

# Project Evaluation Report

<b>Report title:</b>	Endline Evaluation Report
<b>Evaluator:</b>	IMC Worldwide
<b>GEC Project:</b>	Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER)
<b>Country</b>	Sierra Leone
<b>GEC window</b>	Leave No Girl Behind
<b>Evaluation point:</b>	Endline
<b>Report date:</b>	July 2022

## 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](mailto:uk_girls_education_challenge@pwc.com).

# Endline Evaluation Report

Endline 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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July 2022



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# Acronyms and Terms

BLN	Basic Literacy and Numeracy
CRM	Complaint Response Mechanisms
CWW	Concern Worldwide
EAGER	Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient project
EQ	Evaluation Question
ESP	Education Sector Plan
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FM	Fund Manager
FL	Financial Literacy
FQSE	Free Quality School Education
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCS	Girls' Combined Survey
GESI	Gender equality and social inclusion
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HoH	Head of Household
IMC	IMC Worldwide
IO	Intermediate Outcome
IRB	Institutional Review Board
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KII	Key Informant Interview
LBS	Life and Business Skills
LNGB	Leave No Girl Behind
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
MGCA	Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs
NFE	Non-formal Education
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee
RD	Restless Development
SBCC	Social and behaviour change communication
SWGCA	Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training-of-Trainers
TSC	Teacher Service Commission
VfM	Value for Money
WAU	Western Area Urban

# 1. Executive Summary

## Introduction

The Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER) project is a Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) funded Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) project in Sierra Leone. EAGER is implemented by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Sierra Leone in partnership with Concern Worldwide (CWW), Restless Development (RD) and BBC Media Action in 10 districts across Sierra Leone. The project duration is approximately 4 years (February 2019 - November 2023) and is implemented in 10 of 16 districts.

EAGER engages out-of-school (OOS) adolescent girls ages 13-17<sup>1</sup> upon enrolment in the programme who lack basic Literacy and Numeracy skills. EAGER aims to significantly improve their functional Literacy, Numeracy, Financial Literacy, and Life Skills through an 8-month learning programme followed by a somewhat independent 8-month long Transition Period. Empowerment Plan comprised of goals that each girl defines for herself serve as the cornerstone of the transition experience. Girls develop these plans at the end of the learning programme. The plans outline four goal areas (learning, household, community and financial) in which the girls set out goals and steps to help them reach those goals. During the Transition Phase, girls meet twice with EAGER Mentors in order to review progress towards goals and receive encouragement and support.

This Endline Evaluation report presents the evaluation approach, findings and conclusions, and recommendations. The IRC hired IMC Worldwide (IMC) to conduct the Baseline, Midterm and Final Evaluations of the EAGER project. The Endline took place from November 2021 to May 2022 and covers all 10 EAGER programme districts. While the programme includes 2 Cohorts of girl beneficiaries, the Endline, like the preceding Baseline and Midterm Evaluations, focuses solely on Cohort 1 (i.e., 7,500 girls) as well as indirect stakeholders.

## Approach

In line with previous timepoints, the Endline Evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach and convergent design, in which, quantitative and qualitative data collections occurred simultaneously due to time constraints. Evaluation Questions (EQ) that focused on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria of relevancy, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability guided the evaluation. Like the Baseline and midterm, the Endline Evaluation reported on programme Outcomes and Intermediate Outcomes (IOs).

The Endline quantitative sample included 1,612 beneficiaries and 1,605 caregivers from 212 communities, replicating the original Baseline intent. Beneficiary surveys were matched to their caregivers to understand the role caregivers had on beneficiaries. In addition, the Endline sample successfully matched to 1,331 Midterm observations and 854 Baseline observations. Results utilised statistical weights to ensure representativeness by district.

The qualitative component provided context and depth to the findings of the quantitative impact evaluation and increased validity of findings through triangulation. Qualitative sampling took a purposeful approach across the same 10 communities as at Baseline and Midterm (1 per each of the 10 programme districts). In addition to including viewpoints from diverse stakeholder types at the field-level, the Endline included interviews with National Government Officials (4), FCDO and Fund Manager (FM) Officials (3), EAGER CCU (4) and EAGER partner staff (10). The Endline Evaluation Reached 213 individuals (134 females and 79 males, including 61 beneficiaries) via key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs).

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<sup>1</sup> For Cohort 2, this age range was amended so that girls that were waitlisted for Cohort 1 were prioritised, and girls are over 17 years old when starting Cohort 2.

## Key Results at Endline Evaluation

### Learning Outcomes

Learning Sessions concluded at Midterm, therefore Endline results focus on Transition Outcomes. The evaluation of Learning Outcomes are available within the Midterm Evaluation report.

### Transition Outcomes

All beneficiaries were expected to complete an Empowerment Plan at the conclusion of Learning Sessions in 2021 and, according to EAGER's internal records, nearly every beneficiary did so as Endline beneficiary surveys report that 91.9 percent had finalised their plans Empowerment Plan. This discrepancy may be due to a misunderstanding of the when asked whether they had finalised their Empowerment Plan: those who stated that they had not finalised their plans still discussed the goals outlined in Empowerment Plan. According to internal EAGER partner records, 91.2 percent of beneficiaries have completed at least one step per goal at their first check-in. More beneficiaries completed steps for financial (95.4 percent) and learning (97.4 percent) goals and lowest among community goals (91.7 percent).

### Sustainability Outcomes

While the indicator on supportive attitudes of radio listeners relies on results of the BBC Media Action Evaluation, the Caregiver Survey asked if caregivers listened to the radio, listened to the EAGER radio show, and if it helped them understand girls' learning, skills development and education opportunities. Among all caregivers of girl beneficiaries who listened to the EAGER radio show, 87.8 percent agreed that it helped them understand girls' issues better; among all radio listeners, 48.1 percent agreed. Girls' Clubs that operated independently after Learning Sessions were seen as an important aspect of sustainability. After describing Girls' Clubs to beneficiaries, 70.0 percent of said that they had met up with fellow participants for mutual support since the ending of Learning Sessions. Caregivers were asked a series of questions on when it was acceptable for girls to not be enrolled in formal traditional school to create an index for caregiver support of girls' education. The indicator fell between Baseline and Midterm from 78.3 percent to 69.3 percent, and rose slightly to 70.8 percent at Endline. These results do not reflect the broader more supportive attitudes viewed by community members, and may reflect caregivers' positive experiences with EAGER as an alternative pathway to empowerment instead of traditional education. This indicator, as defined, does not appear to have strong external validity.

Outcome Indicator	Source / Notes	Results
<b>Transition</b>		
Number and Percent of girls who completed and signed off their Empowerment Plan	Self-reported from Girls Combined Survey.	91.9%
Number and Percent of girls who completed at least one step per goal at check-in One disaggregated by age, disability, and additional learning needs	From EAGER partners' internal records	91.2%
<b>Sustainability</b>		
Percent of radio listeners that foster more supportive attitudes towards girls' learning / education / entrepreneurship / participation in society	See the BBC Media Action Evaluation. Reported here based on responses from Caregiver Survey.	48.1%
Percent of girl groups that decide to continue meeting and creating a conceptual Safe Space for each other after completing the learning programme	From Girls Combined Survey: defined as percent of individual girls that had attended at least one Girls Club meeting. Girls' Club materials had not been disseminated at time of survey.	70.0%

Percent of community leaders, boys, and caregivers that report positive and empowering attitudes towards girls' education	From Caregivers' Survey's questions about acceptable reasons to not enrol in formal school. Does not reflect or capture broader support found from other sources. Baseline Value: 78.3% Midterm Value: 69.3%	<b>70.8%</b>
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### **Intermediate Outcomes (IOs)**

The table below presents the results relevant to the IOs and their related indicators.

<b>Intermediate Outcome Indicator</b>	<b>Source / Notes</b>	<b>Results</b>
<b>IO3: Empowerment Plan</b>		
Percent of girls who report believing that they can achieve the goals they set for themselves	From Girls Combined Survey. Baseline Value: 81.1% Midterm Value: 91.4%	92.6%
Percent who report that they have used skills learned in their <b>Life Skills</b> sessions	From Girls Combined Survey. Midterm Value: 90.2%	96.0%
Percent of girls who report that they have used skills learned in their <b>Literacy</b> sessions	From Girls Combined Survey.	98.7%
Percent of girls who report that they have used skills learned in their <b>Numeracy</b> sessions	From Girls Combined Survey.	98.3%
Percent of girls who report that they have used skills learned in their <b>Financial Literacy</b> sessions	From Girls Combined Survey.	98.4%
Percent of girls who report making one or more new friends in their group since joining EAGER	From Girls Combined Survey. Midterm Value: 95.2%	93.7%
<b>IO4: Community Engagement</b>		
Number of people reached (including frequency) through national programming	See the BBC Media Action Evaluation. Listenership prevalence among caregivers is discussed under Key Results.	N/A
Percent of radio listeners who report actively engaging with topics discussed in radio programming	See the BBC Media Action Evaluation. Reported here based on responses from Caregiver Survey.	48.1%
Percent of community members that foster more supportive attitudes towards girls' opportunities, education, and safety (disaggregated by sex, role)	Provided by BBC Media Action Evaluation. See Sustainability Indicator.	N/A
Percent of girls that report feeling safe and supported to make decisions and access opportunities	From Girls Combined Survey.	89.2%
<b>IO5: Government Support</b>		
A. National level representatives of Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and Ministry of, Gender and Children's Affairs (MGCA) participate in the Baseline, Midterm and Endline data validation B. Number of informative project coordination meetings held with the National level representatives of MBSSE and MGCA annually	Successful interviews with high-level Government of Sierra Leone officials demonstrate improvements in EAGER's relationships at the systems-level. At the same time, relationships at the technical level seem to be weaker. There were no indications of regular meetings or major dissemination events. Opportunities exist for further strengthening of systems-level overtures.	N/A

## Responses to Evaluation Questions

In addition to the results above, the Endline Evaluation responded to eight Evaluation Questions (EQ) organised according to OECD-DAC criteria. This summary synthesises findings thematically.

### Overall Relevance, Effectiveness and Impact of Transition Experiences

Overall, girls, Mentors and other stakeholders interviewed are overwhelmingly positive about EAGER activities generally, and the Transition Phase specifically. EAGER's approach to transition is **highly relevant** as it relies on Mentorthe development of girls' **individually-customised** Empowerment Plan and tailored coaching for Mentors. The approach encourages specific goal setting, and detailing steps and plans to achieve that goal. This includes, by design, accommodations for girls with disabilities or other special needs. EAGER's design also meets girls' needs within the normative cultural boundaries in which they live, most significantly in supporting plans that enable her to define what empowerment means to her within the context of her own life circumstances.

Within Sierra Leone, almost a third of women (29.9%) and 6.5% of men aged 20-24 were first married before age 18, according to 2017 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey data. A fifth (21%) of all girls between the age of 15 and 19 had begun child rearing. In addition, nearly two-thirds of women (63%) and a third of men (34%) think beating your wife is justified<sup>2</sup>. The complex environment in which girls live and maneuver, requires a nuanced approach to how girls may be able to assert greater control and power without compromising their safety. Girls surveyed indicate continued increased self-efficacy since Baseline and many reported improvements in their financial situations. Many EAGER girls describe receiving **increased respect from partners, caregivers, and community members and experience greater confidence** as they play **more active roles in community affairs**. Mentors similarly reported enhanced communication, household management, financial management skills and higher status in their community.

Findings indicate that **many girls are mindfully practicing behaviours that value peaceful household interactions and less overt conflict at the same time that they use their skills to strengthen their role and say within the household**. These changes may be appropriate given the extensive timeframe necessary to transform gender norms. In addition, positive developments within households and communities include **improved caretaker understanding** of girls' challenges and potential, the **development of policies (by-laws and fines)** to support girls within the community, and **initiatives to reduce GBV and early marriage**. However, much work remains to be done to strengthen developments at the community and policy-level.

**Community, family, and partner support** seems to have a positive effect on the degree to which a girl is able to pursue her Empowerment Plan. Communities, families, and partners demonstrated nearly unanimous support for girls' pursuit of conceived Empowerment Plan. Only one in fifteen (6.8 percent) of beneficiaries surveyed reported their partners as barriers to achieving their Empowerment Plan. Individual barriers such as lack of **childcare, health emergencies, or domestic duties** hindered some girls from pursuing their empowerment goals. Many, however, endured despite these challenges. There are **notable differences between barriers that girls report experiencing and stakeholders' perceptions of barriers** most common for girls. Stakeholders most often perceive pregnancy and early marriage to be the main barriers for girls, while girls interviewed indicate lack of finances and lacking partner and/or family support to be most challenging. Macro factors, such as local market conditions, availability of vocational training centres and seasonality of some businesses, also surfaced as barriers to girls' success.

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<sup>2</sup> Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2017). <https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/3210>

## Effectiveness and Impact of Programmatic Elements

The Transition Phase design addresses four domains (learning, household, community and financial) simultaneously. **Nearly all beneficiaries interviewed reported pursuing business goals<sup>3</sup> and over three-quarters (76.8 percent) of girls surveyed engage in petty trading. Only a few girls interviewed indicated pursuing goals in another domain.** Findings also reveal a **functional disconnect between girls' conceived Empowerment Plan and the plans expressed in written Empowerment Plan tools.** In other words, what girls envision for themselves is often not fully communicated in written form. Comparison of a small sample of Empowerment Plan with monitoring data revealed instances of girls who did not fully complete their plans but still graduated from EAGER. While acknowledging the ambitious nature of EAGER's goalsetting model, for monitoring system requires revisiting. The Endline Evaluation investigated the effectiveness and impact of key programmatic elements. For instance, 96 percent of girls surveyed reported using all foundational skills (basic Literacy; Numeracy; Life Skills; Financial Literacy) during transition. Nearly all stakeholders interviewed overwhelmingly concurred that the acquisition of skills through the **EAGER Learning Sessions** has been critical to girls' success in transition and provided relevant supplements to whatever goal a girl set for herself. EAGER girls' **self-efficacy, communication skills, stress-management skills, financial knowledge and financial management skills, and saving habits** also have continued to improve since the end of Learning Sessions.

**EAGER cash transfers were also essential for enabling girls to realise their Empowerment Plan** and 42.9 percent of beneficiaries identified the cash distribution as the most important ingredient to achieving their goals. Interview data from girls and other stakeholders also generally indicate that the amount received was reasonable for petty business start-ups or growth to existing petty businesses that were in line with the types of business skills that girls had learnt. The amounts were also sufficiently small by design in order to mitigate safety risks. Qualitative data also indicate that for some girls, their financial goals may not have been appropriate to contextual realities and needed to be revised. **Empowerment Packages** that accompanied cash transfers also seem to have **high functional value** for girls and other stakeholders; nine out of ten girls surveyed found the packages to be helpful..

**SBCC messaging** through the *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* radio show has been largely effective and findings detail impressive stories of impact. Of those familiar with the radio show, nearly 9 of 10 (87.2 percent) caregivers agreed that the show helps them to better understand girls' learning, skills development and education opportunities." Testimonies from a small number of boys, male partners and caregivers also suggest that the show may have led to their increased respect for women's earnings and reductions in gender-based violence.

## Sustainability of EAGER's Impacts

**Positive changes in girls' capabilities and sense of empowerment at the household and community level have the potential to be lasting** as benefits may remain into the near and far future. As might be expected, **however, beneficiaries remain highly susceptible to external shocks which threaten improvements EAGER beneficiaries have experienced.** Given this sensitivity, systems-level efforts to strengthen structural and policy-focused solutions may help sustain gains. A systems-level analysis demonstrates that **EAGER has made some critical efforts to influence policy and begin to develop relationships with key government officials** even though systems-level change is not part of EAGER's design. Impressive relationships at the highest ranks within the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs (MGCA) were evident at Endline even though **meaningful linkages with technical civil servants were not apparent. More formal dissemination activities with national government scheduled for May 2002** may have great potential for sharing EAGER's results and perhaps amplifying influence during EAGER's remaining implementation period.

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<sup>3</sup> Within the context of Sierra Leone, "business" is a broad term that reflects small-scale trading, services and production.

## Recommendations

These recommendations are an abridged version of the 27 recommendations provided within the full report. Recommendations address the remaining period before project closure as well as possibilities for future projects aimed to improve the lives of adolescent girls in similar contexts. Parentheses indicate targeted actors for implementing recommendations, where applicable. Within time remaining EAGER should do the following to improve Cohort 2's experience:

1. **Share best practices** with GoSL and other GEC programmes in order to showcase EAGER as a largely effective and ambitious approach to a customised transition process. (EAGER CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist; MEAL & Research Coordinator; FM).
2. **Adjust staff training and continuous professional development** to provide enhanced and targeted support to girls as they prepare for and navigate the Transition Phase. Develop additional training for Mentors, BLN Officers and Facilitators on market shifts and potential pivots in order to better advise beneficiaries. (EAGER CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist, Education Specialist).
3. **Increase the amount of the EAGER cash transfer** for Cohort 2 to cover at least the cost of a 50-kilogram bag of rice. (EAGER CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist).
4. Given emerging effectiveness and impact of SBCC activities, **identify ways to encourage engagement with soon-to-launch radio drama and discussion show**. Take advantage of EAGER Learning Sessions to extend topics discussed and connect girls to peers beyond community boundaries through the radio. (EAGER CCU; Protection & Empowerment Specialist; BBC Media Action).
5. **Work with community leaders to establish and enforce community by-laws that support girls' initiatives** and prevent by-laws that limit their ability to carry them out and promote exchanges between different communities to share promising practices. (Project partners).
6. Capitalise on expressed interest from the Ministers of BSSE and SWGCA to **hold formal dissemination events to share EAGER's results and take advantage of the Minister of SWGCA's offer to convene a multi-sectoral meeting**. (CCU; IRC Country Director).

Future projects should consider the following:

1. Projects pursuing a multi-pronged emphasis on learning, household and community goals in addition to the more tangible financial goal, should **align Empowerment Plan development processes to allow for balanced emphasis on all four domains**. In addition to time spent with content during learning sessions, future programming should adequately scaffold girls' identification of goals in all domains. This approach will help girls feel more attached to all goals given particular enthusiasm for financial concerns.
2. **Implement enhanced sensitisation activities at the community level to focus on changing gender norms and girls' rights**. Develop activities specifically to examine traditional roles for girls as they relate to girls' newly embraced roles (greater economic empowerment, awareness of SRHR). Include coverage of opportunities for men that arise as women take on new roles. Activities may include community dialogues or go beyond to involve more stakeholders.
3. Future projects should include a **dedicated system-level change component with dedicated staff and an initial implementation plan**. Activities to foster sustainability may deliberate trainings and on-going capacity building for government staff; a project staff embedded within relevant ministries, and periodic joint mission trips to project sites.

## 2. Background to project

### 2.1.1. Overview of EAGER project

EAGER is a girls' education and empowerment project funded by FCDO through the GEC's LNGB funding window. This four-year project (February 2019 - January 2023) is implemented through a consortium of four partners working in 10 districts of Sierra Leone (Freetown Urban, Bo, Kailahun, Kambia, Kenema, Koinadugu, Kono, Port Loko, Pujehun and Tonkolili). Through a consortium led by the IRC via a Consortium Coordination Unit (CCU), implementing partners (IRC, CWW, RD, and BBC Media Action) work together to design, plan, implement and monitor all aspects of EAGER programming. While the original value was £17,916,896.63, budget cuts and subsequent realignment in August 2021 reduced the project's total value to £17,487,181.

EAGER engages out-of-school (OOS) adolescent girls aged 13-17 who either never attended or dropped out of school and have not learned basic Literacy and Numeracy skills. The project proactively seeks to include girls facing other factors of educational marginalisation, including girls with disabilities, girls who are pregnant, girls who are already mothers, girls who have married early, and girls who were affected by the 2014 Ebola outbreak.

The project aims to significantly improve girls' learning Outcomes for functional Literacy, Numeracy, and Financial Literacy, as well as Life Skills through a carefully tailored 8-month learning programme. This learning programme has gone through extensive restructuring and adaptations due to the upheaval of COVID-19 and project learning. While the original design was planned for a 11-month learning programme, the first Cohort of girls experienced a longer timeframe due to a 5-month gap in programming followed by review sessions, reduced hours (from 2 hour sessions down to 45 minutes) and reduced days for sessions.

When girls complete the learning programme, they will have identified financial goals which will inform their Empowerment Plan. The Empowerment Plan developed by the girls sets four goals for their transition including a Learning Goal, Household Goal, Community Goal, and Financial Goal. Mentors will meet with each girl twice during this 6-month transition to check on her progress towards her goals and offer encouragement and support.

The project is being implemented in 300 communities (Cohort for year 1: 7,500 adolescent girls) since January 2020. In year 2 and 3, the project continued to work in these communities with the same Cohort, due to delays and amendments in programme implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic. In year 4, the project has expanded into approximately 400 new communities and is working with a new group of approximately 19,800 adolescent girls. The project aims to reach a total of 27,000 adolescent girls and 14,000 Mentors within the four years and the two Cohorts.

### 2.1.2. Project Context

Sierra Leone has an estimated population of 7.5 million, is divided into four 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 day<sup>4</sup>. 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

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<sup>4</sup> UNDP (2019) Human Development Report. Briefing note for countries on the 2019 Human Development Report, Sierra Leone.



(and an increase in non-Ebola morbidity and mortality due to the effects of the crisis on public services and local/national economy)<sup>5</sup>.

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 poverty<sup>6</sup>. Low confidence in public institutions and marginalisation of sub-groups (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.<sup>7</sup>

According to the 2019 Demographic Survey, 61% of women age 15-49 have experienced physical violence by anyone since age 15 (up from 56% in 2013), and 7% have experienced sexual violence (down from 11% in 2013).<sup>8</sup> ; 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 Ebola outbreak, likely due to school closings resulting in reduced protection of girls.<sup>9</sup>

Sierra Leone has a long-standing aspiration to attain middle-income country status by 2035.<sup>10</sup> 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<sup>11</sup> . In 2018, the GoSL embarked on the mission to deliver Free Quality School Education (FQSE), an initiative that aims to provide greater access, quality, and equity in education for over 2 million children by removing financial barriers to school enrolment and improving teaching and learning Outcomes. In March 2021, The GoSL also launched his National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools, which seeks to ensure that schools throughout Sierra Leone are accessible to, and inclusive of, all children – especially those that are typically marginalised or excluded. In particular, the policy focuses on four excluded and marginalised groups: children with disabilities; children from low-income families; children in rural and underserved areas; and girls - especially girls who are currently pregnant and in school or are parent learners.<sup>12</sup>

### 2.1.3. Project Theory of Change

The EAGER project's latest Theory of Change (ToC) and logframe can be found in Annex 1 and Annex 4 respectively. Please note that it is not the final ToC but the most recent version. The ToC is currently being updated by the EAGER project in coordination with updates to the logframe.

**Learning:** Girl-only Safe Spaces for Life Skills sessions and Mentoring and Learning Spaces for Literacy, Numeracy, and Financial Literacy sessions are identified to ensure that girls can learn in a safe and inclusive learning environment. Project Officers meet one-on-one with girls to provide

<sup>5</sup> World Health Organisation (2016). Ebola Situation Report – 16 March 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Government of Sierra Leone (2015) National Ebola Recovery Strategy for Sierra Leone.

<sup>7</sup> World Health Organisation (2016). Ebola Situation Report – 16 March 2016

<sup>8</sup> <https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-FR365-DHS-Final-Reports.cfm>

<sup>9</sup> UNFPA (2015) 'Rapid Assessment of Pregnant Adolescent Girls in Sierra Leone,' Freetown: UNFPA.

<sup>10</sup> Government of Sierra Leone (2018), Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019-2023

<sup>11</sup> Government of Sierra Leone, 2017, Education Sector Plan 2018-2020

<sup>12</sup> Government of Sierra Leone, 2021, Radica Inclusion Policy

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 has developed tailored curricula to meet the needs of adolescent girls. The Life Skills curriculum builds on the IRC's Girl Shine curriculum and includes social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies as well as sessions on sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence, and goal-setting. Training for Facilitators (BLN) and Mentors (Life Skills) include cascade training on inclusive, gender transformative, age appropriate and learner-centred teaching practices. This is reinforced through quarterly individual coaching and peer-learning sessions.

These activities link to Output 2 for the successful resourcing, training and coaching of Facilitators and Mentors. Attendance (Intermediate Outcome 1) and quality and inclusive 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, Facilitators and Mentors can be motivated to apply their training and communities can ensure the provision and maintenance of Safe Spaces.

The pedagogical approach and mode of delivery is inclusive, and sessions are delivered in the girls' mother tongue, while all materials are in English. Therefore, the language of instruction varies between groups and locations. Mentors and Facilitators are actively encouraged to use mother tongue while facilitating sessions, but to teach some key words that relate to the main themes, in English. For Literacy, the content is in English and mother tongue is used to bridge the gap as girls learn new English vocabulary and engaging with written 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 language barriers. Girls are provided with Learner Books (For Cohort 1, these are shared between two girls) that include vocabulary, short sentences illustrations, diagrams, pictures etc. to guide learning. The content is tailored to the girls' context and realities so they relate to and engage with the content. It features a diverse representation of girls, and concepts of gender equity and inclusion are reflected in the content and visuals. The Access to 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.

Training and coaching for Facilitators and Mentors reinforces good facilitation skills and inclusive practices with emphasis on managing the space to ensure every girl can participate fully, as well as strategies on how to include learners with impairments. These trainings also cover gender, GBV, gender responsive pedagogy, and the code of conduct.

**Transition:** Shortly after the learning programme, every girl will have completed her own Empowerment Plan with support from her Mentors and Facilitator. This plan outlines her Learning Goals, Household Goal, Community Goal, and Financial Goal. Graduating girls who have signed off on their Empowerment Plan receive a small EAGER grant to use toward their financial goal. During this six-month transition, Mentors lead two one-on-one meetings with each girl to check in on her progress and encourage her to keep using her new skills to work towards her goals. This transition period is a focused opportunity for girls to continue practicing and strengthening the knowledge, skills, and confidence they have developed, and to leverage these skills to empower themselves (Output 3, Intermediate Outcome 3).

**Sustainability:** At the end of the learning program, "Girls' Clubs" are set up in each community to provide a means for girls' to maintain relationships built during the EAGER programme and continue

formal engagement with the Mentors and safe space. The Girls' Clubs are distributed assets such as a football, a speaker, and a selection of the BBC Media Action radio shows to foster greater community and provide activities for the girls to structure their Clubs around. EAGER works closely with communities to encourage shifts in the harmful attitudes and behaviours that disempower and marginalise adolescent girls. Engagement strategies include six Community Dialogues that use visual aids, storytelling, and girls' voices to foster collective reflection and action planning by community leaders. This series of monthly dialogues are led by LBS and BLN Project Officers with support from Mentors and Facilitators. Quarterly meetings are held at chiefdom level to reflect on and share action plans and mobilise action to protect and empower girls at the chiefdom level. Since the learning program finished in July 2021, EAGER project staff have been working with community leadership to create a "Community Action Plan", which acts as a roadmap to support the community to continue supporting girls' empowerment in their community beyond the project timeline. Another key engagement strategy is the series of radio programmes created by BBC Media Action and designed to present issues through the eyes of girls and role model supportive attitudes and practices towards adolescent girls.

These activities aim to transform the harmful attitudes and gender norms that limit girls' education and income generating opportunities (Output 4), and mobilise communities to take action to remove the barriers that limit girls' access to education, good health, safety, inclusion, and overall wellbeing. 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 caregivers 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) is consulted on the design of the BLN curriculum and research approach (Output 5). As per the original logframe, his 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. However, the project is engaged in revisiting IO and Output 5 to reflect changes in the engagement with key GoSL stakeholders since project proposal. Although the elements above are still relevant, this outcome and output are undergoing revisions.

## 3. Endline Evaluation approach and methodology

### Summary of Endline Evaluation Approach

#### 3.1.1. Objectives and Timeline

As with the Baseline and Midterm Evaluations, the Endline Evaluation only focused on Cohort 1, and included direct and indirect beneficiaries, and ran from October 2021-May 2022. The Endline Evaluation took place after beneficiaries from Cohort 1 completed the Learning Sessions and were focused on the implementation of their Empowerment Plan with check-ins with their Mentors scheduled for December 2021 and March 2022.

The Endline Evaluation focused more on the transition element of the programme, and less on the learning Outcomes (i.e. literacy, numeracy, etc.). While it produced a longitudinal data set for some of the Outcomes and Intermediate Outcomes (IOs) for comparison with data from the Baseline and Midterm, Literacy and Numeracy were not measured at Endline because learning activities ended in July 2021 before the transition-focused component of the programme. The Endline Evaluation therefore assesses the extent of change over the course of the programme implementation for Cohort 1 for select Outcomes and IOs. In addition to focusing on transition, the evaluation focused on the sustainability of the programme, and assesses the relevancy, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of the programme. The evaluation also investigates EAGER programme's approach to transition and the concept of empowerment in practice. Findings from the Endline Evaluation will help to further inform the Transition Phase for Cohort 1, as well as the approach used for transition for Cohort 2.

In addition, the Endline Evaluation offered the opportunity to explore whether the programme met the needs of the Cohort 1 girls in terms of learning (Numeracy and Literacy, Life Skills and Financial Literacy) so that they were equipped to take the steps to reach their goals. Specifically, the evaluation looks at the beneficiaries' perceptions of whether or not the EAGER programme provided them with the resources necessary to implement their Empowerment Plan. If resources and support were not adequate, the evaluation explores possible missing resources based on EAGER's programming and curriculum. The Endline also explored Mentors' capacities to support girls' empowerment and Mentors' own empowerment journey (therefore reinforcing the idea of the Mentor as a beneficiary, too). Finally, the Endline seeks to specifically uncover changes in attitudes towards girls' education, equality, and realisation of girls' rights as well as opportunities for sustainability of intervention components.

A series of Evaluation Questions (EQ) guided the analysis. The EQs are structured around the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria. The EQs focus on four of the six criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Given the scope of the evaluation and Evaluation Questions, efficiency and coherence are not relevant to this evaluation.

At Baseline, IMC worked closely with the IRC to develop the programme logframe and the more comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework for the EAGER programme. These elements continue to guide the Endline Evaluation as they did at the Baseline and at Midterm. The evaluation covered all 10 districts where EAGER programming occurs and the same communities as the Baseline and Midterm Evaluations for both qualitative and quantitative samples.

### 3.1.2. Evaluation Questions

In answering the Evaluation Questions (EQ) below, the Endline Evaluation seeks to build upon the Midterm Evaluation findings (from September 2021) and shed light upon the Transition Phase, in particular, as well as issues of sustainability of results. Findings will also inform modifications for the ongoing Cohort 2 implementation and end of project. Analysis throughout paid attention to sub-group differences including for girls who are heads of household, mothers, girls with disabilities, girls with residency in rural vs. urban areas, older vs. younger girls, etc.

