isn't enough money to pay the costs of girl's schooling	85.4%**	78.3%	58.7%	85.6%**	79.1%	72.3%
Girl needs to work, earn money or help out at home	22.9%	24.1%	1.9%	38.4%**	22.3%	23.5%
Travel						
Transport services are inadequate	15.1%	9.9%	0.0%	20.5%**	1.9%	9.7%
It is unsafe for girl to travel to/from school	4.9%	3.9%	0.5%	2.7%	2.4%	6.3%
No one available to travel with girl to/from school	2.9%	3.4%	0.0%	14.4%**	2.9%	5.5%
School is too far away	3.4%	6.9%	0.5%	13.7%	4.4%	8.9%
Personal						
Girl has a child or is about to have a child	14.1%	26.1%	11.7%	43.2%**	4.4%	18.8%
Girl is not interested in going to school	3.9%	7.4%	23.9%**	15.8%	4.4%	10.1%
Girl is married or about to get married	5.4%	9.4%	0.0%	37%**	1.9%	9.2%

Qualitative interviews with girls, caretakers and boys of the same age provide additional insights into cultural norms and barriers that may affect girls schooling and complicate participation in the EAGER project. Focus groups confirmed that financial difficulties were the main driver in preventing girls from attending school but they also identified the overlap between poverty and other factors.

One such factor is lack of parental support required for schooling. This can be due to lack of esteem for education by parents, but also takes the more literal form of the absences of one or more parents. In the former, some girls noted during focus groups how parents' lack of attention to their children's schooling may have contributed to them leaving school.

“Some parents do not support or monitor their children when in school. After paying the school fees, they don't check to know how the children are doing and they don't honour other school commitments. Some of the girls who are going to school drop out because they don't have clean uniform or shoes to go to school and they stopped going to school.” (Girl, FGD, Kono)

A lack of parental support may more obviously manifest as parents not enrolling their children in formal schooling due to philosophical differences, boys and male caregivers in Kailahun and Port Loko highlighted how the community tended to prefer Arabic⁷³ education to formal English schooling.

Similarly, at least one girl in every FGD (n=20) shared a story of losing a parent and subsequently dropping out of school. Often, relatives who take a girl in after the loss of one or more parents do not have the means to provide for her education. One girl shared such situation during a focus group, explaining how her own resourcefulness was still not enough to allow her to overcome financial hardship and continue her education:

“The reason why some of us the girls are not going to school is because, some of the parents are poor, especially me. My father died during the war and he is poor. My father's relatives did not care about me. I was paying my own school fees, and I had to sell my *boma* [a form of labour]...And I will use that money for school materials but at the end I stopped going to school because I cannot continue to pay.” (Girl, FGD, Kono)

In addition, stakeholders made the link between lack of resources and sexual activity and how this may lead to school dropout. Some girls explained how a girl may need to stop school because her parents can no longer afford the cost but how that staying at home and being idle may lead her to become pregnant. Relatedly, in some focus groups, girls explained how the fear of an increased risk of pregnancy and dropping out of school restricts parents' desires to send their children to school in the first place. In other cases, sexual activity is the means to accessing funds:

“Some of these girls may have determined to be educated but due to family financial constraints, it makes them get impregnated easily. If a girl has someone in the corner (a man who is seeking a woman to have sex with) that gives her Le 1,000 to 3,000 (\$0.3), she will follow that person rather than her family. That is because her family is poor. Poverty is the main reason why girls do not get educated.” (Male caregiver, FGD, Kono)

In both Koinadugu and Port Loko girls in focus groups identified early marriage more than early pregnancy as a factor that has inhibited girls from attending school. A parent from Tonkolili explained how parents may see early marriage as a financial opportunity:

⁷³ When stakeholders refer to “Arabic” education, they are referring to education activities at the Islamic madrasas (Koranic schools) within the communities. Recitation of the Koran uses the Arabic language.

“The other problem also is that we, the parents, [we push] them. When the child has grown up, we want to send them to a married house [to get married] so that we can ‘eat’ the bride price.” (Male, FGD, Tonkolili)

Also connected to a lack of means, girls spoke specifically about how not having lunch, or money to buy lunch, often led them to leave school. This factor seemed particularly relevant for the focus groups in Tonkolili⁷⁴.

As one girl shared,

“Some girls go have sex with men just to earn money as lunch since their parents cannot afford it for them. They will become rude to their parents. They will keep going to those men and in the process, they get pregnant and stop school.” (Girl, FGD, Tonkolili)

These comments illustrate how many girls and their families live precariously and have to often prioritise their immediate needs over their long-term wellbeing. Focus group exchanges also suggest the importance of EAGER being attentive to girls’ economic needs. According to discussions with the project, limited start-up funds will be available for girls interested in businesses as well as to support training and/or apprenticeships during the transition phase.

Lastly, initiation ceremonies, i.e., participation in “Secret Societies” or “Bondo” initiation/society, are widely associated with female-genital mutilation (FGM), and are generally understood as one of the barriers to enrolment and/or a cause of drop-out in Sierra Leone. Qualitative analysis coded for this barrier. In two of the 20 girls’ focus groups, the topic arose as a barrier to education and in both cases, participants linked initiations to early marriage. A girls’ focus group in Kailahun identified how girls often stop their education to become initiated and then married while the focus group in Kono discussed how parents may not send their children entirely to school because they see it futile when girls will marry early and become initiated. A female caregiver in Koniadugu explained her own experience of leaving school to be initiated and then married. Similarly, a mentor in Kenema and one of the community leaders in Kenema spoke of initiation as an alternative to schooling, another way to gain responsibility within the community. Other stakeholders spoke of initiations as a general barrier to education, in particular, how the timing may conflict and once girls miss school they are likely not to return. Stakeholders that spoke of this aspect of the issue included facilitators, mentors, caregivers, community leaders and government officials. A boys’ focus group in WAU also identified the initiations as a major obstacle to girls’ school completion. As they said,

“Bondo’ Society or what they call Female Genital Mutilation is also another reason for the massive dropouts among girls. For instance, if a girl has to take the West Africa Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and the exam clashes with the Bondo initiation, most girls will forego the exam for the initiation especially in the provinces. Consequently, most of them will just give up on education and eventually get married.” (Boy, FGD, WAU)

The issue of FGM also came up when stakeholders spoke about existing discussions on social norms. Some stakeholder identified how preventing FGM among minors is a common topic. Local government officials in Koinadugu and Port Loko identified how communities are actively working to avoid conflicts between initiation practices and school calendars.

⁷⁴ The use of the term “lunch,” may warrant further exploration to determine if girls literally meant “lunch” or if it is a general euphemism for money that provides for their sustenance.

“I can give you a vivid example about a community who wanted to make a secret bondo society; they called me and asked me when schools will be close because they wanted to organise the programme during the holidays. I gave them the correct date and they used that date to practice their society. They did this because; they did not want the programme to disturb girl child education. So, you see, they are having these discussions.” (Local official, Koinadugu, KII)

Although it bears mention that interview questions did not directly address the topic of initiation and FGM, the issue arose in seven of the ten districts, with Kambia, Pujehun and Tonkolili being the exceptions. This could be due to differences in probing techniques by those teams as well as the nature of the data collection which was a relatively quick dive rather than an ethnographic approach which may be more sensitive to such often delicate topics. It is also widely understood that such topics should only be discussed among the initiated, so not likely to be discussed during such a focus group.

Suggestions for lessening barriers

Participant interview data offers suggestions for how to better support them in transition. Suggestions include the provision of start-up funds for those who wish to do businesses, for instance, the provision of a sewing machine at the end of the learning phase and, even more commonly, arranging daycare options for children of young mothers. Additionally, at least two stakeholders, a girl in Kambia and a male partner in Pujehun, identified lending circles (“*osusu*”) as a community resource that would be very useful to youth during transitions. In addition to having start-up funds integrated into the project design, discussions with EAGER affirm that the project is exploring lending circles/village savings and loan associations (VSLAs).

6.4 Sustainability outcome

EAGER aims to be able to demonstrate that the increase in learning for out-of-school girls and transition to other empowerment pathways as a result of the project will continue beyond the end of the project cycle. Three indicators inform this outcome (see Table 21) each representing one of the three levels of interest: national, learning (safe) space, and community level. There is overlap between two of these indicators and IO Indicators below, specifically the system-level indicator, Indicator 1 with IO4A and IOB, and the community-level Indicator 3 with IO4C. For this reason, this section provides a general overview of findings while a more detailed treatment follows within the IO4 sections. The table below and subsequent paragraphs examine baseline conditions for the three relevant indicators based on criteria within the sustainability scorecard.

Table 21: Sustainability indicators

	System	Community	Learning space
Indicator 1:	% of radio listeners that foster more supportive attitudes towards girls' learning / education / entrepreneurship / participation in society (disaggregated by sex)	(Indicator focuses only on system level)	(Indicator focuses only on system level)
Indicator 2:	(Indicator focuses only on learning space level)	(Indicator focuses only on learning space level)	% of girl groups that decide to continue meeting and creating a conceptual safe space for each other after completing the learning programme
Indicator 3:	(Indicator focuses only on community level)	% of community leaders, boys, and caregivers that report positive and empowering attitudes towards girls' education (disaggregated by sex)	(Indicator focuses only on community level)
Baseline Sustainability Score (0-4)	N/A	1	N/A
Overall Sustainability Score (0-4, average of the three level scores)	1		

System-level

According to the project's logframe, the first national-level indicator focuses on radio listeners and is the subject of an additional evaluation process by BBC Media Action, which will include three waves of qualitative data collection. While this indicator is new to the logframe since baseline data collection and not included in this baseline evaluation⁷⁵, the evaluation team is able to provide some qualitative findings to inform this indicator. (See a more thorough treatment of findings in sections related to Indicators IO4 A and B) Nonetheless, the evaluation team strongly recommends that BBC Media Action provide a baseline measurement of radio listeners with gender-supportive attitudes in order to demonstrate progress.

Baseline qualitative data did explore community members' general feelings about radio as a platform for discussing gender norms and girls' education and findings show that feelings are mixed.

⁷⁵ The EAGER project originally intended to include a more system-level approach involving national government partners, particularly in support of the government's strategic outcome for increased literacy for out-of-school (OOS) youth as identified within the ESP 2018-2020.

Data suggest that although radio may offer the opportunity to complement discussions on gender norms and the importance of girls' education within the community, it is one tool of many to be accompanied by community-level, and face-to-face interactions. By district, opinions varied substantially: of the 16 stakeholder interviews per district⁷⁶ Tonkolili (13), Kambia (12) and Western Area Urban (11) supported radio as a useful medium of information on the topic. Kenema (4), Kailahun (4), and Bo (5), however, showed the least support for radio programming (see IO4 Indicator B below for a more detailed exploration).

EAGER's proposal indicates that the radio intervention and community discussions are to work in tandem. Based on the community feedback, it may be more effective to elevate facilitated in-person discussions as the primary role with support from radio programming as a content source.

⁷⁷

Learning space-level

The second indicator measures continuation of conceptual safe spaces after the 11-month learning programme. This intrinsically cannot be measured until the first cohort's completion of the project. As the project commenced (and safe spaces were established) in January 2020, the baseline indicator value is 0 percent. It is not possible to identify a sustainability scorecard value at this time. Both midline and endline evaluations will seek quantitative and qualitative data on this indicator. Additional clarity from the development partners on what defines a conceptual safe space is needed.

Community-level

The third indicator focuses on the community level and is nearly identical to IO4 Indicator C: *% of community members that foster more supportive attitudes in learning / education / entrepreneurship (disaggregated by sex, role)*.

While the IO4C section below provides a more detailed discussion, the analysis below draw on those findings as necessary to inform the sustainability scorecard. Per the means of verification in the logframe, these findings provide an assessment of positive attitude based on qualitative transcripts using an indicator scale identifying a percentage of respondents demonstrating positive attitudes. While there are some data on gender norms for household heads of beneficiaries, these data are not representative of gender norms within communities.

Summary of Findings

- Analysis of stakeholder perspectives using criteria within the sustainability scorecard shows that, with few notable exceptions, nearly all focus groups with boys, with caregivers and with community leaders (91.5 percent) demonstrate a "latent⁷⁸," rating.
- While individuals and groups in the "latent" category demonstrated a willingness to support girls' education, they continue to identify barriers and do not signal they would actively fight to reduce those barriers. District analysis identify notable cases of "negligible⁷⁹" cases.

⁷⁶ Only KIIs with girls and KIIs with male partners did not address the issue of radio.

⁷⁷ Project note: this is the intended approach from a preliminary design of this activity.

⁷⁸ Community stakeholders are developing knowledge and understanding and demonstrate some change in attitude towards girls' education.

⁷⁹ There is evidence of improved practice and support for girls' education in specific ways being targeted by project; Change is not universally accepted among targeted stakeholders, but support is extending.

- Discussions on gender issues do occur at the community level in most communities, though most often via external mediation. Active community initiatives to promote girls' schooling were rare.

Reflections

Calculating the scorecard based on qualitative data, particularly focus groups, is insufficient. Focus group discussions, by nature, encourage differences of opinion. They also are not readily structured to capture tallies as one would with a survey. The evaluation team welcomes a discussion with EAGER to identify a more comprehensive approach that also addresses the various levels of the sustainability scorecard reading at the individual and structural level within the community.

Targets

Given that those individuals within the “negligible” category exhibit more entrenched beliefs regarding discriminatory gender norms, achieving positive behaviour change over the course of the project life cycle with these groups is less likely. The evaluation team recommends a target of 95 percent of community leaders, boys, and caregivers that report positive and empowering attitudes towards girls' education, as defined as the “latent” category or higher on the sustainability scorecard (from 91.5 percent at baseline).

Main findings

Within the interviews and focus groups that addressed preferences for girls' education, 65 of 71⁸⁰ (91.5 percent) of stakeholders signalled that girls should have the opportunity to get an education. The remaining six individuals and focus groups (8.5 percent) expressed clearly that boys should have the right to education but that this was not important for girls. The six individuals comprised five males and one female: one Mammy Queen, two (male) Youth Leaders, one male partner of a beneficiary, and all participants in two boys' focus groups. Of those six, two each were in Kailahun and Koinadugu, and one each in Kenema and Pujehun. One boys' focus group in Kailahun cited that Arabic education should be prioritised for girls; a focus group in Koinadugu argued that girls' education was not a worthwhile investment as girls would just get pregnant. These two groups are significant because they represent the opinion of 14 boys (6 in Kailahun and 8 in Koinadugu). At the same time, the findings signify that there are diverse viewpoints within communities and even where some may express more static opinions about girls' education, others demonstrate a change in mind-set, however incremental.

Figure 37: Number of Interviews and focus groups by district on sustainability scorecard

Values	Bo	Kailahun	Kambia	Kenema	Koinadugu	Kono	Port Loko	Pujehun	Tonkolili	WAU	Total	%
Negligible (0)	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	6	8.5%

⁸⁰ In order to quantify focus groups a binary determination is required. For the sake of the scorecard scoring, focus groups that demonstrated mixed results (where some individuals expressed more traditional views and others argued strongly for girls' education) are counted as latent because they show some change in attitude. Another limitation is that there were more than 71 KIs and focus groups with boys, caregivers and community leaders. Coding indicates that an opinion about the value of girls' education was present. For other interviews, the question may have been asked and probed but a response may have been off-topic. For others, the question may have been skipped.

Latent (1)	8	6	8	6	5	4	5	7	8	8	65	91.5%
Emerging (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Becoming established (3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	8	8	8	7	7	4	5	8	8	8	71	100%

General findings on community dialogues within sampled communities

Data from FGDs and KIIs indicate all sampled communities hold community meetings and dialogues, but they differ in terms of their regularity and their purpose. None of the communities indicated they had regular meetings specific to gender issues/girls' education, but rather that it was a topic that would come up from time to time in general meetings. All communities sampled, with the exception of the one in Tonkolili, indicated that such discussions most often convene due to external motivation, for instance, as part of a civil society initiative. Data on frequency of these events were inconclusive, with contradictory contributions from different stakeholders within the same community⁸¹.

To be able to fully map the practice of dialogues within communities would require additional research. When asked about inclusion of various community members at the meetings, respondents stated that there were no instances of people being excluded (with the exception of small children). However, one leader within the Kono community explained how some topics are more relevant to men than others, and in this case, men only are convened. While this finding was not evident within the other sampled communities, topic-dependent invitations may be more widespread than indicated.

Interviews with community leaders (community heads, mammy queens and youth leaders) covered the cross-cutting nature of gender issues. In general, stakeholders interpreted questions of gender norms to address expectations for boys and girls/men and women within the community. Conversations about initiation ceremonies, early marriage, girls' pregnancy, etc. were said to take place in some communities, but in all cases, these were noted as being externally driven. Nonetheless, community members seemed to generally accept that these activities were helping to change practice / increase girls' rights. Active community involvement to promote girls' schooling was reported less often, although two communities (Kailahun and Kono) indicated there were fines in place to punish families who did not send children to school. A third (Bo) identified laws against girls watching movies at night so they have more time to study as well as another law aimed at ensuring sexual rights and child protection.

Shifting perspectives

The following quotes demonstrate evolving mentalities vis-à-vis girls' education. These boys' focus group comments provide juxtaposition with the focus groups in Koinadugu and Kailahun that were not supportive at all of girls' education.

⁸¹ For example, while focus groups with boys and male caregivers in Koinadugu responded definitively that there were no discussions on gender norms and girls' education within the community, other stakeholders in the community stated that various organisations do indeed initiate discussions on sexual rights.

"As for me, that thought was not in me before but since I have learned that if a female child is educated it is an opportunity and a benefit for my country and even this community. So, it is now that I have gotten that experience." (Boys FGD, Bo)

"Yes, Sir. It is now I have got that idea because I am seeing what our present president's wife is doing - the things she is doing for her family - and this is where I got that idea from." (Boys FGD, Port Loko)

"A lot of sensitisations are going on these days especially from NGOs about girl's education...A lot of people in this community think the same as we have noticed the importance of girl's education" (One community leader, KII, Kailahun)

Table 22: Changes needed for sustainability

Questions to answer	System	Community	Learning Space	Family/household	Girl
Change: what change should happen by the end of the implementation period	GoSL will be supported to achieve strategic outcome for increased literacy with OOS youth	Community leaders, caregivers and male youth will experience a shift in attitudes, and understand and support adolescent girls in navigating barriers to education and their transition to adulthood.	Rehabilitated safe spaces will remain in place for other activities and groups in the community to avail of. Trained Facilitators and mentors will remain as assets in the community, capable of supporting further learning.	Girls will use the skills they have developed in life skills sessions around communication and conflict resolution in their everyday lives and at home; Some girls will make specific transition plans around household empowerment as part of their individual pathway. Some caregivers will attend the community dialogue sessions and should demonstrate more positive attitudes towards girls' education and empowerment	Girls are better equipped with the skills, knowledge, and increased confidence to help them navigate risks and challenges and better support themselves and their families.
Activities: What activities are aimed at this change?	Project generated-evidence in best practices to support OOS girls will be shared to inform policy changes;	1) Community Dialogue meetings with community leaders, to discuss key issues impacting adolescent girls	Rehabilitation of safe spaces, training and coaching with mentors and facilitators.	Life skills sessions, transition plans, one-to-one mentoring, community dialogue sessions.	BLN, life and business skills, mentoring, start-up/training grants

	EAGER BLN and Life Skills Curricula will be used for national non-formal learning programmes	before forming action plans aimed at addressing issues identified 2) Learning Circles with boys 3) National and local radio programming focused on issues affecting adolescent girls (Wae gyal pikin tinap)			
Stakeholders: Who are the relevant stakeholders?	MBSSE, MGCA; UNFPA & UNICEF (supporting GoSL non-formal learning programme)	Community leaders, male youth, BBC Media Action (national radio show) and 18 local radio stations	Mentors and facilitators	Girls, mentors, caregivers	Girls, mentors, facilitators
Factors: what factors are hindering or helping achieve changes? Think of people, systems, social norms etc.	Reshuffling of cabinet ministers and reorganisation/division of ministries	Changing attitudes based on prevailing social norms may take more time than that covered by the evaluation; for radio shows, access to radios and time to listen to shows will be a decisive factor.	Community willing to continue allowing access to safe spaces, capacity level of mentors, attendance at training sessions.	Support from family/household for girls wanting to take on more active roles may be hindered by social norms. Capacity level of mentors to deliver life skills sessions and support girls to develop individual transition plans.	Attendance at sessions, capacity of mentors and facilitators, appropriateness of curriculum, support from families and community members.

Based on the analysis provided by the EE, one of the most difficult sustainability objectives to achieve will be at household level, due to prevailing gender norms that are deep-rooted and very difficult to change. The EE recommends that one of the best ways to target these norms are through community meetings, an assessment that the project agrees with; finalising our approach to this component is one of the key activities being undertaken by the project at present. Adina difficulties may arise around girls' transition, due to limited capacity of mentors. Potential issues with capacity is an issue that the project became aware of.

7. Key Intermediate outcome findings

7.1 Key Intermediate outcome findings

Five intermediate outcomes support the attainment of EAGER’s outcomes related to learning, transition and sustainability. The following sections explore the baseline findings for each of these IOs and their relevant indicators, offering reflections for EAGER’s next steps and identifying targets for each indicator.

IO1: Attendance

Summary of findings

As the project activities had not started, attendance data were not obtained at baseline. This section instead considers some of the elements that may affect a girl attending a safe space programme reliably. The headline finding: Most girls (nearly two-thirds) often do not feel sufficiently empowered to make their own choices about whether they attend or stay in an education programme. Targets are set based on minimum levels considered necessary to be meaningfully enrolled and obtain the benefits of regular participation. While articulation of tangible support from males to attend the safe space is rare, a small number of clear voices stood out from focus group and interviews as willing to make changes to support girls’ education.

Table 23: Intermediate outcome indicators as per the logframe, Attendance

IO	IO indicator	Sampling and measuring technique used	Who collected the data?	Baseline level	Target for next evaluation point	Will IO indicator be used for next evaluation point? (Y/N)
Attendance	Girls' monthly attendance rate in Life Skills programme	Safe Space Attendance Tracker	Project	0%	65%	Y
	Girls' monthly attendance rate in Literacy & Numeracy programme	Learning Space Attendance Tracker	Project	0%	65%	Y
	Girls' monthly attendance rate in Business Skills programme	Safe Space Attendance Tracker	Project	0%	65%	N

Main qualitative findings

- While here is little overt resistance to girls’ participating in the project, clear articulations of support from males are rare.

Main findings

Although the EAGER project had not yet begun at the time of baseline data collection, information has emerged from certain survey questions and qualitative tools that provide an indication of stakeholder perceptions that may influence attendance.

Girls' ability to make decisions about their education

Girls' survey data provide information on girls' perspectives of their personal agency in attending educational activities in general. As summarised above, when asked for level of agreement with the (negatively framed) statement, "I cannot choose whether to attend or stay in education. I just have to accept what happens," girls tended to agree a lot (37.3 percent) or a little (28.8 percent), resulting in an overall average score on a four-point scale of 2.9. Respondents expressed least confidence in their personal agency in Tonkolili and Kono, where 83.3 and 78.1 percent (respectively) agreed with the statement; and most confidence in their personal agency in Port Loko and Kenema, where only 42.2 and 53.9 percent (respectively) agreed with the statement. Beneficiaries who are impoverished, or from households that are food insecure expressed a perception of lesser control over their education choices than the average. It is reasonable to interpret these as economic barriers and not necessarily about their level of personal agency in decision-making. There are no significant differences in responses between age groups.

Figure 38: Average agreement with statement: "I cannot choose whether to attend or stay in education. I just have to accept what happens": (1=Strongly Disagree; 4=Strongly Agree)

	Average Agreement
Overall	2.9
Impoverished	3.0*
Food Insecure	3.1*
Bo	2.9
Kailahun	3.1
Kambia	3.1
Kenema	2.8
Koinadugu	3.1
Kono	3.2*
Port Loko	2.4*
Pujehun	2.8
Tonkolili	3.4*
WA Urban	2.9

Support for girls to attend safe spaces

Although IO4 below addresses in greater detail how gender norms may affect the outcomes of the EAGER project, qualitative interviews provide additional insights specific to girls' attendance. Conversations with stakeholders provide little evidence that men will actively restrict girl's attendance of EAGER activities. A single account arose during a girls' focus group of how a husband refused to let the participant take part as he was concerned that she would "become unfaithful". During fieldwork, an interview with female stakeholders was also interrupted by a husband demanding his wife come back to take care of the children.

As such, there are surely implicit restrictions that may surface during implementation that are not so easily identifiable in the interview setting.

While such clear expressions of conflicts of the aims of the project with gender norms and roles were rare, definitive feedback from male stakeholders during caregiver FGDs and KIIs with girls' partners also remained scarce as they rarely indicated what they might do to help ensure girls' participation / attendance in the classes⁸². A small number of men across the sample expressed that they would take over girls' household duties to enable her to spend the extra time learning. For example, husbands in Western Area Urban and Kailahun noted that they would take on housework to enable their wives to attend school.

“Firstly, I will make sure I take all the responsibilities in the home, for example, taking care of the children, their lunch, school materials, and the feeding in the house so that she can focus on her learning with full attention.” (Male caregiver, FGD)

Similarly, a father-in-law of a girl in Bo urged others in the focus group to take an active role in helping girls enrolled in the project.

“My son’s wife is one of the girls who has registered for the EAGER project but she wanted to reject the offer because she has a child and no one is there to take care of him when she goes for classes. But, I told her to go and I will be taking care of the child when she goes for her classes.”

An interview with the project staff in Bo provided information on how initial enrolment efforts in Bo were met with heavy resistance from men, but that through advocacy for the project, EAGER staff were able to convince men to be more supportive, including bringing their wives to enrol. Such testimonies are valuable evidence of gender transformative attitudes and indications of the existence of potential male champions within EAGER project communities. Similarly, the indications of resistance to girls' participation should raise flags for EAGER to closely monitor girls' abilities to attend sessions and any difficulties they may be facing related to gender-norms.

Reflections

No data were collected for all three IO1 indicators as they relate to attendance and EAGER instruction has not yet begun. The EAGER implementation partners themselves are expected to implement regular attendance reporting after activity commencement.

The indicators will provide useful insights into how these areas of the project are implemented. While there is likely high correlation between the four subindicators, tracking them separately will help identify if there are particular issues with certain topics of instruction.

The project logframe describes that the indicator will be verified according to the attendance register and bi-monthly spotchecks by programme staff. The evaluation team strongly recommends ensuring it is measured and defined as described below.

Targets

We recommend that the attendance rate target set at 65 percent. Given that the curriculum builds upon previous lessons in its teaching methods, we believe regular attendance is an important aspect. The project's plan to allow girls to define the meeting times in each safe space will likely enhance girls' abilities to regularly attend.

⁸² This was a specific topic that the EAGER project explored with individual meetings with girls, caregivers and male partners to assess barriers to participation and ways to overcome these.

The indicator will be collected from monthly in-class attendance as taken by the facilitators. Records will be updated on a monthly basis to update the denominator, based on the number of drop-outs. During project monitoring of attendance, we recommend that they maintain individual girl records to be able to discern whether there are occasional absences by high enrolment levels or frequent absences by a small number of beneficiaries⁸³.

IO2: BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors deliver quality inclusive instruction in BLN, life/SEL skills, financial literacy and (self-) employment skills

Summary of findings

Due to project activities commencing after baseline data collection, this report cannot comment on extant instructional practices. Rather, baseline findings provide insights into the capacity levels, backgrounds, and perceptions of the BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors as possible indication of the potential quality of instruction they may provide. The headline finding is that while, BLN facilitators have relevant background experience and a fair command of appropriate instructional strategies for out-of-school girls, mentors sampled have less relevant skills and background experience. This finding implies a question around the likely effectiveness of the individuals identified as mentors in their role. Low mentor capacity presents a clear challenge for EAGER and necessitates further bolstering of their skills in order to achieve project objectives. Because there are no baseline data on which to base targets, targets must be set based on qualitative analysis.

Table 24: Intermediate outcome indicators as per the logframe, IO2: BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors deliver quality inclusive instruction

IO	IO indicator	Sampling and measuring technique used	Who collected the data?	Baseline level	Target for next evaluation point	Will IO indicator be used for next evaluation point? (Y/N)
BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors deliver quality inclusive instruction in BLN, life/SEL skills, financial literacy and (self-)	% of project-supported BLN Facilitators who use inclusive instructional practices* in the BLN Programme	Session observation, KIIs & FGDs	External evaluator	0%	60%	Y
	% of project-supported LSB mentors who use inclusive instructional practices** in the Life Skills and	Session observation & FGD	External evaluator	0%	60%	Y

⁸³ The evaluation team was informed by the EAGER project after developing baseline report that if a girl misses two entire weeks of BLN classes in a row (other than in exceptional circumstances), she is no longer able to continue with programme due to missed learning (missed life skills sessions are not taken into consideration). A follow up visit is conducted after one week to ensure that the girl is made aware of this and to see if she can be assisted to return to classes. When a girl drops out, a form is completed capturing the reasons for this decision.

employment skills	Business programme					
Main qualitative findings						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data demonstrate a range of capacities among BLN facilitators. ▪ BLN facilitators interviewed identified strategies for working with out-of-school girls though awareness may be surface level. ▪ Mentors appear to have little formal schooling, business experience or experience in their role as mentor. There is no indication that mentors have the experience to help girls seek out opportunities or develop skills that go beyond what the girls may already know. ▪ Mentors and programme staff identified few opportunities within their communities that may be good fits for EAGER participants at the end of the formal learning phase. 						

Main findings

IO2 Indicator A. % of project-supported BLN Facilitators who use inclusive instructional practices in the BLN programme*

Although session observations were planned to be undertaken as part of the baseline collection, delays in activity starting meant that these data not be collected or reported at baseline. The observation tools are designed to measure how a facilitator creates an inclusive and engaging learning environment across 19 dimensions using a four-point scale. There is also a series of questions to monitor how barriers to learning are removed for when there are girls in the safe and learning spaces. Intermediate outcomes 2A and 2B will be measured as a percentage of observed sessions that score a 3 (“good effort”) or 4 (“exemplary”) on 14 or more of the dimensions and removed any barriers to learning in their learning space relevant to the beneficiaries present.⁸⁴ Given that there are no baseline observations to measure improvement on, the targets above are set based on ideals and not based on improvement over the status of instruction at the project’s start.

In complement to anticipated quantitative data, qualitative fieldwork investigated the background of BLN facilitators related to their capacity to teach using inclusive instructional practices. While the qualitative sample is not representative, findings provide insights of sufficient significance that they can and should be extrapolated to other participating communities.

Data demonstrate a range of capacities across the ten BLN facilitators interviewed in terms of facilitators’ levels of their own schooling, their teaching/mentoring experience and their articulation of teaching strategies most appropriate for working with out-of-school youth.

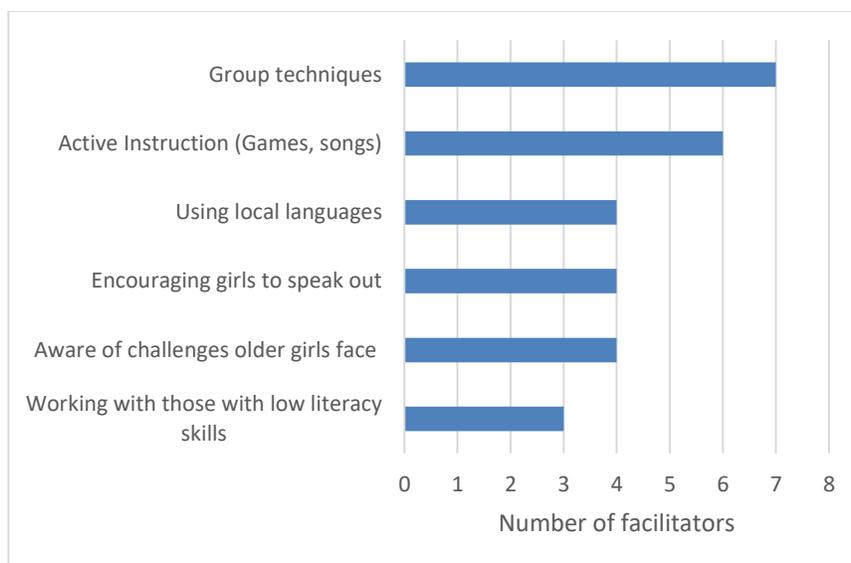
Eight of the ten BLN facilitators provided information about their own schooling: one obtained a higher national diploma, three have teaching certificates and four attended various levels of senior secondary school with one passing the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE)⁸⁵. The teaching experience across the group also varied with one individual having 17 years of experience as a primary school teacher and another having two years of community teaching experience, clearly a wide range, and reflective of the variation in abilities between communities. All other facilitators indicated having less than two years of experience according

⁸⁴ This will be triangulated with data collected by the project through regular session observations, measuring quality and inclusiveness of instruction.

⁸⁵ Passage of the WASSCE is required for admission into university.

to interview data. Of the ten facilitators interviewed, four clearly articulated having experience working specifically with out-of-school girls.

Figure 39: Strategies familiar to BLN Facilitators (n=10)



As figure 39 illustrates, in response to questions about instructional practices, sampled BLN facilitators most frequently identified group work as a technique appropriate to working with out-of-school girls, followed by active instruction (use of games and songs, specifically). They expressed understanding that no girl is meant to feel intellectually weak or embarrassed if they don't know an answer. Four of the ten facilitators also underlined the importance of using local languages with individuals who did not progress far in school, as well as the importance of supporting girls to speak up in class. Similarly, BLN facilitators sampled impressed the need for awareness of the challenges older girls may face. Some also suggested using learning aids (such as money) to help teach counting. Although sampled BLN facilitators generally seemed to be familiar with key strategies, deeper understanding was not assessed by the research team. In-practice capacity could not be assessed at baseline as learning sessions were not yet underway.

Lastly, when asked about supports that BLN Facilitators need from EAGER management in order to best fulfil their roles, eight of ten facilitators readily identified learning space supplies such as flip chart paper, markers and books followed by additional training. Six facilitators, more than half of those sampled, underlined the need for more training and this same proportion also made a request for a decent and timely stipend in order to keep their motivation⁸⁶.

IO2 Indicator B. % of project-supported LSB mentors who use inclusive instructional practices in the Life Skills and Business programme

Unlike contact with the BLN Facilitators in the field, which proved successful in terms of reaching the desired number of stakeholders within that category, completing interviews with mentors proved more challenging, with the baseline qualitative data collection teams reaching 16 out of a

⁸⁶The evaluation team has learned that the curriculum is developed in a staggered approach – the second half of the design will begin soon, and a week-long training will be held with facilitators in May/June 2020 Ongoing coaching is also an integral part of the project.

planned 20 mentors. No mentors were available for interview in Kailahun although at least one mentor participated in KILs in all other districts.

This report presents data for consideration by EAGER relevant to both mentors' capacities for teaching the life skills and business programme, but also relevant to their guidance to beneficiaries during the transition phase.

Mentors' capacities to teach life skills and business

Analysis of interview data indicates that mentors have little formal schooling, business experience or experience directly related to their role as mentor. Two of the mentors specifically indicated that they have impaired capacity to read and write (they "read a little"). In terms of their background relevant to their role in teaching business classes and offer advice to girls transitioning from the learning phase, only one mentor cited clear business experience - in helping her mother as a street food vendor. Finally, none of the mentors cited previous mentoring experience. Data collectors also noted that mentors were young, quite possibly of the same age bracket as older EAGER beneficiaries. The enumeration team recorded age data for only two of the mentors sampled (18 and 20) which is very close to that of EAGER participants. There was thus little evidence that mentors have the experience to help girls seek out opportunities or develop skills beyond what the girls may already know.

Further, most mentors were unable to articulate significant aspects of their intended roles, despite having (presumably) attended EAGER training. This could potentially be due to the fact of the delayed start of the EAGER sessions and time elapsing since training. The sole mentor who expressed a more concrete idea of her role than the others explained that,

"This 9-month project is good and after that they can do business or before taking a decision for them to continue school or do business...We encourage them to share their confidence with us and their secrets because keeping it will make them get emotional stress. We talk to them more and teach them in a respectable way. We tell them about the advantages and disadvantages. We tell them about the importance of education. And that they should make a good choice." (Mentor, KII)

Other mentors spoke in more general terms of providing encouragement and counselling to girls to help them identify their next steps. Two of the mentors interviewed were not clear of the role they were expected to play but spoke of teaching the girls a trade. Indeed, most mentors spoke in general terms about "business" and/or the three most commonly cited economic opportunities for young women of soapmaking, tailoring and hairdressing, a limited range of possibilities.

Mentors' perceptions of possible transitions

When discussing the concept of transition, only four of the 16 mentors interviewed correctly articulated transition as helping the girls identify a pathway, rather than that EAGER providing direct vocational training. As might be expected, re-entering the formal education system was the possibility most frequently-cited by mentors, despite EAGER's stronger emphasis on employment, training and empowerment. For example, one mentor noted that she would discourage girls from working in their current jobs in order to encourage greater focus on their education.

None of the mentors, however, identified transition as empowerment of girls to look for other opportunities or further training with the skills they already have. Similarly, none spoke directly of girls' enhanced household or community empowerment as an objective for the project.⁸⁷

Further, not all mentors and project staff were able to identify opportunities within the community that may be of interest to EAGER participants at the end of the formal learning phase. In at least one community, neither of the mentors nor the project staff were able to respond to a question about opportunities within the community itself. Opportunities that other mentors and project staff identified most often were working in common trades such as hairdressing, food vending and tailoring. Some respondents spoke about opportunities to participating in other NGO training projects within the community rather than creating standalone economic opportunities.

“We don't have any opportunities in this community...The opportunities available here are for people that have skills or education.” (Mentor, KII)

These findings imply that mentors have a limited perspective in their role in counselling EAGER beneficiaries to identify possibilities for economic and more general empowerment. EAGER's theory of change suggests that participants will conduct a market analysis to inform their transition options. This step will be critical in order for girls to go beyond common trades and be able to identify entrepreneurial and other possibilities. As similarly indicated in the transition section, such a mapping will be critical to successfully guiding girls along existent and feasible pathways.

Whatever opportunities are identified, EAGER's capacity to offer start-up funding and educational sponsorship (as per project plans) will be critical. Mentors in three communities indicated disappointment with previous initiatives that did not provide adequate support of this nature. Stakeholders expressed hope that EAGER will be different. One mentor commented,

“Learning, business capital or help for them continue their education, provide school materials, find a place for those girls who want to do soap making, gara tie dying, tailoring” and then added that another NGO “has taught them but since they came and gather them yet they have not support these girls and we do not want it to happen again. People in the community do provoke them because these girls were not supported to be independent.” (Mentor, KII)

Such a comment articulates and reflects considerable community expectations that mentors will be effective in their roles and that EAGER will make available appropriate resources for beneficiaries.

Reflections

Although the observation tool was designed and enumerators were trained to use it, it was not possible to collect quantitative data for Indicators IO2A and IOB as instructional activities had not yet begun at the time of baseline data collection.

While the quantitative session observation tool was not implemented this round, qualitative data indicate need for improvement in facilitators' skills. As indicated above, the sampled BLN facilitators conveyed a general understanding of some of the important strategies necessary for teaching out-of-school girls, yet their experience remains weak.

⁸⁷ The evaluation team learned after developing the baseline report that the concept of girls' enhanced household or community empowerment that these concepts were framed after the recruitment of mentors and after the initial training with mentors. A specific training will be carried out prior to the beginning the business skills and transition components where this will be addressed in detail.

The evaluation team confirms that the indicators are fit for purpose, logical and measurable and thus relevant to the project's theory of change.

The evaluation team does not recommend changes to tools relevant to IO2 on teaching quality. The quantitative tool is comprehensive and has received approval from EAGER as well as the fund manager. Similarly, qualitative tools (KII and FGD guides) produced useful information at baseline. Both tools will be reviewed and adjusted as necessary at midline. Measuring instructional quality in IO2 complements measuring attendance in IO1, both serving as useful sides of implementation.

IO 3: Girls age 13-17 develop a transition plan that includes their self-identified goals and timelines to gain safe fairly-paid employment, self-employment or further learning or training, or goals for greater community or household empowerment; Girls apply skills learned in life skills sessions in their daily lives

Summary of findings

This section echoes some of the findings in the outcome section above on transition. Findings show that girls' ideas of their futures prior to the beginning of project activities are largely limited to self-employment and commerce, specifically through common trades like catering, tailoring, hairdressing and soapmaking. Few girls made mention of expanding current skillsets or business activities, indicating an opportunity for EAGER to explore basic entrepreneurship with girls. At baseline, prior to the beginning of life skills sessions, investigations demonstrate a weak command of life skills topics among mentors and project staff, bringing into question how well beneficiary girls, in turn, may be able to master life skills in order to apply them appropriately. The revised approach to Life Skills and further training on new curriculum should help address this.

Table 25: Intermediate outcome indicators as per the logframe, Girls age 13-17 develop a transition plan; Girls apply skills learned in life skills sessions

IO	IO indicator	Sampling and measuring technique used	Who collected the data?	Baseline level	Target for next evaluation point	Will IO indicator be used for next evaluation point? (Y/N)
Girls age 13-17 develop a transition plan that includes their self-identified goals and timelines to gain safe fairly-paid employment, self-employment or further learning or training, or goals for greater	% of girls who develop an individual transition plan that is realistic and achievable***	Combined girls survey; FGDs and KIIs	External evaluator	0%	75%	N
	% of girls who report that since joining the programme, they have made at least one new friend they can trust	Combined girls survey; FGDs and KIIs	External evaluator	0%	95%	Y

community or household empowerment	% of girls who report believing that they can achieve the goals they set for themselves	Combined girls survey (primary); Life Skills Survey (secondary) FGDs and KIIs	External evaluator	Overall Agree: 81% (Strongly Agree: 27%; Agree: 54%)	Overall Agree: 90%	Y
Girls apply skills learned in life skills sessions in their daily lives	% of girls who report that they have used skills learned in their life skills sessions	Combined girls survey; FGDs and KIIs	External Evaluator	0%	80%	Y

Main qualitative findings

- In discussing their futures, self-employment arose most commonly among focus groups and less about household and community empowerment.
- Girls often focus on a set of trades (tailoring, catering, hairdressing, soapmaking) but rarely on other entrepreneurship possibilities. Girls and caregivers currently most understand the concept of mentor as a confidant.
- The majority of girls (11 of 20) spoke of already having strong positive relationships while others shared some concerns about friendships.
- Mentors struggled to recall examples of life skills when asked. Only two mentors were able to list at least three topics covered within the EAGER life skills manual.

Main findings

IO3 Indicator A. % of girls who develop an individual transition plan that is realistic and achievable

Girl beneficiaries will develop a transition plan to guide their next steps subsequent to the initial learning phase. Baseline interview data from the qualitative sample provide information for EAGER’s consideration regarding girls’ ideas for their futures at the start of the project as well as their current understanding of mentorship.

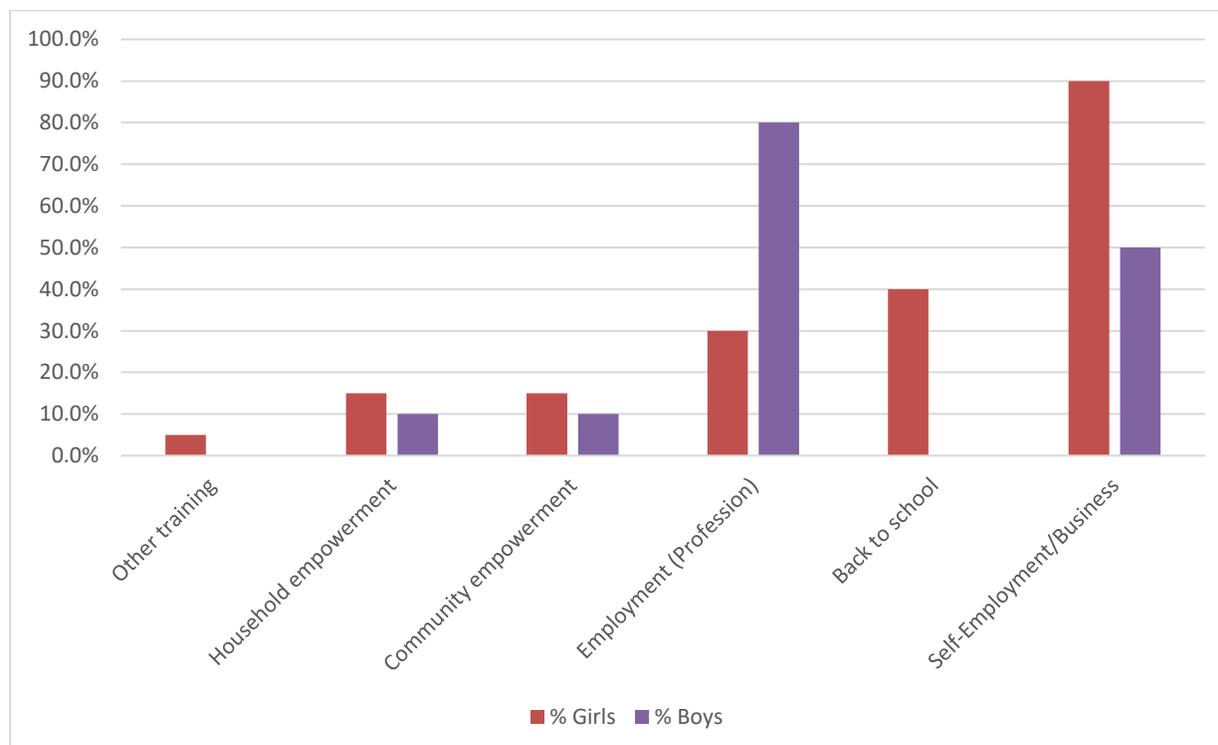
Ideas for the future

Focus group discussions with girls explored general ideas and aspirations about their futures. The possibility of being self-employed arose in 18 of 20 focus groups. Girls understood this option for them meant doing “business” or a trade, most commonly a vocation like catering, hairstyling, soapmaking or tailoring. These trades follow societal expectations for girls’ work. Girls spoke least about other possibilities, including how they might better contribute to supporting their families, that is household empowerment (three focus groups) or within the community, including serving as a politician (three focus groups). Comparisons between girls’ and boys’ focus groups about their ideas for the future indicate differences in their understanding of options available to them.

As figure 40 indicates, a larger proportion of boys’ focus groups (eight of ten) discussed professional employment such as being doctors, lawyers, bankers, computer specialists, accountants, building contractors, imams, army chiefs and ministers, among others.

This may be because participants in the boys' focus groups had a higher education level than the girls (many of which were still in school). These sorts of professions arose in only six of twenty FGDs for girls and included marketing, nursing, banking and entrepreneurship. At the same time, these thoughts may signal the need for EAGER to help girls temper their expectations as they develop their transition plans given girls' limited schooling. While figure 40 presents the data as percentages, this is because of differences in n-values. These figures are not representative of the larger population of EAGER participants and boys within implementation communities.

Figure 40: Comparison of girls' and boys' future goals by focus group (n=20 for girls, n=10 for boys)



Similarly, while girls often identified business-related work (tailoring, catering on their own, etc.) they rarely mentioned needing capital to build a business on the basis of a skill they already have.

Rather than focusing all on the same trades (catering, soapmaking, tailoring, etc.) and risking oversaturation within the community, EAGER should consider exposing girls to basic entrepreneurship concepts and building upon their skills and interests. In this way, EAGER would also be gender transformative in helping interested girls to enter fields that may not as traditionally accepted. Identifying demand for goods and services within the community and building business around them would be a component of that work. One girl beneficiary stood out from the others as already having an entrepreneurial spirit that could be reinforced through EAGER.

“For now, I am selling orange with very small capital so that I can raise money and I am selling oranges in front of the house every day. I went to buy orange to sell at night and most of the time, my oranges will finish and in the morning I will go to buy dozens of orange in the village so that I can sell at night and make a little profit because if I did not sell to raise money it will difficult for me so I decided to sell orange at night I can make money.

The business that I sell belongs to me I did not have any person to give my money or partner with me.” (Girl, KII)

None of the boys’ focus groups discussed returning to formal schooling whereas it was a consideration for eight of the twenty girls’ focus groups, perhaps because many of the boys sampled were still in school.

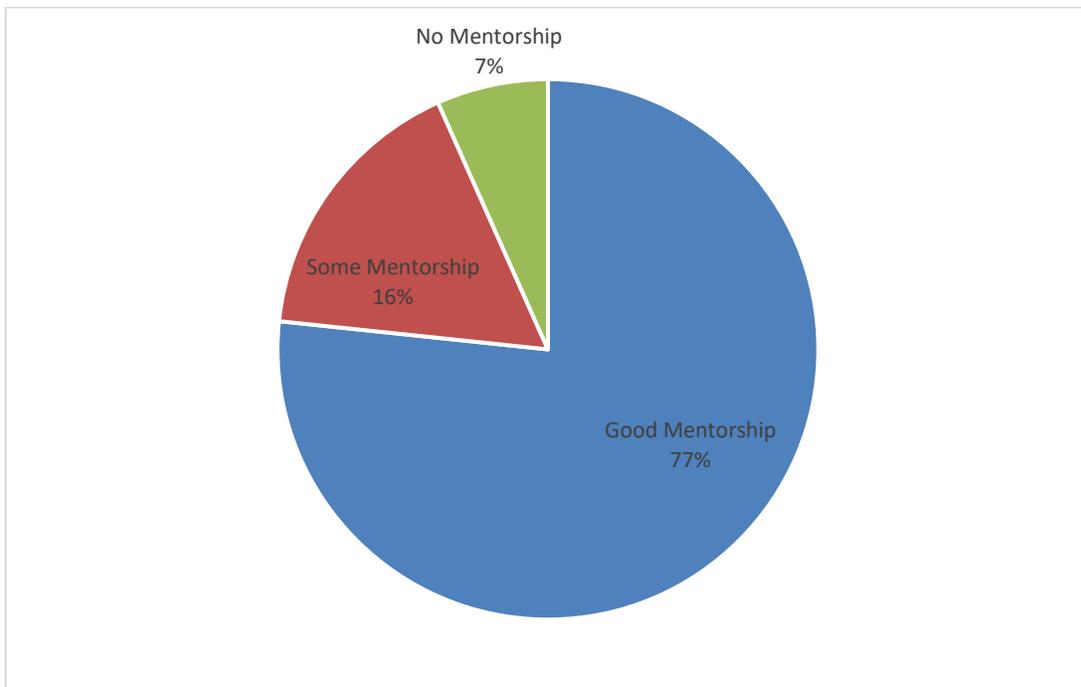
Girls’ existing mentors

EAGER mentors are positioned to serve a pivotal role in helping girls envision their possibilities after the learning phase. Explorations at baseline provide indication of the common concept of mentorship and the sort of mentorships that girls may already experience.

During focus groups, girls and caregivers most often interpreted the concept of mentor as a confidant, i.e., someone to share secrets with and someone who offers advice. Twelve of twenty girls’ focus groups described mentorship in this way. This interpretation may be due, in part, to facilitator’s translations into local languages that specified that a mentor was someone whom a girl could share secrets with or go to for advice.

Girls and caregivers explained that the individuals that fulfil that role were most often family members (mothers, grandmothers, sisters, aunties, brothers, fathers, uncles, and occasionally partners) but could also be friends. Of the 40 focus groups with caregivers and girls that addressed mentors, 30 of them discussed the quality of existing mentors and 23 of these identified girls as having strong mentors in their lives. Five of the focus groups identified that girls have some level of mentorship and two focus groups identified that the girls have no mentorship in their lives. No respondents indicated having an ambivalent or negative mentor.

Figure 41: Girls’ descriptions of the quality of their mentorship at baseline (Girls and caregiver focus groups, n=30)



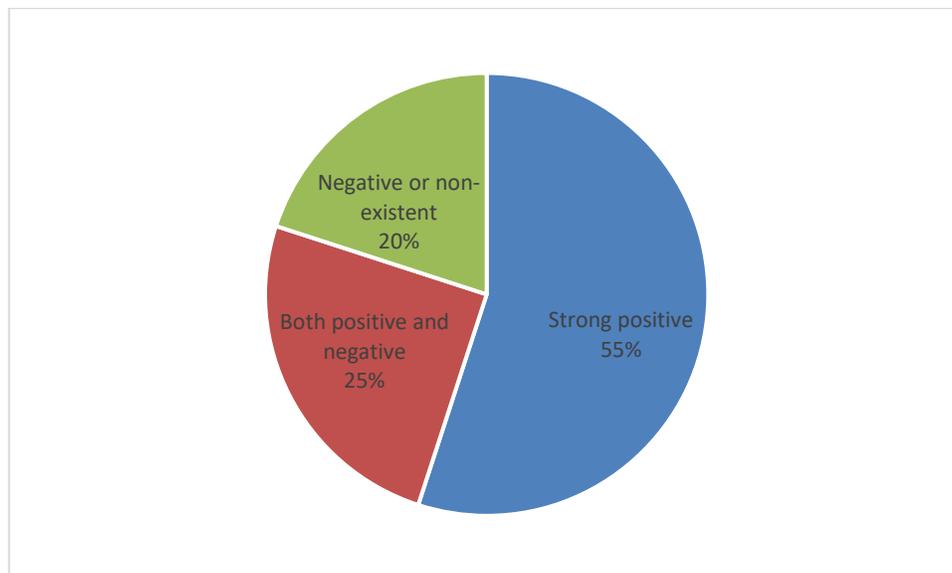
In only two instances did girls focus group discussions indicate that a mentor helped them think about their education and futures; and only once for caregivers. One girls' focus group and three caregiver focus groups expressed an aspiration that EAGER mentors would help them more in this regard. When pressed about the existence of mentors to provide educational and professional guidance going beyond general advice, respondents in a few communities identified other individuals who fill the role: the Mammy Queen, community leader and councillor. In one community, participants identified a mother's group. In a few cases, one girls' FGD and two caregivers' FGDs identified their belief that provision of financial resources was part of a mentor's role, a potential challenge that EAGER mentors may have to negotiate. These findings indicate a clear opportunity to expand beneficiaries' concept of what a mentor *can* do for them beyond being a confidant and providing general advice about life and then, provided LBS mentors implement the curriculum provided to them, *will* do for them.