*Table 1: Evaluation Questions*

DAC Criteria	Evaluation Question
<p><b>Relevance:</b> The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent are the project's objectives and design responsive to the needs and goals of beneficiaries as girls end the Learning Phase and enter into the Transition Phase? And to the needs of the diverse sub-groups served by the project?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Effectiveness:</b> The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which individual, household, community and macro factors support and hinder girls' effective transition?</li> <li>• Which programmatic factors support girls' realisation of their Empowerment Plan, including project resources and hard/soft skills learned during the Learning Phase? What opportunities exist for further supporting girls in the empowerment dimensions?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Impact:</b> The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What changes in girls' behaviours and confidence are visible as girls navigate the Transition Phase? Are girls feeling empowered to meet their own goals since the end of the Learning Phase in the various empowerment dimensions?</li> <li>● How might EAGER Mentors be applying what they learned through EAGER materials and trainings to their own lives and improving their own capacities, status in their households, community and financially to meet their own goals?</li> <li>● What obstacles or challenges do stakeholders still perceive as preventing young women from achieving their goals within their communities? What could be done to mediate them?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sustainability:</b> The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What visible structural or behavioural changes have the potential to remain after the end of the intervention? What signs exist of changing gender norms at the individual, household and community level, including attitudes towards girls' education, equality and realisation of girls' rights?</li> <li>● What is the likelihood that the project benefits will remain after the intervention? What can the project do to further support sustainability?</li> </ul>

### 3.1.3. Evaluation design

Like the Baseline and Midterm Evaluations, the Endline Evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach and convergent design, in which, due to time constraints, quantitative and qualitative data collections occurred simultaneously. The breadth of the quantitative approach allowed for a statistically representative sample of programme locations and participants while the qualitative component provided context and depth to the findings of the quantitative impact evaluation. This dual approach enabled triangulation of findings, thus increasing their validity.

### 3.1.4. Data Collection Tools

The Endline data collection tools reflect a use of multiple data sources (primary data sources as well as secondary sources via a desk review as noted in Annex 2 where a full list of documents and secondary data is listed) and methods to triangulate information and draw conclusions regarding relationships and links between project resources/inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, the long-term goal, within the context of the country in which the intervention is occurring (e.g. political, institutional, cultural) and the nature of the EAGER consortium’s implementation of the project (e.g. operational and technical factors) that enable or inhibit success. In addition to aligning with the Evaluation Questions, like the Baseline and Midterm Evaluations, the data collection methods link directly to select programme Outcomes and Intermediate Outcomes.

The Evaluation Framework (see Annex Section 2) guided the Endline Evaluation’s implementation and has two parts. The first focuses on the project’s revised logframe. The Endline update reflects EAGER’s post-Baseline and Midterm revisions to the logframe as well as updated data collection methods that will allow for Endline verification of indicators. The second part details the methods used to answer each Evaluation Question. Like for the Midterm Report, at Endline, the Evaluation Questions largely provide the structure for the report.

The Endline Evaluation used the following tools.

*Figure 1: Data collection tools*

Quantitative Tools	Qualitative Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Girls’ Combined Survey including Financial Literacy tool and Life Skills tool</li><li>• Heads of household and primary caregivers survey</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Key Informant Interview (KII) Guides</li><li>• Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guides</li><li>• Data Collection Checklist<sup>13</sup></li><li>• FGD and KII Cover Sheets</li></ul>

Evaluation tools were all prepared and designed in English as local languages remain largely oral in common practice in Sierra Leone. In order to promote participants’ comfort and assure understanding between data collectors and participants, data collectors delivered all instructions and questions in local languages. A portion of data collector trainings was dedicated to identifying appropriate local language terms for both qualitative and quantitative activities.

Quantitative data collectors practiced administering surveys and qualitative data collectors facilitating KIIs and FGDs in local languages. Quantitative data collectors recorded all data on

<sup>13</sup> The Data Collection Checklist was used by the qualitative data collectors to guide their work in the field. It lists the different interviews and FGDs and notes when they took place, etc. It is an organisational and accountability tool.

tablets in English while qualitative data collectors wrote detailed field notes in English and transcriptions were also prepared in English. Although there was a potential risk to data quality associated with an oral translation process, knowledge of reading and writing in local languages is quite limited, including amongst in-country data collectors and quantitative data collectors, and verbatim note taking within the language uttered is not possible. These limitations are common in similar multilingual settings. Training addressed language issues for both the quantitative and qualitative team. For qualitative transcripts, the data collection firm employed a quality assurance strategy and assigned a staff member responsibility to oversee the integrity of the transcription process. IMC performed regular spot-checking and the data collection firm addressed issues found when they arose.

### 3.1.5. Sampling Approach

The beneficiary-level data came from distinct samples: the quantitative sample, qualitative interviews and FGDs, and a review of a select number of Empowerment Plan from girls who participate in the FGDs. These samples were selected using different methods, and beneficiaries in one sample may not be part of the other sample. The Empowerment Plan reviewed were not mapped to the quantitative sample.

#### **Quantitative Sampling**

The quantitative sample was designed at Baseline to be conducted on a longitudinal basis, following a single sample of girls as they progress through Cohort 1. The sampled communities were stratified based on geography and randomly selected. The Baseline minimum sample size accounted for minimum sample sizes of sub-groups of interest, cluster-based sampling, and a 30 percent attrition rate between the Baseline and Endline. The intended Baseline sample included 2,160 beneficiaries from 216 Safe Spaces. Due to a Lassa Fever outbreak in Tonkolili in November 2019, the final Baseline sample was of 2,073 beneficiaries. When the Baseline for Financial Literacy was completed in early 2021, it sought out the same beneficiaries.

The Midterm sample replicated the original Baseline intent and surveyed 2,169 beneficiaries from 212 Safe Spaces, and included 150 session observations. Like the Baseline, 10 girls per Safe Space group were surveyed.<sup>14</sup> The Midterm sample consisted of those from the Baseline, and replaced participants as necessary when they could not be found or had left the programme. Replacements were first included during in the Financial Literacy Baseline survey in 2021 (which included 1,402 beneficiaries that were part of the 2019 Baseline sample, and 471 beneficiaries not included in the 2019 Baseline) served as the priority alternates whenever possible at the Midterm Evaluation.

The Endline Evaluation sample strove to sample the same 2,169 beneficiaries from the Midterm from the same Safe Spaces visited at the Baseline and Midterm Evaluations. However, the sample size of 2,160 was designed to account for a 30 percent attrition rate: only 1,512 beneficiaries were necessary to meet the minimum threshold. While quantitative data collectors did attempt to collect data from 10 previously interviewed beneficiaries from each Safe Space group, it was only necessary to obtain the statistical power of the original design. Replacement lists were only used if the sample at a Safe Space was below 7 beneficiaries from the Baseline sample. The first priority was to include girls from the full programme Baseline sample and the Midterm sample, girls who were included in the Financial Literacy Baseline survey served as the

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<sup>14</sup> Some Safe Spaces have more than one group.



priority alternates whenever possible. There were no session observations (which were only done at Midterm) since the sessions for Cohort 1 ended prior to data collection.

The Endline sample included 1,612 beneficiaries and 1,605 caregivers from 212 Safe Spaces, replicating the original Baseline intent. The Endline sample successfully matched 1,390 beneficiaries surveyed at the Midterm. While overall analysis included the entire sample to be representative of the programme, barriers and sub-group analyses comparing Baseline, Midterm and Endline values excludes communities not visited at Baseline.

At the beginning of Endline data collection, the data collection tablets used by the quantitative team had an IT issue and therefore 30 observations collected over the first 3 days on select tablets were lost and could not be recovered. While the Midterm exceeded the sample goal by 100 observations, the missing data left Western Area Urban 10 short of its target and Port Loko 7 short of its target. However, because the analysis design uses statistical weighting to ensure districts representativeness in the analysis, the results remain representative and geographically unbiased. Due to the weighting, results presented in the Baseline, Midterm and Endline Evaluations are comparable.

### **Qualitative Sampling**

The qualitative sampling for the Endline was purposeful and targeted each of the ten intervention districts of the EAGER project. A detailed sampling plan can be found in the Annex Section. The qualitative sampling was largely the same at the Endline as at Midterm with the following exceptions:

- Selection criteria was in place to ensure the respondents have been part of the project for at least year and part of Cohort 1. We did not specify that those who sat for interviews at Endline needed to be the same as at previous evaluation points. This was to allow for greater diversity of inputs but also recognising that a panel analysis approach was beyond the scope of the present qualitative design.
- Participant quotas were established similar to those used at Midterm for each community in order to reach sub-groups of focus (i.e. girls who are mothers, girls who are head of household, girls who are pregnant, and girls with disabilities). The Endline Evaluation strove to place even more focus on ensuring girls with disabilities, in particular, were part of the KIIs or FGDs at Endline. IRC provided lists of beneficiaries that included sub-group criteria in order to draw the sample. EAGER Project staff were asked to play a hands-on roll-on recruiting girls from the various sub-groups to participate in the FGDs and KIIs, with a focus on girls with disabilities.
- Like at Midterm, the Endline focused on FGDs and KIIs with girls of all different ages in the programme to ensure the sample represented the diverse ages of EAGER beneficiaries. The EAGER project staff were asked to assist in the recruitment of girls for the KIIs and FGDs to ensure this occurred.
- Interviews with District Staff focused solely on LS Officers given their critical role to the transition process. BLN Officers did not participate in the Endline.
- Facilitators were not included in the Endline Evaluation as their role was more limited for transition than for the Learning Phase.
- The Endline included KIIs with local government counsellors rather than district level government officials. Baseline and Midterm efforts included viewpoints from regional

MBSSE and Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs officials. At Midterm, one local councilor participated in an interview. The Endline only approached local councilors for their perspectives in order to deliberately investigate community-level interventions and opportunities for lasting change.

- KIIs with boys, rather than FGDs (as at Midterm) were held during the Endline Evaluation in order to maximise perspectives from a range of male peers across EAGER project districts. This approach reinforced EAGER's concern for upholding EAGER's commitment to Do No Harm and minimising the impact within a community while allowing for more breadth across EAGER's 10 districts. Discussions with boys focused especially on gender norms, participation in community dialogues, radio programming and community-level change.
- In addition to KIIs with key EAGER staff and national-level Government of Sierra Leone counterparts, KIIs with FCDO Country office staff were also held. These interviews addressed a gap in perspective felt at Midterm and provide useful insight on the role of Sierra Leonian government counterparts and opportunities for further strengthening.

EAGER project staff in the districts were asked to lead in the recruitment of evaluation participants after being notified in advance about the fieldwork dates and what types of beneficiaries would be interviewed. Attention was paid to the day in which communities were visited, taking into account known holidays, market days, harvest days, etc. in which the population of the community would be less available than usual.

### 3.1.6. Evaluation Ethics

Related to the safeguarding elements of the Endline Evaluation, the approach IMC used during the Midterm Evaluation served as the basis for our approach as there were limited problems with the established protocols, including COVID-19. The safeguarding materials were revised as needed to ensure they were comprehensive and reflected updated referral information.

COVID-19 created a new ethical dimension for the Midterm Evaluation and IMC used the same protocols at Endline. IMC ensured the COVID-19 safety protocols were explained in a clear manner to the field team, and that IMC's COVID-19 protocols followed the international best practices and guidance (i.e. WHO) related to safety. The COVID-19 case rate was monitored closely for any increased risks of COVID-19 in Sierra Leone before and during data collection.

COVID-19 has also caused increased violence against women and girls (VAWG), especially in the case of domestic violence<sup>15</sup>. EAGER's project data also indicated increased incidence for EAGER beneficiaries<sup>16</sup>. As with the Midterm, IMC revisited the reporting and referral protocols to ensure they are adequate and updated as needed to reflect the increase in VAWG over the past two years. IMC also sought guidance from both Dalan and EAGER to be sure that procedures were appropriate and contextualised as needed.

The field team were trained in the safeguarding and reporting or referral process during the training as well, and any new processes or information related to these protocols were highlighted. IRC safeguarding specialists led that session at the training and all field team members signed the Child Protection policy provided by IRC. The same consent process used at Midterm was also used during the Endline Evaluation including the addition of adding in consent related to the future

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<sup>15</sup> UN Women. (2021). Measuring the shadow pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19. <https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/Measuring-shadow-pandemic.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> EAGER. (2020). Annex IV. EAGER C-19 Survey with Girls and Mentors Summary of findings.pdf

storing, sharing and reuse of the data. All field team members were re-trained in the consent process prior to the field component.

The Endline tools and consent forms also went through an IRB process as was done with the Midterm Evaluation. IMC undertook the same steps as taken during the Midterm and Baseline, making adjustments to the tools and consent forms as needed based on IRB feedback, as well as submitting a letter confirming successful completion of the IRB to IRC.

### 3.1.7. COVID-19 Safety Protocols

The same COVID-19 safety protocols used at Midterm were also used at Endline for field work activities. The protocols were deemed sufficient at the Midterm and case rates were lower at Endline. The protocols used during the Endline training and data collection included:

- Temperatures were taken at the start of each day of the training upon arrival
- All team members wore masks during each day of the training
- At the training, all field staff signed a COVID-19 Protocols document acknowledging they were aware of the safety protocols and would adhere to them. They were also provided a copy to carry with them in the field.
- All field team members wore masks during each day of data collection
- Masks were provided to all respondents during qualitative and quantitative data collection
- Hand sanitisers were given to all field staff to use during data collection
- The maximum number of respondents in FGDs was limited to 8 people
- Interviews/FGDs/surveys were undertaken in places with good respiratory hygiene (good air circulation)
- Shaking hands was prohibited
- Sanitiser wipes were used to wipe down field staffs' equipment (pencils/laminated items/data collection devices) between respondents
- After data collection was completed each day, the field team were asked to return directly to their hotel/accommodation and remain there. They were asked to not visit any crowded bars/restaurants or venues in project communities
- Phone numbers/contact information was collected where possible from respondents other than the beneficiary girls for contact tracing
- In the event that a team member became ill with COVID-19 symptoms, they would be immediately quarantined at their home (they would be transported home and provided with proper PPE and quarantining instructions) and separated from other field team members and respondents. They would be tested and remained quarantined until results are known. If they tested positive, IMC and Dalan would pull all field team members they worked with in the field, quarantining them at their homes, and have them tested. For respondents, Dalan would have notified communities visited by the team for data collection and work with the CCU and EAGER partners to inform all respondents that they need to be tested.

Upon completion of data collection, there was no known cases of COVID-19 on the field team, with respondents or in the communities where data collection took place.

### 3.1.8. Virtual Training and Training-of-Trainers

Given the on-going COVID-19 pandemic during the Endline, international travel was not feasible. As such, the training of the field team (both qualitative and quantitative data collectors) took place virtually as was done during the Midterm Evaluation, led by the international evaluation team members. Virtual training worked well at Midterm so the evaluation team was confident to use this approach at the Endline as well. Relationships developed between the international evaluation team and Dalan Development Consultants (Dalan), the local data collection firm, greatly facilitated the distance learning context.

The training started with a 2-day Training of Trainers (ToT) which focused on training the field supervisors from the qualitative and quantitative teams on January 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> 2022. This was held at Dalan's office the week prior to the full-team training. The international team members prepared materials in advance, including interactive learning materials (presentations with voiceovers, quizzes), as well as print outs.

The ToT allowed international evaluation team members to focus on a small group of data collectors and training them on the tools specifically. At the end of the ToT session, supervisors took a short assessment survey to make sure they have acquired all the skills required. This included having them perform mock interviews and assessments with the international evaluation team members. Those who participated in the ToT were instrumental in the delivery of the full field team training the following week and they were equipped to answer questions in-person and support the international evaluation team members during the training. This approach worked well at the Midterm and was thus replicated at Endline.

After the ToT, the full team training took place the following week (the week of January 17<sup>th</sup> 2022) with three days of in-person training for the Quantitative team, and four days of in-person training for the Qualitative team which included piloting on the third day. The training was held at the same hotel in Freetown as Midterm. It started with an introduction to the Endline Evaluation purpose and objectives, COVID-19 protocols, and then a session led by IRC related to safeguarding and child protection, as well as an overview of the Transition Phase and Empowerment Plan specifically.

After the introductory sessions, the qualitative and quantitative teams separated for specialised training on sampling and their tools. The training was led by the international team members in a hybrid fashion. They prepared videos and presentations were used during the training when the international team members were not available (i.e. due the time difference, etc.), and they joined also in real time via Google Meet, Skype, and WhatsApp to present and respond to questions. Mock interviews and surveys took place as well. Each team was assigned a Coordinator from Dalan that ensured the technology was working, materials printed and that the teams were following the training materials. They also coordinated training activities with international team members on WhatsApp.

Since the qualitative tools were revised more extensively than the quantitative tools, the qualitative tools were piloted for one day (the third day) of the training in the same three communities in WAU as at Midterm (Moyeba, Red Pump, and Culvert). The last day of training was used to review any adjustments made to the qualitative data collection tools prior to starting data collection.

Dalan organised the logistics of the training, including renting a training facility that has internet and the technology needed for a remote training. They also facilitated meals/coffee/tea breaks and ensured the field team has printouts of the materials for the training, along with the tablets for the quantitative data collectors. Dalan also ensured that PPE was provided to the training participants for field work.

Below is a list of general topics that were addressed during the full team training. The agendas for the training closely resemble those from the Midterm Evaluation:

- *Introduction to the research:* Overview of the EAGER project specifically transition and Empowerment Plan (*led by IRC*), Purpose and Objective of the Endline Evaluation, Main research questions
- *Research ethics and code of conduct in communities (led by IRC):* Child protection and treatment of beneficiaries during interviews; safeguarding processes; informed consent/assent process and referrals.
- *COVID-19 safety protocols*
- *Fieldwork details:* Sampling strategy, overview of tools, overview of process for entering communities, quality assurance
- *Tool review:* Discussion of stakeholder types, review, clarification and revision of tools
- *Methods training:*
  - *For Qualitative:* Review of qualitative tools, focus on participatory methods, note taking and recording, process for contacting respondents and entering the field, assent/consent processes. Discussion on how to ensure girls with disabilities can participate and how interviewers can mitigate barriers to discussion. Team planning meetings: Groups meet together to identify appropriate terms in local languages, discuss roles, and plan logistics; and,
  - *For Quantitative:* Use of mobile devices data entry and troubleshooting; all quantitative tools; consent/assent process; process for selecting or finding respondents (primary beneficiary respondent list versus backup lists); and, developing translation guide for key terms in relevant local languages. How to properly assess and survey girls with disabilities and how to minimise barriers.
- *Key lessons learned from the Midterm Evaluation that were discussed with the full team:*
  - Entering communities and data collection schedule (communication with District Supervisors and then community Project Officers)
  - Procedures for providing daily updates on number of surveys completed
  - Procedures for providing updates on number of KIIs and FGDs completed
  - Reaffirming that no male quantitative data collectors are allowed in Safe Spaces even for data collection
  - Reaffirming that there are no time limits or language constraints when describing and explaining any aspect of the surveys
  - Expectations for quality assurance and spot checking by Dalan

- Strategies for working closely with EAGER staff in recruiting evaluation participants to ensure representation of beneficiaries from different sub-groups and decrease bias from other stakeholder types
- *Debriefing protocols, data quality control and remote support (safety/security and communications)*

### 3.1.9. Team size for Endline data collection

Data collection was undertaken over the following period:

- **Qualitative:** *Fieldwork: January 23<sup>rd</sup> to February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022; Virtual interviews: January 31<sup>st</sup>-March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022*
- **Quantitative:** January 23<sup>rd</sup> to February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022

There were 18 quantitative data collection sub-teams, which included one supervisor and one quantitative data collector working in pairs (a total of 36 quantitative data collectors) Each team had one male and one female on it. This was a smaller quantitative team than was used at Midterm given that there were less quantitative tools. Nearly 65% of the quantitative data collectors were also on the Baseline and Midterm data collection teams and therefore had familiarity with the data collection tools and EAGER programme, and only 5% had not been on the Baseline or Midterm evaluation teams. The quantitative data collectors were sorted into their sub-teams at the beginning of the training and work in their sub-teams during most of the small-group exercises.

The qualitative data collection field team had 12 qualitative data collectors that were broken up into 3 teams of 4 qualitative data collectors. Each sub-team had a field supervisor that participated in the ToT and helped the other team members during the training and in the field and conducted data in 3-4 districts. All three supervisors and nearly 55% of the qualitative data collectors were also on the Baseline and Midterm teams and only 2 team members were completely new to the EAGER evaluation process.

The virtual Key Informant Interviews were held by the international Team Leader over the Google Meet platform over several weeks. In total, 16 interviews took place with 20 individuals (14 females and 6 males). They included several interviews with the CCU and EAGER partners, National Government Officials, FCDO, and the Fund Manager. Support was provided by IRC in scheduling the interviews and providing contact information for informants.

### 3.1.10. Quality Assurance during Data Collection

Since the international evaluation team did not travel to Freetown, all quality assurance during data collection was done remotely by the Team Leader and Quantitative Specialist, and in-person via Coordinators at Dalan. While the Midterm used Validata to provide additional quality assurance, it was not used at Endline given that the OLA and EGMA was not part of the survey work. As such, the QA measures that were used included:

- **Group chats on WhatsApp:** this was extremely helpful at Midterm and allowed the international team members to answer questions and trouble shoot in real time while teams were in the field.
- **Daily reporting system related to surveys:** this was very useful at Midterm as the quantitative specialist noticed that some quantitative data collectors were skipping the

HoH survey during the first week. This reporting system was used again at Endline and the field team was better about providing daily updates as requested.

- **Pictures of KII and FGD data collection cover sheets daily and field notes:** at Midterm, the qualitative data collectors were expected to do so every day and they were also asked to again at Endline. Qualitative data collectors also uploaded audio files while in the field for immediate translation/transcription which resulted in some additional quality assurance.
- **Ongoing communication with Dalan Coordinators:** daily conversations took place with Dalan. This included daily check-ins and location checks of the field teams in order to mitigate challenges as they arose.
- **The daily report system for surveys is WhatsApp for the quantitative team:** specifically, each day the field supervisor is expected to send detailed survey completion information to the international Quantitative Specialist. Additional details can be found in Annex 2.
- **Weekly updates provided to IRC:** IMC provided weekly updates on the status of the data collection, flagging any challenges or issues that occurred, and what was accomplished that week. This ensured IMC was engaged in the data collection process and problem solving if there were issues.

Additionally, the quantitative data collectors upload data collected via surveys daily so the international Quantitative Specialist could review the data sets more regularly. The QA process related to this was as follows:

- 1) Dalan created a standard reporting format that captured all tools required for the evaluation, implemented and ensured the format is populated and sent to the WhatsApp platform on a daily basis indicating accomplished and non-accomplished tools.
- 2) The international team enforced real-time monitoring and feedback on the quality and completeness of the dataset on a daily basis (as much as possible).
- 3) Dalan tracked all data collected by tools on daily basis.
- 4) Dalan verified tracked data with dataset received by the server.

#### 3.1.11. Greater support in recruitment of Endline respondents to ensure focus on girls with disabilities in the sample

Despite intentions during the Midterm Evaluation to engage girls with disabilities during KIIs and FGDs, this proved challenging. While it was mentioned to the Project Officers, Mentors and Facilitators who led in recruiting respondents for the Midterm Evaluation that the evaluation team would like to ensure that girls with disabilities were included in evaluation activities, no girls with known disabilities participated as respondents in the KIIs and FGDs. While there were no girls with disabilities in the qualitative sample at Midterm, girls from other sub-groups were well represented (specifically, girls who are mothers, girls who are married, etc.).

Including girls with disabilities and other girls that are in the various sub-groups was again a priority at the Endline Evaluation time point. As such, the evaluation team spoke with IRC to discuss the programme staff's roles in recruiting girls with disabilities at the Endline for KIIs and FGDs. Having programme staff's support for recruiting was critical during the Endline given that the Learning Sessions for Cohort 1 had ended and the girls were only meeting at the Safe Spaces

for the Girls' Clubs, with inconsistent application across communities. The international evaluation Team Leader prepared sample lists of beneficiaries using the beneficiary registry provided by IRC for the programme staff to use to recruit for KIs and FGDs. Beneficiaries were prioritised for purposeful selection in order to ensure that all sub-groups were represented in the qualitative sample. Based on EAGER registry information, the 10 selected Safe Spaces only had 7 girls with known disabilities. Despite efforts, it was still impossible to include a high number of girls with disabilities as only one beneficiary<sup>17</sup> reported having a disability at Endline though this reporting conflicts with based on IRC registry data. Although at the point of data collection it was perceived that no girls with disabilities had been included in the sample, a post-facto cross-check of identities of girls who participated in qualitative activities with the Endline quantitative dataset revealed that four of the girls participating in Endline qualitative data collection activities have disabilities according to Washington Group questions. Recruitment may also reflect that while EAGER partners made efforts to identify and contact girls with disabilities that with the Learning Sessions finished, they may still have been more difficult to reach.

### 3.1.12. Desk Review Component at Endline

At Endline, given the scope and focus of this evaluation point, the evaluation team focused the desk review on the following items:

- Transition focused curriculum and programme guidance documents
- Mentors training materials
- Empowerment Plan templates and any supporting documents
- Sample Empowerment Plan that were photographed by qualitative data collectors during KIs and FGDs with girls
- Any strategy or guidance documents related to the concept of empowerment within the EAGER programme
- Draft sustainability plan
- Quarterly reports (narrative form – Word documents)
- Financial data for VfM assessment
- Data collected related to Empowerment Plan and attendance data for girls' check-ins with Mentors in December 2021
- Completed Community Action Plans
- Most recent Annual Report (submitted in September 2021) (narrative form – Word document)
- A sample of the girls' Empowerment Plan provided by girls who participate in the FGDs (Data collectors will take pictures of the Empowerment Plan at end of FGD session)
- The updated EAGER logframe

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<sup>17</sup> For the purposes of the report, the term “beneficiary” refers to the target beneficiaries of the EAGER project and it used interchangeably with the term “girls.” While EAGER has also evolved to recognise Mentors as an unintended beneficiary, the report refers to them consistently as “Mentors.”



- Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) materials as prepared by BBC Action Media
- Cash Distribution Exit Interview analysis
- Girls' Clubs Guidelines
- Other monitoring data collected by the programme

Document review occurred on an ongoing basis during all phases of evaluation, including during analysis to assure relevant inclusion in the final Endline report. A list of documents included in the desk review can be found in the Annex 2.

### 3.1.13. Earlier Data Collection Schedule Planning and Community Entry Protocols

During the Midterm Evaluation, field collection teams encountered some issues entering programme communities and ensuring that the girls were available for the surveys and other data collection activities. In some cases, the Project Officers were caught off guard by the field team which impacted the ability to perform data collection in a timely manner and also impacted obtaining important approvals of data collection from community leaders if necessary. As such, at Endline, IMC proposed solutions in order to overcome this issue and better facilitate community entry. This included:

- Earlier development of data collection schedules, obtaining updated staff contact list from IRC and EAGER partners before the training of field staff. Draft data collection schedules were shared with IRC for the EAGER team approval in the middle of November 2021 (2 months before field work started);
- IRC reached out to EAGER partners to have them inform the District Supervisors of the research, and a community letter was shared with them for dissemination;
- Once the data collection schedules were approved, Dalan reached out to the District Supervisors to let them know of the dates (and ensure there were no conflicts on the schedule), and then started contacting Project Officers;
- Field supervisors were trained to contact the Project Officer or Mentors in a community 2 days before arrival to the community;
- Field supervisors on each sub-team were required to provide daily updates to the international evaluation team members regarding which EAGER project staff they communicated with prior to arriving to the community for data collection; and,
- Dalan provided spot checks with teams so they could ensure they are running on schedule and if not, alerted the proper EAGER programme staff of the delay as well as IRC and IMC.

Community entry procedures was part of the ToT and reinforced during the full team training. Dalan played a more hands on role in terms of ensuring the teams stuck to their field schedules and that EAGER staff were alerted of any delays.

### 3.1.14. Value for Money Assessment

Assessing value for money (VfM) was not a component of the Baseline Evaluation however a VfM analysis was a component of the Midterm analysis and is also for this Endline Evaluation.

For the purposes of the Endline, the VfM analysis focused on direct beneficiaries' views on the importance and value of EAGER activities. Qualitative data captured VfM perspectives, specifically through KIIs and FGDs with beneficiary girls. Quantitative data collected from the various tools (Girls' Combined Survey and Caregiver/HOH survey) jointly contributed to the VfM analysis.

The Endline Evaluation's VfM analysis differed from the Midterm Evaluation in that it included cost per beneficiary of the EAGER programme. The VfM cost analysis was intended to follow a moderate touch approach<sup>18</sup> and paired project cost by activity data with stakeholder perspectives on component worth.

### 3.1.15. Summary of Limitations and mitigation strategies

The Endline Evaluation had several limitations that are discussed below. That said, the evaluation team believes that none of them impacted the quality of the data or the accurateness of the findings and recommendations. Additionally, the approach was still able to be implemented as intended, ensuring the evaluation was methodologically sound. Below we note the limitations and challenges for both qualitative and quantitative data collection, as well as the mitigation strategies ensuring that the challenge/limitation does not impact the quality of the data or findings and recommendations.

*Figure 2: Limitations during evaluation and Mitigation Strategies*

#	Limitation/Challenge	Mitigation Strategy
<b>Limitations for both Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collection</b>		
1	There were some difficulties recruiting girls and respondents during data collection since the Learning Sessions had ended.	IMC and CCU had discussed the difficulty of recruiting respondents after the programme's Learning Sessions ended during the inception phase of the Endline. The Project Officers and programme staff in the communities needed to be more engaged with the recruiting compared to the other evaluation points. Additionally, it was critical that the field teams followed the data collection schedule which was disseminated to District Supervisors and Project Officers well in advance of data collection so that they knew what days data collection would take place in their communities. If a delay occurred, or a respondent was unavailable for an interview, the field teams worked with the Programme Officers to schedule another time for the interview and for the field teams to return to the community.
2	Training of field staff held virtually due to COVID-19 and travel restrictions which made it more difficult to ensure the team was trained properly prior to data collection.	The international team members held a Training of Trainers prior to the full team being trained. This allowed the field supervisors to have a few extra days of training so they were well versed in the tools and sampling approach and could help answer questions during the full field training. This approach ensured there was one member on each data collection sub-team that had advanced training in the field. A coordinator from Dalan was appointed to each team to support during the full team training, managing the technology, printing of materials, and facilitating discussions during the training. The international team members also prepared extensively detailed training materials in a variety of formats.

<sup>18</sup> Shah, V. (2021). How to integrate Value for Money assessments within the External Evaluations of the GEC. Girls Education Challenge.