Attention to the sorts of messages that mentors provide will be important as the EAGER project progresses. While, in general, respondents felt they had good existing mentorship within their communities, examples provided include helping a girl avoid "doing wrong" and it is possible that messages may conflict with the values and lessons that EAGER hopes to convey, for example, around pursuing education. Similarly, it will also be important to track the messages being shared by the EAGER project mentors, given the above finding that many of them are young, lack clarity in their role as mentors, and tend to have limited education and mentorship experience. There may be unintended consequences in case they are not delivering the messages they learnt in EAGER curriculum.

IO 3 Indicator B. % of girls who report that since joining the programme, they have made at least one new friend they can trust

At baseline, when asked about their relationships with girls of their age within their communities, 11 girls readily identified having strong positive relationships with their peers, four identified both positive and negative relationships, and five girls identified that all relationships are negative or non-existent. Girls responded to this question as part of the individual key informant interviews (n=20, 2 per district).

Figure 42: Quality of sampled girls' relationships with peers (Girls' KII's, n=20)



Attributes of positive relationships included that girls speak with and advise each other (5 respondents), they share resources such as clothing, food and money (5), they share chores (4), and they visit with each other (2). Of particular note, a girl with a physical disability as a result of polio commented that her friends often help her with household work, such as laundering clothes. In addition, two girls from different districts (Kono and Pujehun) indicated that they have created communal farming circles with friends, “*bumas*.” One girl described a *buma* as follows:

“This group is formed to assist one another in our farming activities. You know in agriculture, labour is very essential and you pay for it, but with this group we don’t need to pay but we assist each other. I have benefitted a lot from these relationships...” (Girl, KII).

The size of the community may make a difference in the quality of relationships that girls perceive. For instance, a girl from a midsized rural community with an estimated 2,000 people according to the community leader, commented that,

“My relationship with other girls in the community is very good due to the fact that this community is a small community and we are all born and raised here. We already consider ourselves as sisters” (Girl, KII).

Other girls also shared this sentiment, similarly, using the word, “sister” to describe female peers. On the other hand, both girls interviewed in the Western Area Urban community (with an estimated 27,000 inhabitants) expressed disdain for peer relationships out of concern of negative influences that may come from connections with girls of the same age group. It is worth noting that one of these girls also expressed strong feelings of loneliness and depression.

Additional challenges to friendships that girls identified include gossip or their secrets being divulged (6 respondents), peers being bad influences (4) and girls of the same age stealing a boyfriend or husband (3). Two girls spoke of how male partners may not support peer relationships, particularly with girls who are unmarried, in fear that girls may be unfaithful.

“Some girls are thieves, some are prostitutes and some are sex addicts. If you go close to such people, it’s a very big shame to you as a married woman” (Girl, KII).

In general, relationships with men, whether boyfriends or husbands, complicate girls’ relationships amongst themselves. Responses clearly identified rivalries among girls for male partners as a formidable barrier to strong trusting peer relationships.

IO3 Indicator C. % of girls who report believing that they can achieve the goals they set for themselves

This indicator is based on a series of questions about girls’ beliefs about goals and self-efficacy, and these questions are a subset of the life skills survey. Girls’ responses are generally consistent, with an inter-item correlation of 83 percent. Because Indicator C captures the same concept intended to be included in Self-Efficacy section of the Life Skills Index and utilises the same questions, the same method of calculation is also used. It is the result of the mean score on the *New General Self-Efficacy Scale*, as described in the quantitative methodology section.

As can be seen in the figure below, self-efficacy levels vary significantly between regions. The average self-efficacy score is 73.1 (out of 100) but varies by region from 64.5 in Tonkolili to 80.2 in Kailahun. When asked about the future on the girls’ survey, over 75.3 percent of girls responded affirmatively to a series of statements related to goal achievement, demonstrating a high level of self-efficacy for most girls. A notable finding is that approximately 5 percentage points more of girls disagreed with the statement, “When facing difficult tasks, I am certain I will accomplish them.”

Figure 43: Responses of girl related to goal achievement and confidence⁸⁸

Subgroup	Self-Efficacy Index
Overall	73.1%
Food Insecure	71.5%*
Impoverished	71.4%*
Bo	71.0%
Kailahun	80.2%**
Kambia	70.4%*
Kenema	70.4%*
Koinadugu	70.2%*
Kono	78.7%**
Port Loko	77.5%**
Pujehun	72.3%
Tonkolili	64.5%*
WA Urban	74.7%

IO3 Indicator D. % of girls who report that they have used skills learned in their life skills sessions

As life skills sessions had not yet begun, this indicator could not be directly measured at baseline. Instead, investigations about programme staff’s understanding of life skills provide insights into the possible quality of those sessions. When asked to identify concrete life skills necessary for EAGER participants, mentors’ recall was limited. Only two mentors were able to list at least three topics covered within the EAGER life skills manual. A further three mentors were able to identify one or two of these life skills while ten of the 16 mentors sampled could not answer the question. Project staff (BLN officers, LSB officers, etc.) play a critical role in providing oversight and support to mentors, but they also demonstrated difficulties correctly identifying life skills. Of the five project staff that responded to the question, only one was able to name three relevant skills, while three could name one or two skills and two had off-topic responses. Incorrect responses for both mentors and project staff identified skills that refer to trades such as hairdressing, catering, and tailoring or literacy, numeracy, and business. The mentors and project staff who were able to identify life skills in accordance with the EAGER curriculum named topics that included self-esteem, coping with stress, good decision-making, leadership, reproductive health, sexually transmitted infections, menstruation and menstrual hygiene, sexual harassment, pregnancy, parental care, and, gender and power.

Reflections

IO Indicators 3A, 3B, and 3D could not be measured at baseline, as implementation had not begun. Because they are defined as measuring achievement after the start of implementation, the baseline values should be considered as 0 percent complete. The indicators are logical and reasonably flow from implementation.

⁸⁸ Per request, single asterisks indicate significantly different and lower means. Double asterisks indicate significantly different and higher

Success in reaching targets would serve as reasonable proxies for the life skills modules achieving their goals. We do not recommend any changes to the current indicators.

Targets

Setting targets for this section is challenging, as there are no similar data to use at baseline. They are simply defined based on what the evaluation team considers successful implementation to look like. All four indicator targets are thus subjective and on the basis of the judgement of either the beneficiary or an enumerator. Explicit enumerator training at midline will be important to ensure that responses are unbiased.

IO 4: Community members regularly listen to and/or engage in dialogue surrounding issues relating to girls' education and empowerment (disaggregated by girls, boys, men and women); Community members, including caregivers of girls, foster more supportive attitudes and/or behaviour in learning / education / entrepreneurship; Girls report greater support for girls education and learning and at community level

Summary of findings

- Survey data demonstrate perceptions that girls may not attend school due to having become a mother or due to financial constraints.
- While more than four-fifths of beneficiaries (84.8 percent) emphasise their right to access safe spaces, findings regarding perceptions of girls with disabilities raise some concerns.
- Radio may offer a limited opportunity to complement discussions on gender norms and the importance of girls' education within the community.
- Stakeholders convey diverse views about girls' education. Male partners, in general, seem supportive but with limitations.
- Girls are highly affirmative that they have the right to attend learning/safe spaces. Qualitative and quantitative data differ slightly in terms of girls' opinions on whether girls with disabilities should have access to safe spaces. Qualitative data reflect a more open perspective, with nine-tenths of interviews positively responding.

Table 26: Community members regularly listen to and/or engage in dialogue surrounding issues relating to girls' education and empowerment (disaggregated by girls, boys, men and women); Community members, including caregivers of girls, foster more supportive attitudes and/or behaviour in learning / education / entrepreneurship; Girls report greater support for girls education and learning and at community level

IO	IO indicator	Sampling and measuring technique used	Who collected the data?	Baseline level	Target for next evaluation point	Will IO indicator be used for next evaluation point? (Y/N)
Community members regularly listen to and/or engage in dialogue surrounding issues relating to girls' education and empowerment (disaggregated by girls, boys, men and women)	No. of people reached (including frequency) through national programming	FGDs and KIIs	BBC Media Action	0%	3.86 million	N
	% of radio listeners who report actively engaging with topics discussed in radio programming	FGDs and KIIs	BBC Media Action	0%	35%	N ⁸⁹
Community members, including caregivers of girls, foster more supportive attitudes and/or behaviour in learning / education / entrepreneurship	% of community members that foster more supportive attitudes in learning / education / entrepreneurship (disaggregated by sex, role)	FGDs and KIIs, caregiver and head of household surveys	External evaluator	69.5%	80%	Y
Girls report greater support for girls' education and learning and at community level	% of girls that report fewer barriers to accessing education, and increased perception that they have the right to access safe spaces	FGDs and KIIs, girls' survey	External evaluator	75.2%	80%	Y
Main qualitative findings						

⁸⁹ Data will be collected by BBC Media Action for this IO Indicator.

- Focus groups with girls, caregivers and boys highlight the overlap between factors that make schooling unattainable for many girls, including those that contribute to financial hardship, which stakeholders across the board identified as the central problem.
- Data point to the finding that although radio may offer the opportunity to complement discussions on gender norms and the importance of girls' education within the community, it is one tool of many.
- Stakeholders overwhelmingly identified girls as more helpful to their families and many cited that while a girl will support her mother and father when she grows up, a boy will support his wife and her family. The second most common reason for supporting girls going to school over boys was that boys could get jobs without an education, whereas this was more challenging for girls. When asked if they thought it important for a girlfriend or wife to be educated, respondents said that it is desirable, particularly among male caregivers, followed by female caregivers, boys and then, girls.
- Across stakeholder types, the majority of respondents identify positive attitudes towards girls with disabilities accessing safe spaces.

Main Findings

IO 4 Indicator A. No. of people reached (including frequency) through national programming

IO 4 Indicator B. % of radio listeners who report actively engaging with topics discussed in radio programming

This section offers information on radio programming for EAGER's consideration. As no quantitative data are yet available prior to roll-out of radio activities, qualitative data address both indicators above (A&B) simultaneously.

Some stakeholders in focus groups and interviews across the qualitative sample identified radio as a useful tool to extend discussions promoting girls' education without prompting. When asked directly if radio could be a useful platform, sentiments were mixed. Participants cited various strengths of radio, including that diffusion takes place across communities, that most people have radios and that radio is a trusted source of information. On one end of the spectrum, stakeholders vigorously asserted in 22 focus groups or KIIs (out of a possible 150, 14.7 percent) that they would listen to the programming themselves. One notable exchange took place among girls in Pujehun:

Girl #1: "Every one of us will listen

Girl #2: Our husbands will listen

Girl #3: Even we the girls will listen

Girl #4: The entire community will listen because we want a change for the better

Girl #5: The young ones will also listen so that they will take education as priority." (Girls, FGD, Pujehun)

According to female caregivers in one community, radio's reach and the possibility of shaming people offers an incentive for improved behaviour:

“Because the rest of the world will hear it...For them to be disgracing that person so the rest of the world will know that this is his behaviour so tomorrow he won't repeat himself.”
(Female caregiver, FGD, Bo)

This comment and others by stakeholders also indicate that stakeholders have experience with radio focusing on sensitive issues including child protection and sexual violence. In at least two communities, stakeholders identified radio stations that frequently carry socially minded programmes related to girls' issues, such as early marriage, girls' rights, preventing pregnancy, and not initiating girls (FGM) against their rights. Stakeholders identified Radio Wanje in Pujehun and Kolenten in Kambia. One leader within a sampled community in Pujehun explained:

“There are times we hear people talk on radio concerning girls' education. Even myself, I have a radio which I sometimes listen as once in a while. You will hear messages from Radio Wanje in Pujehun regarding girls' education. There was even a time they had a programme done by kids on girls' education It was so interesting...that we enjoyed it so much because the kids were the ones doing it. I called my kids to let them listen to their peers on a radio talking to people about girls' education, discouraging teenage pregnancy and abuse against women and girls...” (A community leader, Pujehun)

Backing for radio varied widely by district. Data from FGDs and KIIs with nearly all stakeholders (a possible 16 interviews per district⁹⁰) show the greatest preference for radio in communities in Tonkolili (13), Kambia (12) and Western Area Urban (11). Stakeholders in Kenema (4), Kailahun and Bo (5, respectively) were the least likely to identify support for radio programming.

Stakeholders also identified the weaknesses of radio as a medium for hosting community dialogues as they commented how not all community members had radios and that people do not necessarily have the interest or time to listen to such discussions⁹¹.

“Radio communication is not too effective here, because even those with radios have so many barriers to listening to it. People don't have time to listen and those that have the time might not afford to buy battery for the radios, and most people don't listen with understanding. And finally, topics that may need question may not be asked even if it's phoning programme, because one cannot afford the top-up to recharge the mobile phone at that particular time of the radio programme. I prefer the Town Crier always in this community to pass information for our meeting.”
(Male caregiver, FGD, Pujehun)

One focus group with male caregivers also commented on how radio's diffusion qualities make it inappropriate for sensitive content and that it was better to handle such issues directly in the community. Again, districts expressed varying levels of criticism for radio with those in Pujehun, Kenema and Bo being the most sceptical. Stakeholders in Kenema seemed to indicate much support for face-to-face community discussions.

Stakeholders suggested other options for announcing that discussions will be held within the community or to serve as platforms for the discussions themselves. Stakeholders indicated the useful role of the town crier, going door-to-door, having one-on-one discussions. In one community, (Port Loko), a female caregiver suggested online social media (Facebook) as a

⁹⁰ Only KIIs with girls and male partners did not address the issue of radio.

⁹¹ Discussions with EAGER about these findings indicate that the project is aware that access to radio may be a problem. They plan to distribute speakers with USB to all communities.

preferable medium, although others in this community pointed out that only wealthier families had access to this technology so radio should remain a viable option.

In sum, the data presents evidence for the finding that although radio may offer the opportunity to complement discussions on gender norms and the importance of girls' education within the community, it is one tool of many, to be accompanied by community-level, and face-to-face interactions. Again, however, preferences varied widely across and within communities.

IO 4 Indicator C. % of community members that foster more supportive attitudes in learning / education / entrepreneurship (disaggregated by sex, role)

This indicator is defined as an index of a series of questions asked heads of households and caregivers. Household responses and caregiver responses each comprise a subscore for the index, which are then averaged together at the beneficiary level. As can be seen in figure 44, composite scores vary by district. Overall the items that comprise the indicator are fairly consistent, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.67. The highest mean scores for the indicator are in Kailahun, Kambia, and Koinadugu. Interestingly, household head and caregiver subscores do not always correlate by district: in Koinadugu, Kenema, and Bo, the one subscore is significantly different and higher than those not in that district, and one subscore is significantly different and lower. It is unclear what is driving this difference.

Figure 44: Scores and Subscores for IO4C (N=2,038)

District	Composite Score	HoH Subscore	Caregiver Subscore
All Districts	69.5	59.9	78.3
Bo	67.5	63.5**	71.2*
Kailahun	79.3**	74.6**	81.3
Kambia	74.8**	57.7	91.9**
Kenema	65.0*	67.9**	59.7*
Koinadugu	73.3*	53.1*	93.2**
Kono	60.9*	45*	76.2
Port Loko	71.5	53.4*	89.4**
Pujehun	71	67.1**	75.1
Tonkolili	62.3*	54.1*	69.5*
WA Urban	67.4	60.2	74.1

When the question, “Under which of the following conditions do you think it is acceptable for a girl to not attend school?” was asked the most common reasons caregivers give is a she is a mother (30.3 percent), or that education is too costly (27.9 percent). Roughly a quarter mention that it is permissible for a girl not to attend school if she is married or getting married (23.5 percent) or if she needs to help at home (21.1 percent). As figure 55 in Annex 19 indicates, disaggregation by district shows that caregivers more often give “need to help at home” as a reason in Kenema (46.6 percent) and Bo (32.9 percent). Particularly given the higher than anticipated proportion of married girls and girls with children enrolled in the programme, EAGER needs to be attentive to these attitudes and adopt a gender transformative approach. Review of EAGER’s GESI Assessment tool⁹² identifies GESI accommodating approaches to both gender and inclusion for

⁹² Dated 9 September 2019.

the use of the safe spaces. EAGER should reconsider if these approaches will be sufficient to resist views that married girls and mother should not attend school.

Disaggregation by gender shows that, in most cases, male and female caregivers had similar responses. Two notable exceptions concern girls' domestic workloads. Approximately 9 percent more male caregivers than female felt that girls needing to work or help at home are acceptable reasons for girls to not attend school.

Figure 45: Caregiver responses for the question: “Under which of the following conditions do you think it is acceptable for a girl to not attend school?” Percent who said yes (by caregiver gender)⁹³

Question	Overall	Male HoH	Female HoH
Caregiver Composite Score	21.7%	21.2%	22.6%
The girl is a mother	30.3%	28.9%	32.9%
The girl needs to work	18.1%	22.1%	13.3%
The girl needs to help at home	21.1%	25.1%	16.8%
The girl is married/is getting married	23.5%	25.1%	20.8%
The girl is too old	13.2%	12.4%	13.3%
The girl has physical or learning needs that the school cannot meet	10.5%	9.2%*	11.7%*
The girl is unable to learn	17.9%	17.9%	17.8%
Education is too costly	27.9%	28.5%	27.0%
Excluded from Index⁹⁴			
The girl may be physically harmed or teased at school or on the way to/from school	14.6%	13.9%	14.8%
The girl may physically harm or tease other children at school	13.0%	14.3%	10.8%

Heads of households overwhelmingly agreed that the beneficiary in their household had a right to education but stated that there were limited education opportunities for them in their community. Heads of household opinions on societal norms vary by question: regarding household responsibilities, 69 percent agreed women and men should share chores, but 82 percent agreed men had a greater responsibility to earn money. While 88 percent agreed that men and women have different roles in the community, 78 percent agreed that their respective roles can change over time.

⁹³ Because heads of household are male or female, tests are for significant difference between the two subgroups, not between each subgroup and the mean score.

⁹⁴ While reported here, two questions were excluded from the index. While these hypothetical circumstances are barriers to school that should not exist, decisions about enrolment in such circumstances may not necessarily be undesirable.

Figure 46: Head of Household's responses to questions on education opportunities

Questions	Responses		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Do you think <beneficiary> has a right to education even though she is not in school?	97.3%	1.9%	0.8%
In your community, are adolescent girls who are out of school given opportunities to learn?	55.5%	40.5%	4.0%
Does <beneficiary> currently have any opportunity for learning/education?	39.7%	56.9%	3.4%

Figure 47: Mean Level of Head of Household's Agreement with questions on Societal Norms. (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)⁹⁵

Questions	All HoHs	Male HoHs	Female HoHs
Higher Agreement Preferred			
Men and women should share household chores.	3.6	3.6	3.6
Men's and women's roles in society can change over time.	3.9	3.9	3.8
Lower Agreement Preferred			
A man has more responsibility to earn money to provide for the family than a woman.	4.1	4.2**	3.9*
A male child is preferable to a girl child.	2.9	3.0**	2.7*
Excluded from Index			
Men and women have different roles in the community ⁹⁶	4.0	4.0	4.0
Taking care of children is the mother's duty.	3.9	3.9	3.9

Figure 48: Mean Level of Head of Household's Agreement with questions on Societal Norms (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Questions marked with an asterisk in this table were excluded from the indicator calculation, as their responses may not indicate opinions. Stating that men and women have different roles in a community is different from saying whether they should; stating that taking care of children is the mother's duty does not necessarily imply it is any less the duty of male family members.

⁹⁶ Because heads of household are male or female, tests are for significant difference between the two subgroups, not between each subgroup and the mean score.

⁹⁷ Questions marked with an asterisk in this table were excluded from the indicator calculation, as their responses may not indicate opinions. Stating that men and women have different roles in a community is different from saying whether they should; stating that taking care of children is the mother's duty does not necessarily imply it is any less the duty of male family members.

Questions	Overall	Bo	Kailahun	Kambia	Kenema	Koinadugu
HoH Composite Score (out of 100)	60.6	63.9	77.0**	57.7	70.3**	53.1
Agreement Preferred						
Men and women should share household chores.	3.6	3.3	3.6	4.0	3.6	3.4
Men's and women's roles in society can change over time.	3.9	3.8	3.9	4.0	3.5	4.2
Disagreement Preferred						
A man has more responsibility to earn money to provide for the family than a woman	4.1	4.0	3.8	4.1	4.1	4.3
A male child is preferable to a girl child.	2.9	2.6	2.7	3.3	3.0	3.1
Excluded⁹⁸						
Men and women have different roles in the community*	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.9	4.2
Taking care of children is the mother's duty.*	3.9	3.9	3.8	4.0	3.9	4.3

Figure 49: Mean Level of Head of Household's Agreement with questions on Societal Norms. (1=Strongly Disagree, 5= Strongly Agree overall across items)

Questions	Overall	Kono	Port Loko	Pujehun	Tonkolili	WA Urban
HoH Composite Score (out of 100)	60.6	45.5	54.4	67.1	54.1	60.2
Men and women should share household chores.	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.8
Men and women have different roles in the community⁹⁹	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.9
A man has more responsibility to earn money to provide for the family than a woman	4.1	3.9	4.2	4.5	4.3	3.8
Men's and women's roles in society can change over time.	3.9	4.0	4.0	3.7	3.6	3.8
A male child is preferable to a girl child.	2.9	3.4	2.7	2.6	2.9	3.4
Taking care of children is the mother's duty.	3.9	3.8	3.4	4.5	3.7	3.7

Perspectives on whether a girl should be educated

Discussions among stakeholders revealed multiple viewpoints concerning whether a girl should be educated, in general, and opinions were often split within focus groups. As the figures above depicts, stakeholders identified a number of reasons for choosing to educate a girl over a boy¹⁰⁰. Stakeholders overwhelmingly identified girls as more helpful to their families and many stated that while a girl will support her mother and father when she grows up, a boy will support his wife and

⁹⁸ Because heads of household are male or female, tests are for significant difference between the two subgroups, not between each subgroup and the mean score.

⁹⁹ Because heads of household are male or female, tests are for significant difference between the two subgroups, not between each subgroup and the mean score.

¹⁰⁰ Responses were not mutually exclusive at the focus group level as multiple answers surfaced within each focus group, sometimes at odds with one another. The graph presents all answers provided.

her family. This finding is true for the four stakeholder profiles that responded to this question: girls, boys and female and male caregivers. A frequent refrain was, “if you educate a girl, you educate an entire nation.” Familiarity with this phrase may be due to the high visibility of the Free Quality School Education campaign. As a male caregiver explained during a focus group,

“When a male child is successful, the first he thinks of is to have a wife but the girl will first consider her parent and that is her most priority. That is why I will love to educate a girl than a boy.” (Male caregiver, FGD, Kailahun)

A few focus groups identified females within the community who had succeeded in life and have given support to their families and community.

“In this community, we are boastful of having a community centre; this is because of a girl who built it for this community. She is the wife of a politician, [name]. She spoke to her husband to build this community centre. There are lots of boys that are educated from this community, but they do not remember this community. The woman that built this community was born in this community and his father is from this community.” (A community leader, KII, Kenema)

The second most common reason for supporting girls going to school over boys was that boys could get jobs without an education, whereas this was more challenging for girls. Some clarified that boys can do agricultural work with or without education, or another trade like carpentry or welding. These findings also require care in their interpretation as they indicate topics that surfaced during discussions and are not necessarily the same opinions if participants had responded to direct survey questions.

On the other hand, stakeholders also provided reasons for supporting a boy going to school over a girl. The most common reason for supporting a boy is because a girl may get pregnant and have to leave school; again, common for all relevant stakeholder groups: girls, boys, and female and male caregivers. The following quote identifies a common sentiment heard during focus group discussions:

“Girls will start school and got pregnant on the way that will be the end of her school but for boys that’s not the case. Even if they impregnate girls they can still continue their education.” (Female caregiver, FGD, Kenema)

Many stakeholders also spoke of a growing awareness of the importance of girls’ education while also acknowledging the strength and importance of traditions. Though likely an outlier, one community leader in the Pujehun community, while acknowledging changes to peoples’ perceptions, spoke about how Islam frowns upon girls going to school as their main duty should be getting married. A community leader from the Kailahun district also addressed the tension between Islam and Western education, but with greater nuance. This leader (from a conservative majority-Muslim community) explained that:

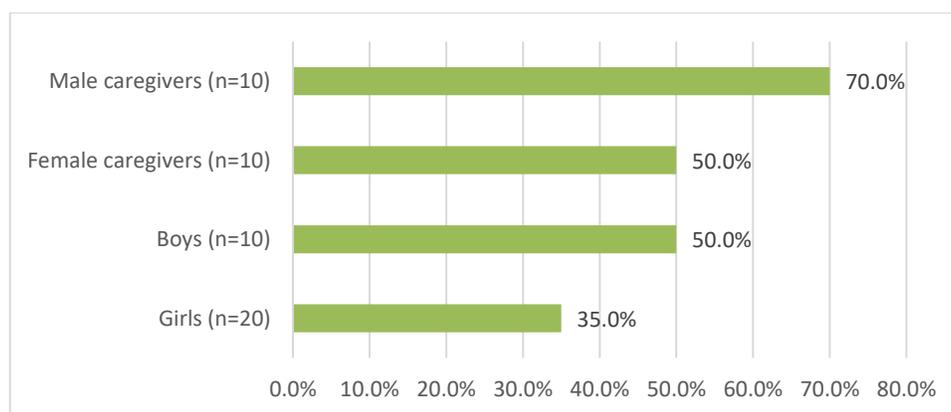
“We have a lot of children in this community who have gone far into Arabic education. We only have problem with the English education. The government and other partners are telling us to send our children to school and we have realised that sending children to learn will enable them make a living. You make money faster than when you learn Arabic as this is not an Arabic country...Their thought about girls’ education is very positive these days though it wasn’t like this before. People have now realised that when you educate a girl child, she will bring wealth and pride into the family...Those who don’t know what it

means to educate girls and have never travelled outside this community may be they will be thinking of that. But otherwise, I will say no one in this community held negative views about girl's education as we have seen what women are doing for their families." (A community leader, KII, Kailahun)

When asked if they thought it important for a girlfriend or wife to be educated, respondents typically said that it is desirable. Figure 50 demonstrates that arguments in support of a girlfriend or wife's education were most common within FGDs with male caregivers, followed by female caregivers, boys and then, girls¹⁰¹. The reasons for this are not typically specified other than a general opinion that education is positive. The few respondents that did specify reasons noted that educated women can help better maintain the family/household, keep records of expenses, and educate children; that educated women can do better business. It also was common that male respondent would indicate an expectation that if he helps his partner/wife with schooling that she "remember" him later in terms of sharing resources. As one partner indicates,

"It is good for my wife to be educated, because if she doesn't have legal source of livelihood there is always problem or quarrel at home. If I have anything/amount at the end of the month planning to do something for myself and children, she too will expect me to do something for her and if I don't do it there will be problem which is not good at any home. So, I prefer she has some skills or education that will maintain peaceful relationship." (Male partner, KII, Pujehun)

Figure 50: Percentage of focus groups that stipulated that an educated girlfriend/wife is preferable (by stakeholder type)



There were four instances of (male) respondents mentioning that while they agreed with education for women, it should not surpass that of the male partner. Some partners and caregivers expressed uncertainty that their partner would remain committed to them were she educated to a level beyond them. Others feared general disobedience and unfaithfulness. While these individuals were few in number (or at least few respondents were willing to articulate potentially unpopular opinions), a quote such as the one below highlights that additional exploration into this topic at midline is warranted and EAGER sensitisations at the community level will need to work actively to counter this concern.

¹⁰¹ While interviews followed a general pattern, due to their nature, not all interviews lasted the same amount of time or had the same amount of detail. One explanation of girls not raising this point as much as other stakeholders may simply be because there were many questions in the girls' FGD guide and this question about an educated wife/partner was not always asked directly.

“As far as I am concerned, if I am not educated my wife too should not be educated. Because I swear to my God that [my] woman will become ungrateful to me. She will leave me for another man because I am not educated. We should both operate on the same level.” (Male caregiver, FGD, Port Loko)

Similarly, when male partners were asked to describe the relationship between husband and wife, nearly all male partners continued to identify a clear demarcation of women and men’s roles that follow traditional sensibilities: women are responsible for children and the home, men generate income though may welcome women’s petty business income. This was true even for those men who express a desire for a more mutual supportive partnership between spouses. Such differences in perspectives illustrate tensions between GESI accommodating and transformative views on gendered roles within a partnership.

IO 4 Indicator D. % of girls that report fewer barriers to accessing education, and increased perception that they have the right to access safe spaces

Fewer barriers to education

Data presented above under Outcome 2 transition provide an overview of the barriers that girls and caregivers report that have stalled hampered them from pursuing schooling as EAGER commences its activities. Any changes in their perceptions of barriers will be measured at midline.

Findings below inform Indicator D - calculated as the percentage of caregivers who name two or fewer barriers to education for the girl. At baseline, 75 percent of respondents named two or fewer barriers, with 9 percent of caregivers providing four or more.

Girls’ right to access the safe space

Data from the girls’ combined survey show that when asked, “Do you think girls have a right to go to the learning/safe space?” beneficiaries overwhelmingly express that they do have that right. Across the sample, 84.8 percent of girls responded affirmatively with only 11 girls across the sample of 1,953 respondents (0.5 percent) replying, “no” to this question.¹⁰² Responses to this question may also reflect girls’ comprehension of EAGER project messages about the central role of the safe space in upcoming programming.

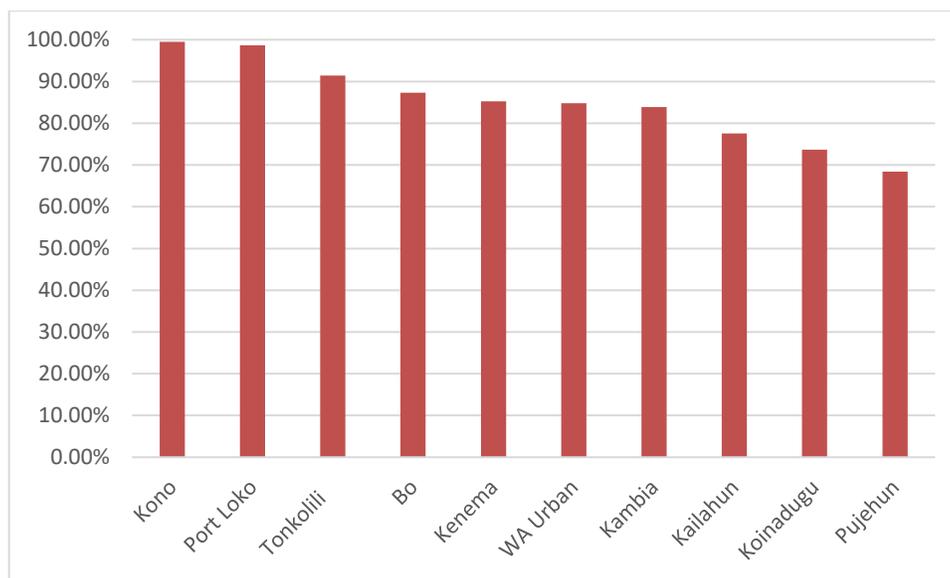
Disaggregation by districts illustrates a range between 68.4 percent in Pujehun to 99.5 percent in Kono of girls who agree that they have a right to access the safe space. This difference lends itself to interpretation and merits further investigation in subsequent monitoring and evaluation efforts. While girls in Pujehun also responded least strongly to the question about the importance of girls attending the safe space, it appears this may be due to enumerator practice, as it is the result of a high percentage of *Don’t Know* responses, not *No* responses (see IO1).

Further investigation suggests that the problem was limited to this particular question. As this was the first subjective question on a girls’ values and opinions in the Girls’ Combined Survey and follows a series of objective questions, girls may have been confused how to respond. Variation in levels of “Don’t Know” responses return to similar levels across all enumerators in the following question. Please see Annex 19 figure 59 for a more detailed breakdown of figure 51: Percentage

¹⁰² The large number of girls who responded “don’t know” may indicate their inability to make a pronouncement given that EAGER learning activities had not yet begun at the time of data collection. Additionally, girls were interviewed prior to re-engagement of them in December 2020.

of girls responding “yes” to the survey question: “Do you think girls have a right to go to the learning/safe space? (Disaggregated by district).

Figure 51: Percentage of girls responding “yes” to the survey question: “Do you think girls have a right to go to the learning/safe space? (Disaggregated by district)



In addition, girls with disabilities display higher levels of affirmation than their counterparts. Among girls with disabilities, 91.4 percent believe that girls have a right to the learning/safe space compared to 82.7 percent for their peers without disabilities.

Figure 52: Response to the survey question: “Do you think girls have a right to go to the learning/safe space?” (Disaggregated by disability status)

	Without disability		With disability		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
No	7	0.47%	4	0.86%	11	0.56%
Yes	1,232	82.74%	425	91.40%	1,657	84.80%
Refusal	4	0.27%	0	0.00%	4	0.20%
Don't Know	246	16.52%	36	7.74%	282	14.43%
Total	1,489	100.00%	465	100.00%	1,954	100.00%

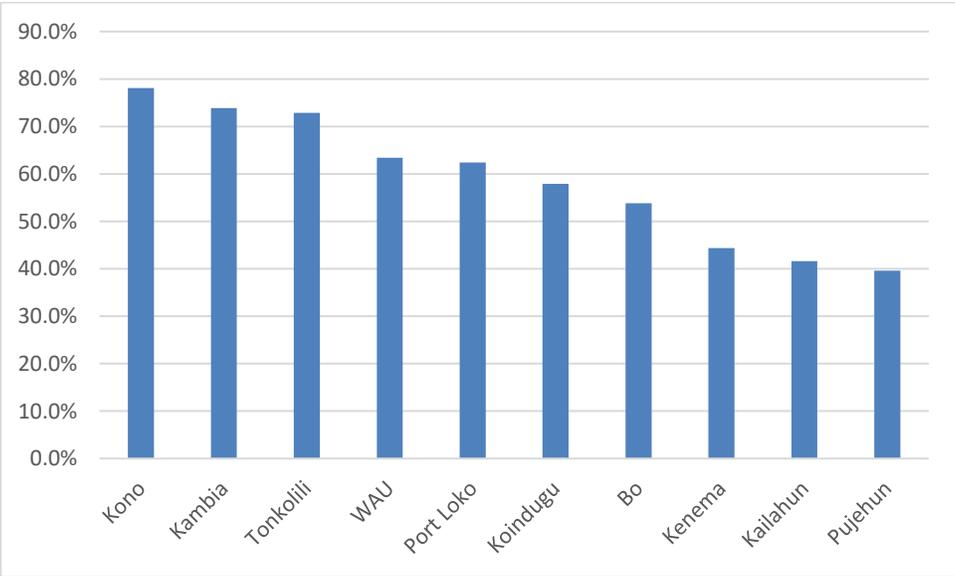
Right of girls with disabilities to access the safe space

With respect to girls’ perceptions of the rights of their peers with disabilities to access important social amenities such as the safe space, over half (57.6 percent) stated that girls with disabilities do indeed have a right to go to the learning space, with 18 percent saying they ‘don’t know’ and 23.8 percent stating that they do not have a right to go to a learning space.

This suggests entrenched discriminatory attitudes among a sizable minority of girls and the need for a GESI transformative approach to inclusion of girls with disabilities in order to assure fruitful participation of this sub-population in the EAGER project. As indicated above, of the 20 girls who participated in individual interviews, one of them expressed having a physical disability (previously had polio).

Disaggregation by district showed that girls in Pujehun responded least favourably (39.6 percent) while nearly three-quarters of girls in Kono, Kambia and Tonkolili were most supportive (78.1 percent, 73.9 percent, and 72.9 percent, respectively). Age does not seem to be related to differences in attitudes. Interestingly, girls with disabilities themselves were only slightly more inclusive than their peers (63.5 percent), perhaps signalling internalised discrimination. It is worth noting that the definition of disability within the question, i.e., “children who cannot see, hear, communicate or care for themselves,” is a more conservative definition of disability than the understanding within the report so it is possible that girls identified as “with disability” for the purposes of this baseline report would nonetheless not fit within the definition of this question.

Figure 53: Percentage of girls responding “yes” to the question: “Do you think children with disabilities have a right to go to the learning/safe space? (e.g. children who cannot see, hear, communicate or care for themselves)”



The qualitative data provide some additional nuance around whether girls with disabilities should be able to access and will actively utilise a safe space, which was discussed in some detail in 100 of the FGDs and KIIs. It is important to note that depression, anxiety, learning disabilities and other more “subtle” reflections of disability were not mentioned specifically in any of the interviews and therefore likely not considered to be a disability when respondents answered questions

probing into this topic. When respondents did offer specifics on what they considered a disability to be (n=18 interviews provided specification), they strictly referred to physical impairments, as in the survey question reported above, like difficulty walking / mobility (n=9), difficulty seeing (n=8), difficulty hearing and/or speaking (n=7).

The vast majority of qualitative interviews (n=91) revealed respondents who were very positive and enthusiastic about girls with disabilities accessing safe spaces. Thirteen interviews reflected reservations and six revealed the perception that there were no disabled children in the community. Though the sample of interviewees is not at all representative of the broader population, it is notable that so few, including girls, were openly negative about disabled girls' ability or right to access safe spaces (figure 54), especially when comparing to the quantitative response rates among girls in the surveys.

Figure 54: Qualitative interview perceptions about disabled girls' ability and right to access safe spaces, based on coding of open-ended responses to interview questions

Perception given	# Interviews
Positive about disabled girls' ability and right to access	91
Reservations about disabled girls' ability and right to access	13 ¹⁰³
Suggests that there are no disabled children at all in the community	6 ¹⁰⁴
Provided a perspective on disabled girls' access	100

This seeming discrepancy between quantitative and qualitative findings may be the result of either a) reluctance on the part of respondents to reveal negative perceptions in the group setting and/or b) the facilitator in the FGD setting having the opportunity to provide more clarification to the girls around what was being asked in the question and/or c) chance, given the sample of girls in qualitative FGDs was purposefully selected and the sample size is small.

Transcripts, however, suggest there is good indication that girls and others truly do feel positive about disabled girls accessing the safe spaces, and provided detailed responses as to the reasons they should be not just allowed to access, but efforts should be made to ensure they are accommodated:

“We do not discriminate in this community. We treat each other the same because we are not the creator of any human being. This programme is a benefit to everyone and even if someone is blind, polio or whatever, they will all utilise that space” (Male Caregiver FGD, Bo).

“Is not a problem because we are not their creator, so we should not laugh at them. It is not their wish.... Like for those that cannot walk, if they have wheel chairs and the blind, we will be taking them to the place and after learning, we will take them home again” (Girl FGD, Kambia).

“I believe girls with disabilities will be happy to be part of such opportunity to utilise the place, though some of them cannot walk like others. They, too, would like to learn

¹⁰³ Of these twelve instances, seven were shared in girls KII or FGD; two in boys FGD; two from caregiver FGDs and one from a Mammy Queen KII.

¹⁰⁴ Of these six instances, two were shared in girls KII or FGD; two in Youth Leader KII; and one each in Community Leader KII and BLN Facilitator KII.

something that they will be proud of. Disability is not inability and therefore they can learn different skills like tailoring, soap making, hair dressing and even to read and write... They will be happy to take part because they will mingle with those that are not disabled and thank God our community doesn't marginalise each other irrespective of a person's background" (Female Caregiver FGD, Pujehun).

"We cannot discriminate against those with disabilities and they we be clean with no disease and they will be safe too. They are created by God and we cannot disown them. They are important in the community... Discriminating against such people is not good and all of us should be in the safe place despite their situation. They are humans. All of us can be educated together and be cleaned in the safe place.... They should be encouraged, and all of us should be together" (Girls FGD, Kono).

"We would want the safe space to be 'disabled friendly.' If the toilet system is not disabled friendly and a disabled person want to use the toilet, she would have to go home to do so. That might be a reason for them to withdraw from the safe space. Involving them would be really nice because that would help them to interact and feel that they belong" (Local Government KII, Pujehun)

Two of the thirteen interviews in which a reservation was expressed about disabled girls accessing safe spaces were related to the respondent's concern that there may not be adequate resources to accommodate those girls, for example hearing and visual aids; transportation to/from the safe space for girls with difficulty walking; proper seating. It was less an issue of the sentiment that they shouldn't have the right to use it.

"Well, for those with visual impairment, it is not advisable because we do not have teaching or learning aids to help them. They can hear but they don't see, and I don't think that is good as it will slow them down... It is also not good for the deaf to come to the safe space as they will see but they don't hear what the teacher will be saying... It is also not good for those who can't talk as they don't have people who know sign language" (Girls FGD, Kono).

In two more of the interviews, respondents conveyed that they thought girls with certain disabilities simply could not learn, but did not specify why:

"They don't know anything and they can't talk, don't know how to read... The blind can't see so I don't want them to be part of learning process" (Girls FGD, Port Loko)

"somebody who is blind cannot learn anything because of her sight" (Girls FGD, Kono).

Others indicated that disabled girls should be separated from non-disabled girls, and specified that it would reduce discrimination or taunting that disabled girls might be subjected to:

"Yes, but their [disabled girls] space should be different so that they will not disturb themselves. If they all sit together, they will discriminate against each other." (Mammy Queen KII, Kailahun).

"They [disabled girls] have challenges while the others don't have. They should be safe... They should be separated... For them not be physically hurt or provoked by others" (Female Caregiver FGD, Kambia).

One BLN facilitator shared his strategy for working with disabled girls, also envisioning a separation:

“The only way I can help them: among the groups I divided, I have to find group leaders that can help them along, and do group spot checks. That is the way I can help them” (Male BLN Facilitator, Koinadugu).

In two cases, respondents suggested that girls with disabilities may not be suitable for a safe space because they had issues with general cleanliness.

“No [girls with disabilities should not be included in the safe space] because they are unable to take good care of themselves in terms of cleanliness” (Girls FGD, Port Loko).

Finally, in two cases, respondents equated a disability with what they interpreted to be a communicable disease that could both be spread, and/or distract from learning time:

“Well, it is good [to include girls with disabilities] because they, too, can learn something and make a living, but it is also not good because of those with disabilities having illnesses that can easy transfer. If they get an attack while teaching is going on, that will distract you as you will all focus on that person?” (Girls FGD, Kono).

In the other case, a girl with a physical disability (Tonkolili) suggested that girls with the disability of “epilepsy” not be included, because they could “easily” transfer the disease to others; in another case, a girl was worried. This same girl from Tonkolili also indicated a concern that her peers be understanding with her; that it may take her and others like her longer to move from place to place: “and they have to patient with us because we cannot move as compared to those in their correct physical state.”

Reflections

Indicators IO4 A¹⁰⁵ and B¹⁰⁶ relate to the radio programme and (per the project logframe) the data will be collected by other evaluation activities. Discussions with EAGER about the scheduling of radio programming will be important to finalising this indicator. Finally, as qualitative findings show that access to radios may be limited in certain communities, a modest target is recommended, i.e. 50 percent.

IO4C¹⁰⁷ presents an adequate measure of head of household and caregiver norms. At midline and endline, to assist comparability, we recommend including questions in the relevant tools to be asked of both groups, instead of different questions on the same subject. These would not directly measure the indicator but provide useful contextual information.

IO4D¹⁰⁸ assesses the number of barriers faced, but does not address the magnitude or severity of the barriers faced. An additional survey question may be helpful for this purpose. While the indicators are appropriate as a basic measure, analysis of the data would be enhanced by additional questions in the data collection tool to provide context to the indicators.

Targets

While it is difficult to set targets for IO4A and IO4B based on the radio programme without additional information about the intended programme or the BBC Media survey design, we recommend conceptualising the goal of the programme to reach at least 70 percent of households

¹⁰⁵ “No. of people reached (including frequency) through national programming”

¹⁰⁶ “% of radio listeners who report actively engaging with topics discussed in radio programming”

¹⁰⁷ “% of community members that foster more supportive attitudes in learning / education / entrepreneurship (disaggregated by sex, role)”

¹⁰⁸ “% of girls that report fewer barriers to accessing education, and increased perception that they have the right to access safe spaces”

in the area, and at least 50 percent of those in households the programme reaches actively engage with the content.

Based on the original EAGER proposal, the radio programmes are expected to reach 5,521,930¹⁰⁹ people. With the goal of reaching 70 percent of those households, the target for IO4A (number of people reached through the national radio programme) is 3.86 million.

This can be estimated based on the proportion of the sample of the BBC Media survey that recognise the programming. The target for IO4B, the percent of radio listeners who actively engage with the content, is proposed to be set at half of the households it reaches, or (based on the assumption of 70 percent reach) or 35 percent of those surveyed. We recommend operationalising active engagement as those who have listened to the content more than two times in the past two weeks and have discussed the content of the radio programme either in a structured setting such as the facilitated discussions that take place in community dialogue sessions, or in unstructured discussions specifically of the radio programme (and not generally the topics related to it) with other members of their household, family, or community in the past month.

The target set for community support of girls' education is ambitious, but an achievable goal. While the radio programme will have diffuse and difficult-to-attribute effects, incorporating facilitated discussions has the potential to have a significant and measurable effect on the respondents, and should be considered as the keystone component in this aspect's success. The target set for indicator D will require ensuring training of midline enumerators to have the same degree of probing, so as to ensure meaningful barriers are mentioned but respondents are not encouraged to name barriers that their household does not personally face.

IO 5: Government supported to achieve strategic outcome for increased literacy for out-of-school (OOS) youth (aligned to updated ESP 2018-2020)

Summary of findings

According to the project, the two indicators related to IO5 have not yet been finalised. The results below provide information on the indicators that existed at the time of the analysis of baseline data.

Discussions with national level officials did not take place at baseline. District-level discussions with MBSSE and MSWGCA (which since the baseline has been separated into two ministries and EAGER will work with the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs) officials indicate that their offices play supervisory and monitoring roles of projects within districts but that administrative inadequacies hamper them in their work. On-going communication between EAGER staff and district officials will be important throughout the life of the project.

¹⁰⁹ Originally based on Housing and Population Census, 2015

Table 27: Intermediate outcome indicators as per the logframe, Government supported to achieve strategic outcome for increased literacy for out-of-school (OOS) youth (aligned to updated ESP 2018-2020)

IO	IO indicator	Sampling and measuring technique used	Who collected the data?	Baseline level	Target for next evaluation point	Will IO indicator be used for next evaluation point? (Y/N)
Government supported to achieve strategic outcome for increased literacy for out-of-school (OOS) youth (aligned to updated ESP 2018-2020)	National level representatives of MBSSE and MSWGCA participates in the Baseline, Midline and Endline data validation	KIIs	External evaluator	Not Complete	Completion of baseline validation	Y
	Number of informative project coordination meetings held with the National level representatives of MBSSE and MSWGCA annually	KIIs	External evaluator	0%	2 meetings with a deputy minister level or higher from each of the two named ministries	Y

Main qualitative findings

- Discussions with national level officials did not take place at baseline.
- KIIs with district-level officials indicate that education (MBSSE) and social welfare (MSWGCA) officials play a supervisory and monitoring role for projects within the community that target out-of-school youth.
- Local government officials identified several challenges that they encounter in their work, including understaffing, a lack of budget as well as often delayed allocation of funds, weak logistics and supplies, and a poor road network. These responses reflect comments across various districts.
- Initial discussions with officials indicate that MSWGCA officials may see working with out-of-school girls as falling squarely within their mandate; this may be a more challenging role for MBSSE officials used to working within the formal sector.

Main Findings

As indicated within the Challenges sections above, due to continued discussions between EAGER and various ministries as well as a ministerial reshuffling in November 2019, the evaluation team did not succeed in interviewing any national-level representatives at the time of baseline data collection.

Qualitative data collectors did seek to meet with local representatives linked to each of the 10 sample communities and undertook fourteen interviews with six MBSSE and eight MSWGCA officials, respectively. Only the official from Port Loko was female, all 13 others were males. No official was available for interview in Kono. These individuals contributed to general discussions about girls' education as well as identifying information about their perceptions of girls' education programmes and the roles of their offices.

Perceptions from government officials at the district level

In general, officials interviewed see the role of their offices as one of working closely with NGOs and other implementing partners. They expect to be informed and to provide oversight. As one official indicated,

“Every project has its aims and objectives. This is why we (government) provide joint monitoring with these NGOs (UNICEF, Cross Canada). The Ministry of Social Welfare, we do joint [monitoring]. We (the government) are not implementing but provide supervision, monitoring and evaluation to ensure that service delivery is delivered to the fullest. (Social Welfare official, KII¹¹⁰)

Local government officials across all districts identified several challenges that they encounter in their work, including understaffing, a lack of budget as well as often delayed allocation of funds, weak logistics and supplies, and a poor road network that makes contact with communities difficult.

In addition, MBSSE and MSWGCA officials acknowledged that they are responsible for monitoring projects implemented by NGOs within communities, but one official indicated that they “last minute” notifications from such partners regarding activities hinders effective work in this regard. Another official asked for NGOs to continue to support government policies:

“The civil societies also should continue to back and align the activities with government policies so that we can have one, for duplication of activities.” (Social welfare official, KII)

MBSSE and MSWGCA officials also identified multiple ways in which they work closely with district councils. As EAGER implementation progresses, ongoing clarification is needed of the roles and level of engagement of different ministries related to out-of-school girls and the Sierra Leonean government's strategic outcome to increase literacy rates for youth.

One district-level education official commented that, “our mandate does not deal with such because we do not deal with youths, more of teacher's affairs.” (Education official, KII) Combined with the difficulties that qualitative teams encountered in meeting with district-level government officials, there is a need to further probe the relevancy of OOS girl's programming to their work. Overall, MSWGCA officials interviewed seemed to see their mandate as broader and clearly one of working with young women within communities.

¹¹⁰ Because these individuals hold unique positions within their districts, the report omits district names to protect confidentiality.

IO 5 Indicator A. National level representatives of MBSSE and MSWGCA participates in the Baseline, Midline and Endline data validation

No data was collected due to on-going discussions between EAGER and ministry officials at the time of baseline as well as a ministerial reshuffling that made impossible identifying appropriate individuals for interview. These interviews are expected to take place at midline.

IO 5 Indicator B. Number of informative project coordination meetings held with the National level representatives of MBSSE and MSWGCA annually

No data was collected due to the same reason as above.

Reflections

Data could not be collected on neither of the two IO 5 Indicators (A and B). Discussions between EAGER management and the government were still ongoing at the time of baseline data collection. A reorganisation of ministerial incumbents at the time of data collector training further complicated these issues and prevented access by the evaluators to national level stakeholders for KIIs. Both of these indicators can be independently verified, but their completion, and the number of government meetings, is not necessarily indicative of meaningful engagement.

Indicators IO5A and B (see above) will establish government's involvement in the EAGER project. The level and quality of that involvement will determine whether or not achieving these IOs will contribute in any way to the project's outcomes. After the radio programme begins, surveys of caregivers and heads of household can incorporate questions on their awareness as supportive evidence, as well as KIIs and focus groups. The evaluation team recommends maintaining the IOs at this time though assuring thorough documentation of developments with national government officials.

Targets

At midline, IO5B [number of informative project coordination meetings held with national-level representatives] will be measured as at minimum two meetings with a key focal person from each of the two named ministries. At midline, the evaluation team will look for evidence of meaningful data validation beyond reception of baseline report findings, such as independent verification and working towards improved coordination. This will in addition be reflected in the sustainability scorecard.

7.2 Life skills

Findings related to knowledge, skills and attitudes

Due to the importance of life skills within the EAGER project, baseline findings above address life skills at both the outcomes (Outcome Indicator 1C) and intermediate outcome (IO indicator 3) levels. In addition to those findings, this section provides additional synthesis regarding resources, gaps and the evaluation team's assessment of the EAGER approach to life skills.