3	COVID-19 and ensuring the protection of all team members and respondents during training and data collection.	IMC, the CCU and Dalan all assessed the risk of COVID-19 and came up with protocols to be used by the field staff both at the training and in the field during data collection to protect themselves and respondents. Protocols were presented at the training session and all field staff were provided a protocols sheet to carry in the field as a reminder. To IMC's knowledge, there were no cases of COVID-19 during data collection. Please see the Section above discussing the COVID-19 protocols that were used.
4	Financial data of cost per activity per girl difficult to acquire for the VfM analysis.	At Endline, the FM requested a financial analysis be part of the VfM analysis in the report. Despite inception discussions as early as November 2021, the evaluation team did not receive all the information needed to provide the anticipated cost analysis per girl per activity before beginning the analysis phase. The requested information required preparation time by the Finance Team at IRC. The evaluation team instead relied upon general data on project component cost. life s explained that the provided figures did not include support costs, allowing for only a partial cost analysis. The evaluation team noted these constraints within the relevant analysis section of the report.
<b>Limitations for Quantitative Data Collection</b>		
1	Some phones were misconfigured for the first three days of data collection, making them unable to submit the data to servers. Teams in the three districts with a deficit of five or more surveys (Kailahun, Port Loko, and WAU) had at least one phone configuration problem. The data was not able to be retrieved from the phones.	The quantitative sample data goals by district were set to make the dataset as proportional as possible. These were helpful goals for teams, but are not critical for the evaluation (because statistical weighting is applied to the data). At the end of data collection, every district was within 10 observations of their original goal, which is sufficiently close to ensure it is representative. As such, despite this missing data, the quantitative data is sufficiently close to their goals for a representative analysis and there was no need to revisit the communities from which the data was lost.
	Due to a skip logic coding mistake, three questions in the Girls' Combined Survey were skipped for all respondents: There questions were: (1) if they could name methods for preventing pregnancy, (2) what the benefits of family planning are, and (3) where to obtain information on it.	While these questions were missed on the survey, questions about knowledge for preventing sexually transmitted infections, where to obtain information on STIs, questions on whether they are currently sexually active, questions on if they use contraceptive and STI preventative methods, and whether and how the programme affected their plans to have children were all still asked of respondents. This issue was noticed during the second week of data collection and even though there was remaining time in the field the Quantitative Specialist did not have the quantitative data collectors update their survey forms to fix the skip logic for the remaining respondents because it would require getting each quantitative data collector to update survey form and if they didn't all update, there could have been issues with losing the collected data like what happened during the first three days of data collection.
<b>Limitations for Qualitative Data Collection</b>		
1	Girls Empowerment Plan had been taken from them and were therefore not available for review by the evaluation team	In at least half (5) of the communities visited for qualitative data collection, girls have not been able to produce their Empowerment Plan as EAGER staff had collected them either at the end of Learning Sessions or after graduation. Qualitative data collectors were trained to ask the girls at KIIs and FGDs for permission to take photographs of their Empowerment Plan so that they could be included in the analysis component. In total only 11 plans were collected as EAGER staff had collected plans in some communities. (See Effectiveness 2 EQ

	below for more detail). This Empowerment Plan analysis of the 11 plans was triangulated with the data provided by IRC related to the Empowerment Plan and the first check-ins girls held with Mentors for the report.	
2	<p>Team members struggled to keep their mobile devices charged or were in remote areas with limited service during data collection. Therefore, the qualitative team did not provide the daily updates as requested during the training which made providing quality assurance difficult.</p>	<p>While the field supervisors were asked to provide daily updates on WhatsApp, several times these were not provided due to the team members' phones batteries not being charged or being out of range of service. While qualitative data collectors were provided with travel battery chargers, it was difficult to communicate with the team daily to provide quality assurance.</p>
3	<p>In some communities, it was not possible to meet with some key stakeholders. For instance, one Mentor was ill and after repeated tries, it was not possible to meet with a local councillor.</p>	<p>In cases where possible, the field supervisors coordinated with the Project Officers to revisit communities where stakeholders were unavailable for data collection. This solved many of the issues, for example, while it was not possible to interview male partners and a boy in WAU as planned in the data collection schedule, the qualitative data collectors returned after completing data collection in other communities to meet with the male partners. In cases where revisiting a community for data collection with a specific respondent was not possible, there were still other stakeholders from that same group which provided necessary perspectives. Analysis also took into account missing interviews as appropriate.</p>

## 4. Key Results

This Section presents the Outcome and Intermediate Outcome indicators as described in the logframe. A complete contextualisation of the Outcomes these indicators attempt to measure are located in the Key Findings Sections. The Findings Sections relevant to each indicator are noted below.

### Outcomes

#### 4.1.1. Transition

##### 1. Number and Percent of girls who completed and signed off their Empowerment Plan (disaggregated by age, disability, and additional learning needs)

A very high percentage of beneficiaries surveyed (91.9%) at Endline report to have signed off on their Empowerment Plan, and 99.0% stated that they received the cash distribution. Based on internal project reporting, 7,007 of 7,013 (99.9%) of beneficiaries' Empowerment Plan were completed satisfactorily and signed off by the LS Officer. Given that, according to internal monitoring, cash was not distributed to beneficiaries who had not finalised their plans, this result indicates either a misunderstanding of the question asked by quantitative data collectors or a discrepancy between girls' understanding of their Empowerment Plan and project reporting. (See the Effectiveness Section for a thorough discussion on the implementation of Empowerment Plan as well as monitoring issues).

*Table 2: Signing off of Empowerment Plan*

	Have you finalised your Empowerment Plan?			
	N	No	Yes	Don't Know
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1,612</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>91.9%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
<b>Beneficiaries with Disabilities: Overall</b>	131	10.0%	90.0%	0.0%
<b>Disability: Learning</b>	13	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
<b>Disability: Remembering</b>	12	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
<b>Disability: Concentrating</b>	13	7.1%	92.9%	0.0%
<b>Under 17</b>	349	5.3%	94.7%	0.0%
<b>17 to 18</b>	717	7.0%	92.5%	0.5%
<b>19 or more</b>	545	8.9%	89.5%	1.6%
Kono*	154	22.7%	71.4%	5.8%
Port Loko*	154	17.5%	82.5%	0.0%

Source: Girls' Combined Survey (n=1,612)

Note: Sub-groups of interest noted here. Additional sub-groups available in Annex. Asterisks denote significant differences in results between sub-group and the rest of the sample.

## 2. Number and Percent of girls who completed a least one step per goal at Check In One disaggregated by age, disability, and additional learning needs

At Empowerment Plan check-ins that have taken place since the end of Learning Sessions, Mentors, in discussion with girls, determine whether steps have been made towards each goal in beneficiary Empowerment Plan. Per EAGER’s monitoring data related to the Empowerment Plan, as of the first check-in 91.2 percent of beneficiaries had completed at least one step for each of the six empowerment goals. (See Relevance Question 1 for details of the Empowerment Plan design and Effectiveness Question 2 for a discussion of check-ins and project monitoring.)

*Table 3: Completion of Empowerment Plan Steps*

Empowerment Goal	Completed at least one step
Overall	91.2%
Literacy and Numeracy	97.8%
Life Skills	96.5%
Learning	97.4%
Household	97.2%
Community	91.7%
Financial	95.4%
Source: EAGER Programme Check-in one data (n=7,153)	

## 3. Number and Percent of girls who have completed their Empowerment Plan

As reported above, 91.9 percent of beneficiaries surveyed indicated finalising their Empowerment Plan, and 7,007 of 7,013 did so according to internal EAGER reporting. The table below presents Midterm results on Empowerment Plan indicators compared to Endline. Most notably, the percentage of beneficiaries surveyed who reported believing that they could achieve their financial goals increased from 87.0 percent at Midterm to 99.0 percent at Endline. (See Effectiveness Question 2 and Relevance Question 1 for a discussion of Empowerment Plan.)

Table 4: Process and Reasonableness of Empowerment Plan

Question	Desired Response	Midterm	Endline
Has your Mentor discussed Empowerment Plan with you?	Yes	96.0%	99.1%
Has your Facilitator helped you create your Plan?	Yes	87.4%	98.2%
Do you believe that you can achieve (your Financial) goal?	Agree a lot or Agree a little	87.0%	99.0%
Do you believe you can achieve the goals you [will] set for yourself in EAGER?	Agree a lot or Agree a little	99.2%	97.6%
Source: Girls' Combined Survey (n=1,612).			

#### 4.1.2. Sustainability

##### 1. Percent of radio listeners that foster more supportive attitudes towards girls' learning / education / entrepreneurship / participation in society (disaggregated by sex)

This indicator will be reported in a separate Endline Evaluation to be conducted for EAGER's Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) activities by the implementing partner, BBC Media Action, in November 2022. A thorough discussion of findings about current SBCC activities are discussed under the Effectiveness and Sustainability Evaluation Questions below. (See Effectiveness 2 for a discussion of the effects of Radio Programming.) Key results related to caregiver radio listening can be found among the Intermediate Outcomes.

##### 2. Percent of girl groups that decide to continue meeting and creating a conceptual Safe Space for each other after completing the learning programme

Seventy percent of surveyed respondents reported that there had been Girls' Clubs meetings in their community. The prevalence of these meetings, however, varies significantly between districts, up to nearly 50 percentage points. Results in WAU, Kambia, Port Loko, and Pujehun are all significantly lower than in other districts. Effectiveness Question 2 presents greater detail on Girls' Clubs below.

Table 5: Girls' Clubs Meetings Scheduled in Communities

In some communities, participants have had meetings with their fellow EAGER participants since Learning Sessions ended. These are called Girls' Clubs. Have there been any Girls' Clubs meetings scheduled in your community since the Learning Sessions ended?			
	No	Yes	Don't Know
Overall	29.6%	70.0%	0.4%
Beneficiaries with Disabilities	38.8%	60.4%	0.8%
Bo*	19.0%	81.0%	0.0%

<b>Kailahun*</b>	2.7%	97.3%	0.0%
<b>Kambia*</b>	56.8%	43.2%	0.0%
<b>Kenema</b>	19.4%	80.6%	0.0%
<b>Koinadugu*</b>	4.5%	95.5%	0.0%
<b>Kono*</b>	11.7%	88.3%	0.0%
<b>Port Loko*</b>	46.1%	53.2%	0.6%
<b>Pujehun*</b>	52.7%	46.7%	0.6%
<b>Tonkolili*</b>	12.7%	87.3%	0.0%
<b>WAU*</b>	73.7%	23.4%	2.9%

Note: Asterisks denote sub-groups with significantly different results from the rest of the sample.  
Source: Girls' Combined Survey (n=1,612)

### **3. Percent of community leaders, boys, and caregivers that report positive and empowering attitudes towards girls' education (disaggregated by sex)**

Caregiver support as defined by this indicator has a decline between Baseline and Midterm and made little improvement between Midterm and Endline. Interviews with community leaders and boys provided generally positive attitudes towards girls' education. The dramatic variation over time and between districts -- in addition to the indicator not being supported by qualitative data suggest that this indicator is not successfully capturing actual community support.

The indicator is calculated based on caregiver responses to when they thought it was acceptable for a girl to not attend traditional school. The more of the listed reasons a caregiver considered valid reasons, the lower their score is. A caregiver that considered none of the reasons included in the Index acceptable reasons to not attend school would have a composite score of 100 percent, and a caregiver that thought all the reasons were acceptable would have a composite score of 0 percent. Overall support declined significantly between Baseline and Midterm, and increased slightly (but not significantly) since Midterm. There is substantial variation between districts at each evaluation point and within each district over time.

One important aspect to note is that this question is asked to a beneficiary's caregiver at the time of each survey, which is subject to change. At Baseline, only 6.3 percent of beneficiaries were responsible for ensuring their day-to-day needs -- that is, were their own caregiver. At Endline, 79.7 percent beneficiaries were their own caregiver. This is unsurprising given the age targeted by EAGER. While this indicator has declined for people who both are their own caregivers and who have caregivers, beneficiaries who are their own caregivers have much less supportive attitudes than people who are caregivers and not beneficiaries.

Overall, this indicator suggests declining support for formal education by caregivers of beneficiaries, but this may not be indicative that community support for girls' empowerment is declining. First, it simply may indicate caregivers broadening their understanding of how girls may lead successful lives, as EAGER has provided a path to empowerment outside of traditional



education. Second, the indicator as defined does not reflect opinions of community members besides caregivers, who in qualitative interviews showed greater support for girls' education. Effectiveness Question 1 and Impact Question 1 provide deeper discussions of household and community support.

*Table 6: Caregivers Reporting Supportive Attitudes*

	Baseline	Midterm	Endline
<b>Sample Size (n=)</b>	2,038	2,120	1,602
<b>Overall</b>	<b>78.3%</b>	<b>69.3%</b>	<b>70.8%</b>
Bo	71.2%	78.6%	68.6%
Kailahun	81.3%	66.7%	46.1%
Kambia	91.9%	51.8%	49.1%
Kenema	59.7%	56.9%	69.8%
Koinadugu	93.2%	41.3%	84.9%
Kono	76.2%	70.3%	64.3%
Port Loko	89.4%	71.0%	71.0%
Pujehun	75.1%	96.3%	99.8%
Tonkolili	69.5%	83.1%	76.4%
WA Urban	74.1%	75.1%	78.6%
Beneficiary own Caregiver	78.3%	69.4%	69.1%
Caregiver different from beneficiary	87.9%	69.5%	77.4%
Source: Caregiver Survey (n=1,602)			

Overall, caregiver responses suggest that decreasing support of enrolment of girls in traditional school. Partners reported that beneficiaries faced greater demands on their time in the household during the COVID-19 pandemic: however, caregivers reported reasons unrelated to household duties as more acceptable reasons to not enrol. Ironically, by providing an avenue for girls' empowerment and earning potential apart from traditional school, it may be caregivers may not see traditional schools as the only path for older OOS adolescent girls who may already have responsibilities. Cultural norms are discussed under Relevance Question 1 and Sustainability Question 2. Community, household, and family support is discussed under Effectiveness Question 1. Status in community is discussed under Impact Question 1.

Table 7: Percent of caregivers who stated each reason was not an acceptable reason to not enrol in traditional school

Percent who stated each reason was <i>not</i> an acceptable reason to not enroll in traditional school			
	Baseline	Endline	Change
Sample Size	2,038	1,602	
The girl needs to work	81.9%	56.5%	-25.4%
The girl needs to help at home	78.9%	72.9%	-6.0%
The girl is married/is getting married	76.5%	65.0%	-11.5%
The girl is too old	86.8%	71.7%	-15.1%
The girl is unable to learn	82.1%	73.7%	-8.4%
Education is too costly	72.1%	64.2%	-7.9%
The girl is a mother	69.7%	61.5%	-8.2%
Source: Caregiver Survey (n=1,602)			

## Intermediate Outcomes

### 4.1.3. Empowerment Plan

#### 1. Percent of girls who report believing that they can achieve the goals they set for themselves

As was true at Baseline and Midterm, a very high percentage of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that they can achieve the goals they set for themselves. Though small, the increase in confidence since Baseline is statistically significant. This is in line with other results on participant confidence that suggest that even though they have finished Learning Sessions and are receiving less ongoing support and may be facing challenges, their self-confidence continues to increase in what appears to be a virtuous cycle. (For more discussion of Self-Confidence see Impact Question 1.)

Table 8: Perception of goal achievement

I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I set for myself.			
Response	Baseline	Midterm	Endline
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	9.9%	5.9%	3.5%
Neither Agree or Disagree	6.9%	2.6%	3.7%
Agree or Strongly Agree	81.1%	91.4%	92.6%
Don't Know	2.1%	0.0%	0.3%

Source: Girls' Combined Survey (n=1,612)

## 2. Percent who report that they have used skills learned in their Life Skills sessions

As with Midterm results, beneficiaries overwhelmingly agreed that they have used the Life Skills they have learned through EAGER Learning Sessions outside of the Safe Spaces. The percent respondents who percent agreed or strongly agreed increased from 90.2 percent at Midterm to 96.0 percent at Endline (Table 9). This is in line with qualitative findings from both evaluation timepoints. Overall, this suggests strong applicability of Life Skills learning, although not a significant change since Midterm. (For a more thorough discussion of Life Skills, see the Effectiveness Section, Question 2. For a discussion of applicability of sessions, see Relevance Question 1.)

Table 9: Use of Life Skills outside Safe Spaces

Have you used the skills you've learned in Life Skills sessions in life outside of the Learning/Safe Space?		
	Midterm (n=2,120)	Endline (n= 1,612)
Strongly Agree	42.8%	34.3%
Agree	47.4%	61.7%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	3.8%	2.1%
Disagree	4.9%	1.3%
Strongly Disagree	1.1%	0.5%
Source: Girls' Combined Survey (n=1,612)		

### 3. Percent of girls who report that they have used skills learned in their Literacy, Numeracy, and Financial Literacy sessions

Respondents agree that they have applied the specific skills they learned in the Learning Sessions in their lives. Responses are resoundingly positive and consistent across sub-groups. Unlike the Life Skills question above, these questions were added specifically for the Endline Evaluation, and have no Midterm comparisons. (For a discussion of applicability of sessions, see Relevance Question 1.)

Table 10: Application of skills

“I have applied ___ Skills I learned in the EAGER Programme in my life since the end of Learning Sessions	
Topic	Percent Agree or Strongly Agree
Literacy	98.7%
Mathematics	98.3%
Financial Literacy	98.4%

Source: Girls' Combined Survey (n=1,612)

### 4. Percent of girls who report making one or more new friends in their group since joining EAGER

As reported at Midterm, nearly all beneficiaries report having made a new friend. At Midterm, 95.2 percent of respondents said that they had made a new friend through EAGER and that they could trust to talk to if they were feeling sad or worried. The percent who responded yes to both questions fell to 93.7 percent since Midterm. The small decline is unsurprising given that respondents no longer have Learning Sessions to spend time together, but remains very high. The only significant difference among sub-groups is that older participants were more likely to have made good friends. While 96.0 percent of participants 19 or older at Endline “said yes to both questions, 90.3 percent of participants 16 or younger replied yes to both questions.

Table 11: Reporting making new friends

Question	Midterm	Endline
Have you made at least one new friend through the EAGER programme?	98.3%	96.9%
Have you made at least one friend that you could trust to talk to if you were feeling sad or worried?	95.8%	95.1%
Yes to Both Questions	95.2%	93.7%

Source: Girls' Combined Survey (n=1,612)

#### 4.1.4. Community Engagement

##### 1.Number of people reached (including frequency) through national programming<sup>19</sup>

Caregiver surveys asked respondents if they ever listen to the radio, and if they have ever listened to the EAGER radio show *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* (When a Girl Stands). As shown in Table 12, 35.0 percent of all caregivers responded that they have listened to the radio show: 1.5 percent of caregivers say that they had heard the show even though they never listen to radio, and 33.5 percent listen to the radio and have heard the show. Presumably, the 1.5 percent heard the EAGER radio show during community listening sessions when EAGER staff had played recordings of it. Of the 60.3 percent of caregivers that listen to the radio, the majority have listened to the show. The BBC Radio show and its effects are discussed under Effectiveness Question 2 and Sustainability Question 2.

*Table 12: Percentage of caregivers who have heard the show and listen to radio*

Have you ever listened to the radio show <i>Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap</i> ?	Response	Do you ever listen to the radio?		Overall
		Yes	No	
	Yes	33.5%	1.5%	35.0%
	No	26.8%	38.1%	65.0%
	Overall	60.3%	39.7%	

Source: Girls' Combined Survey (n=1,612)

##### 2.Percent of listeners who report actively engaging with topics discussed on radio show

Among radio listeners, 48.1 percent agree that the EAGER radio show helps them to understand girls' learning, skill development, and education opportunities. The primary reason this indicator is not higher is because people who report that they do not own a radio or listen to the radio. Among those who do listen to the show, the findings are much higher: 87.8 percent of caregivers who listen to the show agree that it helps them understand girls' issues. The primary drivers of this indicator are the percentage of listeners who listen to radio but not the EAGER show or who do not listen to the radio.

<sup>19</sup> Indicator refers specifically to the BBC radio show.

Table 13: Caregivers who agree that the EAGER radio show helps them to better understand girls' learning, etc.

Caregivers who agree that EAGER radio show helps them to better understand girls' learning, skills development and education opportunities				
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Don't Listen to Programme
Radio Listeners (N=972)	2.3%	4.7%	48.1%	44.9%
EAGER radio show listeners (N=576)	4.0%	8.1%	87.8%	N/A

**3. Percent of community members that foster more supportive attitudes towards girls' opportunities, education, and safety**

This indicator has been upgraded to inform Sustainability Outcome 3. See above.

**4. Percent of girls that report feeling safe and supported to make decisions and access opportunities**

Four new questions were asked during the Endline Evaluation to create the new indicator on whether beneficiaries felt safe and supported. They focus primarily on beneficiary abilities to make decisions. For each question, over 90 percent of respondents agreed "a lot" or "a little" that they felt safe and supported in each way. Effectiveness Question 1 includes a discussion of how household members are supporting and hindering factors. Relevance Question 1 discusses the relationship project effects have with cultural norms.

Table 14: Percent of girls that report feeling safe and supported to make decisions and access opportunities

Questions	Agree a lot	Agree a little
I feel safe and supported to make decisions about my education.	78.9%	18.6%
I feel safe and supported to make my own decisions about my life.	68.4%	26.5%
I feel safe and supported to access opportunities in my community.	73.0%	21.1%
I feel safe and supported to make decisions about my own safety in my community.	67.5%	26.9%

Source: Girls' Combined Survey (n=1,612)

Over half (56.2) percent of all beneficiaries stated that they agreed a lot with all four statements: only 11.8 percent disagreed with any of the statements. These results do vary significantly by district. In WAU, less than half of respondents (47.4%) did not agree with all of the statements. In Kono, less than three-fourths of respondents (72.7%) agreed with all of the statements. Beneficiary safety is discussed at greater length under Effectiveness Question 1.

Table 15: Percentage of Girls Feeling Safe and Supported

	Strongly Agree to All	Agree to All
<b>Overall</b>	<b>56.2%</b>	<b>89.2%</b>
Bo	76.5%	98.2%
Kailahun	71.4%	97.3%
Kambia	60.0%	94.8%
Kenema	82.9%	99.4%
Koinadugu	67.1%	100.0%
Kono	44.8%	72.7%
Port Loko	59.7%	96.8%
Pujehun	79.6%	99.4%
Tonkolili	9.3%	85.7%
WAU	6.6%	47.4%
Source: Girls' Combined Survey (n=1,612)		

#### 4.1.5. Government Support

- 1. National level representatives of MBSSE and MGCA participates in the Baseline, Midterm and Endline data validation**
- 2. Number of informative project coordination meetings held with the National level representatives of MBSSE and MGCA annual**

At the time of writing, EAGER had been in the process of reviewing these indicators. A dedicated systems-strengthening component was also not part of EAGER's original design. The FM indicated that emphasis on systems-strengthening has grown across the GEC LNGB portfolio during the implementation period and that EAGER's positive results suggest it has much to contribute to system-level change. Moreover, interviews with four national-level government officials demonstrate growing relationships with EAGER and governments' interest in the project. High levels of awareness of EAGER and interest in its developments were apparent during interviews with the Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education and the Minister of Gender and Children's Affairs (GCA). Both ministers expressed enthusiasm for EAGER and confirmed its relevance for target beneficiaries and government policies. While government officials indicated frequent contact with EAGER, the contact described was largely informal. The evaluation team did not receive documents detailing frequent meetings or reflection sessions though an in-person and high-level Learning Session is scheduled for May 2022. Prior to this anticipated event, interview data with officials indicate that project results have not been disseminated in a structured and regular way though EAGER staff indicate having shared results. Findings may indicate a desire from the government to benefit more regularly from formal gatherings. The GCA Minister indicated that she would welcome working with IRC to convene a cross-sectoral meeting with ministers and technical staff across government. In addition, although there is indication of some challenges, pursuing closer collaboration with the Direction

of Non-formal Education may afford opportunities to EAGER to influence non-formal education more largely in Sierra Leone. EAGER could also strengthen relationships with technical staff, including offering joint mission trips. (See Sustainability 2 EQ below for more discussion of EAGER's systems-level influence.)

## 5. Key findings

### Relevance

#### 5.1.1. Relevance Question 1. To what extent are the project's objectives and design responsive to the needs and goals of beneficiaries as girls end the Learning Phase and enter into the Transition Phase? And to the needs of the diverse sub-groups served by the project?

The focus of the Endline Evaluation is the Transition Phase of the EAGER project. The Transition Phase follows the previous Learning Phase<sup>20</sup> and lasts eight months<sup>21</sup>. Cohort 1 beneficiaries finished the Learning Phase upon graduation in July 2021. The Transition Phase will continue until March 2022, though beneficiaries are encouraged to set goals that they can complete within one year (i.e., by July 2022). The objectives and structure of the Transition Phase underwent a redesign between the Baseline and Midterm Evaluation points. EAGER's approach to empowerment is holistic and multidimensional, "in which girls themselves envision what they want this to be across the four categories of learning, household, community, and financial empowerment."<sup>22</sup> Key stakeholders interviewed at Endline, including EAGER Leadership, but also the FM representative and FCDO Country Office officials, reiterated observations noted in the Midterm Evaluation report of how EAGER's transition approach is novel within the Girls Education Challenge portfolio. The ambitious and individualised nature of the transition design and its focus on empowerment rather than vocational training make it stand out from other girls' education projects and foster interest in its evolution and results.

Several key milestones and timepoints characterise beneficiaries' transition experience as depicted in the figure below. Beneficiaries began to develop their empowerment goals in line with empowerment domains and articulate their vision for financial goals in the form of a written Empowerment Plan at the end of the Learning Phase. They continued to work with Mentors to expand upon their learning, household, and community goals leading up to a community-level graduation event that also included the distribution of Empowerment Packages. A month later, the project delivered a conditional cash transfer to each beneficiary with an approved Empowerment Plan. Lastly, the project planned for two check-in meetings between EAGER Mentors and beneficiaries to take place in December 2021 and March 2022.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The Learning Phase curriculum focused on Literacy, Numeracy, Life Skills and Financial Literacy. Due to COVID-19 upheavals, the learning programme underwent extensive restructuring and adaptations and took place over an extended timeframe between January 2020 and July 2021.

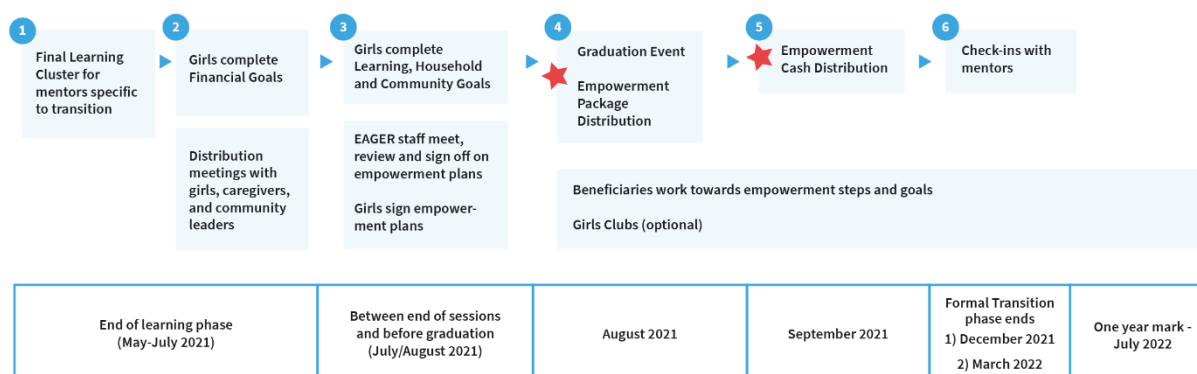
<sup>21</sup> The eight months is composed of four months before the first check-in after sign off of the Empowerment Plan and cash distributions and then another 4 months between check-in 1 and check-in 2.

<sup>22</sup> EAGER. (n.d.). EAGER Transition Design – an Overview, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> This Section and the diagram below it draw extensively from project documents including the Year 3 Annual Report, the Q13 Quarterly Report and the Transition flowchart document.



Figure 3: Transition Phase design



In order to address relevance, this section first describes beneficiaries’ needs and key characteristics and then explores in detail how the project largely meets many of their needs. A final section highlights areas for continued attention.

### Beneficiaries’ identified needs

As indicated in the project overview above, EAGER targets out-of-school girls who experience multiple forms of marginalisation. Many have experienced or are at risk for physical violence, and some may have experienced sexual violence. Sierra Leone also has one of the world’s highest rates of teenage pregnancy. Making reference to Baseline results<sup>2425</sup>, the Midterm Evaluation report identified girls’ identities and needs as follows<sup>26</sup>:

- High prevalence of girls married and with children with high burdens of responsibility as caregivers (and limited time to attend sessions).
- Majority of out-of-school girls had never attended school or dropped out very early, making transition back to school difficult.
- Literacy and Numeracy skills were very low. The majority of girls were interested in attaining Literacy and Numeracy skills that they would be able to use in everyday life and to pursue / enhance livelihood strategies; few were interested in transitioning back to formal education.
- Girls had high levels of anxiety and depression, hostile attribution bias, and moderate levels of emotion dysregulation.

<sup>24</sup> International Rescue Committee. (2020). EAGER Baseline Research Policy Brief: Contextual Background and Learning Needs of Out-of-school Adolescent Girls in Sierra Leone.

<sup>25</sup> Sarr, K. G., Trembley, A., Heaner, G. & Mull, A. C. (2020). 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). IMC Worldwide.

<sup>26</sup> Sarr, K. G., Trembley, A., Heaner, G. & Mull, A. C. (2021). Midterm Evaluation Report Midterm Evaluation of the Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER) project within the Girls’ Education Challenge (GEC) - Leave No Girl Behind project (LNGB). IMC Worldwide.

- Community-based Mentors had limited skills in Literacy themselves, along with limited ability in teaching / facilitating, suggesting that Mentors may have difficulties meeting the needs of girls.
- Community-level support for girls' education and empowerment tended to be superficial as barriers persisted for many girls because some male partners indicated not wanting their wives or girlfriends to be educated beyond their level or to make her own decisions.

External quantitative data from Baseline, Midterm and Endline timepoints clearly reflect EAGER's targeting, as indicated in the table below. Since the beginning of the project, EAGER participants have included girls who work or have sources of income, are married, and have children. As beneficiaries have aged and ended Learning Sessions, the percentage in each of these groups has increased. At the same time, the percentage of participants who qualify as having disabilities using the Washington Group questions has declined over time. While the programme made accommodations for some disabilities, EAGER Leadership also made clear throughout that many more significant accommodations were not possible. It cannot be said whether the decline is caused by attrition from the programme, changes in self-reporting disability, or accommodations. The decline applies for both beneficiaries who report anxiety or depression as their only disability and beneficiaries who have a disability other than anxiety or depression.

At each evaluation point, the Washington Group questions on disability were asked of each beneficiary: they include questions such as "Compared with children of the same age do you have difficulty walking 100 meters?" and "Do you have difficulty accepting changes in your routine?" Per FM direction, beneficiaries who respond that they have a great deal of difficulty or cannot do something at all are classified as having a disability. At each evaluation point, a smaller percentage of the sample has met that criteria. However, this is not likely due to attrition: by matching Baseline, Midterm, and Endline Evaluation data into a single dataset, those with a disability at Baseline or Midterm did not attrit from later evaluation points at a higher rate than those without. As can be seen in Annex Table 2.4, disabilities related to seeing, hearing, and walking have not declined meaningfully. Disabilities in cognitive and psychosocial domains have.

*Table 16: EAGER Target populations reflected in sample*

	Baseline	Midterm	Endline
<b>Has Disability</b>	14.0%	10.9%	8.3%
<b>Anxiety or Depression only</b>	8.2%	6.4%	5.1%
<b>Disability Other than Anxiety or Depression Only</b>	5.8%	5.3%	3.2%
<b>Own Caregiver</b>	6.3%	13.7%	79.8%
<b>Works</b>	38.8%	65.6%	85.7%
<b>Has Children</b>	57.5%	64.3%	67.9%
<b>Married</b>	44.1%	43.2%	53.5%
<b>Average Age</b>	15.8 years	16.8 years	17.8 years
Sample Size (Girls' Combined Surveys)	2,073	2,173	1,612

What does shift dramatically is who qualifies as having a disability using this method. Of those who participated in Baseline and the Endline, 130 qualified as having a disability at Baseline. Of those 130, only 13 qualified as having a disability at Endline based on their responses. Similarly,

of the 149 respondents who qualified as having a disability at Midterm and participated in the Endline, only 18 qualified as having a disability at Endline based on their responses.