Findings related to the intersection of accessible resources and services, girls' social capital, agency and gender norms

While the baseline study only superficially addressed girls' awareness of available resources and services, it did explore girls' relationships with their peers in more depth, finding that a slight majority of girls interviewed individually felt they have positive relationships (11 of 20). Explorations of gender norms show that relationships with male counterparts can be challenging at times and that, while male partners and male caregivers generally spoke positively about girls' education adding value to their role within the family, a small number of males reinforced that a female partner should not exceed the authority or capacity of male partner (see "Perspectives on whether a girl should be educated" in IO4 C section above for further detail, including quotes.)

Gaps

Overall findings indicate that EAGER has an opportunity to provide girls with knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to life skills that they may not already possess. In addition, while the curriculum has been designed to address a wide range of life skills, research of the capacity of mentors by the evaluation team has identified significant gaps in their experience and understanding. Similarly, the identification of key resources going beyond the EAGER life skills manual remains to be seen at baseline, due in part to the project not having begun at the time of research. An investigation in content as well as facilitator capacity will be included in the midline evaluation.

Evaluation team's assessment of life skills approach

Based on the findings on learning outcomes in section 6, the girls selected for participation in the EAGER project have room for growth when it comes to knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to life skills. The EAGER curriculum related to life skills will be delivered over nine months, the same duration of literacy and numeracy classes. This curriculum will address key elements related to girls' personal agency: intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics, smart decision-making, stress management, friendship, peer pressure and a suite of gender and GBV considerations, among others. The design of the intervention aims to address the quality of relationships between girls and those around them, the accessibility of relevant resources and services, and existing gender norms.

The proposed life skills curriculum is GESI-transformative in its exploration of gender norms, relationship to cultural traditions and explorations of power dynamics. The curriculum is designed to be rooted in girls' daily experiences, and as such, has the potential to reach girls with a meaningful message. In sum, the evaluation concludes that the life skills curriculum, if implemented well, will effectively address girls' needs. Successful implementation will rely largely upon the ability of mentors and project staff to guide girls through life skills explorations. At the same time, accompanying discussions on gender norms within the community and with adolescent boys may help to create possibilities for change in gender dynamics.

Project response

Given the baseline levels of the life skills index or various measures, does the project still feel its interventions are suitable to achieve the desired empowered action? Are there intervention design changes that are being proposed to address gaps not previously recognised as major issues to address?

Yes, given the main findings from this Baseline research, the project team believes that the overall design and key components of this project are on target and still in line with the desired outcomes.

The barriers for adolescent girls that were originally identified and informed the project design included: economic barriers; violence; teenage pregnancy/motherhood; a lack of safe spaces and female role models; harmful socio-cultural norms and practices; and lack of accelerated learning programmes and employment opportunities. One of the primary components of socio-cultural norms and practices is gender norms, which underpins all of these other barriers that were identified. As long as the project succeeds in non-confrontationally challenging gender norms and introducing alternate narratives about gender assumptions, expectations, and roles, the planned interventions have the potential to have an empowering impact in the lives of these adolescent girls. To do so, these messages will need to be strongly incorporated into the Life Skills curriculum, Boys Sessions, and Community Dialogues.

The finding that girls are extremely unaware (only 3.7 percent demonstrated awareness) of the gender norms that underpin and define their lives, or at least they have not thought about these norms reflectively or critically, is striking. This suggests that the girls have internalised these gender norms through socialisation and the absence of female role models to suggest viable alternatives, and are likely to limit themselves to familiar patterns they see around them – including early marriage and traditionally female trades. This finding will not lead to any specific design change; however, gender norms will be more strongly emphasised and challenged throughout the different approaches, including in the Life Skills sessions, Transition, Boys' learning circles, and Community Dialogues. It can be assumed that if this finding was so prominent among the girls, a tendency towards hostile is likely to be consistent in the community as normalised behaviour.

The finding that girls' lack of awareness about their behaviour stemming from a hostile attribution bias (only 13.9 percent demonstrated awareness) is not surprising, given that levels of aggression and violent behaviour is quite normalised and accepted and rates of gender-based violence are known to be very high across the country. Again, this finding will not change programme approaches, but emphasis on managing conflict, negotiation skills, active listening, managing anger, and coping with stress will be emphasised in the Life Skills sessions as well as the Boys' learning circles. Developing these Social and Emotional Learning Skills will be very important for the girls as they transition.

The findings about the high level of acceptance of gendered economic opportunities is an important insight and will be kept front and centre in the Business Skills sessions, Mentor trainings, Market Assessments, and Transition. Wherever there are opportunities to promote entrepreneurship or other opportunities that safely break the girls out of the limiting Gender Box, the project will promote these. The project will need to think more creatively and innovatively about how to do this, while ensuring that we are not setting the girls up to fail. The project must challenge the girls to look around and think critically about what is not, and ask why not – for example, why are girls not doing certain roles or running certain businesses?

The finding that the Mentors did not grasp the concept of life skills, or retain very much from their training is not surprising at this stage, given the poor results from their Life Skills Training post-test. This is because the overall literacy and education level was lower than what had been anticipated during the project design and initial drafting of the curriculum, despite the mapping process setting out criteria on the level of education that should be achieved by appointees (90% of mentors self-reported having an education level beyond JSS). In response to this finding, the project took an immediate decision to revise the Life Skills curriculum and tailor it more directly to their demonstrated level of literacy and experience. This process started at the same time as the Baseline Research started in November 2019. A further reason why some mentors may not have demonstrated a firm grasp of the programme is that several were replaced in the interim period

between mapping and training, and when the baseline was conducted. Mentors that joined the projects at a later date were all trained on the revised curriculum.

These revisions have made the material simpler and more straight-forward for the Mentors, increasing the chances that the main points will be understood, internalised, and passed on to the girls through stories, activities, and key messages. The evaluators also shared a concern about the age of Mentors, and that some seemed to be close in age to the beneficiary girls. A review of age records showed that whilst the average age of Mentors is 29.3, in the majority of the districts there are outliers who are both closer in age to the girls, and further away, than ideally desired. In future cohorts, clearer guidance will be provided to project staff assisting with the selection of mentors to ensure that there is an appropriate age gap between them and beneficiary girls, whilst also being mindful that they should still be close enough in age to relate to common issues. The project will explore the feasibility of bringing in more qualified mentors from outside the community, if we cannot identify suitably qualified individuals within a community, for example, by recruiting additional mentors in Chiefdom headquarter towns, where there is often greater availability of educational institutes. This would also allow the project to work in the hardest-to-reach and most marginalised communities lacking an educated volunteer base– something that is an aim for Cohorts 2 and 3.

Further adaptations that will be made to the life skills approach based on findings from the baseline is increased coaching resources for mentors to equip them with the skills needed to provide psychosocial support to girls struggling with anxiety and depression, whilst also ensuring that coping and resilience skills are built into the curriculum as a whole. The second phase of the life skills curriculum, currently under development, will also include a distinct session dealing with disability, to try and address prevailing stigma around inclusion and right to education, and to dispel emergent false beliefs; similar programming will also be incorporated into community dialogues.

8. Conclusions

The evaluation team identifies the following main findings and conclusions, organised by topic area below.

Outcomes

Outcome 1: Learning

Literacy

- **Baseline literacy levels:** Results from the OLA identify three distinct groups of beneficiaries in terms of literacy skills: approximately 40 percent who could not read any letters, 35 percent who could read letters but not read or comprehend proficiently, and the remaining 25 percent who could not read at a proficient pace, but were able to derive enough information to answer the majority of the easy comprehension questions. Thus, the findings indicate the importance of recognition by facilitators of the multiple categories of starting points for literacy learners and not focus on a single average girl ability level during literacy courses.
- **Desired literacy skills:** Qualitative data indicates that stakeholders (girls and caregivers, in particular) are overwhelmingly in favour of improved literacy skills, which they viewed to be helpful for functional tasks such as reading signs, text messages, documents and assisting their own children in school, as well as with writing tasks.

Conclusion 1: EAGER beneficiaries will be entering the project at significantly different reading abilities. Tailored approaches to instruction for different abilities both within safe spaces and between communities will be important to enhancing the chances of successful learning by beneficiaries. It is important to focus on literacy improvement, and not absolute proficiency when assessing success at the individual, community, and district levels.

Numeracy

- **Baseline numeracy levels:** EGMA results suggest that girls performed best in the subtasks of counting, money and number discrimination, and word problems. While, on average, all test-takers performed equally or slightly better on the real-world settings items, girls who had never attended school performed significantly better (9 percentage points) on real-world problems while girls who had attended school performed only slightly better (3 percentage points).
- **Desired numeracy skills:** Qualitative data reinforces stakeholders' interest in improving numeracy skills and offered examples of what they understand to be key capacities in numeracy: counting money, giving change, keeping track of finances, recording measurements and using the phone.

Conclusion 2: EAGER's approach focusing on real-world numeracy skills is likely to offer beneficiaries much-needed skills while satisfying their interests, particularly for girls who have never been to school.

Life Skills

- **Baseline life skills levels:** In general, girls demonstrated a weak to moderate awareness on the wide range of knowledge, attitudes and skills assessed by this tool. Analysis of sub-tasks show that while over half of girls (on average 58.9 percent) assumed hostile intent in response to story prompts, a much smaller percentage of girls (on average 22.1 percent) say they would

act in an emotionally dysregulated way. Girls on average suggested a problem-solving approach to two out of three questions. Results on the life skills assessment also show that while girls demonstrate knowledge on some health topics, there is significant room to measure improvement over the life of the project.

- **Girls in most need of strengthening life skills:** The life skills assessment results suggest that girls with disabilities and younger girls will benefit more from life skills support. This may be related to the fact that 60 percent of those who self-report having a disability have a cognitive, psychosocial, or mental health disability. More than 1 in 8 girls report signs of depression or anxiety at least weekly. Project awareness of mental health concerns and steps to promote protective factors against anxiety and depression may be a critical to removing barriers to success in learning and transition. Steps may include the need to promote inclusion of girls with disabilities within the safe space as well as fostering support for their successful participation within the community.

Conclusion 3: EAGER presents an opportunity for girls to strengthen their awareness of important topics like good health practices as well as strengthening girls' reactions to unpleasant situations and building upon problem-solving tendencies. Mentors should emphasise negotiation skills, expressing emotions and stress management, along with gender-related sessions in their life skills instruction.

Outcome 2: Transition

- **Relationship of poverty to other barriers:** Qualitative data identify the overlap between poverty and other factors, such as the lack of parental support (both in terms of neglect and physical absence). Pregnancy is a major reason for girls leaving school and the relationship between schooling and sexual activity is multifaceted. Some families may put girls in school so that they are not idle at home possibly having sex and getting pregnant. Others argue that girls who go to school are more likely to become sexually active. When resources are scarce, some argue, girls may seek out sexual relationships that often carry some monetary support. In addition, in Koinadugu and Port Loko, more than other districts, girls' focus groups identified early marriage as a factor that has inhibited girls from attending school; some parents choose to marry their girls off early for greater financial security.
- **Baseline levels for schooling:** Quantitative data show that just over half of girls (51.8 percent) enrolled in EAGER had been to school but dropped out while 45.3 percent had never been to school. Of those who had attended school, they had spent on average 4.8 years enrolled. Literacy scores identify three distinct groups of learners.
- **Baseline levels for employment:** Data from the girls' combined survey indicates that the majority of girls are not employed (57.5 percent) at baseline while 4.5 percent are employed by others and 29.7 percent are self-employed. Almost none (five individuals) are engaged in formal paid employment. However, girls spend a significant time completing productive activities not necessarily considered work: it is estimated that 41 percent of girls spend 35 or more hours per week doing household tasks, the working definition of a high chore burden.
- **Implementation challenges for transition to schooling:** Quantitative data also identifies key barriers for girls' education, notably families not having enough money to pay fees (72.2 percent), followed by girls needing to help around the house (23.4 percent) and a girl having a child or being pregnant (18.9 percent). District-level differences arose during analysis and should assist EAGER implementers in focusing project resources.

- **Implementation challenges for personal and community empowerment:** Personal and community empowerment are complex concepts that interlink with other forms of empowerment. For example, while 75 percent of girls expressed capacity to make important decisions and voicer opinions in their home, 66 percent also state that they cannot choose their educational path and are subject to the decisions of others. Gaining greater autonomy and decision-making power within a household is a challenge that requires substantial community change and may not be something that girls can achieve themselves, irrespective of changes to their own skillsets or capacity.
- **Implementation challenges for economic empowerment:** While economic gains can be a clear path to empowerment, social and community norms can limit this. Men, especially male partners, emphasised education as a means to generate household income, but did not approve of changes that would alter traditional gender norms.
- **Implementation challenges of mentor model:** Mentors in the project exhibit more significant similarity in age and background to girls entering the project than initially expected. To some degree, this may be due to a lack of role models within each community; project staff would benefit from identifying a thorough network of support in communities and the adjacent areas.

Conclusion 4: Adequately trained mentors and connections to community resources, networks, skills and knowledge necessary for EAGER’s identified transition pathways will require proactive planning and resource building in the first year of the project. Attention to various identities, such as girls’ marital status, parental status and disability status should all be addressed and accommodations made.

Conclusion 5: Household empowerment¹¹¹ may be a difficult objective for girls to reach within the timeframe of the project given that entrenched gender norms are unlikely to change quickly. Through sensitisations, radio programming and other communications, EAGER should strive to stretch gender norms in a transformative way that will promote girls’ education.

Conclusion 6: Given that the EAGER project will use girls’ empowerment in the household and community as a means for measuring transition, EAGER needs to ensure that programming with boys/partners and also community activities like community dialogues are given enough focus and support for successful implementation.

Outcome 3: Sustainability

- **Baseline attitudes towards girls’ education:** Analysis of stakeholder perspectives according to criteria within the sustainability scorecard shows that, with few notable exceptions, nearly all focus groups with boys, with caregivers and with community leaders (91.5 percent) demonstrate a “latent¹¹²,” rating, i.e. they are indicating some changes in attitude already at baseline, but behaviour may not yet have followed. A notable 8.5 percent of interviews/focus groups with stakeholders demonstrated a “negligible¹¹³” status and show no support for girls’ education.
- **Baseline levels of community discussions:** Feedback from community leaders indicates that discussions on gender issues do occur at the community level, though most often via external mediation, for example as a result of civil society projects. Nonetheless, community

¹¹¹ For an explanation see project description of transition pathways (outcome 2) above.

¹¹² Community stakeholders are developing knowledge and understanding and demonstrate some change in attitude towards girls’ education.

¹¹³ There is evidence of improved practice and support for girls’ education in specific ways being targeted by project; Change is not universally accepted among targeted stakeholders, but support is extending.

members deem these activities as positive. Active community initiatives to promote girls' schooling were rarer, with 3 of the 10 qualitative communities indicating some activity, namely by-laws to support schooling.

- **Barriers to altering gender norms:** While individuals and groups in the “latent” category demonstrated a willingness to support girls' education (largely because they perceive it to be financially advantageous for the family) they continue to identify barriers, such as marriage and pregnancy, as acceptable and do not signal they would actively fight to reduce those barriers. While those with “negligible” status are distributed across all districts, it is significant that all of the boys who were vocal on this point in focus groups in Kailahun and Koinadugu agreed that girls need not to receive formal schooling.

Conclusion 7: The overall sustainability score computes to “1” at baseline, though this calculation rests solely upon the community-level indicator as the system-level indicator and the learning space indicator had limitations that prevented their inclusion.

Intermediate outcome findings

IO1: Attendance

- **Baseline attendance levels:** As the project had not yet begun, attendance data are not obtained at baseline.
- **Baseline attitudes towards empowerment:** Nearly two-thirds of girls often do not feel sufficiently empowered to make their own choices about whether they attend or stay in an education project.
- **Opportunities and barriers for girls' participation:** Qualitative data from interviews with partners and caregiver FGDs did not uncover much overt resistance to girls' participating in the project. At the same time, interviews identified only a small number of pledges from males to support girls' in their EAGER pursuits; these individuals who may serve as champions to for girls' education among their peers.

Conclusion 8: Well over the majority of beneficiary girls identify going to the learning spaces as valuable, indicating that, at the time of baseline data collection, girls were keen to participate in the project. Nonetheless, it is quite possible that girls will continue to encounter barriers over which they have no control. The success of the EAGER project will depend upon its ability to mediate these barriers, working closely with community members and existing champions of girls' education and empowerment to shift norms to promote gender equity and social inclusion. This requires putting into effect the supports and incentives identified in the theory of change, namely start-up grants, special needs grants and/or learning resources¹¹⁴.

¹¹⁴ The Theory of Change that was current at the time of the writing of this baseline report refers to “competitive start-up grants, special needs grants and/or learning stipends.” Discussions with IRC clarified that they are in the process of revising this programme element and that the term “resources” is more appropriate than “stipends.”

IO2: BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors deliver quality inclusive instruction in BLN, life/SEL skills, financial literacy and (self-) employment skills

- **Baseline measures of quality instruction:** Due to project activities rolling out after data collection, anticipated data from session observations could not be captured at baseline. Review of the life skills curriculum shows it is GESI transformative in its exploration of gender norms, relationship and power dynamics.
- **Baseline level of facilitator capacity:** Qualitative findings demonstrate that BLN facilitators, in general, seem to have relevant background experience and a fair command of appropriate instructional strategies for out-of-school girls (group techniques, active methods and use of local languages as the language of instruction).
- **Baseline level of mentor capacity:** Analysis of interview data demonstrates that mentors appear to have little formal schooling, business experience or experience in their role as mentor. Two of the mentors specifically indicated that they have little capacity to read and write (they “read a little”). Only 1 mentor of the 16 identified clear business experience. Data collectors also noted that mentors “seemed quite young,” quite possibly of the same age bracket as older EAGER beneficiaries.

Conclusion 9: Despite a life skills curriculum with potential, there is no indication that mentors have the experience to help girls seek out opportunities or develop skills that go beyond what the girls may already know. Without adequate training and support, EAGER risks accommodating and reinforcing detrimental norms discriminating to girls, in particular, those with disabilities as well as married girls and those who are mothers. Reinforcement of mentor capacities and provision of ongoing coaching will be critical to mentors supporting girls in their transitions.

IO3A: Girls age 13-17 develop a transition plan that includes their self-identified goals and timelines to gain safe fairly-paid employment, self-employment or further learning or training, or goals for greater community or household empowerment

- **Baseline levels of self-efficacy:** Over 75.3 percent of girls responded affirmatively to a series of statements related to goal achievement, demonstrating a high level of self-efficacy for most girls. A notable finding is that approximately 5 percentage points more of girls disagreed with the statement, “When facing difficult tasks, I am certain I will accomplish them.”
- **Girls’ vision of the future as tradework:** In the 18 of 20 girls’ focus groups, when discussing the future, girls understood this option as them doing “business” or a trade, most commonly a vocation like catering, hairstyling, soapmaking or tailoring. Girls rarely mentioned needing capital for existing projects and they spoke least about household and community empowerment (3 FGDs, respectively).
- **Understanding of mentorship:** During focus groups, girls and caregivers most often interpreted the concept of mentor as a confidant. In only 2 of 20 instances, did girls’ focus group discussions indicate that a mentor helped them think about their education and futures; and only 1 of 20 times for caregivers.
- **Baseline attitudes towards peer relationships:** When asked about their relationships with girls of their age within their communities, 11 of 20 girls readily identified having strong positive relationships with their peers; 4 identified both positive and negative relationships, and 5 girls identified that all relationships are negative or non-existent.

Conclusion 10: Life skills classes should emphasise problem solving skills and coping with adversity and, in doing so, to draw upon girls' experiences and strategies. It seems likely these topics are related to the decision-making and stress management modules of the Life Skills Manual. They should be adapted as needed.

Conclusion 11: Girls' notions of future work at baseline are generally limited to the common trades and often those that are gendered for females. EAGER has the opportunity to broaden girls' worldviews through a gender transformative approach as well as to suggest and reinforce entrepreneurship amongst beneficiaries, particularly through small start-up grants, special needs grants and/or additional resources to support further learning which, as per the theory of change, can be accessed by girls based on availability and eligibility.

Conclusion 12: Girls and their caregivers' conceptualisation of mentors rarely includes professional and educational coaching. EAGER will need a clear articulation for communicating the goals of transition mentorship with beneficiaries and their families.

Conclusion 13: Girls relationships with their peers may be stronger than EAGER's original assumptions, but some girls clearly need additional support. Self-esteem and team building exercises will be important to further strengthening girls' friendships with their peers. The life skills curriculum may be able to address aspects of strong positive friendships.

IO3B: Girls apply skills learned in life skills sessions in their daily lives

- **Baseline levels of facilitator knowledge in life skills:** Because the project had not yet begun at baseline, analysis focuses on the facilitators' potential to deliver quality life skills sessions. Qualitative data show that only 2 mentors of the 16 sampled were able to list at least three topics covered within the EAGER Life Skills manual. Project staff (BLN Officers, LSB Officers, etc.) play a critical role in providing oversight and support to mentors, but they also demonstrated difficulties correctly identifying life skills.

Conclusion 14: Mentors and other project staffs' mastery of life skills topics is questionable prior to project roll-out but subsequent to some staff trainings. These findings create doubts about the quality of life skills instruction and that girls will be able to apply skills learned in life skills sessions.

IO4A: Community members regularly listen to and/or engage in dialogue surrounding issues relating to girls' education and empowerment (disaggregated by girls, boys, men and women)

IO4B: Community members, including caregivers of girls, foster more supportive attitudes and/or behaviour in learning / education / entrepreneurship

- **Baseline attitudes towards radio:** Qualitative data from FGDs and KIs with nearly all stakeholders (a possible 16 interviews per district¹¹⁵) demonstrate that stakeholders' opinions of radio as an effective medium are mixed across districts with the greatest preference for radio in communities in Tonkolili (13), Kambia (12) and Western Area Urban (11). Stakeholders in Kenema (4), Kailahun and Bo (5, respectively) were the least likely to identify support for radio programming.

¹¹⁵ Only KIs with girls and male partners did not address the issue of radio.

Conclusion 15: Some stakeholders and communities display scepticism of the use of radio as a means to discuss and affect gender norms. While the project includes components of the radio project and facilitated community discussions, focusing energies on the latter may be critical to changing community norms and fostering transformation.

IO4C: Girls report greater support for girls' education and learning and at community level

- **Baseline community attitudes towards attendance.** Caregivers indicate it is acceptable for girls to not attend school if they are a mother (30.3 percent) or if education is too costly (27.9 percent) with some variation among districts. Caregivers also most commonly by far attributed their daughters'/ wives' not being in school to not having enough money to pay fees (72.2 percent), needing to work/earn money or help around the house (23.4 percent) or similarly, if the girl has a child or is pregnant (18.9 percent). Beneficiaries also overwhelmingly feel they have a right to access the safe space (84.8 percent) with variation across district and with stronger affirmations among girls with disabilities. Girls' beliefs are much more mixed concerning girls with disabilities accessing safe spaces as nearly one quarter (23.8 percent) indicate they do not believe they have a right to that space, suggesting entrenched discriminatory attitudes among a sizable minority of girls.
- **Baseline community attitudes towards girls' education:** Stakeholders revealed diverse viewpoints concerning whether a girl should be educated. Supportive individuals indicated that girls are more helpful to their families and they have greater difficulties finding work than boys while others prioritise boy's education because many believe that girls have a tendency to get pregnant and leave school anyway. In general, male partners and caregivers are supportive of their partners being educated though within the boundaries of established gender roles.

Conclusion 16: While these findings are not surprising, they reinforce the need for EAGER to work closely with boys, girls' spouses/partners, and community leaders to effect transformation in gender norms. The midline and endline evaluations will seek to identify if changes in attitude have amplified and if changes in practice are present within EAGER communities.

IO4D: % of girls that report fewer barriers to accessing education, and increased perception that they have the right to access safe spaces

- **Baseline attitudes towards girls' right to access safe spaces:** Data explore perceptions around the rights of girls to access safe spaces. Acknowledging possible desirability bias, 84.5 percent of girls responded positively that they have the right to go to the learning/safe spaces. Girls with disabilities display higher levels of affirmation than their counterparts. Qualitative and quantitative data differ slightly in terms of girls' opinions on whether girls with disabilities should have access to safe spaces. Qualitative data reflect a more open perspective, with nine-tenths of interviews positively responding.

Conclusion 17: Building upon findings related to barriers above, data demonstrate a general highly supportive attitudes among girls for their right to attend learning spaces. The midline evaluation will seek to explore this attitude at this new time point as well to gather more nuanced evidence related to girls' various identities, particularly disability, marital and parenthood status. Experiences in the programme and within the community as the programme gets under way will likely greatly influence girls' attitudes.

IO5: Government supported to achieve strategic outcome for increased literacy for out-of-school (OOS) youth (aligned to updated ESP 2018-2020)

- **Baseline assessment of implication in education for OOS girls:** Discussions with national level officials were not possible at baseline. District-level discussions with MBSSE and MSWGCA officials indicate that their offices play supervisory and monitoring roles of projects within districts but that administrative inadequacies hamper them in their work.

Conclusion 18: On-going communication between EAGER staff and district officials will be important throughout the life of the project.

Theory of Change

With the exception of national government level aspirations that have undergone significant revisions due to factors outside of EAGER's control, the evaluation team judges the project's Theory of Change to be appropriate and ambitious. Baseline findings underline the complexity of the situation of out-of-school girls in Sierra Leone and the Theory of Change and confirm barriers that the project has identified. Project activities are thoroughly designed and offer alternatives, for instance, community dialogues working in tandem with radio programming to promote discussions of gender and inclusion practices at the community level.

Similarly, the suite of start-up grants, special needs grants and/or learning resources will offer girls the possibility to mediate primary barriers at least for the duration of programming. Should Intermediate Outcomes be realised, it is likely that the project will make progress towards its articulated outcomes. The learning outcome is likely more straightforward than transition and sustainability.

The transition outcome related to economic empowerment, however, requires particular attention. Appropriate market analysis and assessment of other more empowerment related opportunities are critical to helping girls move to the next phase, yet at baseline, few stakeholders could identify concrete opportunities for girls within their communities. Similarly, the assumption that mentors, in particular, have the skills and background required to shepherd girls on their journey is also critical yet baseline findings question the abilities of the majority of mentors included within the qualitative sample.

Key characteristic subgroups and barriers faced

Findings show that, by large, the project's understanding of subgroup needs, and barriers faced align with the situation found at baseline and correspond with EAGER's Theory of Change. The project has recognised the issues surrounding marriage, parenting, and never attending school, which are the most prevalent groups of concern. Baseline findings, however, call EAGER's attention to an unspecified subgroup of 9 percent of beneficiaries who are also their own heads of household, as well as to larger proportions of married girls and mothers than had originally been anticipated.