It is important to conceptualise disability as done by the question designers, the Washington Group. They define disability as an “an outcome of the interaction between a person with a functional limitation and an unaccommodating environment.” Disability is not defined strictly by a person but the adaptations and accommodations that can be made for them. In many cases, disabilities can cease once accommodations can be made. Accommodations can range from eyeglasses and walkers, assistive hearing technology, or training and rehabilitation such as physical therapy or learning to read lips or sign.

It is also important to note that the Washington Group questions were, by design, intended to capture that disability is not a binary: the questions ask *to what degree* a respondent has difficulty completing each activity, to recognise that disabilities have gradations of how much they affect a person’s life. However, to simplify reporting, the FM’s rules for determining disability compress these into a binary: those with “some difficulty” with an action do not qualify as having a disability, but those with “A lot of difficulty” do. Preliminary reviews of data suggest some cases of difficulty were from respondents falling on one side or the other of this range.

It is critical to appreciate that at every evaluation point the majority of beneficiaries with a disability were counted due to having daily feelings of anxiety or depression, which can be affected through an accommodating environment: many of which accommodations were targeted by EAGER, by building self-confidence, skills to manage stress and improve communication and conflict resolution. While anxiety and depression incidence did not decline any faster than other disabilities since Baseline, EAGER likely had a positive effect of providing protective factors against anxiety and depression. As a member of EAGER Leadership indicated, it may also be possible that girls have learned improved stress management through Learning Sessions and that levels of anxiety or depression have decreased as a result. (See the Midterm Evaluation Report for a more thorough explanation.)

In sum, the variation in disability levels and types should not be seen as a negative consequence of the project, but likely a natural change in response over the course of the project.

Having reviewed key characteristics and needs of EAGER beneficiaries, we next turn to how EAGER’s approach meets needs as well as areas for further improvement. Findings rely largely upon qualitative data.

### **Meeting girls’ needs**

This Section presents Endline findings on EAGER’s relevance to its target population.

#### **Customised and realistic goal setting and planning**

A key component of EAGER’s relevance comes from the production of customised Empowerment Plan for girls. The Empowerment Plan is a five-page document that beneficiaries complete followed by two pages of worksheets related to check-ins with Mentors. Beneficiaries develop these plans with guidance from EAGER Facilitators and Mentors. The Facilitators lead and sign off the section related to financial goals while Mentors support girls on all other sections. The Year 3 Annual Report describes the approach to the plans as individual, “whereby different abilities, interests, age and marginalisation factors are considered. Plans will be **SMART and trackable**

with clear criteria for assessment and success.”<sup>27</sup> The figure below details the components that make up the Empowerment Plan.

*Figure 4: Empowerment Plan Structure*

- The beneficiaries' Section of the Empowerment Plan has the following Sections:
- Identification of learning goals for a) Literacy and Numeracy, b) Life Skills, and, c) continued learning, and three related steps for each goal
  - Identification of household goal and three related steps
  - Identification of community goals and three related steps
  - Details of financial goal:
    - Plans for use of money, justification
    - Identification of assets possessed (skills, knowledge, experience, tools or resources, people)
    - Details of collaborators (if relevant) and sources of funding
    - 5 steps to reach financial goals and associated timeline
    - Budget
    - Market survey results
  - Signatures to approve Empowerment Plan from
    - Beneficiary
    - EAGER support team (Mentor, Facilitator, LS Officer)
    - Family (caregiver, husband and/or partner) (if applicable)

While the Effectiveness Section below explores *how* beneficiaries completed the plan and its utility, here we note the relevance of the Empowerment Plan approach to EAGER beneficiaries. Goal-setting was specified to be appropriate for girls in 39 interviews (and in no interviews was it said to be inappropriate) with local councillors, Mentors, girls, and community leaders. Among those, in 12 interviews (6 with girls), participants articulated that a particularly important aspect of EAGER was that it encouraged girls toward realistic goal-setting and detailed planning, accounting for the various enabling and limiting factors in their lives, to reach those goals. One girl clearly articulated how novel it was to think in terms of planning and goals:

*“Me, I can’t lie, I have not ever sit-down to set up a goal for myself because I never knew how important it was for girls’ development, that is why I appreciate this programme because it has opened up my eyes to that....When we were in class, they asked the Mentors to work with us to identify our various plans and some will explain all what they want and they will tell us the importance of such plans that we reveal and leave us to decide on the specific one because some of us will have so many in our mind to write on the plan but the specific one was what they give the cash to do. So, that approach was the most exciting part of the entire programme and it benefitted every other person on the programme...I like everything about the process because for instance when we finished the programme, they came with this idea of the Empowerment Plan and setting a goal but none of had a knowledge about it but the teachers trained us, explained to us and even took their time to teach us how do it.” (Girls FGD, Kailahun)*

<sup>27</sup> EAGER LNGB Annual Project Report (APR) Y3. (July 2021), p. 7. (bolding in original)

Another girl said,

*“EAGER showed us how to develop our plan properly because before EAGER, I just have my plan that this is what I plan to do, but EAGER taught us about so many things and how to work towards achieving your plan. Yes, it works for me.” (Girl KII, Kambia)*

Often, beneficiaries interviewed provided examples of how EAGER’s emphasis on goal-setting had changed the way they thought about their futures:

*“The plan that I had before was to go into marriage if a man asked for my hand in marriage because I was not doing anything, but a friend tells me about the EAGER programme which change everything, and I decide to do the tailoring and with that I can take care of myself and support my family.” (Girl KII, WAU)*

Another girl reflected on being surprised to learn through EAGER that she could still be successful even if she had not had the opportunity to attend formal education:

*“I learnt that going to school is not the only surest way to success but even though you did not go to formal school, but still you can make a difference in society and I am able to do what I do now because of EAGER programme.” (Girls FGD, Kono)*

Mentors and Life Skills (LS) Officers explained how they worked with beneficiaries both as a group and one-on-one, to come up with realistic plans and goals. In this manner, the project design allowed for flexibility and comprehensive support.

*“So, most of those who wrote that they want to go to school we see that they were fit to go back to school and those who want to do business<sup>28</sup> we guide them because these are people who have left school for a very long time and some don’t even know how to do proper business transaction. So, we took our time to decide who can go to school and who should continue business that will help her out.” (LS Officer KII, Bo)*

Such a quote demonstrates the relevance of the project design for out-of-school girls, the project targets. There was also agreement from caregivers, partners, and other community members that EAGER met girls’ specific needs.

*“As I earlier mentioned that the Life Skills, Numeracy skills and Business skills they have acquired from the EAGER sessions which they are currently putting to practice will certainly be useful to them to achieve their goals. All they need was the basic and they have acquired that from EAGER sessions, now they have to build on it to achieve their goals and they have start working on it. Yes of course, this approach can benefit all types of girls be it pregnant, suckling mother and the disabled, it will benefit all of them. To me, these set of people are the real beneficiaries, as long as you are part of these categories of people you deserve help to achieve your goals. The programme is there to tell*

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<sup>28</sup> In the context of EAGER, “business” is a broad term that encompasses small-scale trading, services and production. See the Effectiveness 2 Question below for more descriptions of EAGER beneficiaries’ business activities at Endline.

*these categories of people that all is not lost, you can still make it in life hence there is hope.” (Local Councilor KII, Kailahun)*

### Relevance of conditional cash grants and Empowerment Packages

EAGER’s concept and approach to the conditional cash transfer underwent significant changes from the original project proposal and, as finally implemented, aimed to provide girls with “experience of making their own financial decisions based on their Empowerment Plan.”<sup>29</sup> Each beneficiary who completed her Empowerment Plan received LE 300,000. This sum is just under the cost of a 50-kilogram bag of rice in Sierra Leone<sup>30</sup>. The project reached this amount taking into account local costs and also being attentive to girls’ safety and thus avoiding risks that could arise with larger sums. Girls were also advised to spend the money quickly in order to minimise risk. As indicated in the Midterm Evaluation Report, the project also felt strongly that allowing each girl to benefit from the cash rather than a select few girls with outstanding business plans better aligned with the project’s ethos and inclusive approach. This new design also acknowledged the struggles that many of the beneficiaries continue to have with writing. As the Effectiveness Section of this report outlines, the majority of EAGER beneficiaries seem to have made constructive use of the money distributed though the amount of money also received substantial criticism. (See the Effectiveness 2 EQ below for further discussion.)

In addition to cash transfers, the project provided each girl with an “Empowerment Package” that consisted of a drinking bucket, a cloth wrap (locally known as *lappa*), a solar light and a wooden cashbox with lock. These items were to complement money received and present an in-kind transfer that would reduce risk to girls while supplying them with materials hard to access in more remote areas of Sierra Leone<sup>31</sup>. EAGER Leadership interviewed underscored a series of feedback procedures that occurred in order to identify items that would be relevant and useful for beneficiaries (see Effectiveness for more details).

### Relevance of foundational skills for pursuing Empowerment Plan

Clearly, the acquisition of foundational skills (basic Literacy; Numeracy; Life Skills) through the EAGER Learning Sessions was also critical and provided relevant supplements to whatever goal a girl set for herself. Girls were not only nominally appreciative of having these skills, but were able to provide numerous specific examples of how they were using them both in the pursuit of their Empowerment Plan:

*“Yes, the programme has given me a big help because before now I don’t know how to sell, how to give change, how to write, how to read, how to count 1, 2, 3 I on to 100 but now I know to write, how to count and how to read A, B, C, D so now it has help me big.” (Girls KII, Kambia)*

Having the confidence to pursue an Empowerment Plan was also essential for many girls; strengthened Literacy, Numeracy, and Life Skills helped to give them this confidence. The connection between acquisition of hard and soft skills for EAGER beneficiaries with girls’ pursuit of their Empowerment Plan and changes in confidence are the focus of later Effectiveness and Impact Evaluation Questions.

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<sup>29</sup> EAGER LNGB Annual Project Report (APR) Y3. (July 2021), p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> In discussion with EAGER Leadership, a staff indicated that the amount had been pegged to a 50-kilogram bag of rice but that market prices had then shifted.

<sup>31</sup> EAGER LNGB Annual Project Report (APR) Y3. (July 2021).

## A measured and relevant approach to gender norms change

As indicated within the Project Theory of Change section above, EAGER activities aim to transform the harmful attitudes and gender norms that limit girls' education and income generating opportunities and mobilise communities to take action to remove the barriers that limit girls' access to education, good health, safety, inclusion, and overall wellbeing. Midterm findings as well as ongoing discussions with project members indicate the project's awareness that changes in gender require substantial time and indicate that, in practice, the project takes a more measured approach. In accordance with do no harm principles, the transition design recognises the need to mitigate potential risks girls may face if too outwardly rejecting normative expectations. This guiding document indicates how EAGER will work with girls to create Empowerment Plan that challenge gender norms but also encourage them to think critically about "whether they can safely step beyond the restrictions and assumptions about the activities that girls can and should do in their homes and communities."<sup>32</sup>

Importantly, Endline findings demonstrate that EAGER meets girls' needs within the normative cultural boundaries in which they live, most significantly in supporting girls to make a plan that accommodated the culturally gendered dimensions of her duties as woman. Girls were able to learn, become empowered to engage in their own business or vocation, earn their own money, and continue to maintain their role as a mother, wife, or daughter with domestic duties. As is detailed in the Effectiveness Section, many partners and families were particularly impressed at how the girls maintained or improved their domestic roles while simultaneously pursuing her own empowerment goals.

*"There was no cause for alarm or trouble at their homes because of this program." (Mentor KII, Kenema)*

At the same time, girls noted that EAGER allowed space to break free of some of the barriers that may have been restricting their independence or power in their daily lives:

*"Why I said it's important, because in the future, when I'll be doing my business and earning my money, a man would not see me as a liability and belittle me." (Girls KII, Bo)*

While a more detailed exploration of gender norms and possible implications that EAGER may have for these norms is the subject of the later Sustainability Section, some consideration of the complexity of gender roles and potential related changes require attention in this early section in order to properly frame findings throughout the Evaluation Report. The Context Section (Section 2) above pointed to how many girls within the target group in Sierra Leone may be at risk of violence within the home. Notably, the Midterm Evaluation Report found that beneficiaries demonstrated greater awareness for how they can successfully participate and negotiate within their household unit, at times, feeling a greater purpose, increased decision-making power and more control over their time. The Midterm Report also identified how beneficiaries and other stakeholders interviewed frequently used the words "respect" and "obey" when speaking about positive changes and improvements in girls' attitudes and behaviours towards caregivers and male partners.

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<sup>32</sup> EAGER. (n.d.). EAGER Transition Design – an Overview, p. 1.

Discussions with cultural informants indicated that “obey” and “respect” may translate similar attitudes from local languages concerning upholding cultural norms. Some beneficiaries also indicate a desire for their partners and others in the community to show respect for them, indicating that respect is a mutually appreciated characteristic of positive relationships.

### Relevance for key sub-groups

As already mentioned, a key aspect of EAGER’s relevance is in its emphasis on producing customised Empowerment Plan for girls that take into account their many and various enabling and limiting factors, making the plan more realistic. This customisation is central to the Transition Phase design. Accordingly, Endline Evaluation data reveal some examples of girls with particular needs whose Empowerment Plan have been customised to account for those needs. One girl explained how she was soon to give birth when she received the money, but was able to use the cash box to hold onto the money to pursue her Empowerment Plan:

*“When they brought the money, I was pregnant by then and I was unable to sell [because in our community if you have a business you have to carry it] ... so I placed it in safe keeping...After I given birth, it took me some time before I started selling.” (Girls KII, Port Loko)*

Other participants provided examples not of their own experiences, but of those they could imagine being acceptable for EAGER girls with certain disabilities:

*“Let’s say for those who are disabled, you can have your saloon where do your hair dressing and make your money without moving ups and down.” (Community Leader KII, Kailahun)*

At the same time, qualitative interviews also revealed a few examples of girls explaining how they were unable to pursue their Empowerment Plan because of challenges with childcare, pregnancy and childbirth, or illness (either themselves or a family member). There were clearly some challenges in Empowerment Plan being feasible. We further discuss these barriers below in the Effectiveness Section.

Relevance of the EAGER objectives and design for girls with disabilities is harder to assess. The FM representative<sup>33</sup> interviewed expressed support and interest for EAGER’s approach of using Washington Questions to identify girls with disabilities as this tool is more likely to identify girls with invisible disabilities, i.e., those with psychosocial or cognitive impairments. As the FM representative noted,

*“The project has done a good job in pivoting towards those girls – with the stress management, psychosocial work and recognising that some of the Mentors may have psychosocial impairments as well. The project has responded really well to that.” (Fund Manager representative, KII)*

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<sup>33</sup> The Fund Manager shared her personal views and not necessarily those of the Fund Manager entity.



While EAGER trained Mentors and LS Officers to work with girls with disabilities to prepare the Empowerment Plan (for example, helping them to write), one stakeholder's interview responses noted specifically that accommodations in preparing the Empowerment Plan were not made for girls with certain types of disabilities. As a result, some girls were left out, as one LS Officer (Kambia) reported,

*“There is a child here who is partially deaf he can talk but not clearly. [So] we had to use all our skill to fill in that Empowerment Plan, as it was not easy to fill it in... good thing is that she was able to write and because she was able to write we were able to understand what she is trying to say... The tool [Empowerment Plan] did not cater for those with disability... there are disabled children and we [do] not want them left out ...[those who are] deaf, blind. How will they be able to fill their Empowerment Plan? So, we want the tool to cater also for those children.”*

At the same time, one Mentor noted the challenge in accommodating girls with certain disabilities through the Empowerment Plan phase. As part of the EAGER design, support for girls, including those with disabilities, was not to extend into the transition period. The Mentor noted that while she was able to accommodate a girl with a disability in her session and complete an Empowerment Plan, she wasn't certain that the girl had progressed sufficiently in the session to achieve her empowerment goals:

*“So, the programme approach is very useful to all the girls. EAGER programme did not discriminate anyone, even if you are blind, deaf and dumb, disable everyone is include with no barrier, hence you are sane, so the programme caters for all the girls... I have one girl, whose name is [redacted], that girl even when the time for interview comes, for her to talk is a huge problem, they should have not taken her to the programme, but because the programme came for all the girls, irrespective of the girl situation; that is why she was taken. That was her problem. She wasn't able to even read and write... Yes, I was finding it very difficult with her... What I want EAGER to do for such girls that were unable to catch up during the program, we should not forget about them, if she was in the programme, she couldn't gain anything, if the programme is now done and we forget about that girl, she will never catch up, even her Empowerment Plan she not able to follow it. I will like EAGER, even they money that they disbursed to them, they should continue to do follow on them. We the Mentors should monitors these girls to see how they are moving. Let EAGER came and help us the Mentors in monitoring these girls.” (Mentor KII, Bo)*

Still, there are some examples in which Mentors share situations in which they were able to work with girls with disabilities.

*“Yes, the Empowerment Plan approach was well-suited to the needs and special circumstances of girls within the community. No, it wasn't equally useful for all the girls in the group because, some are very slow to learn whilst others are fast. Yes, it was useful for girls with disabilities although it was challenging at the initial stage.” (Mentor KII, Kailahun)*

The relevance of EAGER for girls with disabilities is also challenging to assess given the relatively few girls with disabilities enrolled into EAGER and thus the qualitative sample struggling to identify specific examples of EAGER's work with such girls. When asked specifically about girls with disabilities in the interviews, in 20 of 30 the Mentors or LS Officers did not provide any specific comment. LS Officers and Mentors in three communities said outright that they did not work with any girls with disabilities.

Using the Washington Group questions, the quantitative surveys identified 8.3 percent of girls as having at least one disability (including cognitive, socio-emotional, mental, and physical disabilities). As with previous evaluation points, a large proportion (5.2 percent of all respondents) meet the criteria of a disability due to anxiety and/or depression and no other disability. Project documents suggest a lower proportion of girls with disabilities. The EAGER project enrolment data identify 3.5 percent of girls as having a disability at the time of enrolment; monitoring data from the Empowerment Plan assessment and sign off process report that 3.2 percent of beneficiaries in Cohort 1 had a disability. Identification from internal reporting rests largely on visible disabilities. Within the 10 districts identified for qualitative data collection, only seven girls out of 244 registered are identified as having a disability. They were spread across 4 of the 10 districts. Despite targeted recruitment efforts, only 1 beneficiary participating in the qualitative evaluation sample had a disability.

#### **Areas to improve relevance**

While data reveal high levels of relevance of the EAGER objectives and design to many beneficiaries' needs, findings also indicate areas where relevance could be further improved. As detailed in Effectiveness Question 2 below, girls and other stakeholders highlighted a number of aspects of EAGER that did not fully meet their needs. The most common unmet needs included:

**Vocational training:** Better access to vocational training was requested in 25 interviews (two girls and 23 others, nearly all male partners and Mentors) - more often others alluded to this). In some cases, respondents mentioned that there was no centre near them to continue skills training. Respondents also did not indicate having access to or knowledge of apprenticeship-style vocational learning opportunities. With respect to these perceived limited options, respondents suggested that the training be a part of EAGER directly. This reflects, to some extent, a disconnect between the goals set by some girls, and what was realistic in their context. For example, if a girl had 'tailoring' on her Empowerment Plan, it would only have been realistic with a clear idea as to where that skill would be learnt. Within the qualitative sample, girls reported access to training in tailoring in Bo and the WAU districts, but girls were without access in the other 8 districts. As such, the unmet need here is less around the actual offering of vocation, but rather the appropriateness of plans developed by some beneficiaries.

**Increased amount of cash transfer:** Access to more money was requested by 20 of 30 interviews with girls. At the same time, girls were demonstrably able to pursue their Empowerment Plan with the amount provided to them. A request for more money is not surprising given economic realities within targeted communities, in particular given that there had been inflation and associated cost increases globally and in Sierra Leone at the time of research. At the same time, there are some indications of the amount not being sufficient for some, or requiring a re-structuring of the plans. This suggests the need to further refine Empowerment Plan to be realistic given the amount of money to be received (see Effectiveness 2 for more discussion on the amount of cash transfer).

**Desire for in-depth learning and guidance:** Some stakeholders indicated that more support from EAGER was necessary to be successful in the long-term. A male partner for instance, noted that he had expected his wife to benefit from follow-up coaching to support her business efforts:

*“There was also the promise of monitoring their businesses but since they started the businesses, they had not been monitored. To me, I would want them to be doing follow up visits to see how the businesses are going. Provide continued guide on how to improve the business.” (Male partner KII, Bo)*

However, such a promise was not part of the programme design, nor was such a promise intentionally made to beneficiaries or stakeholders. Instead, it appears as though plans for regular project monitoring, in which beneficiaries would be administered questionnaires on how their businesses were doing, was interpreted to mean continued business support. There may also have been some confusion about the role of Mentors (See Effectiveness 2 Question for more exploration of project check-ins with Mentors) during the Transition Phase. This reveals the anticipated challenge of setting and managing expectations for a programme that continued to evolve during implementation.

In addition, there were two cases from interviews of beneficiaries who were particularly adept at business and who said that they would have benefited from deeper knowledge of financial management and saving over the longer term. Learning to count, provide change, and orient one’s goals toward business and earning a profit was an important first step, but for some (not necessarily all) more detailed instruction or practice on calculating profit and loss, tracking market conditions, and considering long-term plans for the business and growth, would have been helpful. These findings bring into question possibilities for differentiation that would accommodate girls with both less and more experience. Repeated discussions of this point with the CCU have surfaced at each evaluation point. The CCU indicates that, while they are aware that beneficiaries’ capabilities differ, they face constraints related to resources, Mentor capacity and the large-scale coverage of the project.

## **Effectiveness**

Empowerment Plan and their articulated goals are the foundations of the Transition Phase. The evaluation distinguishes between “conceived plans,” that is, the goals and steps to achieve them that girls may have in their minds and may have discussed with others, and “written plans,” that is, what girls actually wrote on the Empowerment Plan paper tool. Two Evaluation Questions focus on effectiveness. The first explores contextual factors that support and hinder transition while the second investigates programmatic elements.

### **5.1.2. Effectiveness Question 1. Which individual, household, community and macro factors support and hinder girls’ effective transition?**

In order to contextualise the responses, we begin the response to this first Evaluation Question with a summary of girls’ transition activities and stakeholder perspectives on activities since the end of EAGER’s Learning Phase. This Section relies upon quantitative survey data and qualitative interview/FGD data.

#### **Overview of girls’ transition experiences**

While the EAGER transition design emphasises four domains of empowerment, extensive discussion with girls interviewed about their conceived empowerment goals indicates that nearly all girls reported most on the financial goal. The financial goal is more tangible in nature than the other three domains. At the same time, the overwhelming attention to financial goals may also

reflect EAGER's emphasis on the financial goal during preparation of the Empowerment Plan and also aligns with the precarious financial situation that many girls face and their need to improve their economic situation. Project staff interviewed agreed that financial goals would likely be most pressing for girls and that is why the project asked girls to also identify goals for the other three domains: learning, household, and community. These additional domains also reflect areas where girls may have acquired skills and knowledge during the EAGER learning program. Of the 30 girls interviewed, 27 indicated they conceived of a petty trade activity as central to their Empowerment Plan. The remaining 3 girls indicated hairdressing and tailoring as their conceived principal activity for the financial goal. Still, some girls identified other activities alongside petty trading, specifically tailoring, hairdressing, farming, and soapmaking. EAGER Leadership also noted that girls may have decided to begin first with their financial goals and that they may turn to learning, household and community goals within the remaining transition period (approximately two months after data collection.)

The figure below provides examples of girls' conceived Empowerment Plan.

*Figure 5: Examples of girls' conceived Empowerment Plan*

*"On my Empowerment Plan, I wrote different things that I want to do. I wanted to do business; I wanted to have a shop where I sell different items. But my main focus among the items I will be selling will be salt and Maggi[-brand bouillon cubes]. Here in this village salt and Maggi are very important and people demand them every day and it makes a lot of profit. The money that was given to me from EAGER helped me in achieving the things I want to do. When I received the money form, the organisation I went to the other town to buy my business and since I started, I have been having profit from it." (Girls KII, Koinadugu)*

*"[On] my Empowerment Plan... I listed two things down. They are business and agriculture, but it's the business that is more important to me. I love agriculture but there is no machine here to do agricultural work for us and if I want to do all the agricultural work by myself it will lead to an early death and I am not a child. The money they gave me helped me achieve my Empowerment Plan. When I received the money, I used it to buy gari [cassava product]. Here, in our community, gari is difficult and expensive to have, so I decided to buy and sell gari. My sister and my children are helping me in the gari selling." (Girls KII, Tonkolili)*

*"On the paper they gave us to write on our Empowerment Plan, I wrote that I wanted to engage myself in business and sugar to be specific. When I received the money, I went to the neighbouring village to purchase one bag of sugar. I also involved myself in farming like okra, garden, egg and groundnut and rice pap [ground rice turned into flour] selling. The most important is the sugar business." (Girl KII, Tonkolili)*

*"So, there is a community organisation called Grassroots. They offer training for girls in tailoring, soap making, gara [tie-dying] and other skills. [An EAGER participant I know] enroled into that school with the small amount that Concern [EAGER partner] gave to her and she is now doing well there. She can even sew some styles in and she is the one who repairs all the children's uniforms at home and the neighbouring homes. So, that is what she was engaged in doing since she graduated up to this time." (Community Leader KII, Bo)*

Quantitative data provide further indication of beneficiaries' financial activities since the end of the EAGER Learning Phase. As shown in the table below, also according to the beneficiary survey, 85.7 percent of "Relatively Few" (13.3 percent) are not currently working for money, and only 9.7 percent are neither working for money nor enrolled in formal school. In communities where vocational training was also an option, this seems to have been a viable route for some girls. Overall, 7.8 percent of girls are enrolled in a non-traditional education programme besides EAGER. In Bo, that number climbs to 20.3 percent. Qualitative data indicate that girls within the sampled community in Bo also had access to a vocational programme.

*Table 17: Work and Education Status*

Which describes the work you currently do for money?	Financial Literacy Baseline	Midterm	Endline
<b>Works for money in one or more sectors</b>	39.0%	65.5%	85.7%
<b>Does not work for money but attends formal school</b>	1.2%	35.5%	14.3%
<b>Does not work for money nor attend formal school<sup>34</sup></b>	59.6%	32.0%	9.7%
Sample Size (Girls' Combined Survey)	585	2,173	1,612

Over three-quarters of girls (76.8 percent) were engaged in petty trading (see table below). Stakeholders interviewed explained that activities often include selling ground nuts, rice, palm oil, seasonings (salt, pepper, seasonings) cakes, bread, fish, shoes as well as braiding hair. While few, some stakeholders also indicated that beneficiaries may be selling items not allowed by EAGER such as cigarettes and firewood<sup>35</sup>. Many other beneficiaries (41.5 percent) were engaged in farming or agriculture.

<sup>34</sup> The three evaluation points for neither working nor enrolled aren't necessarily comparable: during Baseline, participants were expecting to begin Learning Sessions, and during Midterm, participants were currently involved in Learning Sessions. In addition, participants are two years older than they were at Baseline.

<sup>35</sup> Transition guidance indicates that EAGER will not support girls engaging in the following activities: cutting down trees to sell for firewood; making or selling charcoal, sand mining; catching, buying, selling, or preparing bushmeat; selling alcohol or cigarettes. (Source: EAGER project. (No date). Mentor Guide: Girls' Empowerment Plan.)

Table 18: Sectors of Work

Sectors: <sup>36</sup>	Financial Literacy Baseline	Midterm	Endline
Petty Trading	26.9%	46.5%	76.8%
Farming / Agriculture	24.1%	28.9%	41.5%
Domestic / Housekeeping	2.0%	4.5%	3.8%
Other Service	0.7%	1.7%	2.5%
Shopkeeping	0.5%	0.9%	1.4%
Other	4.2%	1.5%	0.8%
Sample Size (Girls' Combined Survey)	585	2,173	1,612

Survey respondents were asked to identify the goals of their financial plan. Over half (50.9 percent) wanted to start a new business; 11.0 percent said that they wanted to grow an existing business and start a new business; 23.8 percent said that they wanted to just grow their existing business. Separately, 22.8 percent stated that obtaining a new skill was part of their financial plan. (Recall that “business” within the context of EAGER may refer broadly to a small-scale trading, services and production.)

Regarding the three remaining domain areas (learning, household, and community), of the 30 beneficiaries interviewed, two beneficiaries from Pujehun noted that, alongside business, they wanted to focus on fighting for women’s rights while a beneficiary from Kambia indicated wanting to promote a clean environment. Despite emphasis during data collection on all four domains, including practical exercises, as well as probing that data collectors conducted in the field, no other girls articulated non-financial goals. Quantitative data also did not explore these other domains. Similarities among the girls interviewed suggest that common factors may influence beneficiaries to think in likeminded ways about their future. Contextual elements related to local economic activities, girls’ interests, and Mentor approach and capacity may all likely influence choices of empowerment goals. Discussion within Effectiveness Question 2 probes more deeply into the use of the written empowerment tool including its potential to help beneficiaries focus on all four empowerment domains.

#### General perspectives on girls’ transition activities

This Section provides an overview of stakeholders’ reported perspectives of transition activities. As at Midterm, girls and other stakeholders interviewed were overwhelmingly positive about EAGER generally. Their perspectives on the Transition Phase are also positive, as the tables summarise below. Over two thirds of beneficiaries surveyed reported that they felt supported in most ways or completely supported by their Mentors and the EAGER programme as a whole since the end of Learning Sessions.

<sup>36</sup> During the Financial Literacy Baseline, respondents could only select one industry they worked in.

Table 19: Perspectives on support received since end of Learning Sessions

	Not at all Supported	Somewhat Supported	Fairly well Supported	Supported in Most Ways	Completely Supported
How well have you felt supported by your Mentor following the steps in your Empowerment Plan to reach your goals? <sup>37</sup>	2.3%	11.1%	15.6%	54.4%	16.6%
Do you feel sufficiently supported by the EAGER Programme since the end of the Learning Sessions?	2.9%	9.4%	14.6%	48.9%	24.1%

Source: Girls' Combined Survey (N=1,612)

Qualitative data provide insights from a wider swath of stakeholders. The table below presents a summary of overall perspectives and includes reasons for, albeit limited, negative or mixed assessments of transition experiences. It is important to note, as will be elaborated upon in later Sections, that an overall positive perspective did still come with some suggestions for improvement.

Table 20: Overall perspectives on EAGER transition period, based on coding of qualitative interviews

	Positive	Mixed or negative	Main stated reason(s) for negative or mixed assessment
Girls (n=40)	38	2	Insufficient funds provided to support conceptualised Empowerment Plan
Caregiver FGDs (n=4)	3	1	All members of a male caregiver FGD in Koinadugu indicated that EAGER resulted in little change in the girls other than how some had joined in VSLA ( <i>osusu</i> ). Rather, they expressed disappointment that the girls had unexpectedly returned to farming as before.
Boys KII (n=20)	18	2	Illness impeded one girl's progress; unclear reason another was "sitting at home"

<sup>37</sup> Although this question does not explicitly state support since the end of Learning Sessions, it is the last in a series of questions about follow-up meeting frequency with Mentors.