Similarly, 14.6 percent of the sample qualify as girls with disabilities, in part, because of reporting daily experiences of anxiety or depression. In order to promote inclusion with the programme and beyond, we also recommend nuanced consideration of those who are characterised as having a disability, and how it intersects with other barriers. Anxiety and depression appear to be at higher incidence among those facing other barriers. The flexibility and pace of the training projects largely seem to meet needs of the group, although additional support for mental health issues and additional considerations for girls who are heads of household may merit consideration.

Gender equality

The project design takes into account gender inequalities and articulates activities to be GESI accommodating or GESI transformative. By balancing nationwide interventions to affect gender norms broadly with individual and community-level interventions to provide opportunities to challenge and take advantage of changing gender norms, the project is overall accommodating and transformative. Baseline findings call additional attention to transition options, which may reinforce female-specific pathways. At baseline, opportunities present within communities for girls' transitions were not yet clear to the majority of stakeholders. The evaluation team plans further to revisit this project element at midline.

Risks

Mentors and others who have direct contact with girls may reinforce gender norms and limitations that may restrict girls' possibilities. EAGER can mitigate this risk and instead foster a transformative approach through immediate reinforcement and ongoing training of its mentors, and similarly, scaffolded support for the personnel chain that oversees and supports frontline staff.

The percentage of girls with mental health concerns, specifically, anxiety and depression, presents a specific challenge to the project in terms of its overlap with other barriers, and being able to offer adequate and inclusive support to girls throughout the project.

EAGER should revisit its curriculum to assure that mental health issues and related resources available to girls are emphasised from the beginning of the project in order to ensure their greatest success. Similarly, project staff must be attentive to any discriminating or inappropriate interactions between girls once in the learning space. Protocols for dealing with such behaviours and creating inclusive and supportive environments should be delineated in advance and communicated to staff in the form of a decision-tree. Coordination staff should stand ready to support community-based staff immediately should such issues occur.

The EAGER project is working with a very vulnerable group of girls and their families and communities, offering hope that the girls and their entourage may benefit from project activities. While EAGER should aim to be ambitious in its approach, clear communication of realistic expectations to beneficiaries and their communities will be extremely important to not leaving participants and their communities jaded and disappointed with yet another training project that has not led to long-term improvements. This is particularly true given EAGER's re-articulation of transition pathways that now also include more nuanced outcomes, like personal, household and community empowerment.

9. Recommendations

The recommendations below address three areas of project implementation: monitoring, evaluation and learning; project design and sustainability. In terms of evaluation questions, more broadly, the evaluation team finds the questions to be comprehensive and does not recommend any changes to them for midline, other than minor grammatical revisions to assure appropriateness for that timepoint. For the project response sections below, all EAGER partners convened to discuss recommendations issued by the EE, identify priorities for future action and programme adaptations.

	Action	Actor to address	Timing priority	Project Response
#	Monitoring, evaluation and learning			
1	Additional disaggregation of project data according to beneficiaries who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of households • Impoverished and food insecure 	Evaluation team; EAGER MERL Team	Midline, endline; Start-up of learning activities (monitoring data)	Head of households – data will be disaggregated at this level (and is available for all beneficiaries from project mapping data) Impoverished / Food insecure – at this point it is not planned that this will be done as it would be a huge undertaking to measure accurately (full livelihoods assessment would be required) and most households outside of Freetown are food insecure at some point of the year (in Sierra Leone food supply varies substantially based on the season due to extended rainy & dry seasons). Do not have any harmful implications if we ask if people are food insecure, but do nothing to address this.

2	Establish the attendance rate as <i>the number of beneficiaries in attendance on the day it is measured divided by the number of girls enrolled in the project.</i>	EAGER MERL Team	Start-up of learning activities	Project collects attendance data for all safe and learning spaces (monthly attendance rate and individual learner attendance collected). Project officers do regular spot checks for verification - some inaccuracy will be expected, particularly at the beginning; many facilitators are just getting used to the tool, and may also over-report attendance if they are concerned that absences reflects badly on them. Engagement with facilitators will continue to support attendance tracking until they have become accustomed to the tool.
3	Maintain individual girl's attendance records to be able to discern whether there are occasional absences by high enrolment levels or frequent absences by a small number of beneficiaries.	EAGER MERL Team	Start-up of learning activities	Individual-level data is being collected in all safe and learning spaces. Individual attendance records will be collated and shared with the EE to assess if this was influential for demonstrated learning gains/lack of at midline
Project Design				
4	Clarify which girl beneficiaries may also be heads of households. Reassess project structure within each community to ensure that it accounts for the needs of this subgroup.	EAGER Consortium; District Supervisors; BLN/LBS Officers	Start-up of learning activities	Information on girls that are their own head of household was collected during the project mapping phase. As part of the barrier analysis being conducted on all beneficiaries, stemming from data collected during one-on-one meetings with girls, sub-analysis will attend to this group to

				ascertain if their specific needs differ from those of the overall cohort; based on outcomes of this, as assessment will be made if additional support or adaptations are required.
5	Given the higher than expected proportion of beneficiaries that are married and have children, work with programme staff to revisit the programme structure and accommodations to best support girls with families. Identify existing community support systems and work with supportive partners and their families to put into place creative solutions, such as rotating childcare.	EAGER Consortium; District Supervisors; BLN/LBS Officers	Start-up of learning activities	Through individual meetings with girls and caregivers prior to the programme beginning, potential barriers to participation were identified for each girl, and possible solutions to these barriers proposed. In many instances this involved the girls' household assisting with childcare in order for the girl to attend learning sessions. The project is also looking to leverage caregiver/household support by forming community-level support committees that may also be able to assist with provision of childcare when the safe and learning spaces are in session. From observations to date since sessions have begun, many of the girls with younger babies and who are still breastfeeding bring their children along to learning sessions. Facilitators and mentors have been trained to ensure these girls are still encouraged to actively participate in the sessions, and this is assessed at session observations conducted by project officers what measure inclusive and quality educational practices. The

				<p>project will build in additional checks to ascertain the impact of having children on session attendance, and discuss additional support structures if needed.</p>
6	<p>Given high prevalence of mental health disabilities (recurring feelings of sadness and anxiety), assure and adjust curriculum so that mental health is front and centre. Additional modules may necessary to complement the “expressing emotions” and “stress management” sessions.</p> <p>Provide additional trainings to EAGER staff, and in particular, mentors and facilitators, to be able to assist young people in need accordingly and to foster a socially inclusive approach throughout EAGER programming.</p>	EAGER Consortium	Start-up of learning activities	<p>Since the baseline was conducted, the life skills approach has been revised. The curriculum has been redesigned and will be completed in two batches. The first batch has already been completed, whilst the intention is to use learning and findings to feed into the revisions of the other half of the curriculum.</p> <p>Several life skills sessions deal with the issues highlighted here (e.g. emotions, building good friendships and relationships – showed in report to be linked to higher prevalence of anxiety and depression). A lot of content also is aimed at encouraging inclusion and participation which can lesson feelings of isolation/depression, whilst the approach taken in GBV sessions focuses on building resilience which should also be beneficial for these girls.</p> <p>A module focused on supporting girls with these issues will be developed for mentors and delivered through learning clusters.</p>

				<p>Reassessment of these disabilities will be added to the midline evaluation to see if there has been any decrease in prevalence, or if further adaptations should be made for cohorts 2 and 3.</p> <p>The project also needs to acknowledge that participation may add to stress by placing increased demands on time and potentially create conflict with unsupportive family members.</p>
7	<p>Conduct skills assessments of girls for each learning area at the beginning of the learning phase to identify beneficiaries' abilities in light of baseline findings (i.e., gaps between literacy rates; different learning outcomes by district). Using findings from assessments, implement differentiated instruction alongside active learning pedagogies and reliance upon real-world examples.</p>	<p>District Supervisors; BLN Officers; BLN Facilitators</p>	<p>Start-up of learning activities</p>	<p>As part of the project mapping for future cohorts, screeners will be more widely used by project officers to ascertain learning level prior to selection and enrolment. Conducting skills assessments with all girls would be challenging due to limited capacity of facilitators to both oversee this activity and usefully make adaptations based on findings.</p> <p>The way the current curriculum is designed, facilitators for literacy and numeracy sessions have options to “do more” or “do less”; feedback from focus groups with facilitators is this component is not being used or fully understood, however, so more support is needed from project officers to support facilitators with this. In terms of real-world examples – entire</p>

				<p>curriculum is based on this.</p> <p>Action: Relook at mapping/screening/drop-out based on baseline levels of learning (based on years of school attended).</p>
8	<p>Allow and encourage variation in the pace of the curriculum between communities and districts to recognise the differences in starting abilities of beneficiaries. Encourage development partners working in different regions to solve problems unique to their areas of operation.</p>	<p>District Supervisors; BLN Officers; BLN Facilitators</p>	<p>Ongoing during implementation</p>	<p>Action: Set a minimum number of lessons that need to complete (so that business skills can be accessed) rather than needing to complete entire curriculum. The project will look for guidance from IRC's Education Technical Unit on this.</p> <p>Possibility of providing additional resources in Freetown (WAU), Port Loko and Kambia for extension activities as learning levels is higher amongst groups in these districts.</p> <p>Coaching will be tailored within districts to address specific needs for facilitators and learners in that area. The need for additional adaptation will be reassessed for cohort 2 based on evaluation findings if learning gains/achieved levels differ substantially across districts.</p>
9	<p>Mentors should assure that particular emphasis and time are spent with girls discussing the negotiation skills, critical thinking, expressing emotions and stress management portions of the curriculum, along with</p>	<p>District Supervisors; LBS Officers; Mentors</p>	<p>Start-up of learning activities</p>	<p>This has been changed in the curriculum, with a standalone session on critical thinking incorporated. The curriculum has been framed at a more</p>

	gender topics during life skills sessions.			accessible level, with greater emphasis on decision-making. This has also been incorporated into learning clusters with mentors. Additional training was delivered on rollout of revised curriculum. Skills build on one-another and cross-reference across sessions.
10	Reinforce mentors' training in life skills through additional training sessions and anticipate weekly coaching for mentors in life skills as well as gender sensitivity. Open discussions of gender norms and examinations of gender transformative attitudes and practices should be explored during trainings. Project staff may need to play a larger role than anticipated during life skills and mentoring sessions with girls and to closely monitor mentors' performance to mitigate risks.	EAGER Consortium, District Supervisors; LBS Officers; Mentors	Prior to start-up of learning activities	Quarterly learning clusters for mentors (mini-training) have been incorporated into the project design. Individual observation and coaching will also take every six weeks and bi-weekly meetings with project officers will be scheduled to offer support. A review of coaching tools will be conducted to ensure they are adequately tailored to the specific needs of mentors.
11	Build upon girls and their caregivers' existing notions of mentors while making very clear that EAGER mentors specifically cover professional and educational advice. Spend time to identify the role that mentors will play vis-à-vis girls who will focus on enhanced personal, household and community empowerment. Develop an articulation of these roles to share with stakeholders.	District Supervisors; LBS Officers; Mentors	Prior to transition phase	Understanding of mentors roles – at the time that the baseline evaluation took place, sessions had not yet started, having been postponed until January 2020 to allow renovation of safe spaces to be completed, and until after secret society activities had wound down. Clarification on the role of mentors was subsequently made in a preparatory/engagement meeting with girls, during one-on-one meetings to address potential barriers, and in the first session of curriculum.

				Further communication on role of mentors will take place once the approach to transition has been finalised. This area is still under development.
12	Given relative basic business experience and youth evidenced by mentors during interviews, reinforce transition coaching for girls through visits, discussions, and guest speaking opportunities with prominent female community members, including those who may be visiting from other areas of Sierra Leone and world. These discussions may help to open up the girls' minds to other possibilities beyond what they readily know.	District project staff; LBS mentors in concert with community leaders	Prior to transition phase	The approach to transition is still under development, and this guidance will be taken into account during this process.
13	Rather than focusing all on the same trades (catering, soapmaking, tailoring, etc.) and risking oversaturation within the community, revise curriculum to expose girls to basic entrepreneurship concepts and building upon their skills and interests. Examine ways to help beneficiaries confront existing gender norms that may push back on their choices.	EAGER Consortium	Prior to transition phase	The approach to transition is still under development, and this guidance will be taken into account during this process
Sustainability				
14	Elevate face-to-face community discussions as the primary means of fostering gender norms change, complemented by radio programming.	EAGER Consortium	Prior to roll-out	Community discussions have been identified by the project as the primary means of fostering gender norms change at a local/community level, whilst radio programming will feed into change at a national level. This will be made clearer in project guiding documents. The project also wishes to acknowledge that change in prevailing

				gender norms will be challenging to achieve over the lifetime of the project, but we aim at minimum for a change in attitudes.
15	Target male partners, boys and community leaders to effect gender norms change through community dialogues, radio and life skills classes for boys. Qualitative data, though not representative, suggest that particular attention may be placed on certain communities that are more strictly Muslim or where early marriage is more prevalent.	EAGER Consortium	Ongoing during implementation	Boys will be engaged in Boys' Learning Circles. Whilst the approach to this activity is still being finalised, we envisage that approx. 20 boys from each community should take part in 10 learning circles in each cohort. Leaders of male youth groups, Poro (secret society groups), Religious groups, and other male community leaders will all be invited to participate in community dialogues and participate in action plans initiated within these groups. For radio programming, different episodes and components are targeted at different audiences, including male partners and other groups identified here. In terms of strict Muslim communities, district teams will be advised to closely attend to these areas in order to assess if additional support or adaptation is needed.
16	Identify champions of girls' education for out-of-school girls within communities who may help to build awareness within communities. Begin with community leaders as well as supportive male caregivers.	District supervisors, LBS/BLN Officers	Ongoing during implementation	As part of the community dialogue sessions, community groups will form action plans and be encouraged to engage with other community members on the issues discussed within these dialogue sessions.

				The project will also look at appointing additional champions; discussions of forming support groups comprised of mothers and female caregivers of OOS girls are also ongoing, as initial observations have noted this group to be particularly supportive of the EAGER programme.
17	Build upon existing community resources, such as <i>osusu</i> (lending circles) to extend start-up grants and help girls build capital.	LBS Officers, Mentors	Set up prior to Phase 2; during transition	The project will discuss the possibility of this; we are also considering feasibility of setting up VSLA (village saving and loan schemes) within communities where there is a demand for this and where existing schemes are not in place/are at capacity.
18	Work closely with district-level government counterparts (MBSSE and MSWGCA) to ensure government buy-in and take advantage of existing District Council efforts.	District Supervisors	On-going during implementation	There have been some changes to governmental structures and key representatives based on recent cabinet reshuffle and restructuring, but engagement is ongoing at district level and monthly meetings have been held in 7 out of 10 districts, whilst attendance at BLN step-down training was attended by representatives from MBSSE in 9 out of 10 districts. District staff will continue to engage with representatives to build these relationships over the course of the project.
19	Initiate discussions with the Fatima Bio campaign, “Hands Off Our Girls” as a possible opportunity to extend	EAGER Leadership	Ongoing during implementation	This can be explored to assess where crossover may exist and whether this

	and amplify EAGER's work.	Team	<p>initiative could potentially be engaged for a radio programme.</p> <p>Existing collaborations are already ongoing on multiple levels with other actors and programmes focused on girls' education and empowerment in Sierra Leone. These include membership and attendance of events for national fora on areas relevant to the project, as well as specific arrangements with other projects including a MoU with SAGE (who will operate programmes for OOS girls in the six districts where EAGER is not operating) and with UNICEF and UNFPA who are supporting the government with national programming for OOS girls.</p>
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10. Annexes

Annex 1: Baseline evaluation submission process

Please submit all baseline reports and accompanying annexes to your respective evaluation officer. Please note, some annexes can be sent for FM review separately and before the baseline report analysis is completed. We advise projects and Evaluation Team to follow the sequence outlined below to speed up the review process and avoid unnecessary back and forth. Where possible, we also advise that projects and EEs do not begin their baseline report analysis until annex 8 is signed off by the FM.

Annexes to submit for FM review any time before the baseline report is completed:

- Annex 3: Cohort approach evaluation
- Annex 4: Beneficiaries table (sample data)
- Annex 5: Beneficiaries table (Project mapping data)
- Annex 5: MEL framework
- Annex 6: External evaluator's inception report (where applicable)
- Annex 7: Data collection tools used for baseline
- Annex 8: Datasets, codebooks and programmes
- Annex 9: Learning test pilot and calibration
- Annex 10: Sampling framework

Annexes to finalise after annex 8 'Datasets, codebooks and programmes' is signed off by the FM:

- Annex 2: Logframe
- Annex 11: External evaluator declaration
- Annex 12: Project management response

Annex 2: Logframe

The project logframe has been submitted as an external annex.

Annex 3: Cohort approach evaluation

The external evaluation for EAGER took place only with cohort 1, and be representative of the 7,500 girls enrolled in this cohort; there will be no external evaluation for cohort 2 (12,500 girls) or for cohort 3 (12,500 girls).

There is not envisaged to be any major changes to cohorts 2 and 3 in comparison to cohort 1; all cohorts should all follow the same format. The reason for any changes that are made will be as a result of learning and adaptive management on the basis of information collected during the evaluation with cohort 1. Indeed, the reason for selecting cohort 1 for the evaluation was so that the project could assess the effectiveness of the project as early as possible, to identify areas that are working/not working well and for whom (e.g. if there are differences between girls with different marginalisation factors), so that changes can be made where is appropriate for cohort 2 and 3. In order to evaluate learning (in literacy, numeracy, life skills and business skills) in cohorts 2 and 3, as well as to track transition outcomes, the project will collect internal data using simplified versions of learning assessments used by the external evaluator, which can be administered to a sample of beneficiary girls by project officers from implementing partners. These will be finalised and shared at a later date.

Annex 4: Beneficiaries table (sample data)

Please complete the table below, providing data on the characteristics subgroups and barriers the FM needs for portfolio-level analysis. This data should be based on data collected from the baseline evaluation sample. If you have not collected the data, please put 'NA' in the corresponding cell.

If you have collected data relating to an index for poverty, e.g. the poverty probability index (PPI) or UNDP Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) please include additional tables to show these calculated scores.

Table 28: Characteristic subgroups and barriers of sample for portfolio level aggregation and analysis

Characteristic/Barrier	Proportion of baseline sample (%)
Single orphans	28.8%
Double orphans	6.7%
Living without both parents	76.3%
Living in female headed household	34.8%
Married / living with partner	44.1%
Mother under 18	55.4%
Mother under 16	1.9%
Difficult to afford for girl to go to school	69.8%
Household doesn't own land for themselves	25.5%
Material of the roof (material to be defined by evaluator)	16.6%
Household unable to meet basic needs	43.1%
Gone to sleep hungry for many days in past year	45.5%
Lol different from mother tongue	Not Available
Girl doesn't speak Lol	Not Available
HoH has no education	Not Available
Primary caregiver has no education	67.1%
Didn't get support to stay in education and do well (%)	6.8%
Sufficient time to study: High chore burden (evaluator to specify threshold, %)	44.3%
Sources: Caregiver, Girls' Combined, and HoH Survey N = 2,041	

Annex 5: Beneficiaries table (Project mapping data)

Table 29: Direct beneficiaries by age*

Age (adapt as required)	Proportion of cohort 1 direct beneficiaries (%)	Data source – Project monitoring data, data from sample used in external evaluation or assumption?
Aged <10	0.2	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Aged 10	0.1	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Aged 11	2.7	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Aged 12	2.7	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Aged 13	5.8	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Aged 14	6.3	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Aged 15	13.7	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Aged 16	26.2	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Aged 17	42.2	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Aged 18	0.1	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Aged 19	0 (n = 2)	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Aged 20 +	0	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Unknown	0 (n = 2)	Beneficiary register / project mapping

N = 7394

* Recorded age relied on self-report, triangulating responses between caregivers, head of households and girls. A degree of inaccuracy can be assumed with this data, given that formal records of birth are rarely kept, and a high level of uncertainty over age existing amongst all respondents, including the girls themselves, with responses often differing based on the respondent. The figures presented here were from databases updated in January 2020 but do not represent the final selected girls. For girls aged under 12, it was deemed that they should not be included in the cohort group but instead encouraged to enrol in formal schooling wherever possible, as the age difference would not be as amplified as with older girls. Project officers conducted visits to households of these girls in order to achieve this. For girls over 17, given the small number (some of whom may have turned 18 since the mapping process), and because of uncertainty with age, a decision was made that these should be included in the programme.

Table 30: Target groups - by out of school status

Status	Proportion of cohort 1 direct beneficiaries (%)	Data source – Project monitoring data, data from sample used in external evaluation or assumption?
E.g. Never been to formal school	33.7%	Beneficiary register / project mapping
E.g. Been to formal school, but dropped out	66.3%	Beneficiary register / project mapping
E.g. Enrolled in formal school	/	Beneficiary register / project mapping

N = 7394

Table 31: Direct beneficiaries by drop out grade

Level of schooling before dropping out (adapt wording as required)	Proportion of cohort 1 direct beneficiaries (%)	Data source – Project monitoring data, data from sample used in external evaluation or assumption?
Never been to school	33.7	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Preschool	.1	
Class 1	1.5	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Class 2	4.4	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Class 3	12.3	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Class 4	8.5	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Class 5	11.3	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Class 6	18.4	Beneficiary register / project mapping
JSS1	4.8	Beneficiary register / project mapping
JSS2	2.7	Beneficiary register / project mapping
JSS3	2.0	Beneficiary register / project mapping
SS1	.1	Beneficiary register / project mapping
SS2	.1	Beneficiary register / project mapping
SS3	.1	Beneficiary register / project mapping
N = 7394		

Table 32: Other selection criteria

Selection criteria	Proportion of cohort 1 direct beneficiaries (%)	Data source – Project monitoring data, data from sample used in external evaluation or assumption?
married / living with partner	25.3%	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Children	50.1%	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Pregnant	7.0%	Beneficiary register / project mapping
Working outside the home	36.1%	Beneficiary register / project mapping
N = 7394		

Table 33: Other beneficiaries

Beneficiary type	Total project number for cohort 1	Total number by the end of the project.	Comments	Data source – Project monitoring data, data from sample used in external evaluation or assumption?
Broader student beneficiaries (boys) – boys will participate in 10 learning circles	Approx. 6000	Approx. 26,000	cohort 2 + 3: aim is 10,000 in each (20 per community per cohort)	Assumption – based on planning but until activities have begun, final figures will not be known
Broader student beneficiaries (girls) – girls who will benefit from the interventions in a less direct way, and therefore may benefit from aspects such as attitudinal change, etc. but not necessarily achieve improvements in learning outcomes.	/	/	/	
Teacher / tutors beneficiaries – number of teachers/tutors who benefit from training or related interventions. If possible /applicable, please disaggregate by gender and type of training, with the comments box used to describe the type of training provided.	Facilitators: 345 Mentors: 600 (300 x life skills, 300 x business skills)	Facilitators: 1 per district per cohort (500 in cohort 2 and cohort 3) + 30 roving Mentors: cohorts 2 + 3 = 1000 additional; 2600 in total	If new people were trained for each cohort, in total 1005 facilitators would be trained; ideally, however, facilitators and mentors will agree to work for more than 1 cohort in some communities	Assumption
Broader community beneficiaries (adults) – adults who benefit from broader interventions, such as community messaging / dialogues, community advocacy, economic empowerment interventions, etc.	25 (approx.) per community = 7500	cohort 2 + 3: 12,500; 32,500 in total	Ideally the same people will continue to take part in dialogue sessions / form action groups across more than 1 cohort if possible	Assumption

Regarding the expected number of male student beneficiaries, the estimation appears reasonably founded. It is based on actual numbers of communities. Because all observations were completed before implementation began for this group, it is not possible to assess whether the project is prepared to provide life skills to an additional 15 people, but it is a reasonable number of beneficiaries to be able to find, given that 25 girls were found. These estimations are all subject to implementation in the same number of communities as originally planned in all cohorts.

The EE is unable to comment on additional female beneficiaries, as this section has not been completed. The teacher/tutor beneficiaries, which comprises facilitators and mentors, as these numbers are also derived from current implementation plans at the community level, the assumptions used to calculate these quantities of beneficiaries seem reasonable and reliable. As with the other beneficiary levels described above, because the broader community beneficiaries is based on the current implementation plan and number of communities, it is reasonable and reliable.

Annex 5: MEL framework

The MEL Framework has been submitted as an external annex.

Annex 6: External evaluator's Inception Report

The Inception Report has been submitted as an external annex.

Annex 8: Datasets, codebooks and programmes

Datasets, codebooks and programmes have been submitted with the final report.

Annex 9: Learning test pilot and calibration

Out of School Literacy Pretest Results

The pretest of the OLA provided optimistic and useful results for the assessments. The pretest served several purposes. We aimed to determine whether:

1. The difficulty level of the assessments were appropriate (minimising floor and ceiling effects)
2. Which tested sections were more useful for determining literacy
3. The comparability of the three versions tested

The original designs of the OLA and EGMA intentionally included a wide variation of subtasks. Decisions on which subtasks were to be included in the final version were intentionally set to be determined after pretest. was to trial multiple assessments and keep those deemed most appropriate for their difficulty level and appropriateness. Given concerns of respondent fatigue and efficient testing, it is to be used to determine which sections are most useful to include in the final test.

Testing

On the week of November 3rd, 2018, the 14 research supervisors for the EAGER test visited 115 households in Western Area Rural for pretesting. They visited Kissy Town and Waterloo, and interviewed out-of-school girls in the same age range as the project beneficiaries. Each girl completed two OLA and two EGMA tests, so that the results between the two tests were comparable.

Scoring

While for simplicity, OLA scores could be calculated by averaging the scores of each subtasks: however, this would cause the 8 comprehension subtasks' importance be obscured by the 154 oral reading items in subtasks five and six. For the purpose of analysing the pilot data only, the score was calculated as the average of seven subscores: the first four subtasks, the oral reading fluency of the two reading texts (giving each word equal weight), the percent correct on the comprehension questions from the two passages, and the final writing subtask.