<b>Partners Kills (n=20)</b>	20	0	Need for specialised skills training accounts for mixed feelings
<b>Community Leaders FGDs (n=6)</b>	6	0	Overwhelmingly positive

When asked to comment on barriers preventing girls from achieving their financial goal specifically, the most commonly reported barriers were financial: over one-third said that they did not receive enough money to realistically complete their plan; 59.7 percent said that they either did not receive enough money or the items they needed were no longer available or affordable. In terms of household support, relatively few (14.0 percent) said that did not have enough family, household, or spousal support: 8.1 percent stated they did not have enough family or household support, and 4.1 percent said they did not have enough support from their male partners. The table below summarises these barriers.

*Table 21: Barriers to reaching financial goals*

<b>What are the main barriers to reaching your financial goals? (open ended, select all mentioned)</b>	<b>Percent Mentioned</b>
I did not receive enough money to realistically complete my plan	33.6%
The items I needed were no longer available or increased in price	31.6%
Either did not receive enough money to realistically complete plan or items needed were no longer available/affordable	59.7%
I changed my plan	17.9%
I did not have enough support from my family or household.	10.9%
Other demands on my time and resources made it impossible to work	8.1%
I did not have enough support from my husband	4.1%
My goal was too difficult	3.8%
I did not have enough support from the Facilitators or Mentors	2.8%
Source: Girls' Combined Survey (N=1,612)	

**Note:** Percent that mentioned "I did not have enough support from my husband" is calculated as percent of married beneficiaries.

### **Supporting and hindering factors**

As shown in the previous Section, there is strong support for the EAGER programme in general in addition to strong community, family, and partner support for the transition period specifically. To reiterate, less than one tenth of beneficiaries indicated lacking support from partners and family as a barrier while nearly two-thirds of beneficiaries cited financial reasons. The following Sections examine in more detail the ways that community, family, and partners support, or conversely, their lack of support, directly affects the degree to which girls were able to meet or begin to pursue their conceived empowerment goals. Macro conditions are also considered. Findings draw from both quantitative survey data and qualitative interview/FGD data.



## Community support

When asked directly, respondents nearly always say that the community is supportive of EAGER and more specifically, supportive of a girl transitioning into pursuing her Empowerment Plan. Upon probing, when further describing this community support, respondents most often articulate how community members are supportive by virtue of *not* interfering with the Transition Phase.

EAGER staff commented on the changes at the community level such that girls' education and empowerment had become more acceptable:

*“Well, you know long before now people feel women should not be educated because men are having the thought that if a woman becomes educated they will be bullied but based on the community dialogue meetings that we have held, that has drastically reduced” (LS Officer KII, Bo).*

There were four examples of communities and community leaders taking a more active role in supporting transition. For example, a girls FGD in Kailahun explained:

*“The mother’s club chairlady is also very instrumental in the community EAGER girls because since the Mentors are not with us, she is the one that admonishes us especially when know about the project’s empowerment goal approach. She asks each and every one of us about how far we have gone with our plans. If she noticed that one of us has stopped doing our trading, she will come to us to find out why.” (Girls FGD, Kailahun)*

A girl in Kambia explained how community members supported their businesses specifically:

*“Other people in the community also support us because they buy from us. Some people would call you and advise you on how to go about your business. Even when we were attending classes, some people would call you and advise you to take the programme seriously.” (Girls FGD, Kambia)*

Nonetheless, examples of explicit non-support remain. Some stakeholders indicated that non-EAGER girls or other community members would verbally ridicule the girls telling them that EAGER was a waste of their time. The fact that COVID-19 delayed programme activities likely also contributed to the ridicule girls received. A Mentor in Port Loko described her efforts to help girls see past these expressions and to focus on their progress and future potential. In Bo, a girls' focus group discussion articulated how strong resistance from community members that began in the training phase, but also continued during girls' pursuit of their transition plans:

*“At first, when we were doing this training, there are people in this community/town that were provoking us, saying, we are going to a homosexual (lesbian) training place, we are going to a vocal [place where girls would learn to speak out] school. [That] we are just doing this training, it will end us in disgrace... [that] we won't know what we are doing, [that our] profit [should] remain with them [community members], [that we] will eat it. So, we are just doing a fruitless endeavour...even unto now, they say, 'to hell with you, with all the training you went and did, what's the benefit? We aren't seeing any improvement. You only go there to discuss about men.' [According to them, ] they don't teach us...It's just rude matters they teach us.” Even now, they do say it. Even the three hundred thousand they gave us, some were criticising us saying, 'Is this the money you were going to school for? What's*

*that money? In just a day when I go out and work, I'll generate that money or even more!' They said, [EAGER] couldn't give us not even a reasonable sum. They say it's chicken change they gave to us, and they were provoking us."*  
(Girls FGD, Bo)

In one case, revealing a less explicit but still important barrier, a girl explained that community elders would task them with community work during times they were to be working on their business (Koinadugu, #55), which was limiting, but that there was still general support for what they were doing. A caregiver in this community corroborated this, saying:

*"You will see parents removing their children in class and tell them to follow them to the farm and I am a witness to that, so like I said they are not supporting the girls in reaching their goals. The chief is another example, he removes his children from the class when there is work to do."* (Caregiver FGD, Koinadugu)

### Family support

Across nearly all qualitative interviews, respondents explained how parents, siblings, and other family members supported girls' transition periods. This support was most often articulated as general verbal encouragement, but there were also multiple examples of girls getting specific advice about what to do or material support, such as providing cash, supplies, or one's time.

An important aspect to note with family support is that participants' role has they enter adulthood. Over the two years of the project, Cohort 1 median ages increased from 16 to 18 (see Annex 2). Unsurprisingly, the percentage of beneficiaries who are their own caregivers has increased from 6.3 percent at Baseline to 79.8 percent at Endline (see Table 16 in Relevance Section). As more participants have entered adulthood, the dynamics of how and how much household members can make choices for them has changed. Among beneficiaries who have caregivers at each evaluation point, many had opinions supportive of girls' education and more equitable gender roles since Baseline. This is likely due in part from selection bias, as these caregivers supported enrolment into the EAGER programme. The percentage of caregivers who agree with some supportive statements has increased over time, for instance, 90.7 percent agree with the statement "men's and women's roles in society can change over time" at Endline compared to 79.2 percent of caregivers at Baseline. Supportive opinions typically fell at Midterm, but rose at Endline. This may be because beneficiaries were dedicating more of their limited time to EAGER Learning Sessions but had yet to reap many of the benefits of the programme yet.

Interview data reveals that girls highly appreciated verbal encouragement; in some cases, this was critical in helping them to continue. They described men and women family members as providing this encouragement:

*"For me, my uncle has been a good motivator for me. Whenever I am sitting idle at home he will annoy with me and advise me to focus on achieving my goal."* (Girls FGD, WAU)

*"As for me, I do have people that advise me despite that I haven't neither a mother nor a father, as they are dead. But, my brother that is far away, sometimes I do call him, and he tells me not to discourage, it's just that conditions are yet unfavourable with him, and the work he does, he is a monthly earner. So, he does talk to me. Again, the man sitting there is my uncle. Sometimes he calls me and say, [name], since your mom and dad*

*aren't living anymore, I'm the one to advise you, but, whenever, I'm fortunate to succeed, I'll surely help you, just for you to go and do your training course.”*  
(Girls FGD, Bo)

Business advice and material support also helped girls become more successful as they continued their plans:

*“Yes, we have people that have helped me move toward my goals like as for me my mother advised me on a lot of issues if someone did something bad to me, she will tell me, ‘Don't retaliate. Be patient.’ Whenever I wanted to do business, I will go to her and ask her consent and advice. [For example, ‘what if I it is] this business that I want to go into will it sell?’ She will give her genuine advice, [for example,] that during rainy season you go into rice and shoes business.”* (Girls FGD, Pujehun)

*“For instance, let's say that's the business I'm doing, a certain person, a woman, she said to me, the business I'm doing, the money when I added it, she also added to it. It was, in fact, a debt. She's my sister. She then lent me the money and I started my business, started selling. So, that was one help she offered me. My male sibling also assisted me. For example, if I'm doing wrong, my brother advises me. For instance, the business I'm doing, when someone comes to lend from me, say twice or thrice – he warns me, ‘say no, when doing trading/business you don't just have to be lending out to people often like that. Perhaps, if in the near future you become broke, they would be laughing at you.’ He was advising me in that aspect. He's my younger brother.”* (Girl KII, Bo)

One example was shared of family members opposing or actively interfering with their transition plans:

*“As for me, it was my father who stops me from achieving my goal, he stops me from attending school and said I should get marriage.”* (Girl KII, Koinadugu)

Two girls reported family members taking some or all of the money they had been given:

*“Because of the money we received, some of us have brothers that steal from us. Yes, at home. The box is for money but sometimes they steal the items that you sell.”* (Girls FGD, Kambia)

*“My business is not growing because my little sisters usually steal from it.”*  
(Girls FGD, Kenema)

Notably, relatively few girls remarked on not having sufficient time due to domestic duties to devote to carrying out their Empowerment Plan. When such barriers were articulated they were generally related to caring for children. Quantitative data demonstrate that unpaid household labour served as a significant barrier to girls' empowerment at Baseline and has fluctuated over the course of the project. At Baseline, 41.0 percent of respondents reported having a high chore burden based on the number of hours spent completing unpaid household labour and its impact on their ability to undertake other productive activities. This fell to 13.3 percent at Midterm – it was suspected that this was due to the time spent dedicated to the EAGER programme. At Endline, 21.8 percent had a high chore burden, suggesting that they have greater time to engage in other productive activities than at Baseline, such as their Empowerment Plan.

## Partner support

Over half of all beneficiary girls (53.5 percent) are married, and 43.5 percent report living with their husbands. As with community members and family members, partners interviewed were overwhelmingly supportive of girls' participation in EAGER generally, and with the steps she had begun taking in pursuit of her empowerment goals. Among those surveyed, only 6.8 percent (or one in fifteen) of beneficiaries reported their partners as a barrier to them achieving their empowerment goals.

Support from husbands was most often articulated as general encouragement, but in some cases girls noted active support such as providing money, business advice, or taking on domestic duties that had previously been the wife's responsibility:

*"My husband helps me a lot. Sometimes he even gives me money to add to my business" (Girls FGD, Kambia).*

Partners often detailed their reasons as to why they supported girls' empowerment, and nearly all (18 of 20 interviews) specified a practical implication that his partner could now contribute more to the well-being of the household, including contributing to household income and family business. As discussed already in Relevance, above, this is understandably and not necessarily disappointingly in contrast to providing a more rights-based justification for girls' empowerment.

*"Yes, they are working towards their goals because, like I said, she is doing business and we are completely benefiting from what she is doing and I told you earlier that she can now boast of a sum of five hundred thousand Leone in addition to the money she was given. Each time she goes out to sell, she makes a profit of at least twenty thousand Leones which she shows me so...also, the small-small things she helps do in the house for the kids and the family too; that is why I said she is making progress in it." (Male partner KII, Kailahun)*

*"She can manage resources well and she has managed the little money they gave her on to this point. She can read. She is vocal. She now knows how to operate a small-scale business and most importantly, the profit she got from her small business is what we used to buy seeds for our groundnut farm...she is now a real housewife. She gives attention to me and my children which I think I must appreciate." (Male partner KII, Tonkolili)*

Additional common reasons that partners articulated as to why they supported girls' empowerment goals were frequently reflective of the context in which these traditional gender norms endure. At times, comments are even internally discordant and reflect the complexity of the environment that many girls and their partners navigate. As discussed already in Relevance, above, such findings should not overshadow that within this context, EAGER girls are making huge gains in agency and empowerment by working within those traditional norms.

*"But now she is taking care of me and the children and doing some things at home even before telling me about it. I am happy about that." (Male partner KII, WAU)*

Similarly, nearly all male partners (16 of 20) commented on how girls had changed such that there were fewer disputes in the house. Interviews with girls indicate that they have gained greater ability to better manage relationships with their partners and be assertive while maintaining a

peaceful household. This may be in contrast to an environment in which some girls experienced physical violence previously. Many partners perceive this change as the girl becoming 'less quarrelsome' or more respectful. With male partners expressing their support for EAGER because of these changes, findings suggest that partner support for girls' participation in EAGER was at least partially rooted in their view that a practical outcome of EAGER was girls' adhering to more traditional gender roles. The following excerpts provide illustrations of partners' views:

*"She is not as quarrelsome as she used to be." (Male Partner KII, Kenema)*

*"Now, she obeys me, and we spend time together, so I have noticed that change in her because before that did not happen." (Male Partner KII, Kono)*

*"Prior to the programme, she used to be very argumentative and did not use to take my orders. At night she used to go out to the village centre without any permission from and if I dare to ask or stop her, she will say she is a young girl and that she deserve to socialise but now is a different story because she now asks permission to go to wherever she wants to and comes back in the time agreed." (Male Partner KII, Kailahun)*

*"Before now, she would disrespect me a lot but because of the life training skills that she acquired from the programme, she is now very respectful and she is also very caring." (Male Partner KII, Tonkolili)*

*"She used to disrespect me and people in the community, but now she gives me all the respect I deserve and also respects those in the community. I am very happy about these changes, in fact, I am overwhelmed." (Male Partner KII, Koinadugu)*

Partners also noted the benefit in the programme as a whole, which they say enabled EAGER participants to be more communicative and build stronger relationships with people outside of the home, again referencing the concept of being 'respectful' as a positive trait for his partner:

*"She is able to talk gently to the people in the same locality." (Male Partner KII, Bo)*

*"I was anticipating divorcing her, but since she joined EAGER, I have changed my mind. To start with, she is respectful to community members, elderly family members and my very self. She interacts widely in the community." (Male Partner KII, Kenema)*

For girls, as will be further elaborated upon in Impact 1, below, working within these expectations of female behaviour that align with traditional gender norms ultimately helped many girls to get their partners' full support for their participation in EAGER. This approach was intentional and practical for them and enabled many girls to pursue their empowerment goals with a significant degree of autonomy.

There were, though, few examples given by girls of partners who were not supportive and took steps to actively limit girls' pursuit of Empowerment Plan. In three cases, it was said that a husband took (or tried to take) his wife's business money:

*"Even our husbands stopped us from taking steps toward your goals because they will take the money from us with force and use it somewhere else." (Girls FGD, Kenema)*

*“Most of our husbands are not working and whenever they see us with money they wanted to claim ownership of it.” (Girls FGD, Tonkolili)*

*”Yes, I faced challenge with my husband when I collected the money EAGER gave us later my husband was after me to give him the money but I refuse to do so because I have made up my mind to do business.” (Girl KII, Kono)*

Other examples reveal less direct barriers, but still demonstrate how partners could hinder girls’ progress toward her goals. In one example, a girls’ transition toward business and receiving money for it resulted in a dispute with her husband, which had since resolved:

*”There are some that even had an argument over that three hundred thousand Leones. The marriage almost fell apart. [This was the case for] one of our colleagues/friend that was also part of this programme. The day they gave her the three hundred thousand, the husband started telling her was to start using the money for food. When she refused, he became angry and started grumbling, ‘It is because of that money they have given you that you are acting proud on me. I earn money more than you do,’ They had a bitter argument and did fight. Their marriage almost fell apart, but they settled it later. All that happened.” (Girls FGD, Bo)*

This case corroborates the project’s concerns that the cash transfer amount, if too large, could cause risks to girls, and affirms EAGER’s mitigation strategy that the amount be reasonably small so as not to put girls at risk (see Relevance Section above).

Some stakeholders provided examples of male partners’ resistance that began during the Learning Phase and may have carried into transition. An LS Officer in Kenema described how girls often arrived late to the Learning Sessions with the reason that the husband opposed their coming to the Safe Space. She explained,

*“Clearly, that was as a result of jealousy. The late arrival affected the duration of the sessions. We have often engaged the husbands in a bid to strike a compromise, and also reminded them about the consent they had earlier given to us. With the continuous engagements with the husbands, the spates of refusals have considerably dropped over time.” (LS Officer KII, Kenema)*

Similarly, a beneficiary in Kono explained how her husband was initially reluctant to support her, but over time saw that allowing her to do her business would ultimately help the household:

*“The challenge that I was faced with is my husband is that sometimes when the time comes for me to go for the programme he would ask me not to go there but rather to the farm and sometimes with negative remarks. For example, he used to tell me that, ‘the book that you were not fortunate to acquire it is not at this dusk time of your life you want to acquire it?!’ But what I was telling him is that I said, ‘hence this programme is here and I am attending it. I am sure that I will learn something that will be of help to you and the family.’ He was just laughing at me but today he appreciates me based on the differences I am making at home compared to the previous time.” (Girl KII, Kono)*

This final quote provides further example of how girls may recognise the necessity to frame outcomes as providing value to her marriage and family in order to create space for her to change and grow.

Many girls seem to recognise the full context of their participation in EAGER and the need to work within societal constraints, including relationships with partners, while also pushing against them.

### Individual barriers

Several additional barriers also bear mention as factors that hinder beneficiaries achieving their transition goals. Many of them overlap with girls' household responsibilities. As mentioned previously, girls having limited time to pursue their Empowerment Plan as a result of domestic duties. According to the quantitative data, 5 percent of beneficiaries that received a cash distribution spent money on something besides their empowerment goals. The most common reason was a family health emergency. The second most common reason was spending on their children. The qualitative data further reveal the challenge mothers face, where 12 interviews with girls suggested lack of childcare and/or needing to care for a sick child directly impeded with pursuing her transition plan. A Mentor in Tonkolili provided illustration of challenges girls face:

*“The problem they are facing in the house is to be able to take care of the children. That is one problem as some of the men do not provide support to the beneficiary so that they can take care of their children, like washing the children and dressing them is another problem as well as when they want to go to do their businesses. Who they should they leave the children within the morning hours when they want to go to the market? Who will help them? That is a problem.” (Mentor KII, Tonkolili)*

### Macro Factors

Finally, macro factors that have impacted beneficiaries' effective transition include the economic conditions of a location in which a girl is trying to do business, the availability of further skills training or industries in which a girl can pursue non-business employment, COVID-19 economic and social volatility, and the context of working within certain gender norms (as discussed in Relevance, above).

Financial plans may not have always sufficiently accounted for all macro factors to be realistic. As reported in the quantitative data above, 31.6 percent of girls reported that they were unable to pursue their financial plan because of changing market conditions, or items no longer being available as they had planned. Male caregivers in Koinadugu alluded to difficult market conditions for girls which limited their business success; instead, they were enticed back to farming. The exchange below indicates caregivers' original excitement and support for EAGER but also how they became disillusioned as girls resumed prior agricultural activities:

*Caregiver 1: “For me since after the Empowerment Plan, I have not seen improvement in the girls. They are just there in the community unless you see them with their parents to going back to the farm. And, we did not expect them to go back to the farm.”*

*Caregiver 2: “After the Empowerment Plan they were given money...and it was successful, but some joined osusu [VGSA] and saved in their cash box. Selling became difficult and the money that they were saving, they used it to pay for the osusu and everything finished. They started to go back to the farm, following their parents.”*

*Caregiver 3: “[I think] the same as my colleagues have mentioned. The girls do business with their money, some joined osusu but the money did not yield profit.”*

*Caregiver 1: "This was not pleasing to us for them to be given money and seeing them following us back to the farm but they are our children and we still appreciate them."*

*Caregiver 4: "Why did the girls not fulfil the Empowerment Plan? It's because of the understanding they did not have, because they should have held the Empowerment Plan seriously but they value farming more than the Empowerment Plan."*

*Caregiver 2: The girls were not making effort towards their Empowerment Plan and that was because of early married." (Male caregivers FGD, Koinadugu)*

The other factors indicated in this excerpt are also notable: a lack of understanding and early marriage. Similarly, this discussion indicates that some beneficiaries contributed their money to VSLA activities (*osusu*), which may have been lucrative for girls though after some time. Again, discussion also signals caregivers initial support for the project even though expectations were not fulfilled.

There were also factors to consider as it relates to seasonality of some businesses, as one LS Officer in Kambia explained:

*"The challenges they are facing concerns their business, as some children, the business they put in their Empowerment Plan that is not the business they are doing presently. The reason being that change of weather or climate like when it is planting season for rice. When it is rice season they buy rice but presently it is not rice season so they need to accept that they have to wait until rice season or they change to other business like sweet biscuits. So this is how they change different business because of the harvesting season." (LS Officer KII, Kambia)*

There were also said to be limited vocational options for girls, despite multiple girls indicating their desire to learn more skills (see Effectiveness 2 for more information on skills). Caregiver and community leader focus groups most frequently mentioned this need and a boy interviewed also eloquently made a case for girls to receive focused skills training:

*"I want to plead to the ones that were implementing it to come with more bigger one than this for example like tailoring we have our sisters here who are more interested in learning vocational skills tailoring, carpentry I also do carpentry if I'm given that opportunity we will spearhead in learning those that may want to learn carpentry. Some of our sisters may want to do soapmaking but they don't know how to do it, other girls also may want to do gara-tie-dyeing but they don't know how to go about in doing it so we want a training centre that will teach them how to go about in doing it." (Boys KII, Pujehun)*

As reported in the Midterm Evaluation Report, another critical macro factor is the degree to which girls and women can safely travel and work in their communities. Responses from the beneficiary survey shows that the vast majority of respondents agree that they feel safe when out in their community, and (if they work in the market) feel safe in the market. However, experiences since the end of Learning Sessions appear to diverge.



When asked if they feel safer, equally safe, or less safe since the end of Learning Sessions, over half (52.3) feel safer in their communities since the end of Learning Sessions and 10.3 percent feel less safe. It is unclear what has caused this change.

*Table 22: Beneficiary Perceptions of Safety*

	Agree a lot	Agree a little	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot	Don't Know
<b>I feel safe at my nearest market.<sup>38</sup></b>	82.1%	16.7%	0.8%	0.4%	0.1%
<b>I feel safe when I am out in my community.</b>	71.0%	22.7%	4.2%	1.3%	0.7%
<b>I feel safe when I am working to earn money.</b>	79.6%	16.7%	3.1%	0.4%	0.3%

Source: Girls' Combined Survey (N=1,612)

Having reviewed macro, community-level and individual factors supporting and hindering girls' effective transition, we next focus on programmatic elements.

### 5.1.3. Effectiveness Question 2. Which programmatic factors support girls' realisation of their Empowerment Plan, including project resources and hard/soft skills learned during the Learning Phase? What opportunities exist for further supporting girls in the empowerment dimensions?

The response to this second effectiveness question continues the investigation of factors that support and hinder girls' transition. Here, the focus is on programmatic supports and barriers that affected the degree to which girls were able to meet or begin to pursue their empowerment goals. We draw from quantitative and qualitative data, including a close review of written Empowerment Plan. We first begin with a review of hard/soft skills that were the focus of the project and then investigate key programmatic features such as the written Empowerment Plan as a tool, the cash transfer, distribution of Empowerment Packages, Mentor check-ins and EAGER Girls' Clubs.

#### **Overview of hard/soft skills**

Learning foundational skills also clearly contributed to girls' confidence and had implications beyond the pursuit of their Empowerment Plan. At Baseline, less than 1 in 5 participants (17.3 percent) could read any of a simple reading passage while at Midterm, over half (52.4 percent) could read at least some of it. Similarly, at Baseline just over half (53.1 percent) could perform some addition or subtraction of large numbers – a critical skill for money transactions; at Midterm, 86.8 percent could.

<sup>38</sup> Only asked of beneficiaries who work at the market.

They exercised this newfound empowerment in their daily lives. At this Endline point, survey questions asked beneficiaries whether they had applied each of the following skills they acquired since Learning Sessions ended: Financial Literacy, Life Skills, Literacy, and Mathematics. Over 96 percent of respondents agreed that they had used all four skillsets during the transition period.

As discussed already in the Relevance Section, Literacy and Numeracy were critical and appreciated aspects of EAGER. In nearly all (28 of 30) of the qualitative interviews with girls, Literacy and Numeracy skills were said to have been acquired successfully by girls.

*“Yes, I can now be proud of myself because I now know how to read any written words in English as well as write, which I was not doing before but EAGER have empowered me to do.” (Girls FGD, Kailahun)*

*“I never went to school. I stopped at first grade. I never knew the alphabet (ABC), and numeracy (1, 2, and 3). Even my name, I never knew how to spell it. Through this training, I’m now able to write my name, I’m now able to write numbers (1, 2, and 3) and also read letters (ABC).” (Girls FGD, Bo)*

The acquisition of business skills were also mentioned by a majority (18 of 30) girls with varying degrees of specificity. Girls most frequently noted simply that they “learned business” or were more specific in saying that being able to give correct change was essential in their business being more successful than it would have been without. This was also a positive finding captured at the Midterm as well. Less often, girls explained how EAGER had helped them to think more critically about profit and savings, negotiation skills and customer service skills:

*Beneficiary 1: “Even if I had money, I did not know how to invest it because I could hardly even count, let alone to write. But, since I enrolled into the programme, I have learnt how to count. I know how to calculate my profit. I have to check how much I have spent and then how much I raised after the sales.”*

*Beneficiary 2: “Now that I am from the programme, I don’t just do business without checking the cost involved. Now, I note the amount I put into the business, [for example,] if I hire a motorbike, if I pay someone to help me in the business. Whatever amount I put into the business, I consider it because of the things that I learnt from the programme.” (Girls FGD, Kambia)*

*“I learned a lot from EAGER and that has benefited me a lot. For a very long time, when I was doing business I would just wake up in the morning and go to the market and buy what so ever I wanted to buy and come back home and sell it without any estimate. After our sessions, I realised that I was doing bad business. EAGER made me realise that scheduling and planning is important when you want to buy and sell and it is from there you would know how much you are going to spend and possibly how much profit you are going to make.*

*Now, my idea of business has changed and I am making profit and I am spending it judiciously.” (Girl KII, Kono)*

*“The financial skills have made most of the girls become financially viable and prudent in spending. They are doing the petty business very well as they give out correct change. The literacy and numeracy skills have also helped the girls who have never been to school to read and write.” (LS Officer KII, Kenema)*

Girls developing an awareness of their local economy and the likely viability of various business ideas through a market survey was also a key skill gained for some beneficiaries. The EAGER curriculum covered how to perform a market survey and, as will be discussed below, the written Empowerment Plan included a relevant Section where girls input information about existent businesses, the size of a potential customer base and likely profit. An LS Officer, described the process as follows making reference to beneficiaries:

*“One example of skill is selling of wrappers (lappa), before doing this, she needed to do a survey on wrappers and also need to select a particular place for her business and should make sure that she has all the necessary items that she needs to do her business, for example, table, umbrella, tray etc. Another one [beneficiary] is making soap. She needed to do her market survey on the rate of how soap making is selling and the amount of people that is involved in soap making. After that, she can then purchase the materials that are needed to make her soap and she can then sell it on purchase or loan.” (LS Officer KII, Kono)*

Beneficiaries also referred to reflecting on market feasibility as they described their financial goals:

*“My financial goal is hairdressing. I choose hairdressing because, here when it's time for an occasion, there is no salon, unless we have to go to Bo town in order to plait our hair. That is why I have decided to learn hairdressing.” (Girl KII, Bo)*

*“When I received the money I decided to buy and sell palm oil and coconut oil because I found out that no house in this community cannot cook without using either of these. Since I started selling them I have not had any reason to regret doing this business. The business is profitable.” (Girl KII, Tonkolili)*

Life Skills were also frequently mentioned; these often referred specifically to a girls' improved ability to take care of her home and children. As discussed already in Relevance and Effectiveness 1, above, the practical benefit of these improved skills that align with traditional gender norms (to the satisfaction of partners and others who, in the context, have some degree of authority over what girls can and cannot do) was that girls were able to simultaneously pursue their empowerment goals given the degree of support provided to them as a result of their adherence to:

*“I've learnt a lot from the training that we were doing. During the time I used to stay home, I never knew how to maintain my home. Even the child I gave birth to, I never knew how to maintain him/her. But through the help of this training, I can now take care of my child, our dwelling room. I'm able to maintain it. At daybreak I sweep, go and fetch water and bathe my child well and then I cook the food (pap) and feed the child.” (Girls FGD, Bo)*

Girls and other stakeholders (34 interviews) also frequently mentioned enhanced communication skills with family and partners. There were three dimensions of communication skills that were most often specified: a) communicating assertively; b) communicating respectfully; c) communicating clearly. These three dimensions of communication were said to be applied to multiple people in girls' lives with good outcomes. Girls also mentioned anger management skills. Most frequently, girls described appreciating their improved communication with their husbands because it made their relationships better and many express taking pride in their roles. In some cases this was referred to as having increased 'respect' for their husbands.

As shown in the previous Section on partner support for EAGER, husbands often said they appreciated this as well. Also, as with the finding discussed above related to girls' reports of learning domestic skills that fit within traditional gender roles, while behaviours around 'respect' for one's husband fits within strict gender roles, the beneficiaries indicate simultaneously gaining more control within their households as a result<sup>39</sup>.

*"Before I joined the EAGER programme, I easily got angry over things. Even my relationship with my partner was not cordial. We quarrelled most of the time but based on what I learned from the programme, I am now a different person. I don't get angry easily." (Girls FGD, Port Loko)*

*"I now know how to communicate with friends and family using my mobile phone and I can call words [being selective with words based on context] when working in the street. Also what I have learned in EAGER, I used it to advise my companions not to fight or quarrel because that is not good." (Girls FGD, WAU)*

*"Consider me, who was so disrespectful to my husband. I couldn't regard him. I'm the same person now that do respect him. Initially, as soon as it was daybreak, I just moved out as I pleased, but now, when it is morning, I have to organise the home, attend to my kids and dress them well, maintain them well." (Girl KII, Bo)*

Improved communication skills with non-family community members also were mentioned by girls and others to be important in allowing girls to participate more actively in their community, garner respect from others, and work more productively with customers:

*Caregiver 1: "The skills she learnt at EAGER sessions have helped her greatly because, she is engaged in her business and she has no problem with anyone."*

*Caregiver 2: "EAGER sessions have changed our daughters in this community because, they are now doing things beyond our expectations such as their way of communicating to people and ways of doing things."*

*Caregiver 3: "Before now, when you were talking to them they were careless about what you were saying, but now all that has changed due to EAGER sessions." (Male Caregivers FGD, Kailahun)*

As mentioned already in the Relevance Section, often respondents requested girls learning some additional skills. Most often, and notably almost always mentioned by non-girl respondents (mentioned by 2 girls and 22 others) it was said that EAGER should have provided more specific vocational skills for girls:

*"Apart from what they have been taught they also need to have some basic skills like hairdressing, gara-tie-dying, soap making, catering and tailoring." (LS Officer KII, Tonkolili)*

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<sup>39</sup> Sarr, K. G., Trembley, A., Heaner, G. & Mull, A. C. (2021). Midterm Evaluation Report Midterm Evaluation of the Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER) project within the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) -Leave No Girl Behind project (LNGB). IMC Worldwide.

*“EAGER should endeavour, as best as possible, to incorporate skills like tailoring because she has expressed interest in that particular skill and it was even part of the Empowerment Plan that she shared with me.” (Male partner KII, Kenema)*

*“For instance, the issue of catering. If the community people agree or my Mentor agrees, the programme, I would like them to replicate it here. They should come and build a solid centre here, wherein, we will be able to be doing the training, doing the catering training.” (Girl KII, Bo)*

While vocational centres are not available in all locations and connecting girls with vocational opportunities is beyond the scope of the EAGER programme, responses from beneficiaries in Bo and WAU sampled communities where vocational centres do exist, often identified both enthusiasm for attending these programmes and concerted efforts to transition to these centres upon completion of the learning plan. While unintended and not within the EAGER design, it is worth noting that the combination of EAGER and a vocational training programme, seem to be a highly beneficial pairing, in providing girls foundational skills as well as improved business acumen to frame their vocational skills.

### **Programmatic factors**

This next Section examines programmatic factors in detail. Specifically, the evaluation reviewed the effectiveness of written Empowerment Plan and their associated development process, the cash transfer and Empowerment Package distribution, continued contact with EAGER Mentors and the effectiveness of EAGER Girls' Clubs.

#### **Written Empowerment Plan**

The development of the written Empowerment Plan is a key step within the EAGER curriculum as well as a tool intended to guide girls' progress during transition. The plan is also used as in project monitoring during project check-ins. During these meetings, beneficiaries discuss with Mentors if they have achieved steps towards their empowerment goals. While originally intended as a spot check, the analysis of the Empowerment Plan assumed a larger role within the Endline Evaluation methodology when findings emerged of discrepancies between conceived Empowerment Plan, i.e., what beneficiaries have developed in their minds for their transition experience in concertation with project staff, and the written plans, i.e., the final content of the written tool. In actuality, these discrepancies are not surprising given Baseline Literacy and Numeracy skills of EAGER participants. The findings require careful review, however, as the written tool is central to the project's design, implementation and monitoring.

Qualitative data collectors encountered challenges when attempting to take photographs of beneficiaries' Empowerment Plan for analysis. The original spot check aimed to review the written plan of each of the three beneficiaries sitting for KIIs. Of the 10 districts within the qualitative sample, qualitative data collectors were able to photograph Empowerment Plan in only six districts: Kailahun, Kambia, Kenema, Kono, Tonkolili, and WAU. Beneficiaries reported no longer having access to their Empowerment Plan in the remaining 4 districts as they had been collected by project staff: Bo, Koinadugu, Port Loko, and Pujehun. The evaluation team raised concerns with the EAGER Consortium Coordinating Unit (CCU), which in turn, sent out word to partners that it was imperative that girls have access to their plans.

Interviews with CCU members as well as leading staff with each project partner indicate that they were not aware of collection of the Empowerment Plan. Moreover, they were working hard to return the plans to girls and to ensure that Cohort 2 girls would remain in possession of their written Empowerment Plan. Nonetheless, beneficiaries not having access to their written plans throughout the Transition Phase strongly suggests that many beneficiaries in these districts were not able to reference the plans as a guide. In total, the Endline Evaluation reviewed 11 Empowerment Plan. Besides partners having collected plans from 15 of the girls sampled, two girls did not have their Empowerment Plan as they misplaced them, another girl did not have access because her mother-in-law had it and she was not living with her at the time of the interview, and one girl was not able to return a long-distance home to collect it for the interview. Analysis of the plans revealed the following:

- **Quality of plans varied:** Quality differed drastically between one district and another, perhaps suggesting the importance of Mentor capacity in guiding girls' towards their plans. For example, the 3 Empowerment Plan from Tonkolili are consistently clear and coherent but the plans from the Kono community reviewed include off-topic sentences for the goals and steps and had blank Sections. These discrepancies may indicate that the Tonkolili Mentors may have been able to provide highly adequate support and guidance or that the beneficiaries may also have had more developed literacy skills than their Kono counterparts. (See earlier Sections on Empowerment Plan structure and development in the Relevance Section above. The Project Context also provides additional information about the complex environment in which the project operates.)
- **Written goals frequently incomplete:** As illustrated in the table below, 6 of the 11 plans reviewed included a full set of goals though quality varied. All plans included financial goals. Sometimes the goals were too vague to be meaningful, such as “overcome challenges” for the learning goal or “teach them” for the household goal. It seems the financial goals and community goals may have been more straightforward for girls as these were more complete. In discussion, CCU members indicated that EAGER did not expect the beneficiaries to write full sentences, and that it was possible that an outsider to the process might not be able to decipher the sense of the goals.

Table 23: Goals Included in Review of Written Empowerment Plan<sup>40</sup>

District	Learning Goal	Household Goal	Community Goal	Financial goals: I will use my money to buy
Kailahun	Blank	Blank	Blank	Buy rice and sell it to customers
Kailahun	By [unclear] what I learned in EAGER with community	Amara and I will start sleeping under a bed net	Advance girls to avoid early marriage and pregnancy	Buy banana and sell it
Kambia	Read a book to my sister	Aminata and I will start sleeping under a mosquito bed net	Help protect girls from early marriage early pregnancy	Buy shoes and sell

<sup>40</sup> Spelling and grammar have been adjusted to aid comprehension and to recognise that many beneficiaries have made significant progress in their writing skills but that writing challenges may remain.

Kenema	I [Incomplete]	Blank	Blank	Do business
Kenema	Blank	To teach them	To teach my community	Do business
Kono	Blank	Blank	Blank	Do a business
Kono	Blank	Blank	Blank	When she has a clear answer that she about help her.
Tonkolili	Overcoming challenge	Handwashing	Osusu	Make and sell flower cake
Tonkolili	Overcoming challenge	Change my table room	Help start the EAGER girls group	Buy and sell Maggi
Tonkolili	Overcoming Challenge	Buy [illegible]	Attend community meetings	Buy and sell sugar
WAU	By continue learning on how to read and write	To be a role model	Involve in community meeting	Learn a new skill tailoring

- **Steps were more coherent than goals:** Even when goals were missing, steps were more complete and may be more manageable for girls. It is worth noting that while monitoring data asked for sign off pending the goals' relevance to the girl and her context, the review placed more emphasis on the number of steps completed to measure progress.
- **Market survey Section likely useful:** The market survey Section was often complete. This section only needed to be completed by girls with an income generating goal. At the same time, only three of the 9 plans including this information compute correctly. It is again likely that this Section requires additional training of Mentors in order to fully benefit EAGER participants.
- **Budget Sections challenging:** Review of the budget section indicates possible difficulties for beneficiaries and likely Mentors. Ten of the 11 plans reviewed included budgets. Only 3 of the budgets were correctly completed with clear indications of items and costs and correct computations. At the same time, these 3 plans from Tonkolili did not fill out the information regarding amounts of money still needed or where the money would come from. This is likely due the fact that that section only needed to be filled in if the budget was over the amount given by EAGER (300,000Le). At least 1 plan also indicated that a beneficiary intended to use a loan to cover missing costs, which seems to disregard the EAGER Financial Literacy curriculum's message that loans are risky.
- **Timelines do not align with Transition Phase:** In 8 of the plans reviewed, beneficiaries delineated a timeline for achieving their various financial steps. The timelines of written Empowerment Plan reviewed ran from 1 week to 6 months. The latest completion date was September 29, 2021. Analysis demonstrates that the financial section of the Empowerment Plan extended only up to 2 months after the end of the Learning Sessions even though the Transition Phase continues until July 2022. None of the plan timelines extended for the eight months of the Transition Phase. CCU members indicated that while EAGER suggested that

girls plan to complete their goals within one year, there was no minimum or maximum. In addition, shorter goals with more achievable steps might motivate girls to stay the course and to set additional goals. The project also emphasised spending cash early so as to limit risk and to begin their businesses as soon as possible. Findings suggest the need for more emphasis on the timeline with both Mentors and beneficiaries to lay out short-term plans as well as accentuating the benefits of long-term planning. The project should also consider revisiting the appropriateness of the check-in timing (December 2021 and March 2022).

- **Signatures:** Three of the 11 girls sampled did not sign their own Empowerment Plan.

The evaluation team discussed these findings with members of the CCU. There was agreement that in spite of EAGER's perceived benefit of the written plan for girls' literacy development, the current version of the written plan may be an imperfect tool for reflecting beneficiaries' conceived Empowerment Plan. Moreover, cross-check with project monitoring data<sup>41</sup> demonstrated that all reviewed plans had been approved despite having a number of sections that were blank or incomplete. These findings suggest that the empowerment tool template may be further improved to strengthen its use as an implementation tool and that the project's monitoring processes that rely upon the project's plans can be enhanced. The project claims that, "Plans will be SMART and trackable with clear criteria for assessment and success"<sup>42</sup> though an interview with a CCU member (EAGER Leadership KII #4) indicated that expectations would need to be much more realistic given girls and Mentors' capacities and the novelty of this goal setting experience. Another CCU member also stressed that while Mentors and Facilitators receive training in SMART goals development that girls are not expected to write their goals in adherence to SMART characteristics as it may be limited and time consuming. These exchanges suggest that the project's understanding of how the plans will be presented continues to evolve, and at least since the writing of the annual report.

CCU members underlined the trade-offs inherent in the Empowerment Plan process. As reflected in the Midterm Evaluation Report, the project has recognised low Mentor capacity since Baseline findings and has put in place training structures, such as learning clusters, to support Mentors. EAGER values Mentors as community-based volunteers, all of whom must be validated by the girls and able to connect with girls beyond the EAGER project. According to correspondence with the evaluation team, the CCU placed value on the beneficiaries discussing their goals with Mentors and Facilitators, and deliberately intended Mentors and Facilitators to lead the Empowerment Plan development and sign-off process, even if capacity may be an issue for some. LS Officers have a much higher educational level than Mentors. Their signing off on incomplete plans may indicate that the 60 Life Skills Officers covering Cohort 1 may have been stretched thin to review over 7,000 Empowerment Plan. EAGER is planning for a longer Empowerment Plan review period for Cohort 2. While these assertions are valid, the findings from review of written Empowerment Plan merit further reflection in order to further improve the learning, implementation and monitoring processes for transition based on Empowerment Plan, both conceived and written versions. Ideally, the written plans will allow for the project to capture and monitor the rich goals and plans that the girls have within their minds.

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<sup>41</sup> EAGER. (February 2022). Girls' Empowerment Plan Check-In Analysis (Internal dataset).

<sup>42</sup> Year 3 Annual Report, p. 7



## Development of Empowerment Plan

The EAGER Mentor Guide to the Girls' Empowerment Plan describes a process led by Mentors with support from Facilitators and LS Officers. Facilitators would work with girls on their financial goals during Financial Literacy sessions. Mentors were to work with each girl individually or in small groups of no more than 5 girls to develop the written plan. Mentors were to split up the EAGER group and each work with half the beneficiaries in order to share the responsibility. While the guide provides examples of possible goals and steps, Mentors were to take inspiration from these examples but not share them with girls as examples from which to choose.

Mentors interviewed generally agreed that the process of developing the Empowerment Plan was appropriate for EAGER beneficiaries and that it was a positive experience. Mentors and LS Officers interviewed provided additional details of how the process of developing written Empowerment Plan unfolded and some of its strengths and challenges. In 2 communities, for example, in the districts of Kambia and Pujehun, Mentors indicated that they worked with girls in groups of 5. As the Mentor in Pujehun described:

*"It was in groups, 5 persons per group. Each individual is asked from the various groups what she intends to do. If someone say, 'At the end of the programme, I want to be selling rice,' we indicate and record your name, and then put it aside. So, if you are 5 (pronouncing the same plan), we blend you together. We were doing the writing on blackboard as they declared their plans/goals." (Mentor KII, Pujehun)*

While the group in Kambia seems to have followed a similar process, the Mentor also indicated that they were careful to tell the beneficiaries not to copy what the other friends have written:

*"Because we did not want other people to write what their friends are writing so I was telling them to decide on exactly what they want and stop writing what others are writing because it will disturb them so I was there to Guide them on it." (Mentor KII, Kambia)*

The other Mentors did not provide as much precision and may have worked with girls individually or in unspecified groups.

When asked whether or not this process accommodated the needs of all girls with various sub-group identities, most Mentors interviewed indicated that the process was very appropriate for EAGER beneficiaries including those with children and/or pregnant. A Mentor in Koinadugu and another in WAU also specified that the process worked well for two girls with disabilities in their group. Unfortunately, a Mentor in Pujehun reported challenges working with a beneficiary who seemed to experience periodic mental illness. The Mentor noted that it was challenging to work with this beneficiary as she would have episodes, often not come to sessions, and/or fall asleep during sessions. The beneficiary still was able to graduate from EAGER. No additional details were available. All of the Mentors interviewed indicated that the process did not create additional risks for the beneficiaries.

As might be expected, some LS Officers and Mentors noted it was a struggle to get girls to decide on a single plan, especially early in the process of writing Empowerment Plan. As one LS Officer explained,

*“It is not easy to sit down with those girls and do their Empowerment Plan because today she will say, ‘I want to do this business’ and tomorrow she will say another business so that was really hectic for me as I have to be changing their plans again and again until we get a specific one....I was able to encourage them and when they come with their business plan I was with them to know the kind of business they want to go into, the advantages and disadvantages of the business and if the business will be successful and where they are planning to do the business. Those who wanted to do joint businesses [with other EAGER participants], we tell them the advantage and disadvantage so I was able to guide them through this Empowerment Plan which makes it to be successful.” (LS Officer KII, Kambia)*

The other most commonly cited challenge was the literacy and writing skills of some girls preventing them from independently writing out the form. Mentors in Bo, Kono and Port Loko indicated this challenge. A Mentor in Bo and Koinadugu commented that they helped girls write out their plans when beneficiaries had difficulties completing the written form. This was expected and planned for in the programme design as it was understood that there would be varied literacy levels among the girls and that some girls would not be able to write in full sentences. A Mentor in Kono also indicated that the Facilitator often intervened to help girls with writing. These practices seem to be largely in line with the Mentors’ Guide. In discussion with the CCU, EAGER Leadership indicated that, on occasion, Mentors may have supported the beneficiaries by writing out some of the plans as girls dictated the details, recognising the varied levels of writing skills among girls as well as time constraints. A Mentor explained this process, in her case, as follows:

*“My work with the girls was a smooth one, first I encourage them and help them in their Empowerment Plan, and some were unable to write so I will help them to and the ones that can write I will spell for them to write their Empowerment Plan. The Empowerment Plan was later collected for approval and I was still monitoring the girls until they deliver to them their Empowerment Package and cash.” (Mentor KII, Koinadugu)*

The evaluation also shines light on beneficiaries’ perspectives of the process of developing the written Empowerment Plan. Nearly all (98.4 percent) of beneficiaries surveyed said that the Financial Literacy Sessions helped them decide on their financial empowerment goals, and 99.3 percent stated that it helped them make a plan to achieve those goals. Girls participating in focus groups also expressed that the approach to developing goals met their expectations. Nine of the 10 focus groups responded affirmatively and most participants emphasised how their lives had changed due to EAGER and how they had benefited from newly developed skills and especially, the cash grant. Two FGDs, provided deeper insights into girls’ goal setting experiences and learnings. During the FGD in Koinadugu, all the girls agreed that they had received adequate support to develop their goals while two girls expressed how new the process had been to them:

*Beneficiary 1: “The challenges I was having was all the training was difficult for me to understand. I never knew what was meaning of ‘goal was’. EAGER gave us support and we made good use of the support.”*

*Beneficiary 2: "I thought goal was used in football. We received support from them." (Girls FGD, Koinadugu)*

*P1: "Hmm...If I could say, the process was good because the fact that we were given the chance to learn and choose what we want in future, I think it was good for us. For instance, I had always wanted to learn a skill or engage in doing something that is beneficial to me and one that could earn me money. So, when this chance came to our community, I was happy about it and I like everything."*

*P2: "I like the education part also because at first, there was no one amongst us that who could read and write, neither had a deep sense of identifying a goal for oneself, but the process of EAGER has trained us in that."*

*P3: "I like everything about the process because for instance when we finished the programme, they came with this idea of Empowerment Plan and setting a goal but none of had a knowledge about it but the teachers trained us, explained to us and even took their time to teach us how do it." (Girls FGD, Kailahun)*

At the same time, one group from Kenema emphatically disagreed and shared that they felt very disappointed by the process. They focused specifically on the amount of the cash grant and a misunderstanding that they would be receiving five times more money than they did (1.5 million LE rather than 300,000). (See later Section focusing on Challenges in Project Communication.) It seems they had difficulty appreciating other parts of the Empowerment Plan process given their dissatisfaction with the cash transfer. The next sub-section explores in greater detail the effectiveness of the cash grant, including the amount provided.

### Effectiveness of cash transfers

As indicated earlier, EAGER provided every EAGER beneficiary who graduated from the project with a 300,000 cash grant to be used in support of girls' empowerment goals. This Section explores the various perspectives on the effectiveness of the cash transfer.

#### **Challenges encountered during distribution**

Interviews with key EAGER stakeholders, including the IRC Country Director, CCU members, the Fund Manager and FCDO all emphasised the ambitious nature of providing money to over 7,000 beneficiaries at the same time. Doing so required adhering to strict partner requirements for exit interviews as well as that accounting staff personally accompany distribution efforts. Internally, the process also required mobilising all administrative departments: finance, supply chains, operations and M&E (EAGER Leadership KII).

The cash distribution took over 2 months to reach all beneficiaries. EAGER Leadership interviewed also expressed the innovative nature of the design that provides both cash and an in-kind Empowerment Package. The staff member also noted that the approach had to take into account the young age of the girls and recognised that most girls did not have access to a cell phone or bank account, nor did they have official IDs, necessitating physical cash transfer and alternative ways of identifying girls at the cash distribution point. As field-level stakeholders and EAGER Leadership pointed out, the gap between graduation and the cash distribution meant that a limited number of beneficiaries did not receive the cash grant as they had changed locations.

Nearly all (99.0%) of beneficiaries surveyed for the Endline Evaluation indicated receiving the cash: this is similar to EAGER's internal monitoring data, which only found 4 of 5,835 participants interviewed hadn't received Le 300,000 from the programme. These results may reflect sampling bias, however, as it is likely that the beneficiaries who did not receive cash would not show up for internal or external surveys.

In spite of these challenges, EAGER Leadership sees the cash distribution as a success and, according to interviews with EAGER Leadership, has put into place reinforced systems to ensure strengthened preparation and implementation of cash distribution for Cohort 2. Stakeholders interviewed generally agree that the cash transfer was beneficial, though those who felt disillusioned or disappointed voiced strong dissatisfaction. The paragraphs below explore these findings in greater detail.

### ***Cash amount largely sufficient***

Without doubt, all types of respondents considered the cash received as essential to support the transition period. As discussed in the Value for Money Section below, 42.9 percent of beneficiaries surveyed stated that the cash distribution was the most important ingredient to achieving their Empowerment Plan. At the time of Endline Evaluation data collection, one-third of beneficiaries surveyed (32.1 percent) indicated having spent all of the money while around the same proportions still retained less than half and half of it, respectively. Only 4.9 percent of respondents indicated having all of the money. These figures vary considerably between districts, with nearly all (92.3%) girls in Koinadugu retaining more than half compared to less than a tenth (7.4%) of beneficiaries in WAU. Recall from the Relevance Section above that EAGER advised girls to spend the money quickly in order to minimise risk and to begin their work towards their transition goals expediently.

Analysis made use of a probit regression model to identify the barriers associated with spending less than half of their Empowerment Plan.<sup>43</sup> The model identified two reasons most closely associated with not spending their money by the Endline interview: that (1) items had increased in price or were no longer available, or (2) they did not receive enough support from Facilitators or Mentors. Price and availability changes were a barrier noted by 31.6 percent of respondents, and among them, 59.1 percent had not spent half of their money. In one way, it seems paradoxical that beneficiaries facing higher prices would be less likely to spend all of their money. However, if they are unable to afford upfront costs to start their business, they are likely to save that money until they can afford them. The second barrier related with not spending their money, insufficient support from Facilitators and Mentors, was rare: only 2.7 percent of respondents stated it was a barrier; however, of these respondents, 57.5 percent had spent less than half of their money.

In addition, nearly all (95.0%) of beneficiaries surveyed indicated using the money received towards their financial goal. Only a small proportion (4.1%) of girls reported using the money for other purposes, although it bears mention that the design of the Transition Phase permits beneficiaries to use the money towards a household, community or learning goal as well. In addition, according to beneficiary surveys, 62.6 percent of respondents stated that they used the financial support for their Empowerment Plan as budgeted, and 32.6 percent used it for their Empowerment Plan, but not according to their original budgets.

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<sup>43</sup> Probit analysis regressed the binary variable representing spending less than half on the listed main barriers to reaching financial goals.

Of the 5 percent that did not use it according to their Empowerment Plan, the most common uses were to pay for education costs or unforeseen medical expenses. Qualitative findings agree but also shed light on the unfortunate case of beneficiaries using the money to cover funeral expenses. The quote below illustrates a beneficiary lamenting on not being able to use the funds as planned. This same beneficiary later added that she was very grateful to have had the experience of having received the cash.

*"The money was used for some personal stuffs and that is not how I intended to spend it. Even though it was not enough but it was a great help because it came at a time my child was sick so I used it my child wellbeing. I had plans to sell and the profit gather will use to start another business but it did not go that way."(Girl KII, Kenema)*

Qualitative data generally demonstrate enthusiasm and appreciation for the funds provided. For example, 27 of 29 girls responding to qualitative questions about the use of the EAGER cash explained specifically how they used the 300,000 Leones in line with their Empowerment Plan goals. Most of the beneficiaries explained that they used the money to begin their businesses. As one girl explained,

*"Yes, the money has helped me, even though the money is not enough to solve all my problems but things are far better than how they were before EAGER came to this community." (Girl KII, Tonkolili)*

In three cases, girls explained that the money was sufficient for two purposes. A girl in WAU used half to pay for a tailoring class and invested the other half in her business. Another in Koinadugu explained how she invested half in her business and the other half in an *osusu*, as security for when her business would be slow. A third beneficiary in Kono split the money between her business and gardening.

As the Impact Section will explore further, many girls indicated that they have been able to convert the money into profits that have been very useful to them. One beneficiary explained how she was able to obtain life-saving services after a miscarriage, for instance:

*"Three hundred thousand I was given to me and I realise a lot profit from the business I did. I used the money to take myself to the hospital. I would have been a dead person by now without the money and God. " (Girl KII, Koinadugu)*

The majority of male partners (15 of 20) and nearly all boys who spoke about cash received (7 of 9) similarly expressed appreciation for the money and how it has helped EAGER participants, and in some cases, their families more generally. Caregiver responses were more ambiguous, as discussed later. The following quotes illustrate examples of stakeholder support for the amount of cash provided.

*"Well actually to my own understanding the programme has ended and I heard that they gave them money which was 300,000 Leones. The 300,000 Leones that was given to them, they said it was for business purpose and they are really doing the businesses and we are beginning to see some improvement in their lives compared to before." (Boy KII, Pujehun)*

*“She told me she was going to buy cake flour to be frying cakes for sale and also some fish, which she takes to other villages to sell. I agreed and supported her to achieve that goal and I am seeing that she is doing well in it and I am happy for her and I thank God for the change. Although the money that was given was so small, she is doing well with it as according to the savings, she is almost climbing up to 500,000 Le.” (Male partner KII, Kailahun)*

*“Yes. The help is plenty. Initially, the money they gave my wife, when she was doing business with it, the business she did, it reached a point where she got a profit of 250,000. It helped her very biological child in the aspect of school, and it came from what? It came from this EAGER programme. So, that’s one complete help. Secondly, even myself, when I got sick, **the profit**, she had to squeeze and take me to the hospital, more than fifty thousand. What does it come from? It came from the EAGER programme. So, thirdly, it may happen today, me her husband, me the man, the profit she gets, it may happen today that I’m lacking and there is no food, so, she can check her pocket and buy the food we eat.” (Male partner KII, Pujehun)*

At the same time, project staff underscored that the cash transfer is intended for progress towards the girls’ goals and such use may not be fully appropriate if taking away from her efforts.

#### **Cash amount insufficient for others**

While the cash was indispensable for many, the amount provided was not adequate for some girls to reach their conceived empowerment goals. Of those surveyed, 33.6 percent stated that one of the main barriers to their Empowerment Plan was that the cash distribution was insufficient to realistically achieve their goal. Overall, 11.3 percent of beneficiaries said that the financial support was not reasonably adequate. As a result, girls interviewed explained, either additional money was added (usually obtained from a family member) in order to continue with the plan (7 of 29 responses), or the plan was scaled back (12 of 29 responses). Beneficiaries told of how mothers, uncles, sisters and brothers provided additional funds to either purchase business inputs or to complete funds to enrol in a training programme. The focus group excerpt below provides an example of how beneficiaries in a community with access to a tailoring training programme have succeeded in supplementing their money to enrol in the class:

*Beneficiary 1: “When we finished working on the Empowerment Plan, the EAGER programme gave us a sum of 300,000 and I took it home to my parents and they asked me what I want to do with my money, if I want to do business like buying dresses or other business. But, I told my mother, ‘because I did not go to school, I will use the money to pay for tailoring class.’ So, my mother and I went to the tailoring centre and she pay the money for the tailoring class and the teachers mentioned that I should buy materials for practical exercises and for that my mother did some additional payment for the other things that I will be using...”*

*Beneficiary 2: “The money that they gave to me, I used it to learn tailoring but it was not enough and my sister helped out. In working towards my goal, I have learned much in tailoring because I put so much effort into learning and I am using that to help my family and solve my own problems. I have a challenge in buying the materials for practical exercises because I had to*

*borrow money from my sister and was afraid not to spoil the material that I bought because it is expensive.”*

*Beneficiary 3: “After the EAGER programme I gave my money to my aunt for us to do business, she is doing the buying and I am the one that is selling the items that she buys. The challenges that I faced is that the money was not enough for me to do the skill work I wanted to do unless I have to switch to business and the profit will use it later to pay for the class.” (Girls FGD, WAU)*

Qualitative data clarifies that those who shifted their plans due to receiving less money than expected all scaled down to petty trading. Three of the beneficiaries indicated that they did not pursue catering ambitions, while two beneficiaries shifted from tailoring and another from hairdressing. Two girls changed from selling clothes to other items (donuts and bread, respectively).

*“I attended the EAGER class from the start to finish and at the end of the class the issues of Empowerment Plan came in and so I worked with my Mentor to draft it but I chose the goal for myself. When I got the money, I took a determination to sell clothes but when the money was not enough, I changed my mind to fried Don-Not [donut] cake.” (Girls KII, Kailahun)*

*“As for my own daughter, she is selling fish with her mother. They combined their capital as one because the money given to her was too small to do a business.” (Caregiver FGD, Kailahun)*

For those who found funds to supplement the EAGER cash, the most common response was that they sought additional funds to purchase a 50-kilogram bag of rice. It seems that the cost was just more than what EAGER provided, according to one girl, a difference of 60,000 Le. EAGER's response to the Midterm Evaluation as well as subsequent correspondence with the CCU, indicates that the amount of money budgeted for Cohort 2 cash transfers is larger. Findings suggest that providing at least enough money to purchase a 50-kilogram bag of rice may make a meaningful difference.

In many cases, stakeholders detailed how the cash transfer would serve as a stepping stone towards a different activity, such as training, a different business or saving (in an osusu, for example).

*“Yes, I was given Le, 300,000 and now I have raised up to 6,000,000 JLe. I was buying slippers and selling, so I kept managing my profits to reach the amount. We were told to manage our profits everyday by saving, so I am saving 100,000 Le from my profits. So, I believe from now to the raining season, my savings will be ok. It is not the way I planned to use the money...I had wanted to do hairdressing...the money is not enough...That is why instead of just holding on to this money, or my husband using it without refunding it, let me use this money in buying and selling slippers. So, in the future, after making enough money, I will now turn to my empowerment goal by making my own salon. ” (Girl, KII, Kambia)*

*Caregiver 1: "Yes the money is helpful because they are doing business and buying stuff for themselves. First I use to buy everything my daughter needs but now she can handle that, but I would still ask her where did you get this money from to buy these things and she will tell me it is from the business she is doing."*

*Caregiver 2: "For my daughter, the cash is very useful because the business that she started with has yielded to another business and she is now operating a mini business in the market. I was not expecting that but now she has additional items to sell like soft drinks, mayonnaise etc."*

*Caregiver 3: "The cash helped my daughter to do business, before she did not have any idea how to do business. Even when the business start collapsing I helped her to join an osusu, so when they contribute for her she will buy items again to sell."*

*Caregiver 4: "For my daughter the money was helpful and she is doing business but when she saw that she cannot save the money to herself she join the osusu." (Caregiver FGD, Koinadugu)*

Taken cumulatively, these findings suggest that, while many beneficiaries were able to put the empowerment cash towards achieving their goals, some girls may not have had adequate information or guidance in order to establish a first goal and accompanying budget that was reasonable. The complex operational context in which beneficiaries have high expectations for financial support further complicates perceptions of the cash transfer. Findings may also suggest that LS Officers, Facilitators and Mentors need additional capacity building. Indeed, some LS Officers and Mentors interviewed commented on the challenges of orienting beneficiaries during the empowerment process. As one LS Officer commented,

*"The challenge has to do with the money which EAGER assigned to each girl because some girls want to start up a business but [the cash] is only limited to 300,000 Le. The question is, 'which type of business can you start up with 300,000? How effective will the business be?' Because the girls have huge dreams and vision, like they want to start something big like after the EAGER project but they only have limited fund which is a great challenge to go back to the drawing board and say, 'let us do the Empowerment Plan again because the money that is here exceeds the budget that EAGER allocates to you.'" (LS Officer KII, WAU)*

Nonetheless, many of the girls interviewed were resilient and innovative, and demonstrated creative problem-solving such as seeking family support and adjusting plans to be more realistic. Many have had some success with this alternative plan. Alternatively, it may have been beneficial for girls to see the steps towards achieving their financial goal as incremental ones that would occur over the long-term. We next turn to how framing of the cash transfer may have influenced the effectiveness of the EAGER cash provided.



### **Challenges in project communications regarding cash transfer**

Findings from the qualitative data suggest that there was confusion about the usage of the cash as well as the amount of cash to be provided. While the project design underscored the use of the cash to support girls' financial empowerment, it was intended to for any financial use that would generally fall into any of the four empowerment domains<sup>44</sup>. In practice, its usage is nearly ubiquitous with business purposes. In addition, three of the 17 Mentors who responded to questions about how girls used the EAGER cash described the empowerment cash as having the purpose of supporting businesses<sup>45</sup>. They indicated that, *"they were given money to do business,"* (Mentor KII, Koinadugu #1), *"the package was given to the girls for business purposes,"* (Mentor KII, Kenema #1), and *"the girls were given money to engage in business"* (Mentor KII, Kono #2). These comments seemingly omit application to the other empowerment domains (learning, household and community) and suggest that EAGER may need to ensure a broader framing of the potential uses of the money if all four domains are to be considered by girls as transition options.