Reliability

The OLA pretest demonstrated the test was reliable and appropriate for the group tested. In terms of psychometric reliability, in that the items of the test measure success with high internal correlation, we find the test to be highly reliable and valid. A Cronbach's Alpha test, which measures correlations among assessment items, yielded an result of .96: a minimum of .60 or .70 higher is generally considered necessary to consider an instrument valid.¹¹⁶

Difficulty Level

For each assessment, the test should minimise the number of girls getting zero or all questions correct, and maximise the number of girls on a gradient between 0 and 100 percent. Ideally, a one-point-in-time test's goal would be for mean scores to be as close to .5 as possible. The average score on the pretested OLA (across all three versions was 53.5 percent, which is close

¹¹⁶ Nunnally, J. & Bernstein, I. (1994). Psychometric theory (3rd edition). New York: McGraw-Hill

to ideal). To give greater room for growth in scores in the midline and endline, the test could be adjusted to be slightly more challenging, but is not necessary.

N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
213	52.3	25.7	0	91

Difficulty Range

The pretest was designed to measure a very expansive level of ability, and significantly longer than such an assessment should be, to allow removal of sections that proved too difficult or easy. It appears that the test was not too easy or too difficult, but may measure too wide of a range -- increasing the difficulty of the test, or reducing the amount of energy focused on testing easy tasks -- is preferred. The range of expected improvement only spanning from 50 percent to 59 percent suggests that the current version is too broad. Among girls with four or fewer years of schooling the average score was 37 percent.

Decile	N	Percent
0 [to 9.9%]	13	6.1
10	21	9.9
20	16	7.5
30	21	9.9
40	23	10.8
50	25	11.7
60	23	10.8
70	29	13.6
80	41	19.3
90	1	0.4
Total	213	100

Comparable Versions

The three tested versions yielded very similar results. While there was a variation of 3 percentage points, this is only roughly a 0.1 SD difference. Decisions during preparation at midline and endline can be made to reduce differences by using statistical weighting in calculating scores or through minor modification to the midline and endline tools. However, as a difference-in-difference model, small variations in difficulty such as this should have no bearing on the final target achievement. None of the versions are significantly different from each other.

Version	Mean	SD	N
A	50.9%	27.5	78
B	53.6%	27.6	79
C	56.6%	26.6	70

Enumerator Feedback

Some enumerators did not fully understand that girls did not finish reading the entire word lists during the pilot. We discussed thoroughly the instructions again. One common mistake was to ask girls to complete the entire word lists, which placed a substantial burden on them. They also stated that even though girls who do not complete 4 items in a row do not complete that subtask, girls who struggle with easier subtasks shouldn't be expected to attempt more complex tasks.

Changes made

- Adding clearer, more complete directions.
- Adding greater detail on activities to field materials prepared for enumerators, and additional review.
- Introducing skip rules for the more challenging subtasks. The coding may not look right, but the rules are: if a girl can't read 10 correct words per minute in the first oral reading passage, they don't try to read the second reading passage. If they can't complete 10 words per minute on the second (and more difficult) reading passage, they don't continue onto the writing exercise. This is in addition to the previous rule that if a test taker gets four incorrect words in a row, they end the subtask.
- Removing background questions required for the pretest & pilot where we have from other tools for the sample.
- Removing the questions on reading the directions on tablets. Enumerators said that these questions did not make sense to the girls, because of the difficulty in understanding complex instructions, not because of reading. Item-based analysis suggests these are among the items with the lowest correlations to overall scores.
- Changing the instructions to reading the listening comprehension passage once, then the questions, and then rereading the passage before girls have to answer the questions. The original version only read the passage once and then asked the questions.
- Changing the writing exercise "I want to sit" to "I have a cup" to account for test takers who wrote "I one two sit" and "I won to sit"

EGMA Pretest Results

Scoring

For the purpose of analysing the pilot data only, EGMA Scoring was weighted evenly among the six subtasks. Each item within each subtask was given equal weight.

Reliability

The Cronbach's Alpha test returned a value of 0.76, above the minimum requirement for a useful test.

Difficulty Level & Range

The average EGMA score at pilot is 67 percent, which seems higher than an ideal score. On its own, it suggests that the difficulty level could be too low. However, it may have been due to the fact that some out-of-school girls included in the sample had a higher level of education. Among out-of-school girls tested with four or fewer years of schooling, the average score was 28 percent.

Comparability

The three versions of the test have similar means, and are within 0.13 standard deviations of range, and none are significantly different from each other.

VERSION	MEAN	SD	N
A	.63985714	.27694722	70
B	.67522692	.27119446	71
C	.7086532	.27025783	66

Summary of Findings from Dalan Consulting

1. The communities covered for the Pretest are Waterloo Western Rural, (Kissy Town and Lumpa community)
2. Community Entry: The communities were booked before the pretest and access were granted no issue.
3. Consent Issues: All respondents consented but few declined along the assessment on EGMA and OLA because of the length of time on each assessment, and children become inpatient
4. Timing: Each Supervisor spent 90 minutes per girl.
5. Typos and errata in the OLA and EGMA tools were identified and corrected for the final tool versions.
6. Targets: Each supervisor was able to complete 8 Surveys, and one that complete 10 Surveys, a total of 114 but few among that are incomplete surveys because of the children declined along the process. Reasons why the 12- target was not achieved because of difficulties in locating never went to school or drop out.

Annex 10: Sampling framework

Provided as an external annex.

Annex 11: External evaluator declaration

Name of project: Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER) project within the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) -Leave No Girl Behind project (LNGB)

Name of External evaluator and contact information:

IMC Worldwide
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Names of all members of the evaluation team: Karla Giuliano Sarr, Andrew Trembley, Gwendolyn Heaner, Alexandra Cervini Mull, Brian O'Callaghan

I, Mike Klein, certify that the independent evaluation has been conducted in line with the Terms of Reference and other requirements received.

Specifically:

All of the quantitative data was collected independently (Initials: MK)

All data analysis was conducted independently and provides a fair and consistent representation of progress (Initials: MK).

Data quality assurance and verification mechanisms agreed in the terms of reference with the project have been soundly followed (Initials: MK).

The recipient has not fundamentally altered or misrepresented the nature of the analysis originally provided by IMC Worldwide (Initials: MK)

All child protection protocols and guidance have been followed (Initials: MK).

Data has been anonymised, treated confidentially and stored safely, in line with the GEC data protection and ethics protocols (Initials: MK).

Mike Klein, Director
IMC Worldwide
March 9, 2020

Annex 12: Useful Resources

Evaluation, analysis and reporting:

- World Bank, 2016, *Impact Evaluation in Practice – 2nd Edition* - <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/sief-trust-fund/publication/impact-evaluation-in-practice>
- HM Treasury, 'The Green Book: Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government'. 2018 - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/685903/The_Green_Book.pdf
- J-PAL, Introduction to Evaluations - <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/resources/Introduction%20to%20Evaluations%20%281%29.pdf>
- Better Evaluation - <https://www.betterevaluation.org/>

Gender and power analysis:

- Sida, 2013, *Power Analysis: Experiences and challenges* (Concept note). Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) - https://www.sida.se/contentassets/83f0232c5404440082c9762ba3107d55/power-analysis-a-practical-guide_3704.pdf
- DFID, 2009, 'Gender and Social Exclusion Analysis How To Note', A Practice Paper, Department for International Development, London, UK - <http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/se9.pdf>
- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Gender Tools and Publications - <https://www.ebrd.com/gender-tools-publications.html>

Annex 13: Project management response

Project response to key findings in the report

In terms of learning outcomes related to literacy and numeracy, the key findings here are not surprising. The base level of literacy and numeracy demonstrated by OOS girls is in line with project expectations, with slightly higher level of attainment demonstrated in numeracy. This indicates that both the learning assessments and curriculum have been targeted at the correct level, with room for improvement and to support differences in levels. Findings relating to the reasons why girls want to improve literacy and numeracy, which are predominantly for practical purposes, also provide justification to the decision to focus predominantly on functional learning when developing the curriculum.

Breaking down the results by district, whilst some variation between districts was expected, the extent of this variation has highlighted the need to tailor programme delivery at district level and made adjustments or provide additional support where needed. Larger adaptations can be included for Cohorts 2 and 3, as project implementation specifically included a lag so that learning from Cohort 1 could be utilised for informing changes to future cohorts. Further attention is needed to flexibility within curriculum delivery (e.g. covering less content for groups that have a lower starting point, making content more simple/complex dependent on the group's ability); an issue that was already identified through the project's own reflections with facilitators and girls. Overall, no changes to the Theory of Change are required for outcomes related to literacy and numeracy. In the logframe, targets will be set for learning improvement rather than an overall benchmark for proficiency, given the wide variation amongst beneficiaries.

For findings related to life skills, what has been identified by the evaluator largely reflects issues that the project had already identified and were taking steps to rectify at the time that the baseline evaluation was conducted, namely the limited capacity of mentors to support girls and deliver content, and the life skills curriculum being too complex for the level of both the mentors and girls. A completely revised curriculum and approach to delivery has been developed as a result, that should be more accessible and targeted to the level and needs of both mentors and girls. A larger emphasis on coaching will be adopted to support with this, as well as looking into alternative strategies to strengthen capacity, such as through engagement of national volunteers to support mentors, a system that has been used elsewhere by implementing partner Restless Development. Findings relating to the very prevalence of anxiety and depression amongst girls were higher than anticipated, and strategies to target this and provide appropriate support will be addressed within the revised approach to life skills for the second half of the curriculum currently under development, with an intention to further incorporate this for Cohort 2. The logframe and theory of change will be revised to adjust assumptions related to the capacity of mentors to support programme components.

For findings related to Transition, the evaluator has identified key factors that might impede successful transition. These again relate to the capacity of mentors to provide support and guidance, particularly for looking beyond 'typical' economic pathways for girls. Adaptations are required to ensure that project officers provide greater support for this component, whilst comprehensive training for mentors will also be incorporated into plans for coming quarters. Further limitations may be due to a reluctance amongst community members to empower girls, particularly when such empowerment would challenge existing social norms, or risk empowering a girl to a level that is perceived to be beyond that of a respective male partner, be it in terms of education, earnings, or decision-making power. The evaluator has suggested useful ways that could potentially help to target these attitudes, primarily through the use of community dialogues. The project is currently finalising our approach to this component, where particular attention will

be paid to this issue. The project may need to revise expectations around transition at a household and personal level due to these findings, and this will be discussed when setting targets in the logframe.

For findings related to sustainability, the evaluator notes that the current approach of measuring sustainability outcomes on the basis of qualitative investigations does not provide a representative reflection of attitudes at community and systems level; discussions around alternative approaches to measurement for midline and endline evaluation points will be assessed. The overall approach to sustainability will be further defined before the next evaluation point, which will enable the evaluator to assess this outcome in more detail. Once details on this are clearer, the logframe and theory of change will be updated to reflect any changes, once these have been discussed and agreed to by the FM.

Project response to conclusions and recommendations in the report

The project response to conclusions relating to life skills is outlined in the main body of the text (section 7.2), whilst for transition and sustainability, as these approaches are still being firmed up, proposed actions to address project recommendations are most relevant; in Section 9 of the main body of the text, where the evaluator has added a table summarising recommendations, a column has been added to document the project's response to each recommendation. Responses were compiled through a joint meeting with all project partners to discuss findings and identify strategies and priorities for project adaptation.

For these reasons, this response primarily addresses conclusions related to literacy and numeracy, expanding on the response to the key findings above.

Outcomes in literacy

Baseline findings under Outcome Indicator 1A confirm existing understanding around the profile of learners, namely that they are entering the EAGER learning programme with varied levels of pre-existing literacy and numeracy skills, largely due to different levels of exposure to education prior to the programme. In order to manage this and ensure that all learners are accessing meaningful learning at the appropriate level, the first phase of the EAGER Basic Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum pilot included 'Do More/Do Less' activities within each session plan, to support facilitators in differentiating learning. The Deep Dive¹¹⁷, conducted in February 2020, found that this approach is not working for facilitators. Discussions are underway regarding reframing the approach to differentiating learning, for example including it as a key area of support in the coaching provided to facilitators twice monthly by BLN Officers, in the quarterly learning circles, and in subsequent trainings.

The Deep Dive confirms the Baseline finding that learners 'unanimously responded that they desire literacy skills'. Some stated that they want to be able to read things like school report cards, as they have their own children who attend school and have to find people who can read to help them to understand their report cards.

The Baseline findings confirm pre-existing assumptions that there would be differences between different districts. The Deep Dive also confirmed that there are differences in facilitator capacity between different districts, primarily with facilitators of a higher teaching and English capacity in Freetown WAU. In response to this, options are being explored around providing slightly different materials for Freetown WAU facilitators, for example including an extra page per session in the

¹¹⁷ An exploratory study aiming to gather evidence on initial successes and challenges in the EAGER Basic Literacy and Numeracy learning programme, in order to inform the next phase of curriculum development.

Literacy and Numeracy facilitator's guide with extension activities. Audio speakers are going to be provided for community dialogue sessions.

To support facilitators experiencing challenges in delivering particular aspects of the literacy sessions, in particular phonics activities and reading the Bintu story in English, brief audio recordings for each session will be shared for use on the speakers. This will ensure that each learning space receives some quality English instruction, regardless of the capacity of the facilitators.

Outcome Indicator 1B. Percentage of EAGER Research Participants with improved learning outcomes in numeracy

Baseline findings that learners 'perform better in real-world settings' confirms the existing understanding of the needs of adolescent out-of-school girls in Sierra Leone, supplemented by the Needs Assessment. The approach to the Literacy and Numeracy learning programme therefore takes a 'real-world' approach, bringing in items and materials from the learners' daily lives (e.g. child health card), positioning learning in a real life context.

Baseline findings that the learners as 'particularly useful skills': counting money, giving change, keeping track of finances, recording measurements and using the phone, were confirmed by the Deep Dive, with learners identifying the same skills as areas they wanted to learn more about. One learner gave an example that she had learned how to give change since joining the learning programme, citing $\text{Le } 10,000 - \text{Le } 8,000 = \text{Le } 2,000$ as an example.

IO2: BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors deliver quality inclusive instruction in BLN, life/SEL skills, financial literacy and (self-) employment skills

From baseline: Data demonstrate a range of capacities among BLN facilitators. across the 10 BLN facilitators interviewed in terms of facilitators' levels of their own schooling, their teaching/mentoring experience and their articulation of teaching strategies most appropriate for working with out-of-school youth.

The responses given by BLN facilitators in the Baseline in relation to strategies for working with out-of-school girls suggest there has been uptake and retention of knowledge gained in the first series of step down trainings delivered by the BLN Officers, following the first training of trainers. In addition to training on curriculum content, approaches to teaching adolescent out-of-schools was a key focus. Facilitators are encouraged to use mother tongue as much as is needed in both literacy and numeracy sessions, particularly for explaining key concepts. The Deep Dive found that this is happening, with the majority of sessions currently being conducted in mother tongue. As the baseline found that four out of 10 facilitators underlined the importance of using mother tongue with learners joining EAGER with lower exposure to education, it is possible that when beginning to deliver sessions, the need for mother tongue became more apparent to facilitators. For mentors, the capacity to deliver quality and inclusive education may be more challenging due to lower educational attainment, prior experience and thus overall capacity. Adaptation of the curriculum so that it is more accessible, simplified and more targeted at the level of the mentor as well as contextualised for beneficiaries will partly mitigate this issue, but a greater emphasis on coaching and capacity building will be required to ensure targets for this indicator are achieved.

Projects' approach to evaluator comments on addressing gender inequalities

The external evaluator found that the project considers, articulates, and addresses gender inequalities in its design and across its activities. However, several risks are rightly pointed out that could make the project lean more towards being GESI-accommodating rather than GESI-

transformative. One of these risks is based on the fact that the Mentors come from the same communities as the girls and have been socialised to accept many of the existing gender norms, which they may then reinforce during the sessions. The project is aware of this, and has integrated into its design and workplans targeted trainings and other learning opportunities such as quarterly Learning Cluster meetings, as well as more regular observation and coaching for Mentors and also for Facilitators. Specific sessions on gender and power will also be included in the Life Skills curriculum, and Mentors will learn from these sessions prior to leading them.

The evaluator also emphasises the importance of sessions with adolescent boys and targeted discussions with the community as strategies for supporting change in gender dynamics and possibilities for adolescent girls that fall outside of the gender box. The project is already placing emphasis on these accompanying pieces, as well as the BBC Media Action radio programmes, as key components of a GESI-transformative project that helps to create a more supportive environment for girls and empowers them to engage in wider opportunities and succeed in their efforts. Over the course of the project, BBC Media Action will develop, produce and broadcast a gender transformative and inclusive national radio magazine programme, targeting fathers, mothers, other caregivers, partners and community influencers and leaders aimed at increasing their knowledge and understanding, enabling discussion and dialogue, shifting their unsupportive attitude and motivating them through role modelling. The BBC programme will challenge the root causes of gender discrimination by addressing stereotypes and unequal power relationships between those with 'power over' girls – especially where this power is unequal between the sexes. By shifting the dynamics between girls and those in her social networks from 'power over' to 'power with', we will seek to contribute to an environment which enables girls to have 'power to' shape their lives with, and supported by, those around them.

Project's response to GESI risks identified by the evaluator

The evaluator found that the Life Skills curriculum was GESI-transformative in that it explores gender norms and encourages the girls to think critically beyond the limitations such norms place on them, as well as the risks embedded within these gender norms – for example the normalisation of a husband beating his wife. It is important to note that the curriculum also emphasises safety and encourages the girls to think about their own safety and thinking carefully through their decisions before acting in ways that push them outside of the accepted gender norms.

The evaluator correctly identified that the key is the capacity of mentors to effectively communicate these key messages and help the girls to see new possibilities. The project team is very aware of this, and will work closely with the mentors to build their capacity and awareness of gender norms and gendered power division through the planned Protection Trainings, Quarterly Learning Clusters that will delve into the session content, the development of short and focused training modules on Gender that can be used in different forums including the Learning Clusters, and ongoing Supervision and Coaching from project staff in the field.

Based on research findings, another recommendation from the evaluator was to ensure that the curriculum incorporates topics that address anxiety and depression, and that Mentors are sensitive towards girls who are struggling. Before the research was conducted, the Project determined to revisit the Life Skills curriculum and revised the sessions to be more adapted to the context. In the process, the session on Emotions was carefully presented based on the assumption that adolescent girls living in contexts where they have little power in decisions that affect them, GBV rates are high, and poverty levels are high, are likely to experience anxiety and sadness. Other Life Skills sessions provide various coping strategies to build resilience, emphasise the value of friendship and being a good friend, how to listen to each other and use

positive body language, and encourage girls to see their strengths and value themselves for who they are. Girls in the programme are invited to form pairs from the first session to encourage supportive friendships and reduce isolation, which contributes to anxiety and depression. In these ways, the project has already taken steps to respond to these concerns and support girls, and will continue to do so now that this has been confirmed through the research.

A key risk raised by the evaluator was that the Transition piece of the project is likely to be Gender-Accommodating rather than Gender-Transformative, given the consistent responses reinforcing female-specific pathways for earning income. This is not surprising, given the absence of female role models or community-based examples of opportunities that break the mould. One important point to note is that in its overall approaches and in the Life Skills curriculum in particular, the Project emphasises safety. Sessions encourage the girls to think about their own safety and to think carefully through their decisions before acting in ways that push them outside of the accepted gender norms – for example, when using assertive communication.

The evaluator correctly identified that the key will be the capacity of mentors to effectively communicate these messages and help the girls see new possibilities. The project team is very aware of this, and will work closely with the mentors to build their capacity and awareness of gender norms and gendered power division through reinforcement by the community itself of what types of income generating activities are generally acceptable for women and adolescent girls to engage in. The responsibility to ensure that this Transition piece does not become Gender Accommodating will fall on the project team, rather than the mentors themselves – who are socialised in the same communities and may carry many of the same limited ideas about what women and girls can and should do. The project will think creatively about how to introduce new ideas and possibilities for realistic and safe income generation, and how to safely engage the community in discussions about reassessing gendered employment and income generation. The project is committed to framing and carrying out this important Transition piece of the project in such a way that it creates space for new narratives of girls' and women's engagement with income generation and becomes more Gender-Transformative.

Changes to the logframe that will be proposed to DFID and the fund manager

Greatest alterations to the logframe will be in relation to assumptions of the education level and capacity of community mentors, required to achieve outcomes and intermediate outcomes for activities they are responsible for supporting; namely life skills, business skills, transition and community dialogues. Possibilities to boost capacity and provide additional support and coaching will be explored that may help with meeting these assumptions. Revision of IO2 (Facilitators and LSB Mentors deliver quality inclusive instruction in BLN, life/SEL skills, financial literacy and (self-) employment skills) will also be done to ensure that indicators for this IO capture quality as well as inclusive practices. The project is satisfied that the tool used to measure this IO by the EE is appropriate and able to collect information on both quality and inclusive instructional practices, whilst adaptations have been made to the session observations tools used by the project to monitor BLN and life skills sessions so that these now also include assessments of both dimensions of instruction.

For transition outcomes, the necessity of addressing prevailing and negative attitudes and social norms around gender in communities, and particularly amongst male partners and caregivers, will be identified as a key factor for achieving successful personal and household empowerment for girls choosing these as transition pathways.

Throughout the logframe, targets for all outcomes and intermediate outcomes will be updated using recommendations from the evaluator, based on baseline analysis and findings.

Further changes to the logframe will be required to update indicators for Outcome 3, sustainability; further clarity on this, particularly at systems level, will be achieved after planned meetings with ministerial officials recently taking up posts in the MGCA and MBSSE. Finally, we will discuss with the evaluator revised approaches to measuring sustainability at community level, for both the logframe and sustainability scorecard, as at present the approach of quantifying qualitative data does not give a representative overview of attitudes.

Project's reflections on the ambition of the project

Overall, the ambition of the project remains unchanged as a result of evaluation baseline findings. The project has been able to identify appropriate beneficiaries that were originally set out when defining target groups, with particular success in reaching the most educationally marginalised girls, reflected in findings that a large proportion of the sample had never been to school. The project was also more successful than previously thought based on our own mapping of reaching girls with disabilities; the prevalence of girls with psychosocial disability, which was not captured in project mapping, was higher than anticipated and will require some project adjustments to ensure that this is adequately addressed in programming.

One learning from the evaluation is that ambition in terms of learning outcomes may need to be tempered for some districts, with wide variation between baseline learning attainments across the district. As targets will be framed in terms of improvement in learning rather than reaching set benchmarks, this will not reflect the overall ambition of the project.

When setting targets for improvements in learning, success will largely be contingent on providing appropriate support and training for community mentors, whose capacity is a lot lower than envisaged when originally designing this component. Continual coaching and engagement with mentors will be conducted to support with this, however it is possible that gains in life skills as well as business skills may be impacted by the capacity of mentors to deliver these components of the programme.

Transition is another area that has seen some reworking from what was originally framed in the project proposal; transition outcomes have been expanded to incorporate multiple levels of empowerment. Successful transition will be measured against individual plans and goals, however once again, these will be contingent on certain things being in place: 1) capacity of mentors to support with development of appropriate, achievable and realistic plans, 2) success of project staff in mapping appropriate opportunities for beneficiary girls at a local level, which can then be pursued, 3) Success of community dialogues, boys' learning circles, and radio programming to shift attitudes towards gender roles; the project acknowledges that changing social norms will likely take longer than what is possible in the evaluation lifespan. The project remains committed to achieving outcomes set out under transition and whilst these are ambitious, we will work to ensure that the issues identified above are given appropriate consideration and attention to help mitigate potential stumbling blocks to success.

Finally, the project will continue to work towards sustainability at the level of the girl, safe space, community, and system; whilst indicators in the logframe relating to sustainability need to be revised, particularly at systems level where there have been widespread changes in government structures and positions, we remain dedicated to achieving sustainable outcomes at all levels.

Annex 14: Original Evaluation Questions from SOW

The IMC evaluation team will be required to develop an evaluation approach that answers the following overarching questions, with support from the EAGER Consortium Coordination Unit (CCU):

- *Process* – Was the project successfully designed and implemented?
- *Impact* – What impact did the project have on the learning and transition of marginalised girls, including girls with disabilities? How and why was this impact achieved?
- *Effectiveness* – What worked (and did not work) to increase the learning and transition of marginalised girls as defined by the project? What adaptations and improvements can be made to the project for cohorts 2 and 3?
- *Sustainability* – How sustainable were the activities funded by the GEC-LNGB and in what way? Was the project successful in leveraging additional interest and investment?

Specific questions that IMC will be required to answer using a mixed-methods evaluation approach are:

1. How do the effects of the EAGER learning project on girls' learning and transition outcomes vary for different subgroups of girls (e.g. single vs. married, pregnant vs. not pregnant, disabled vs. non-disabled, rural vs urban, older vs younger girls, etc.)?
2. What individual (including psychometric measures), home and community level characteristics are associated with girls' learning and transition outcomes?
3. What implementation characteristics (e.g. attendance to interventions, community members' engagement with radio show and community group discussions) moderate the effect of the EAGER learning project and Business training on girls' learning and transition outcomes?
4. What are the girls' perceptions and experiences with the interventions?
5. What are the profiles and experiences of girls that were successfully able to transition to formal education, training or (self) employment and how do they differ from girls who were unable to transition into new paths? What are some of the facilitators/barriers to successful transition? Are the girls able to remain in their chosen transition pathway after the project and mentoring concludes? What obstacles remain for girls who were unable to transition?
6. What are the community attitudes and facilitators/barriers to girls' education and employment? How do these change over the course of the project?
7. How can the project improve for future cohorts? What elements of the intervention work/do not work, and what adaptations can be made?