Moreover, the perspective that the amount received was not sufficient to achieve empowerment goals a girl has set may be partially a result of some stakeholders' expectations that girls were going to get more money than the 300,000 Leones - up to 1.5 million Leones according to some - articulated in 4 of 10 communities by at least one interview with girls, caregivers, and others:

*"The rumour that we heard about the money is quite different from the actual money that they brought for us. We were hearing that the money is Le 500,000 and some others were saying Le 1,000,000, but the day they came with the money and assembled us here, and then started calling us, everyone was receiving Le300,000. So, we became very discouraged. Because, even to our Mentors, they were saying that they are coming with plenty of money for us."*  
(Girls FGD, Bo)

*"No, the EAGER approach did not meet our needs because we were hearing they are going to give us 1,500,000 Le value of market goods to do business but that did not happen."* (Girls FGD, Kenema)

Caregiver 1: *"Actually the money they promised these girls was 500,000 Le each and they ended up given them 300,000 Le. But, we will not deny it [the benefit of the 300,000 Le] because it is a favour they are doing to them, but actually the girls are not happy with the reduction in the money."*

Caregiver 2: *"I was also part of the meeting wherein they promised the girls that they will receive 500,000 Le each and they were very happy. And, later they called them again and told them, 'The money is now going to be 300,000 Le.' Most of the girls were very angry over that and even wanted to reject the money but I told them not to do that. They are just rendering help to them so whatever money they receive should be accepted because it is not something you guys worked for which you are entitled to pay. What they have taught you should also be beneficial if you put it into practice."* (Caregiver FGD, Kono)

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<sup>44</sup> Annual Report Year 3; Transition design document; Discussion with CCU members (March 9, 2022)

<sup>45</sup> In the context of EAGER, "business" is a broad term that encompasses small-scale trading, services and production.

The Midterm Evaluation had already revealed misconceptions about the sum of the expected cash transfers and included a specific recommendation to clarify messaging with beneficiaries as well as with community stakeholders. The project response indicated that messaging had been clarified at the beginning of the Financial Literacy sessions preceding the Midterm Evaluation and that EAGER “never formally mentioned any figure of the cash amount that was to be distributed.” The project indicated rumours as well as the challenging of receiving approvals for project adaptations and uncertainties of the FCDO funding situation during Year 2 as constraints the project had to manage that affected the sum of the cash transfers. The project has also indicated that Cohort 2 beneficiaries would likely receive a slightly higher amount<sup>46</sup>. Findings suggest that such mitigation would further improve attitudes towards the cash transfer and potentially improve the next group of beneficiaries’ transition experience.

### Empowerment Package Distribution

Recall that EAGER distributed an Empowerment Package to each graduating beneficiary that included a cloth wrap, plastic bucket, solar light and a wooden cash box with lock. As indicated earlier, the Empowerment Package served the dual purpose of providing girls with items that may be hard to access and to provide an in-kind contribution that would not put girls at risk like a larger cash amount might (see Relevance Section above). In interviews with both CCU members and managing project partner staff, they indicated an extensive brainstorming process with consortium partners in order to identify items that would complement and support the Transition Phase. Much thought went into standardising items across partners. EAGER Leadership<sup>47</sup> interviewed also noted discussions with girls and a Mentor survey to try to identify the most appropriate items while at the same time carefully balancing expectations. Discussions with caregivers about items to be distributed also took place. While the Endline Evaluation is not specifically investigating efficiency, the project faced significant challenges for all three operating partners to procure the same items for over 7,000 girls in a short period of time. As a CCU member noted,

*“The actual procurement side of these things and the availability of goods and services in Sierra Leone, what is possible in the market and our budget, plus the pressure on teams...What we could procure in the end was not what we had hoped to procure.” (EAGER Leadership, KII)*

Project monitoring data and Endline qualitative interviews with community-level stakeholders and project leadership (#3) indicate their awareness that some items have underperformed as well as a resolve to address issues for Cohort 2. Monitoring data indicate that one quarter (24.5 percent of girls expressed that not all of the Empowerment Package items were useful to the girls; of this proportion over half of girls surveyed reported not needing or questioning the quality of the lockbox and the solar light (58.98 percent and 51.1 percent, respectively). Stakeholders interviewed noted problems with the solar light, including that it was not of high quality and susceptible to failure. EAGER Leadership interviewed expressed greatest dissatisfaction with the cashbox, indicating it was a large wooden box when directives had been that it be small in order not to attract unwanted attention. Despite clear specifications on size, reports indicate that the lock box may have been larger than originally intended.

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<sup>46</sup> Midterm Evaluation, p. 146; correspondence with Isabel (email)

<sup>47</sup> Sources: EAGER Leadership #2, 3, 4, 5, and 7.

At the same time, another project staff (EAGER Leadership), underlined the importance of the cash box keeping money safe and reducing theft within the family. Interviews with girls and male partners also indicated support for the cash boxes received as well as girls' commonly expressed concerns that internal theft could dampen their transition efforts.

Despite these challenges, Endline Evaluation stakeholder feedback on the Empowerment Package distribution, more strongly suggest that the package has been largely effective in both aiding girls in their transition and garnering continued support for EAGER. Beneficiary Endline survey data report that one third (33.3 percent) of girls found the Empowerment Package items to be helpful while 61.0 percent found them to be "very" or "extremely helpful." Qualitative data support these findings. Half of both focus groups with beneficiaries (5 of 10) and caregivers (2 of 4) expressed general satisfaction with all items of the package while just under half of male partners (8 of 20) did the same. These figures are higher for individual items. Interview data demonstrate, though few, that complaints about the Empowerment Packages either identified some items as unnecessary or of low quality or that girls would have preferred receiving more cash instead of the items.

Both girls and male partners interviewed provided details of how these items are being used during the Transition Phase, as indicated in the table below:

*Table 24: Examples of Use of Empowerment Package Items*

Item	Use
<b>Bucket</b>	Drinking, washing, chamber pot, storing child's clothing
<b>Cloth wrap (<i>lappa</i>)</b>	Wear to market, around house, after shower, baby carrying, tailored into church outfit or for EAGER graduation event
<b>Solar light</b>	Selling at market, to sleep, studying (self or children), toileting at night, charging phones with light and assess fee of 1,000 LE per charge (Girls FGD, Pujehun)
<b>Cash lockbox with lock</b>	Keep money safe, store Empowerment Plan

The quote below provides illustration of some girls' appreciation of the items received:

*"The disposable battery I used to buy, sometimes, I buy and just a day it's done/weak. But presently, the light they've given to me, in the morning, I place in the sun and it gets charged and later at night, I sleep on it. The rubber bucket I have it and the cashbox. At first, they often succeed in stealing me, but now, I have out smart them by a point to nil. The money I earn, I place it in my cashbox and close it tightly and then I carry my key. I really thank God."  
(Girls FGD, Bo)*

Findings also seem to demonstrate that male partners and caregivers view the items as an important overture to the entire family from the project. In some cases, men express clear satisfaction in being able to use the items. For instance, two male partners described storing money in the lockbox with the permission of their EAGER partner. The quote below provides illustration of some male partner's pleasure with the items, and their recognition of the project's effective assistance:

*“Well, I saw light, and a rubber bucket...Well, it did a lot of things, the rubber [bucket] they gave to them is what we’re drinking from today. That’s one complete help. The light they gave them, today, this faithful day, is what we are sleeping on in the room. The sanitary pads they gave to our wives, presently our wives are using it.” (Male partner KII, Pujehun)*

In sum, despite procurement challenges and need for continued improvement, while not perfect the distribution of the Empowerment Package seems to have stimulated much justified and symbolic enthusiasm for the EAGER project, and small yet significant improvements in their life among beneficiaries as well as their caregivers and male partners. The Value for Money Section below explores its benefit in more detail.

### Continued contact with EAGER Mentors

Continued contact between EAGER participants and project Mentors is a key ingredient in the EAGER transition design<sup>48</sup>. Two structured check-ins are part of the process, scheduled for November 2021 (took place in December 2021) and March 2022, approximately four and seven months after graduation from the Learning Phase. A member of the EAGER CCU enthusiastically described the check-in meetings as follows:

*“The girls are having a personal cheerleader and somebody who is invested in them as well, someone who is checking in with them. It is an accountability mechanism as well for them to have someone who is following up. It’s part of what we envisioned Mentoring to be from the beginning.” (EAGER Leadership, KII)*

Of beneficiaries surveyed at Endline, 92.6 percent reported that they had checked in with their Mentors at least one time since the end of Learning Sessions. Nearly all (99.9 percent) of beneficiaries also report Mentor support to be “helpful” with 48.1 percent indicating “very helpful” and one-fifth (21.9 percent) of beneficiaries indicating “extremely helpful.” Overall, less than 2 percent of responses (only 28 out of 1,609) stated that Mentors were not at all or only a little bit helpful. While responses in all districts were very high, they were significantly higher in Kailahun and Pujehun.

Qualitative data from girls and other community-level stakeholders similarly suggest continued contact with Mentors has been effective for supporting girls’ transitions. While not all girls’ FGDs responded to a sub-question focused on the December check-in, of those that did, 3 three focus groups found the check-in meetings to be informative and motivating. Two other groups indicated that the check-ins made the girls accountable for earning money specifically during the Transition Phase. In a focus group in Bo, the beneficiaries expressed how the Mentor seeks them out and asks what the girls are doing with the money received from EAGER. She also has provided advice to invest the money little by little in order to have profit that can help take care of the children and cover gaps in home earnings.

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<sup>48</sup> EAGER. (n.d.). EAGER Transition Design – an Overview, p. 2.

One of the beneficiaries expressed that the Mentor provides her with motivation and support:

*“Like the money they gave to us, she monitors me in relation to that money, since I have no husband. I have children, but I alone carry their burden, assisted by my mom. She [the Mentor] does go and encourages/counsels me, telling me, the business I’m now doing, I’ll be able to use the profit to attend to the needs of my kids. Just for me not to sit idling. She says that ‘because, even if you keep the money, it can’t increase [by itself].” (Girls’ FGD, Bo)*

Qualitative findings demonstrate that other community-level stakeholders, specifically male partners and caregivers, also identify the benefit of the check-ins for supporting girls’ transition. A caregiver explained how her daughter had stopped her business, but picked it back up again after the check-in with a Mentor. A caregivers focus group in Kailahun also expressed how the Mentor regularly visits with their daughters and motivates and advises them. Some male partners interviewed provided rich descriptions of how contact with Mentors been useful for providing the beneficiary with direction and keeping her focused and serious about her plan and promoting accountability for how the money was used. One male partner indicated how the check-in also made him more respectful of his female partner’s money and reluctant to touch it. Another provided even more clear support of the check-ins:

*“I am aware of the several check- in meetings that the Mentor has had with my wife. Those meetings are relevant to her. She has been engaged on the progress she has been doing with the business and support her in areas where she has difficulties. The Mentor has always encouraged her to maintain the viability of the business, and discourages unnecessary expenditure. All of those discussions have positively impacted on the business orientation of my wife, and therefore, I am happy about those discussions because they serve as a means of motivation and support towards the empowerment goals set during the course of the sessions.” (Male partner KII, Kenema)*

At the same time, findings indicate challenges to the check-in process and consistent Mentoring. Two girls’ focus groups, in Kailahun and WAU, were less enthusiastic about the check-ins and indicated that contact with Mentors may not have been regular. Some Mentors interviewed also indicated challenges with remaining in touch with beneficiaries Post-Learning Phase. For example, a Mentor in Tonkolili noted that many of the girls were dispersed in surrounding villages making it challenging to visit them and noting transportation money being an issue. A Mentor in WAU similarly noted that the girls had moved, while a Mentor in another district had herself changed locations and had not had contact with beneficiaries since the December check-in.

When asked if Mentors felt they had received sufficient support from EAGER in order to support the Transition Phase, over half of Mentors (13 of 20) responded positively. They cited the EAGER curricular content, training, stipend and transportation money, EAGER materials/books, and increased confidence and recognition within the community as important resources to help them be supportive of EAGER participants. Only 2 Mentors indicated wishing to receive additional stipend money. Other Mentors advocated for increased cash for the girls and for meetings to offer the beneficiaries food. One Mentor indicated wishing to be recognised officially as project staff, rather than as a volunteer. Finally, one Mentor, while she agreed that she received sufficient support from EAGER, also explained how since the December check-in, she has not checked in due to a lack of transportation funds (as indicated above.)

## Girls' Clubs: Some Indications of Effectiveness

EAGER conceived of EAGER Girls' Clubs as an informal way for girls to keep meeting and maintain momentum towards their empowerment goals during the Transition Phase. As described in the Year 3 annual report, "Girls' Clubs also have the potential to continue reinforcing the bonds and sense of solidarity that the girls have been building."<sup>49</sup> While the project made the suggestion to girls to participate in Girls' Clubs during the Learning Phase, the EAGER Club's formation and continuity would depend upon the interest and initiative of girls within that particular community. EAGER is not able to formally facilitate or follow-up with Girls' Clubs. The project intends to provide each Cohort group within EAGER communities with a set of materials to support and incentivise regular meetings that would include a Girls' Club guide, USB stick with recording of radio show *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*, bluetooth speaker, and a football. EAGER was in the process of distributing Girls' Club materials during February 2022, at the same time that data collection for the Endline Evaluation occurred.

As indicated above, 70.0 percent of the quantitative sample reported that there had been Girls' Club meetings in their community. However, there is significant variation between districts (See Sustainability Outcome Indicator 2). In Koinadugu and Kailahun, over 95 percent of respondents state that Girls' Club meetings have taken place in their community. However, only 23.4 percent of participants in WAU report Girls' Clubs activities in their communities, and just under half of respondents in Kambia and Pujehun report Girls' Clubs activities. The quantitative surveys were conducted before EAGER had distributed materials in all areas, so activities may have increased after the Girls' Club materials were distributed.

The 30 beneficiaries interviewed had the opportunity to comment on the effectiveness of the Girls' Clubs. While it seems likely that few of the meetings are formally "EAGER Girls' Club" meetings, around a third of the interviewees noted that they see other EAGER participants informally. Like the quantitative analysis above the data display district variation. Beneficiaries in Bo, Kambia, Koinadugu and Pujehun indicated that their Clubs were active. In addition, the Clubs within sampled communities in Bo, Kambia and Pujehun are reported to be holding regular meetings that are weekly or biweekly. One respondent from both Bo and WAU reported having received EAGER Girls' Club materials. In Kambia, the group purchased their own football prior to EAGER materials distribution and the Mentor serves as their football coach. Most often, girls reported spending time with each other to discuss issues, largely associated with business but also with their roles and rights within the home and community.

*"I love talking to my colleagues. I love the fun during meetings. I love when we are singing those songs that we were taught during the programme. That is why I love when we meet. Even the ideas we give to one another are vital...In our meetings we discuss our various businesses. We ask ourselves how much profit each of us makes, and advise each other to manage our monies well." (Girl KII, Kambia)*

In two examples, in Bo and in Pujehun, the Girls' Clubs serve as a cooperative in which girls provide financial support to each other. In Bo, the group has engaged together in an VSLA (osusu) and the girls specifically support each other with funds when a girl needs money in order to pay school fees. A beneficiary in Pujehun described activities that are even more entrepreneurial in nature, including jointly hiring farming support and assessing interest on loans to each other:

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<sup>49</sup> EAGER LNGB Annual Project Report (APR) Y3. (July 2021), p. 8.

*“We normally contribute money whenever we meet, and we use that money to support our colleagues in the Club who have problems. We do the contribution on a weekly basis. We also use the money on other issues such as agriculture, where we pay boys to help us in our agricultural works. The money we give out to our colleagues is in the form of a loan. They will pay back upon an agreed time given to them.” (Girl KII, Pujehun)*

While data indicate that some of the groups of girls within qualitative communities have been able to initiate and sustain Girls’ Clubs activities, a number of challenges limit the potential and effectiveness of the EAGER Girls’ Clubs. Although most respondents surveyed who have attended Girls’ Club meetings report them as useful, many report that either they do not have time to participate, or the meetings are in locations that are not near where they live. Qualitative findings agree as, in addition to delayed delivery of support items, girls interviewed most often noted relocation of beneficiaries and distance between the girls as being impediments to their continued contact. Others noted that interest in the Clubs varies among the girls and that many face competing demands on their time such as business efforts and household chores. To a lesser extent, beneficiaries also cited the withdrawal of EAGER support and Mentor absence as a challenge for establishing Girls’ Clubs. While the Girls’ Clubs, by design were optional, findings suggest that forming a club may require significant motivation and coordination on the part of girls which may not be possible for many groups of beneficiaries. In addition to developing materials for Girls’ Clubs, additional support in providing locations may improve attendance.

### Effectiveness of SBCC Messaging

EAGER includes a component on SBCC to address the harmful norms, attitudes and practices that pose barriers in the lives of adolescent girls. Activities within the multi-format SBCC approach include the broadcast of a factual radio show (*Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*) and an upcoming radio drama and discussion show (*Kotoku Baray*), creation and dissemination of social media content, and Mentoring and technical support for 18 partner radio stations on producing gender-sensitive programmes. The radio shows aim to “present issues through the eyes of girls and role model supportive attitudes and practices towards adolescent girls.”<sup>50</sup> Since SBCC activities seek to change negative norms and attitudes, the radio show primarily “targets the community around the girl that exerts influence on her life,” including parents, caregivers, partners, community and religious leaders, but also adolescent girls.

EAGER’s radio drama and discussion show was in production at the time of the Endline Evaluation report writing with plans to broadcast in May 2022 (BBC Media Action, KII). *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* began airing in July 2020 and has covered topics relevant to the barriers and social norms that many out-of-school girls face. At the time of data collection, the show had covered 72 (out of a target 108) topics<sup>51</sup>. Project data indicate that since EAGER began in 2019, each episode of *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* has reached at least 64,000 people across all 16 districts of the country with each of the 64 radio stations that broadcast it reporting a listening population of at least 1,000 people.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> EAGER. (2021). Background Section. In Sarr etc- Midterm p. 17

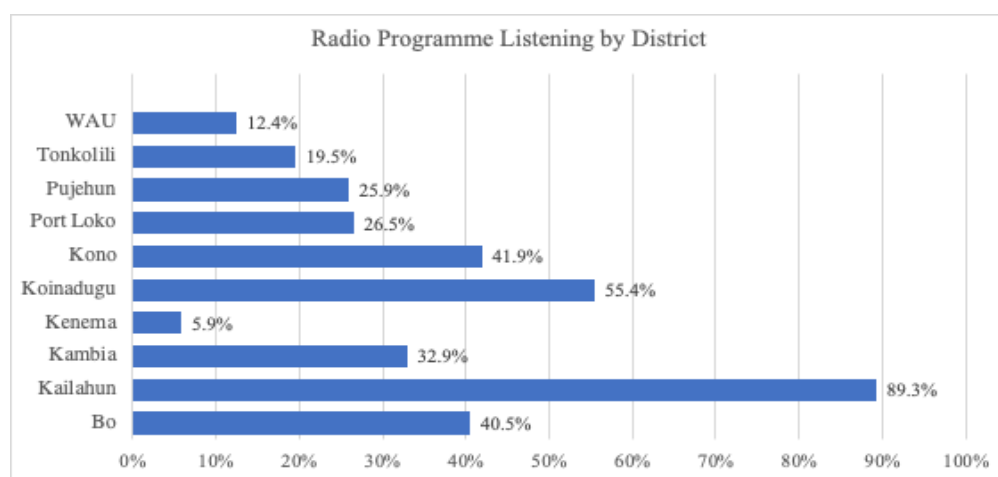
<sup>51</sup> BBC Media Action – Sierra Leone. (2022). EAGER Topics So Far. (Internal communication); EAGER. (2022) EAGER Project BBC Media Action: Strategy, Emerging Impact and Coordination (Draft).

<sup>52</sup> EAGER. (2022) EAGER Project BBC Media Action: Strategy, Emerging Impact and Coordination (Draft).

In this Effectiveness Section, we briefly touch upon Endline findings on the participation of EAGER beneficiaries and their families in radio programming. *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* is the focus of inquiry. The later Sustainability Question (#2) focusing on gender norms provides additional information on the emerging impact of EAGER’s SBCC activities. Comparing present external Endline Evaluation findings with findings from BBC Media Action’s Midterm Report, may provide further insights<sup>5354</sup>.

Endline Evaluation survey responses indicate that over half (60.3 percent) of sampled caregivers listen to the radio. The primary reason caregivers give for not listening is that they do not own a radio (33.5 percent). One third of caregivers (36.0 percent) have listened to *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*. Rates vary considerably by district and range from only 5.9 percent of caregivers having listened in Kenema to 89.3 percent of caregivers in Kailahun. In addition, *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* listeners indicate relatively frequent listening as four-fifths of affirmative respondents indicate listening to the show at least “sometimes.” Over half (57.8 percent) of those who listen to the show report doing so within the past seven days, again with great variation depending upon district. (Note that the Impact Section provides further details of how stakeholders may change their attitudes and behaviours as a result of the *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* show.)

Figure 6: Percent of caregivers that have ever listened to *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* by district



Source: Caregiver Survey (N=1,602)

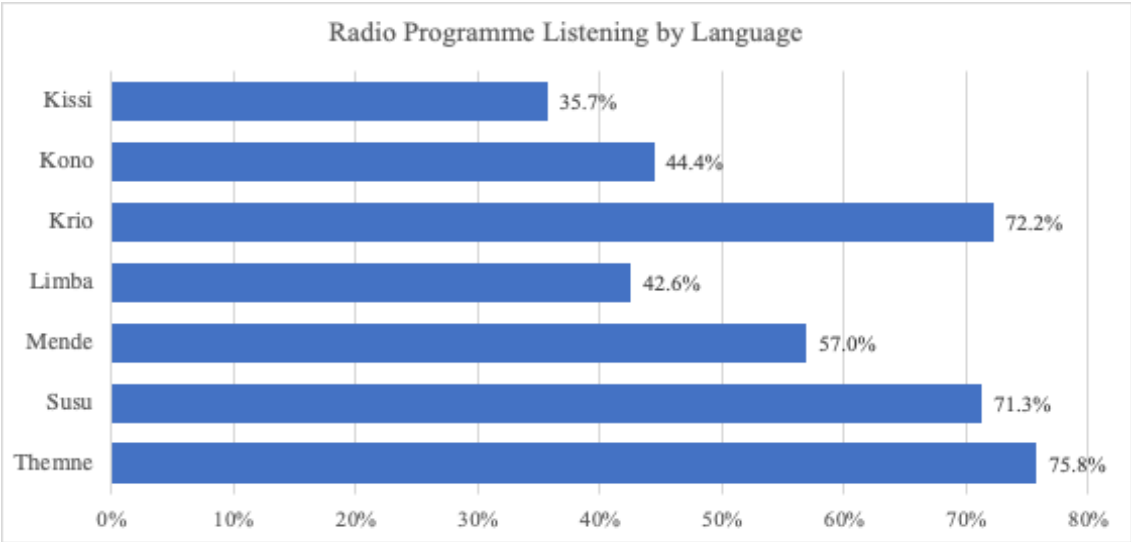
Listenership varies significantly by language as well. While the national broadcast of *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* takes place in Krio, EAGER’s partner radio stations broadcast weekly shows in local languages, drawing from the national show. There were high levels of listenership by caregivers in most languages (see figure below).

<sup>53</sup> An interview with BBC Media Leadership in Sierra Leone as well as Headquarters indicated that the Midterm report was in process but results would not be available in time for inclusion in the EAGER Endline Evaluation report.

<sup>54</sup> BBC Media Action has developed a separate monitoring and evaluation methodology to assess the impact of EAGER’s Social and Behaviour Change Communication activities. Formative research was conducted at the start of the project to understand barriers and enablers on girls’ empowerment, and media habits of audiences. Three rounds of qualitative audience research are being carried out over the life of the project to track changes in audience behaviours and attitudes as a result of listening to EAGER’s radio shows and to inform adaptations in radio content. A qualitative Midterm Evaluation will further investigate audience attitudinal changes, as well as the impact of the technical and mentoring support provided to EAGER’s 18 partner radio stations. A qualitative and quantitative Endline Evaluation will capture overall results of the project’s SBCC’s activities and make recommendations for future projects.



Figure 7: Percent of caregivers that have ever listened to Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap by language



Source: Caregivers’ Survey (N=1,602)

Qualitative data provide additional information about individuals tuning into *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* and consistently show that about half of evaluation participants interviewed had listened to the show. This applies to caregivers (2 of 4 groups: two female caregivers in Kono and in Koinadugu), community leaders (2 of 6 FGDs: male leaders in Port Loko and female leaders in Pujehun), local councillors (6 of 10), male partners (7 of 20), and boys (9 of 20 interviewed).

*"Yes, I listen to it on Thursday, they were talking of how parents should take good care of their child most importantly the girls. I like the emphasis they laid on how to take care of the girl child and people should realise that it is very important." (Male community leader FGD, Port Loko)*

*"Well yes, I am aware of it because it is a popular programme that most community people talk about." (Local Councillor KII, Pujehun)*

Results indicate that frequent challenges for accessing the radio show included not having a radio, the radio station having technical difficulties or there being inadequate coverage within the community.

Many of the stakeholders familiar with *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* were also able to recall topics covered in particular episodes. These included:

- General importance of girls to the community and how community should support them
- Girl’s empowerment
- General importance of girls’ education and supporting girls’ education
- Guardians should support education of their female charges
- Role men can play in supporting girls’ education
- Dangers of early pregnancy and need for prevention
- Implications of rape and early marriage for girls’ education
- Importance of supporting wives’ ambitions (business, in particular)
- Case studies of town in which women are educated
- Girls’ respect for parents and the converse, and proper treatment of girls

When surveyed for the Endline Evaluation, nearly 9 of 10 (87.2 percent) caregivers agreed with the statement, “*Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*” helps me to better understand girls’ learning, skills development and education opportunities.” The two caregivers’ groups familiar with the radio show further substantiate this data. Both groups felt that featuring girls was a very effective strategy for communicating with girls. Both women’s caregiver groups framed the show as targeting girls and having clear messages for them about being serious about their education and respecting elders. While this content is correct, the SBCC strategy focuses on her family and community members first and girls secondly. Findings also indicate that the radio show is effective by allowing EAGER beneficiaries to convey messages to those close to them without needing to serve as the direct messenger. Two quotes from Mentors provide illustration:

*“I have a little sister who uses to play with young boys in the community and I was listening to the programme fortunately she was around and I have to called her to listen what they were discussing in the radio for her to understand better and not to see me as an enemy.” (Mentor KII, Port Loko)*

*“There was a change because when I was listen to it [factual radio show] my husband was there. They were saying it is the right for girl children to be educated and they should allow them to go to school.” (Mentor KII, Kambia)*

Interviews with EAGER beneficiaries reveal that about a third of them (10 of 30) had listened to *Wae Pikin Gyal Tinap*. Most of them (7) had listened during a radio broadcast while two others indicated having listened during EAGER Learning Sessions. But only 2 of the respondents were able to identify the content of the episode to which they had listened. Two interviews with boys shed additional light on girls’ listening habits. A boy interviewed in Kambia spoke of how girls in the community had listened to the radio show at least once within the Safe Space while another boy in WAU indicated that girls frequently listened to the show at the community centre.

Nine of 27 Mentors who responded to questions about SBCC activities indicated having listened to *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap*. However, six of the Mentors had no awareness of the show, while two Mentors indicated having listened to it as part of their EAGER Learning Sessions. These results seem incompatible with Mentors having received access to recordings through an online audio sharing platform. As EAGER provided Girls’ Clubs with recordings to play on a Bluetooth speaker, introducing girls to the show during Learning Sessions seemingly would have the potential to function as a useful bridge to later listening. Exchanges with the CCU specific to these findings clarified that girls and Mentors listening to the radio show in the Learning Sessions had not been part of the EAGER design though on some occasions, for instance for International Day of the Girls Child or International Women’s Day, EAGER did share recordings to support those events. Nonetheless, the quotes above demonstrate that Mentors and girls exposed to the radio show responded positively and that they may even help other primary stakeholders of the show get connected to it. Not deliberately connecting girls and Mentors to the show may indicate a missed opportunity for EAGER to leverage radio programming within learning activities and to extend listenership. It also should be noted that language and access to technology may serve as barriers in some cases.

The next Section moves from a discussion of effectiveness to emerging outcomes.

## Impact

### 5.1.4. Impact Question 1. What changes in girls' behaviours and confidence are visible as girls navigate the Transition Phase? Are girls feeling empowered to meet their own goals since the end of the Learning Phase in the various empowerment dimensions?

At Endline, EAGER girls showed improved self-efficacy, better communication skills, enhanced financial knowledge, higher rates of borrowing and saving money, and increased financial autonomy. Endline results also suggest unexpected findings relevant to girls' perspectives on marriage, parenthood, and contraception. Improvements in behaviours and confidence have an iterative relationship with girls' transition activities as positive changes facilitate transition while at the same time transition experiences reinforce newly enhanced competencies. This Section will first present the qualitative and quantitative data showing these observed improvements, and then provide a discussion around the ways in which these improvements relate to the degree to which a girls' Transition Phase was successful at the time of data collection.

#### Improved self-efficacy and confidence in general

EAGER girls in the Transition Phase, at the Endline time point, demonstrated enhanced self-efficacy as compared to previous external evaluation results according to quantitative surveys. At all three evaluation points, beneficiaries responded to a series of eight standardised questions to measure their own confidence in their ability to achieve goals and overcome challenges. It is known as the General Self-Efficacy index and is converted to a 0 to 100 scale.<sup>55</sup> Using a five-point scale, respondents identified whether they strongly agree (12.5 points per question) to strongly disagree (0 points) with statements such as *“Even when things are difficult I can still manage well.”* A score of 100 indicated the respondent strongly agreed with all 8 statements; a score of 75 would mean that, on average, they agreed with all eight statements. The increase in self-efficacy scores between Baseline (73.2) to Midterm (80.7) were statistically significant, and the increase from Midterm to Endline (81.8) are also statistically significant.

Table 25: Self-Efficacy Index

	Baseline	Midterm	Endline
Self-Efficacy Index <sup>56</sup>	73.2	80.7*	81.8*
Sample Size (Girls' Combined Survey)	2,073	2,173	1,612

The table below outlines the percentage of respondents that said that they agree or strongly agree with each statement included in the Self-Efficacy Index. All of the statements had a significantly higher percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing at Midterm than at Baseline. For half of the statements (numbers 4, 6, 7, and 8), the percent that agreed or strongly agreed at Endline was significantly higher than at Midterm. It is unsurprising that the largest increases were between Baseline and Midterm, given that they had enjoyed most of the benefits of the Life Skills programme by Midterm.

<sup>55</sup> See Chen, Gully, and Eden (2001) *Validation of a New General Self-Efficacy Scale*. doi:10.1177/109442810141004

<sup>56</sup> Statistical Significance between evaluation points demarcated with asterisks.

The overall increases since Midterm, however, suggest that there is a virtuous cycle of reinforcement in their sense of empowerment that has continued since beneficiaries ended the more structured Learning Phase and moved into the individualised Transition Phase.

*Table 26: Percent that Agreed or Strongly Agreed*

#		Baseline	Midterm	Endline
1	I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I set for myself.	81.2%	91.6%*	92.6%
2	When facing difficult tasks I am certain that I will accomplish them.	74.0%	91.0%*	91.8%
3	I think that I can achieve things that are important to me.	78.5%	93.6%*	93.8%
4	I believe I can succeed at almost anything if I work hard at it.	80.2%	94.0%*	96.4%*
5	I can successfully overcome challenges.	77.0%	91.5%*	93.3%
6	I am confident that I can be successful at many different tasks.	78.6%	90.9%*	95.2%*
7	Compared to other people I can do most tasks very well.	80.8%	92.4%*	95.0%*
8	Even when things are difficult I can still manage well.	76.9%	91.8%*	95.1%*
Sample Size (Girls' Combined Survey)		2,073	2,173	1,612

The following Sections provide further illustration of these trends towards enhanced self-efficacy and confidence as it relates to some of the specific impacts of EAGER.