Annex 16: Baseline Evaluation Matrix

Outcome/IO	Description	Indicator	Assumptions	Evaluation Method
OUTCOME 1 - Learning	Number of marginalised girls supported by GEC with improved learning outcomes (with sub-indicator for boys where reported)	<i>1. Literacy Improvement: Percentage of EAGER Research Participants with improved learning outcomes in literacy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -That girls who attend the learning programme will be motivated and engaged in the curricula to improve their literacy, numeracy, life skills and business skills learning outcomes. -That adolescent girls who receive continuous mentoring throughout the learning programme and transition plan development will be able to transition to (self-) employment or further learning. -That girls will be able to attain learning outcomes in order to transition to their self-identified pathway. -That business plans created by girls receiving start-up/growth grants and transitioning to self-employment enter into viable and market-driven business. -That girls interested in transitioning into further learning can identify viable pathways back into formal/non-formal education, with guidance and support from BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors. -That the communication approach for behaviour change (community discussions and radio programming) can be tailored to the Sierra Leone context and generate changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> OLA Desk review of secondary data
		<i>2. Numeracy Improvement: Number of marginalised girls supported by GEC with improved learning outcomes in numeracy</i>	Same as assumptions for Literacy Improvement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> EGMA Desk review of secondary data
		<i>3. Life Skills Improvement: Number of marginalised girls supported by GEC with improved outcomes in life skills</i>	Same as assumptions for Literacy Improvement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Girls' Combined Survey with Life Skills and SEL questions (will do business questions at midline) Desk review of secondary data FGDs/KIIs (girls, caregivers, facilitators, mentors, boys, project staff, community leaders, government officials)
		<i>4. Business Skills Improvement: Number of marginalised girls supported by GEC with improved outcomes in business skills</i>	Same as assumptions for Literacy Improvement	(For midline/endline)
OUTCOME 2 - Transition (optional)	Number of marginalised girls who have transitioned into and through key stages of education, training or employment	# and % of girls who transition, disaggregated by age and transition track (employment, self-employment, education and training)	Same as assumptions for Literacy Improvement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Girls' combined survey HH survey KIIs/FGDs (girls, caregivers, facilitators, mentors, boys, project staff, community leaders, government officials)
OUTCOME 3 - Sustainability	Project can demonstrate that the changes it has brought about which increase learning and transition through education cycles are sustainable: Performance against comprehensive sustainability scorecard (scores 1-4).	1. % of community members (including caregivers of girls) that foster more supportive attitudes towards learning / education / entrepreneurship for girls	Assumptions: Community members attend dialogues; Mentors properly and effectively facilitate community dialogues; radio programming and community discussions have their intended combined effect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> FGDs/KIIs (girls, community members, program staff, community leaders, government officials) Attendance data (midline/endline) Program Data Sheet Document review
		2. % of communities that have a transition plan for the continuation of the use of safe spaces for girls	Assumptions: Community outreach under EAGER is effective in encouraging support for girls-only safe spaces; community leaders recognize the value of girls-only safe spaces.	
		3. # of DEOs and district council who have incorporated plans for support for out-of-school girls' education	Assumptions: Government support for education programming targeting out-of-school girls (consistent with stated administration priorities); that the District Council is open to engaging with EAGER staff on planning.	

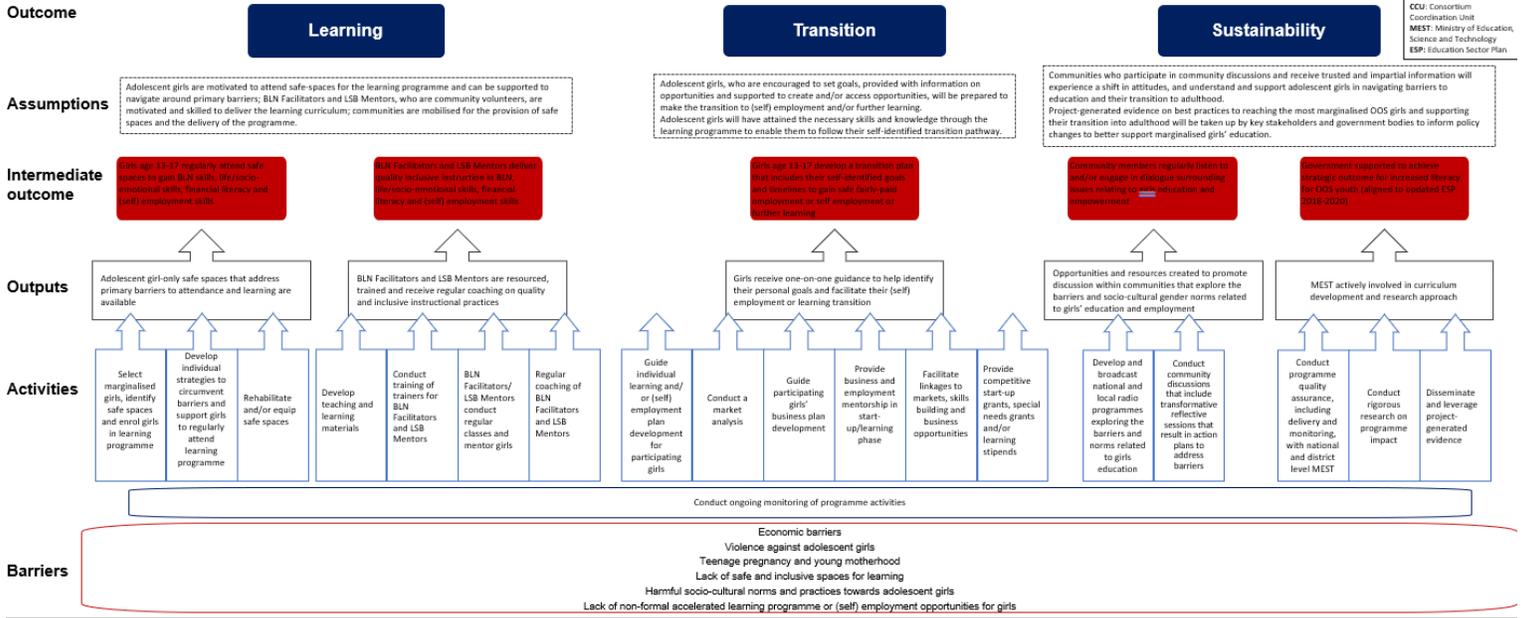
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 1	Attendance	1. Monthly Attendance rate for Girls in learning program [Life skills]	-Girls can be supported to navigate around barriers to attend the learning programme and receive one-on-one mentorship for their transition. -Adequate BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors can be identified and recruited to delivery quality instruction and mentorship. -Girls are motivated to develop viable transition plans for employment or further learning. -Project research is accepted and validated by the Ministry of Education. -The Ministry of Education approves the BLN curriculum targeting OOS adolescent girls. -Boys do not feel excluded by the programme and do not react negatively in a manner that impacts target girls.	1.Desk Review of program data related to attendance 2.Safe Spaces spot checks/observation tool 3.FGDs/KIIs (girls)
		2. Monthly Attendance rate for Girls in learning program [Literacy & Numeracy]	-Girls can be supported to navigate around barriers to attend the learning programme and receive one-on-one mentorship for their transition. -Adequate BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors can be identified and recruited to delivery quality instruction and mentorship. -Girls are motivated to develop viable transition plans for employment or further learning. -Project research is accepted and validated by the Ministry of Education. -The Ministry of Education approves the BLN curriculum targeting OOS adolescent girls. -Boys do not feel excluded by the programme and do not react negatively in a manner that impacts target girls.	
		3. Monthly Attendance rate for Girls in learning program [Business Skills]	-Girls can be supported to navigate around barriers to attend the learning programme and receive one-on-one mentorship for their transition. -Adequate BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors can be identified and recruited to delivery quality instruction and mentorship. -Girls are motivated to develop viable transition plans for employment or further learning. -Project research is accepted and validated by the Ministry of Education. -The Ministry of Education approves the BLN curriculum targeting OOS adolescent girls. -Boys do not feel excluded by the programme and do not react negatively in a manner that impacts target girls.	

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 2	BLN Facilitators and LSB Mentors deliver quality inclusive instruction in BLN, life/SEL skills, financial literacy and (self-) employment skills	1. % of project-supported BLN facilitators who use inclusive instructional practices in the BLN programme	Same as for IO Indicator 1	1.Safe Spaces observational tool 2.Girls' Combined Survey 3.Desk Review: Program data and review of program documents/teaching materials and manuals 4.KIIs/FGDs (facilitators, program staff, girls)
		2. % of project-supported LSB mentors who use inclusive instructional practices in the Life Skills and Business programme	Please note any assumptions underlying this indicator	
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 3	Girls age 13-17 develop a transition plan that includes their self-identified goals and timelines to gain safe fairly-paid employment, self-employment or further learning	% of girls attending individual mentorship sessions	Same as for IO Indicator 1	1.Combined Girls' survey 2.FGDs/KIIs (mentors, girls, parents)
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 4	Community members regularly listen to and/or engage in dialogues surrounding issues relating to girls' education and empowerment (disaggregated by girls, boys, men and women)	1. % of community discussion groups that complete the community dialogue series	Same as for IO Indicator 1	1.Desk review 2.FGDs/KIIs (community leaders, program staff, caregivers) 3.BBC Media Action evaluation* 4.HH Survey 5.Combined Girls' Survey
		2/ No. of people reached (including frequency) through national programming	Please note any assumptions underlying this indicator	
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 5	Government supported to achieve strategic outcome for increased literacy for out-of-school (OOS) youth (aligned to updated ESP 2018-2020)	1. National level representatives of MBSSE and MSWGCA participates in the Baseline, Midline and Endline data validation	Same as for IO Indicator 1	1.Desk Review; 2.KIIs (national and local government officials, EAGER staff)
		2. Number of project coordination meetings held with the National level representatives of MBSSE and MSWGCA annually	Same as for IO Indicator 1	

Annex 17: EAGER project's Theory of Change

Marginalised girls have significantly improved learning outcomes and have transitioned to education, training, or employment.

Acronym guide:
 OOS: out-of-school
 BLN: Basic literacy and numeracy
 LSB: Life skills and business
 CCU: Consortium
 Coordination Unit
 MEST: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
 ESP: Education Sector Plan



Annex 18: Community Level Case Studies

The community level case studies have been submitted as an external annex.

Annex 19: Annexed tables

Figure 5: Self-Efficacy Scale

New General Self-Efficacy Scale ¹¹⁸
I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself.
When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.
In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.
I believe I can succeed at almost any endeavour to which I set my mind.
I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.
I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.
Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.
Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.

Figure 6: Social Resources Questions

Question
Is there somewhere that you could go if there was an emergency or something happened that made you feel unsafe?
When you travel to the learning spaces and safe spaces or to different places in your community do you feel safe?
Do you have a plan to keep yourself safe when you travel to different places in your community?
Is there a safe place in the community outside of the learning spaces and safe spaces or home where you feel comfortable to meet and talk freely with other girls?
Do you know what to do if your safety is at risk?
If someone you know experiences violence, would you know where to tell them to go to get help?
Is it ok for you or other girls to say “No” to people who ask them to do things that make them feel unsafe?

Figure 7: Supportive Relationships

Statement	Preferred Response
If you love someone you should have sex with that person.	Disagree
A man should have the final word about decisions in his home.	Disagree
A woman should accept violence in the home to keep the family together.	Disagree
A man can beat his wife if she does not agree to have sex with him.	Disagree
A woman can suggest using condoms just like a man can.	Agree

¹¹⁸ Source: Chen, Gilad & Gully, Stan & Eden, Dov. (2001). Validation of a New General Self-Efficacy Scale. Organisational Research Methods.

A male child is preferable to a girl child.	Disagree
Men and women should share household chores.	Agree
A man can do whatever he wants to a woman if he has money and/or gives her gifts	Disagree
A man has more responsibility to earn money to provide for the family than a woman.	Disagree
Men's and women's roles in society can change over time.	Agree
If you love someone you should have sex with that person.	Disagree
A man should have the final word about decisions in his home.	Disagree

Figure 8: Sexual and Reproductive Health questions

Knowledge
Understands the link between the onset of periods and pregnancy
Knows what contraception is and can name two types
Can name one benefit to contraception
Can name a place where one could get family planning services
Can name at least two methods of birth control
Can name a place one could get STI testing
Can name 2 or more times when it is important to wash hands
Can name 2 or more food groups
Can name 2 or more foods to avoid
Practice
Percent of girls who are having sex but do not want children that used an effective birth control method the last time they had sex.

Figure 55: Caregiver responses for the question: “Under which of the following conditions do you think it is acceptable for a girl to not attend school?” Percent who said yes overall (by district)

	Bo	Kailahun	Kambia	Kenema	Koinadugu	Kono	Port Loko	Pujehun	Tonkolili	WAU	Total
Composite Score	67.5%	79.3%	74.8%	64.9%	73.2%	60.9%	71.5%	71.0%	62.3%	67.4%	69.5%
The girl is a mother	30.4%	27.1%	7.6%	57.0%	11.7%	34.6%	19.7%	45.8%	41.8%	30.1%	30.3%
Education is too costly	35.9%	30.4%	10.5%	50.7%	8.8%	31.2%	22.2%	16.5%	41.8%	34.5%	27.9%
The girl is married/is getting married	19.4%	28.5%	10.0%	51.2%	6.8%	31.7%	12.3%	3.3%	42.5%	35.9%	23.5%
The girl needs to help at home	32.1%	10.1%	6.7%	46.4%	5.4%	24.4%	2.0%	46.7%	22.6%	12.6%	21.1%
The girl needs to work	32.9%	6.8%	6.2%	28.5%	3.9%	19.0%	2.5%	46.7%	17.1%	14.1%	18.2%
The girl is unable to learn	33.3%	15.0%	8.1%	27.1%	5.9%	10.7%	11.3%	13.7%	24.7%	28.6%	17.9%
The girl may be physically harmed or teased at school or on the way to/from school	16.0%	12.1%	15.2%	24.6%	8.3%	8.8%	7.9%	1.4%	29.5%	26.7%	14.6%
The girl is too old	17.3%	13.0%	7.6%	21.3%	4.9%	14.6%	4.4%	2.4%	23.3%	25.2%	13.2%
The girl may physically harm or tease other children at school	19.8%	14.5%	11.4%	16.4%	8.3%	7.3%	7.9%	0.9%	27.4%	19.4%	13.0%
The girl has physical or learning needs that the school cannot meet	5.1%	5.8%	8.1%	15.0%	2.9%	15.6%	10.3%	0.5%	19.2%	26.2%	10.5%

Figure 56: Conflict Resolution

Model	R Squared	AIC ¹¹⁹	BIC	Chi Squared	RMSEA
Conflict Resolution only	0.50	14755.305	14805.65	0.00	0.00
Conflict Resolution and differentiated aggression and non-aggression	0.50	9482.531	9532.642	0.00	0.00

Figure 57: Prevalence of Characteristics by District

Characteristics	Overall	Bo	Kailahun	Kambia	Kenema	Koinadugu
Beneficiaries with Disabilities Overall	14.6%	13.1%	25.4%	22.2%	25.0%	5.3%
Under 15	15.9%	2.5%	15.6%	24.1%	8.9%	26.5%
15 to 16	40.0%	39.1%	36.5%	40.1%	56.5%	33.6%
17 or more	44.1%	58.4%	47.9%	35.8%	34.6%	39.8%
Female Head of Household	33.4%	19.4%	26.8%	22.2%	30.7%	27.0%
Married	44.1%	60.1%	38.9%	61.9%	39.0%	52.6%
Has Children	57.5%	75.0%	57.5%	54.3%	55.1%	42.0%
Source: Girls' Combined Survey N = 1952						

Characteristics	Overall	Kono	Port Loko	Pujehun	Tonkolili	WA Urban
Beneficiaries with Disabilities Overall	14.6%	12.4%	12.8%	14.6%	0.7%	11.7%
Under 15	15.9%	5.6%	9.6%	15.1%	2.8%	47.1%
15 to 16	40.0%	47.4%	37.7%	34.2%	38.9%	35.1%
17 or more	44.1%	47.0%	52.6%	50.7%	58.3%	17.8%
Female Head of Household	33.4%	47.7%	42.7%	21.7%	32.0%	65.2%
Married	44.1%	41.5%	26.4%	52.8%	65.4%	11.2%
Has Children	57.5%	73.2%	52.2%	68.1%	69.9%	28.6%
Source: Girls' Combined Survey N = 1952						

¹¹⁹ Lower AIC and BIC scores demonstrate greater goodness-of-fit.

Figure 58: Prevalence of Barriers to Education by District

Barrier	Overall	Bo	Kailahun	Kambia	Kenema	Koinadugu
Paid or Self Employment	38.8%	37.9%	38.2%	88.3%	57.8%	25.5%
Works Full-Time	24.3%	26.2%	25.0%	14.4%	42.2%	24.3%
High Chore Burden	41.0%	50.4%	45.5%	23.1%	50.7%	34.1%
Never went to school	45.3%	31.8%	38.7%	70.9%	43.3%	80.3%
Impoverished	43.1%	40.3%	62.8%	12.4%	46.4%	28.8%
Food Insecure	45.5%	36.9%	37.6%	49.7%	40.4%	32.7%
Beneficiary is Head of Household	9.2%	1.3%	31.0%	20.6%	19.3%	1.9%
Source: Girls' Combined Survey N = 1952						

Barrier	Overall	Kono	Port Loko	Pujehun	Tonkolili	WA Urban
Paid or Self Employment	38.8%	33.8%	26.9%	27.8%	40.0%	18.7%
Works Full-Time	24.3%	34.3%	11.0%	17.8%	22.9%	23.2%
High Chore Burden	41.0%	56.5%	56.5%	33.5%	20.4%	29.5%
Never went to school	45.3%	40.2%	22.0%	31.6%	41.8%	53.4%
Impoverished	43.1%	41.0%	34.5%	43.7%	52.4%	72.6%
Food Insecure	45.5%	52.2%	48.3%	44.6%	50.7%	64.4%
Beneficiary is Head of Household	9.2%	4.3%	4.4%	0.5%	8.6%	4.4%
Source: Girls' Combined Survey N = 1952						

Figure 59: Percentage of girls responding “yes” to the survey question: “Do you think girls have a right to go to the learning/safe space? (Disaggregated by district)

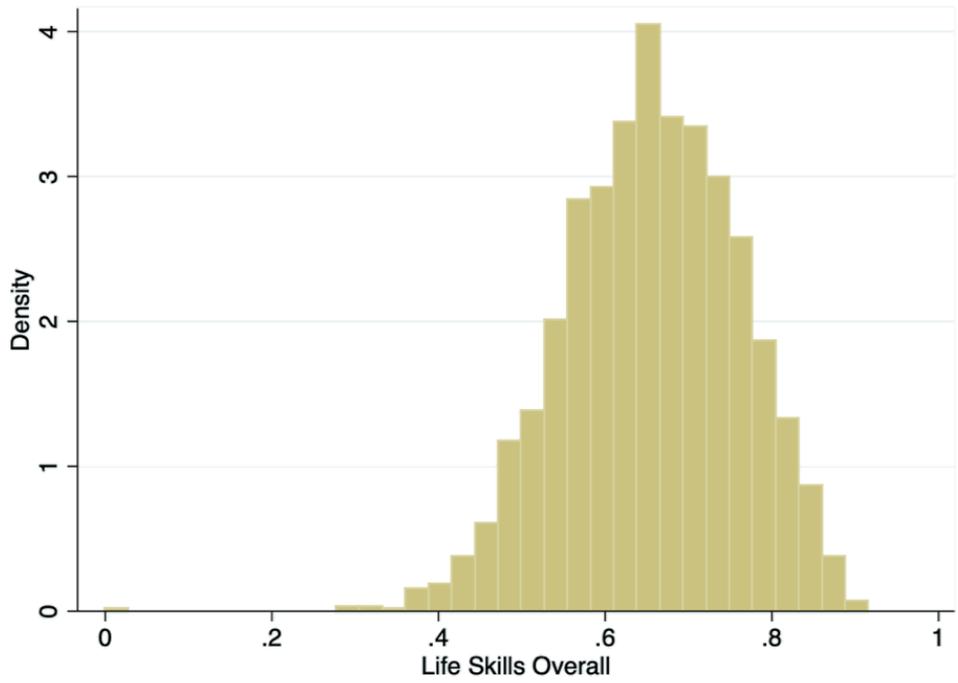
	Bo	Kailahun	Kambia	Kenema	Koinadugu	Kono	Port Loko	Pujehun	Tonkolili	WA Urban	Total
No	0	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	11
	0.00%	1.02%	1.11%	0.48%	0.00%	0.48%	0.44%	0.00%	1.43%	1.47%	0.56%
Yes	206	152	151	179	154	209	223	145	64	173	1656
	87.29%	77.55%	83.89%	85.24%	73.68%	99.52%	98.67%	68.40%	91.43%	84.80%	84.79%
Refusal	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	4	8
	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.48%	0.00%	0.00%	0.44%	0.00%	2.86%	1.96%	0.41%
Don't Know	30	42	27	29	55	0	1	67	5	26	282
	12.71%	21.43%	15.00%	13.81%	26.32%	0.00%	0.44%	31.60%	7.14%	12.75%	14.44%
Total	236	196	180	210	209	210	226	212	70	204	1953
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Figure 60: Caregiver responses for the question: “What are/were the main barriers to education for the girl?”

	Bo (n=237)	Kailahun (n=207)	Kambia (n=210)	Kenema (n=207)	Koindugu (n=205)	Kono (n=205)	Port Loko (n=203)	Pujehun (n=212)	Tonkolili (n=146)	WAU (n=206)	Total (n=2039)
There isn't enough money to pay the costs of girl's schooling	62.0%	71.5%	68.1%	57.7%	42.4%	85.4%	78.3%	58.5%	85.6%	79.1%	72.2%
Girl needs to work, earn money or help out at home	19.0%	11.1%	58.1%	36.2%	5.4%	22.9%	24.1%	1.9%	38.4%	22.3%	23.4%
Girl has a child or is about to have a child	32.9%	19.3%	8.6%	31.9%	1.5%	14.1%	26.1%	11.8%	43.2%	4.4%	18.9%
Girl is not interested in going to school	18.1%	11.1%	5.2%	10.1%	0.5%	3.9%	7.4%	24.1%	15.8%	4.4%	10.1%
Transport services are inadequate	3.4%	6.8%	17.1%	23.2%	3.4%	15.1%	9.9%	0.0%	20.5%	1.9%	9.7%
Girl is married or about to get married	17.7%	4.8%	3.3%	17.4%	2.4%	5.4%	9.4%	0.0%	37.0%	1.9%	9.3%
School is too far away	6.8%	7.7%	27.6%	18.4%	2.0%	3.4%	6.9%	0.0%	13.7%	4.4%	9.0%
It is unsafe for girl to travel to/from school	1.3%	8.7%	20.0%	16.4%	2.4%	4.9%	3.9%	0.5%	2.7%	2.4%	6.4%
No one available to travel with girl to/from school	3.4%	3.9%	11.9%	13.5%	1.5%	2.9%	3.4%	0.0%	14.4%	2.9%	5.5%
It is unsafe for girl to be in school	2.5%	6.3%	13.8%	14.5%	1.0%	1.5%	2.5%	0.5%	4.1%	1.9%	4.9%
Schooling not important for girl	7.2%	1.0%	3.8%	5.8%	1.5%	3.4%	3.0%	0.0%	5.5%	1.0%	3.2%
girl} has a health condition that prevents (him/her) from going to school	5.9%	4.3%	1.9%	4.8%	2.4%	2.0%	2.5%	1.9%	3.4%	1.0%	3.0%
To attend school girl needs special services or assistance such as speech therapist, support worker, sign language interpretation that not available	1.3%	1.0%	3.3%	10.6%	1.0%	3.9%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	2.5%

{girl} is too old to attend school	2.1%	1.4%	0.5%	2.9%	0.5%	3.4%	1.5%	0.5%	8.2%	2.4%	2.2%
School does not help girl in finding a good job	0.8%	0.0%	1.9%	4.3%	2.0%	1.0%	1.5%	0.0%	8.9%	0.5%	1.9%
girl was refused entry into the school	0.8%	2.4%	1.4%	7.2%	0.5%	2.0%	2.0%	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%	1.8%
Girl says teachers mistreat her at school	0.0%	1.4%	1.9%	7.2%	0.0%	0.5%	1.0%	1.9%	3.4%	0.5%	1.7%
The school does not have a programme that meets girl 's learning needs	0.4%	0.5%	1.9%	6.3%	0.5%	1.0%	3.4%	0.0%	1.4%	1.0%	1.7%
Girl cannot move around the school or classroom	0.4%	1.4%	1.4%	6.3%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%
Teachers do not know how to teach a girl like girl	0.8%	1.4%	1.4%	5.3%	0.0%	1.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	1.3%
To attend school girl needs assistive devices/technology such as braille textbook, hearing aid, wheelchair, etc that are not available	0.4%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.0%	1.5%	1.5%	0.0%	0.7%	1.5%	1.2%
Girl says they are mistreated/bullied by other pupils	0.4%	0.5%	1.4%	5.8%	0.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	1.2%
Girl is not mature enough to attend school	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	3.4%	0.5%	1.0%	2.5%	0.0%	3.4%	0.5%	1.1%
Girl cannot use the toilet at school	0.8%	1.4%	0.5%	4.3%	0.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.5%	1.0%
girl has completed enough schooling	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.5%	1.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%

Figure 61: Histogram of Life Skills Overall Scores



Annex 20: Baseline IO Indicator Levels and main findings

Baseline IO indicator levels and main findings¹²⁰¹²¹

- **IO1: Attendance:** Level: 0 percent (due to no observations). Main findings: Qualitative data did not uncover much overt resistance to girls' participating in programming.
- **IO2A: Instructional quality of BLN Facilitators:** Level: 0 percent (due to no observations). Main findings: Data demonstrate a range of capacities across the 10 BLN Facilitators within the qualitative sample. Facilitators interviewed identified appropriate strategies for working with OOS girls.
- **IO2B: Instructional quality of LSB mentors:** Level: 0 percent (due to no observations). Main findings: Mentors interviewed demonstrate little formal schooling, business or experience as a mentor.
- **IO3A: Girls develop transition plans:** Level: 0 percent (due to no observations). Main findings: Girls' future goals expressed in FGDs most often reflect "business" or trade options (catering, hairstyling, soapmaking or tailoring). Few addressed household and community empowerment.
- **IO3B: Made a new friend they can trust:** 0 percent (due to no observations). Main findings: Of 20 girls who sat for KIIs, 11 identified strong positive peer relationships, 4 mixed, and 5 negative relationships.
- **IO3C: Believe they can achieve their goals:** Level: 81 percent. Main findings: Girls generally report confidence in their ability to achieve their goals, but slightly lower confidence in their ability to overcome challenges.
- **IO3D: Girl applying life skills learned:** Level: 0 percent (due to no observations). Main findings: While life skills classes had not yet begun, data show low mastery amongst the mentors who will instruct life skills; only 2 were able to identify at least 3 topics from manual.
- **IO4A: No. of people reached through national programming:** Level: N/A; tracked by BBC Media Action
- **IO4B: % of radio listeners actively engaging with topics:** Level: N/A; tracked by BBC Media Action. Main qualitative findings: Data showed that stakeholders perceptions of radio as a medium were mixed within communities and across districts.
- **IO4C: % of community more supportive towards girls' education:** Level: 69.5 percent. Main findings: On an index of 15 questions on gender norms supportive of girls' empowerment, caregivers and household heads scored 69.5 percent.
- **IO4D: % of girls reporting fewer barriers to accessing education:** Level: 75.2 percent. Main findings: 75.2 percent of caregivers identify fewer than 3 barriers to education for the beneficiary.

¹²⁰ For the sake of brevity, the full descriptions of indicators are truncated here. See full report for expanded titles.

¹²¹ IO5 Indicators A and B related to national level representatives are not included here as discussions between EAGER and ministerial colleagues were still ongoing at the time of data collection.