#### **Improved Communication and Conflict Resolution**

As described already in the Effectiveness 2 Section, according to girls, partners, and other stakeholders, much positive change has occurred as a result of EAGER's discussion and Mentoring around communication skills (in particular communicating assertively, communicating respectfully, and communicating clearly). Many girls have also benefited from guidance around conflict resolution. Girls and others participating in the qualitative sample indicate that beneficiaries apply communication skills throughout girls' lives both inside the household, at the community level, and in business interactions.

As a result of the communication skills learnt through EAGER, many girls report examples of disputes not escalating as girls were able to voice their concerns to people in a way that was, according to girls, more effective in encouraging the person to listen and often resulted in a good outcome. As discussed in the Relevance and Effectiveness Sections, in some cases the communication skills learnt were interpreted and used in ways that reflect gender norms while simultaneously allowing girls to be empowered within their households. As illustration two beneficiaries described how they used their improved communication skills with her husband:

*"They trained us how to talk to people in the community and also we should be very polite with our husbands, that if they are mad over things that we did we should always be calm and fix it up." (Girls FGD, Tonkolili)*

*“I now know how to communicate with friends and family using my mobile phone and I can call words [use an appropriate way to communicate and use the correct words and tone based on context of who one is dealing with] when working in the street. Also what I have learned in EAGER, I used it to advise my companions not to fight or quarrel because that is not good.” (Girls FGD, WAU)*

Though the evaluation team examined quantitative data for a relationship between Midterm and Endline scores relevant to conflict resolution, the results are inconclusive. It may be appropriate to further examine this topic as part of the post-Endline research.

**Improved financial knowledge and practice; budgeting, planning, borrowing, and saving**

As already discussed in the Effectiveness 2 Section, girls were highly appreciative of, and positive about, the financial knowledge they had acquired in the EAGER Financial Literacy sessions. The quantitative data demonstrate this impact as well. This Section investigates these results in detail. For example, Financial Literacy sessions discussed budgeting and business planning and beneficiaries’ development of their Empowerment Plan provided girls with a practical exercise. As shown in the table below, a high percentage of participants surveyed agree or strongly agree with statements about their Financial Literacy skills. The percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed increased across all statements. Increase at Endline demonstrates that girls’ assessment of their financial competencies have not only maintained, but increased after the end of formal Learning Sessions.

*Table 27: Confidence in Financial Literacy Skills*

Percent who Agree or Strongly Agree			
	Financial Literacy Baseline	Midterm	Endline
I have the skills to save money so that I can accomplish my goals or to respond '.	88.2%	95.6%	97.4%
I know how to make a plan so that I can reach my financial goals.'	76.2%	95.6%	97.9%
I know how to create a budget to help me manage my finances.'	67.7%	93.0%	97.0%
I can make good decisions about how to spend my money.'	88.2%	95.4%	97.6%
I have the skills to manage my personal finances.'	86.1%	95.2%	98.3%
Sample Size (Girls' Combined Survey)	585	2,173	1,612

Both Baseline and Midterm Evaluations included these statements as the Confidence in Abilities component in the Financial Literacy Index, which measured on a scale from 0 to 100 how strongly respondents agreed with statements about their knowledge and abilities (See table below). Results show that beneficiaries' confidence in their abilities increased significantly between Baseline and Midterm, and also increased significantly between Midterm and Endline.

*Table 28: Confidence in Financial Literacy Skills Since Baseline*

Category	Financial Literacy Baseline	Midterm	Endline
<b>Financial Literacy Confidence Index</b>	67.8	77.7*	86.7*
Sample Size (Girls' Combined Survey)	585	2,173	1,612

Financial Literacy sessions also discussed saving and borrowing. At Baseline, 31.5 percent of respondents reported currently having some savings. This increased to 45.3 percent at Midterm, and 77.5 percent at Endline. It is likely that the much higher rate of saving at Endline has to do with the EAGER cash transfer. However, the cash disbursement took place at least three months before the Endline survey. Whether money referenced is newly saved money or has been saved for three months, the increase is encouraging evidence of good financial decisions. At the same time, borrowing decreased significantly between Baseline and Midterm. This change may be in part linked to the fact that beneficiaries state that they have their own money to make decisions with now, which is also likely related to the fact that many more earn money at Endline than Baseline. Saving in a group or institution also increased significantly: nearly all participants surveyed that have savings keep it in a group or institution. This institution may include VSLA (*osusu*).

*Table 29: Saving and Borrowing*

	Financial Literacy Baseline	Midterm	Endline
Do you have any savings?	31.5%	45.3%	77.5%
Do you ever borrow money?	86.2%	35.3%	37.5%
Do you keep any of your money in a bank, VSLA [Osusu], or other Community Savings group?	N/A	37.4%	77.3%
Sample Size (Girls' Combined Survey)	585	2,173	1,612

### Financial Autonomy

The response to Effectiveness 1 above outlined various ways that EAGER beneficiaries pursue their empowerment goals during the Transition Phase and how many girls displayed a degree of financial autonomy in these pursuits. Quantitative data also show that, at Endline, significantly more girls work for pay, and more have money that they can use for making decisions. At Baseline, just over half of respondents (53.6%) asserted that they had their own money to make decisions with: at Endline, that has increased to 87.1 percent. Even when controlling for age, the percent of participants working has increased dramatically: at Baseline, 46.9 percent of 18-year-olds were doing paid work or self-employed; at Endline, 85.2 percent were.

*Table 30: Girls' Financial Autonomy*

	Financial Literacy Baseline	Midterm	Endline
Have your own money to make decisions with?	53.6%	64.7%	87.1%
Do you work for pay?	38.7%	64.4%	86.5%
Sample Size (Girls' Combined Survey)	585	2,173	1,612

Among those who are working, more participants are self-employed: over half (63.8 percent) of all girls report being able to make decisions by themselves, while around a quarter (28.5 percent) make decisions with a business partner or family member. Less than 8 percent report working for someone else or having no say in a family business.

*Table 31: Business Decisions*

Who makes business decisions about your work?	Financial Literacy Baseline (n=572)	Midterm (n=1,397)	Endline (n=1,553)
I make the decisions myself.	50.9% <sup>57</sup>	47.8%	63.8%
I make the decisions with a business partner or family member		18.4%	28.5%
My family makes the decisions but not me.	34.8%	31.2%	7.1%
I don't make the decisions. I work for someone else's business.	11.3%	15.5%	0.6%

<sup>57</sup> At Baseline, ownership and co-ownership were not separate options. At Baseline and Midterm, respondents could select multiple forms of decision-making because they may be involved in multiple income-generating activities.

While having income to support her family was a major benefit for many, further analysis shows how many girls also articulated feelings of relief and pride in being able to have their own money. With this money they could make decisions, no longer needing to rely on asking others for help:

*"We thank God at the moment. We no longer go and beg an individual, saying, please offer me salt, or neither [do we] go and beg our fellow females. EAGER has helped us with that." (Girl KII, Pujehun)*

*"Well, before now if I [was] sick, sometimes I [would have] to take a loan. When they brought this money, we could say thanks to God because if one got sick, she could take from there to cure herself and no one can know your secret." (Girl KII, Port Loko)*

### **Marriage and Parenting**

EAGER's Theory of Change would indicate that if beneficiaries have improved access to learning and financial opportunities, and especially greater awareness of means of contraception and household empowerment, rates of early motherhood would decrease. Indeed, pregnancy and childcare remain obstacles that many girls cited as keeping them from reaching their empowerment goals (see Effectiveness Question 1). At Baseline, 2.3 percent of respondents reported being 18 or older (although age reporting was not always consistent). At Endline, 57.0 percent are 18 or older. As indicated in the Relevance Section above, between Baseline and Endline, the percentage of beneficiaries who stated that they were married increased from 44.1 percent to 53.5 percent. At Endline, quantitative data collectors asked unmarried beneficiaries if their participation in EAGER affected or delayed them getting married: 14.8 percent of unmarried girls said that they delayed marrying due to the EAGER programme. The percentage of girls under 18 who married remained nearly the same from Baseline (43.8 percent) to Endline (43.3 percent).

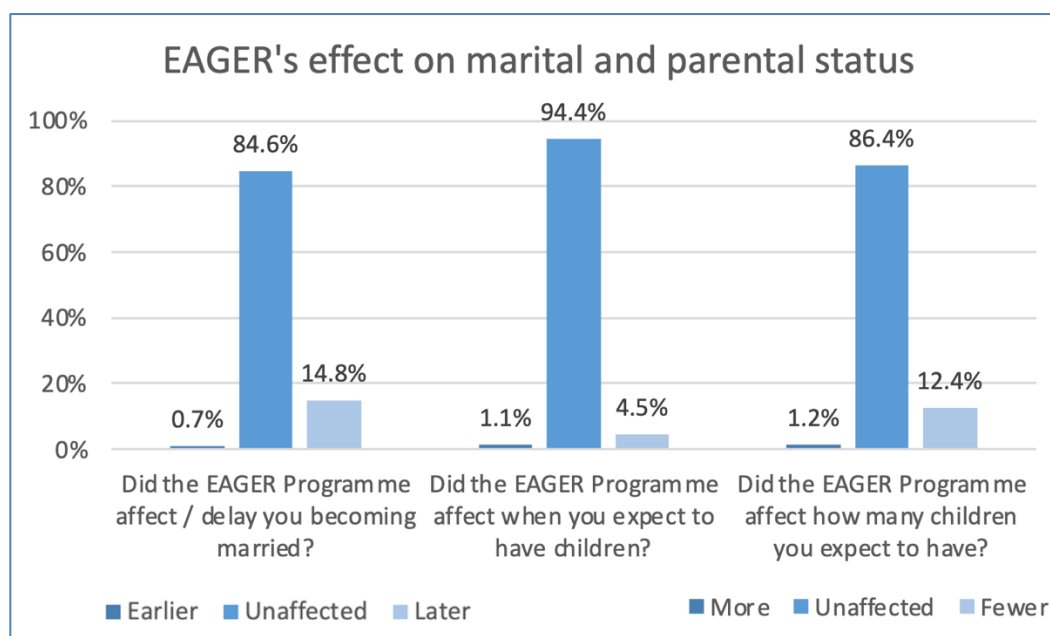
At Baseline, 57.5 percent of all beneficiaries were mothers. By Endline, it had increased by 10 percentage points to 67.9 percent. An additional 1.7 percent were expecting their first child. When respondents were asked about how EAGER affected when and how many children they expected to have, the answers were mixed: 4.5 percent of all beneficiaries said they expect to have children later due to the EAGER programme; 1.1 percent said that they expect to have (or already had) children earlier because of the programme. Similarly, 12.4 percent said that they expect to have fewer children due to the EAGER programme and 1.2 percent said that they expect to have more children because of the programme.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> These results exclude the responses taken by four quantitative data collectors due to irregular response patterns.



Figure 8: Programme Effects on Marriage and Parenting<sup>59</sup>



Source: Girls' Combined Survey (N=1,612)

For the vast majority of beneficiaries interviewed, the programme has had no effect on marriage and child-rearing plans. Beneficiaries reporting earlier marriage, earlier childrearing, or more children may be the result of them (or their partner) deciding that they could afford having children earlier or having more children with greater income, or that beneficiaries may have gained greater confidence in their childrearing and homemaking skills. It is worth noting that the BBC Media Action's second audience research report indicates that adolescent girls and their parents are looking for more information on family planning, early pregnancy, and early marriage. The upcoming BBC Media Action drama will cover these topics<sup>60</sup>.

While not being able to explain the shift in results between Midterm and Endline, Endline Evaluation qualitative findings indicate a more nuanced story of beneficiaries' attitudes towards family planning. Indeed, over half of beneficiaries (11 of 20) girls interviewed underscored their newfound awareness of the importance of deliberate family planning and, spacing pregnancies in a response to an open-ended question about marriage and parenting. Two quotes below provide illustration of beneficiaries indicating a conscious change in behaviour:

*"EAGER were telling us that child, after giving birth to children, you should wait for long to see how it's going to be like, you put him/her on the right path. So being on the right path, you may now continue, even if you give birth to one or two, and then you cease again. But you've given birth and he/she [the child] hasn't walked, then you continue giving birth? It will be difficult for you."  
(Girl KII, Bo)*

<sup>59</sup> The sample sizes of the three questions in the graph are (from left to right) n=759, n= 1,313, and n= 1,311. The first question was only asked of unmarried beneficiaries.

<sup>60</sup> BBC Media Action. (September 2021) Leave No Girl Behind: Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient: Audience Research Repo

*"Yes, because EAGER has let us know that it is bad to get married below 16 years. So, now people are getting married above 16 years. As for me, I have no plan of given birth for now until my child has grown older and I stand strong to do better things in life. Yes, women's role in my community is different now because, most women are now busy making money by doing different kinds of businesses. Also, the role of women is different now because, they are no more encouraging girls to get married early or force to get married to a man they don't like. Yes, I have made great changes in my life such as doing business and making profit, been polite to people, doing my house chores and being obedient to elders in the community. All EAGER girls in this community have changed for good because, the bad habits they were having before now are no more, they are all doing great things which have made the community people admired at us." (Girl KII, Kailahun)*

While lengthy, this second excerpt in particular is meaningful because it indicates a beneficiary's awareness of the multiple ways that she has changed due to participation in EAGER and how this affects her relationships and attitudes towards those in her community. At the same time that she embraces family planning, she indicates that she is more apt to follow established generational norms in deferring to elders as well as adapt a gendered role in performing household chores. She also indicates that her new actions result in admiration from community members. As indicated within the Relevance Section above, care must be taken to interpret these quotes within their complex context in which many girls face real risks and where changes to gender norms will take time.

At the same time, only one beneficiary signalled a more traditional approach to marriage. She is sixteen years old. The girls' motivations for marriage as well as her constraints are not clear. She commented,

*"Yes, I have the plan to get married. Because, even as of now, a guy had already come and ask of my hands in marriage, he went, and promise to come back by March. I have the desire to give birth to plenty children." (Girl KII, Pujehun)*

This quote indicates great enthusiasm for her coming marriage and motherhood and a different perspective than the other half of beneficiaries who expressed wanting to reduce or delay childbearing. The complexities of girls' choices and constraints and potential changes in gender norms is the focus of the Sustainability Section below.

### **Sexual and Reproductive Health**

Responses to questions on contraception use have also significantly changed since Midterm. The percentage of respondents who reported that they are currently sexually active, not trying to conceive, and using no effective contraception increased from 9.0 percent at Midterm to 45.8 percent at Endline. Those not sexually active or trying to conceive did not as dramatically shift: the change is primarily a shift in reported behaviours by those who are sexually active and are not trying to conceive. One significant driver is reduction in use of birth control pills. At Midterm, 26.5 percent of sexually active beneficiaries reported using birth control pills as contraceptive the last time they had sex; at Endline, only 10.7 percent reported using the method. Other contraceptive methods all fell proportionally in usage since Midterm. While Endline data provide no clear justification for this change, it is possible that access to contraception, not behaviour change, is driving the decline in contraception use.

Table 32: Sexual Activity and Contraception

	Midterm	Endline
Not Having Sex	19.0%	17.0%
Trying to Conceive	17.0%	12.2%
Having sex and using at least one effective contraception	55.0%	25.0%
Having sex and using no effective contraception	9.0%	45.8%
Sample Size (Girls' Combined Survey)	2,173	1,612

Like the results related to attitudes towards marriage, these results are concerning. Recent statistics provide context and still indicate that EAGER results are more promising than national averages. According to the 2019 Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), only 14.3 percent of girls and women ages 15-19 who are unmarried and sexually active or are married use a modern form of contraception.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, in a recent study of 2011-2018 DHS data for 14 sub-Saharan countries Sierra Leonian adolescents demonstrated the highest rate of engagement in condomless sex of all countries (93.2% for female adolescents and 84.5% for male adolescents<sup>62</sup>). Although the decrease from Midterm is problematic, perhaps Endline results are more reflective of real practices once Learning Sessions have ended. EAGER beneficiaries still indicate a higher rate of using contraception (by ten percentage points) and a half the rate of unprotected sex. Further inquiry is warranted.

EAGER leadership has also indicated how known barriers for girls to access and use contraceptives include: disruptions in the supply chain leading to local stock-outs, cost barriers (as many health facilities charge for methods that are meant to be free), distance to facilities and associated transport costs, social norms that value a greater number of children and give husbands/partners the decision-making power over contraceptive use, judgemental attitudes of health workers, and concerns about confidentiality. The latter concerns arise particularly in community-based health facilities where a health worker is likely to know a beneficiary's caregiver or husband/partner. EAGER Leadership also indicated that they are having conversations with Marie Stopes Sierra Leone to investigate possibilities of helping girls within EAGER communities access resources more easily.

#### **Relationship of EAGER short-term impacts to present transition trajectories**

Our analysis identifies four ways that the impacts explained above enhance (and are enhanced by) a girls' experiences during the EAGER Transition Period: 1) strong support from partners for girls to earn and use money; 2) girls' improved interaction with customers to increase business; and, 3) girls' ability to express opinions and have a voice at the community-level.

<sup>61</sup> Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey Key Indicators, 2019.

<https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/PR122/PR122.pdf> . Accessed 6 Oct 2021.

<sup>62</sup> Using 2013 data. Source: Ali, M.M., Merdad, L. & Bellizzi, S. Socioeconomic variations in risky sexual behaviour among adolescents in 14 sub-Saharan Africa countries who report ever having had sex. *Int J Equity Health* 20, 11 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-020-01352-8>. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33407497/>. p.

## Support from partner

As described in the Effectiveness 1 Section related to partner support for girls in EAGER, and with context provided in Relevance, male partners were overwhelmingly supportive of girls leaving the house for Learning Sessions and work and earning money. Given the socio-cultural norms in Sierra Leone and globally in which partner (or family) support is often a necessary component for a woman's or girl's activities, it is a huge asset to EAGER beneficiaries that there is such strong partner support for girls' empowerment pursuits. Indeed, also elaborated on in Effectiveness 1, many girls identified partner support - both verbal and material - to be critical to their success.

At the same time, it is important to recall that partner support tended to emphasise the practical and personal aspects of their partner's empowerment - how EAGER benefited the household and by implication, male partners themselves as the burden for providing for the household is now shared - rather than noting for example that partners supported EAGER because it enhanced girls' rights for autonomy and empowerment. This theme within the data emerges stronger at Endline than at Midterm, likely because girls had increased access to funds. For example, nearly all (19 of 20) partners expressed that EAGER had greatly improved the EAGER beneficiaries' ability to contribute financially to the household. The excerpts below provide insights into male partners' perspectives on changes that girls have experienced. In some cases, the excerpts make allusions to gender norms and demonstrate how many girls have improved their abilities to negotiate their roles in order to find greater independence and ideally, mutual respect. The Sustainability Section also explores this dynamic in great detail below.

*"What I love most about her is that she is helping me in the home and money is better now and I take her very seriously, to be honest with you before she starts doing business I was not serious with her because I knew she depended on me for everything she needed but now she is helping me greatly." (Male partner KII, WAU)*

*"I feel great about these changes because they are of benefit to me and my children. We are also benefiting from the positive changes that she is exhibiting. I feel happy because the things she used to do that annoyed me, she is no longer doing them. And, she is now supporting me in taking care of the household." (Male partner KII, Tonkolili)*

Partners also frequently highlighted girls' improved respectful communication and interaction with others, which was often articulated in terms of a benefit to the partner directly:

*"Before now, she was mostly out. She spent a lot of time out of the house and was not as respectful as she is now. We used to quarrel a lot at home but for now we hardly quarrel. I have really seen some changes in her and for that I want thank IRC for the good thing that they had done to my wife." (Male partner KII, Bo)*

*"Before now, she would disrespect me a lot but because of the life training skills that she acquired from the programme, she is now very respectful and she is also very caring." (Male partner KII, Tonkolili)*

Remarks from some EAGER staff further indicate how instruction or Mentoring to girls around dispute resolution, respect, and communication are cognisant of gender norms, helping the girls to work practically within them:

*“One of the example which we can show now is there were some girls who were having a lots of issues with their husband or partners, but because they have gone through this Life Skills that teaches them on how to talk to people and bringing up their point in an aggressive way...so in that sense most of them have been be able to manage their homes well when it comes with issues of disagreement with their husband,...you don't need to play blame games but to rather be accepting your fault and work on that and, to me, disagreement is a good thing because you shouldn't agree on everything.” (LS Officer KII, Port Loko)*

*“Another skill that the girls learned is how to take care of their houses and also on how to be submissive/obedient to their husbands.” (Mentor KII, Kenema)*

*“Through EAGER I have known my rights now between me and my husband I know what to do that will make him angry with me and what to do that will also makes him happy.” (Girls FGD, Pujehun)*

This finding aligns with Midterm Evaluation results. At the same time, the impact of these changes are clear: girls, partners, and other stakeholders report widespread acceptance of girls' acquisition of skills and pursuits toward financial empowerment. While the reasons for acceptance were not purely based on acceptance and promotion of girls' rights, the practical implication was beneficial for girls. As a result of partner acceptance, girls were demonstrably given more space to work outside the home and make decisions about their roles both inside and outside the home. In other words, girls (and project staff) seem to recognise that acquiescing to some gender normative behaviours ultimately facilitates girls' ability to pursue their unique empowerment goals. Many girls are doing their best to make skilful and calculated choices that benefit them most whilst navigating the gender norms and constraints in their communities. The Sustainability Section below will also show that positive changes may even extend to decreasing physical violence that girls experience within the home. As found at Midterm<sup>63</sup>, knowingly or unknowingly, many girls are negotiating gender norms for their own benefit. These issues around gender transformation within unsurprisingly enduring cultural norms are explored in more depth in response to Sustainability questions below.

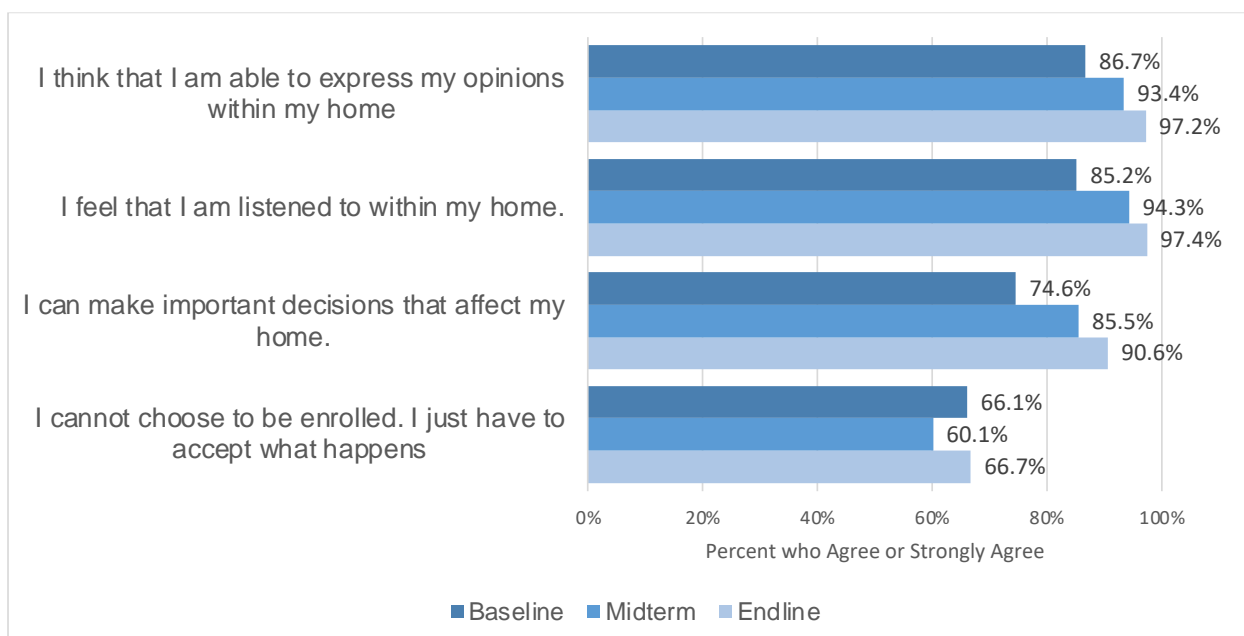
### **Status in household**

Beneficiaries surveyed report having a greater role in their home at each evaluation point. More beneficiaries agree with statements about their ability to voice opinions, make decisions, and be listened to in their home (see table below). However, the percentage of respondents who believe that they can choose whether they can continue their education remains largely unchanged. This response may reflect an awareness that options for girls' education continue to be limited. To ensure that the greater voice in their household is not merely a product of getting older, the statement "I feel that I am listened to within my home" was analysed for 17-year-olds at each point. At Baseline, 90.0 percent of 17-year-olds agreed with the statement; at Midterm, 95.0 percent agreed; at Endline, 98.7 percent agreed. This suggests that age is not the only driver of increased voice and demonstrate a more real change in girls' and women's role in their households.

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<sup>63</sup> Sarr, K. G., Trembley, A., Heaner, G. & Mull, A. C. (2021). Midterm Evaluation Report Midterm Evaluation of the Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER) project within the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) - Leave No Girl Behind project (LNGB). IMC Worldwide.

Table 33: Changes in beneficiaries' confidence in role within the home



Source: Girls' Combined Survey (Baseline N=2,073; Midterm N=2,173; Endline N=1,612)

### Status in community

In addition, Endline results indicate that, as a result of enhanced communication skills and efforts toward engaging respectfully, demonstrating skills and hard work in one's business or other work, and enhanced self-efficacy, EAGER beneficiaries are more confident around community members with whom they were previously shy or with whom they felt inconsequential. Endline results mimic stated improvements at Midterm and demonstrate the application of increased community-level competencies to girls' activities during transition. Illustrative quotes provide insights:

*"EAGER support has helped me to stand in public to speak without shame. It has made me bold.... EAGER support has made me know how to make friendships and how to talk to people boldly and respectfully. Previously I was shy talking to people. I always bowed my head down because of shyness."  
(Girls FGD, Pujehun)*

*"She does not have a quarrelsome life any longer. For a long time, I have not paid court fines on her behalf. She does not engage any more in community quarrels. She is concentrating on her business. I was anticipating divorcing her, but since she joined EAGER, I have changed my mind. To start with, she is respectful to community members, elderly family members and my very self. She interacts widely in the community. She has made more friends than before."  
(Male partner KII, Kenema)*

In some cases, girls have become role model figures for others:

*"I will say thanks to God, since she started working on her Empowerment Plan I am seeing great changes in her because she is now doing a business which*

*is making profit, she is respecting me and even the elders in the community, she seems very obedient and friendly now than before. Even in the community, she is respectful to everyone and that has made people to admire her. I really feel happy and I am very much grateful to EAGER for helping her change in such a manner.” (Male partner KII, Kailahun)*

*“When there was International Day of the Girls, we called the adolescent girls to come and they did well. We also designed message in English to deliver to their peers and in the various communities and they did that in a very accurate manner. So, their peers were so impressed with the performance of the selected girls who were giving the messages.” (LS Officer KII, WAU)*

Girls are also, as reported by themselves and others, engaging more often and more vocally in community meetings and discussions where decisions are made. Again, as noted elsewhere, in some cases this successful engagement is attributed to a girl being more respectful or ‘better-behaved’, showing ways that girls are negotiating gender norms to ultimately enhance their empowerment. Many girls pointed to this change as well as some male partners, for example,

*“Now, I attend meetings and during meetings, I also contribute. Before now, even if they invited me for meeting, I would not attend but now I attend meetings. At meetings, I think before I say something.” (Girls FGD, Kambia)*

*“For the community, firstly, after this EAGER programme she is now very respectful in the community, when there is a meeting for the community, she makes her own contribution; unlike before she doesn’t participate in any community discussions. The skills she has learnt; now she can take care of herself, she also helps other girls as her peers the things that she has learnt from the Safe Space.” (Male partner KII, Bo)*

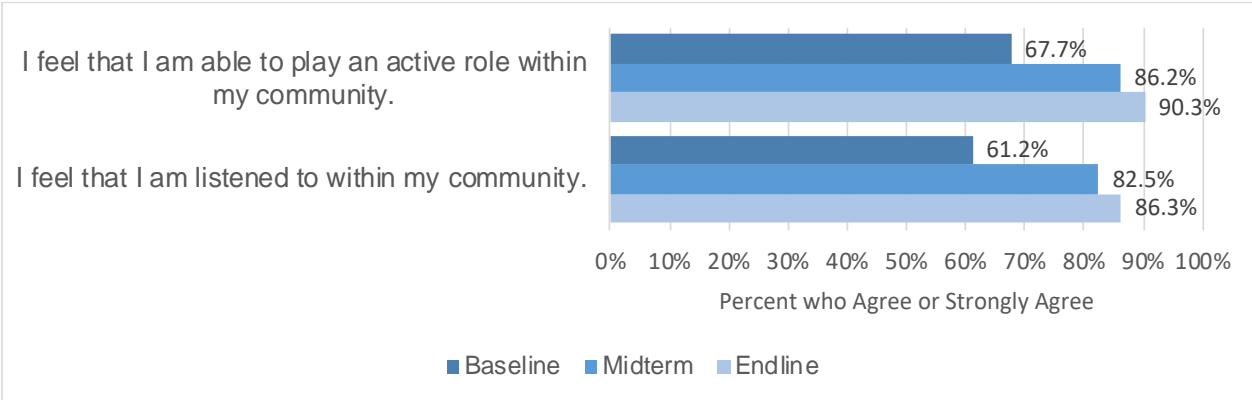
*“Before now, we would hardly sit and converse but since she started attending the programme, she became a different person.... In the community, she is now a better-behaved person. Now, she is no longer afraid of contributing during community meetings. Before, even to attend meetings was a challenge for her and if she managed to attend, she would just go there and sit and would not say anything throughout the meeting. But now, that is no longer the case; she now participates in community gatherings, she is no longer shy of raising her hand up and making her own contribution.” (Male partner KII, Tonkolili)*

Also, like Midterm results indicated, at Endline, girls continue to demonstrate themselves serving as mediators and have helped resolve disputes within the community or within their own families:

*“If I see elderly people or chiefs quarrelling among themselves, I can boldly advise them and settle between them amicably. Its shows that this EAGER project is creating positive change in the community which is not a bad thing.” (Girl FGD, Pujehun)*

Their greater role in the community is supported by the survey. Respondents report feeling greater voice in their community. The percentage of respondents who agree increased significantly between Baseline and Midterm. While agreement did not increase a statistically significant amount between Midterm and Endline, the increase did still continue.

Figure 9: Role in Community



Source: Girls’ Combined Survey (Baseline N=2,073; Midterm N=2,173; Endline N=1,612)

**Improved business productivity**

For beneficiaries who chose starting a business as their financial goal, as explained already in Effectiveness 2, the majority of girls explained that the most critical skills obtained from EAGER were, most commonly, the ability to count money and give correct change, but also others noted their deeper understanding of awareness of market conditions, budgeting, and saving. Improved communication skills and status in the community were also said to be contributors to a girls’ successful business. One Mentor explained how communication in particular was important:

*“Because they [EAGER] have taught them [girls] the topic on how they should respect each other, they [girls] also know that when you don’t respect them [others] they will also not respect [you back], and when [girls] walk round the community busy on their business, everyone respects them. They have respect in the community now because they have their own business; the men respect them for that and even the children [respect them]. The way [girls] talk to the customers, all those things make people respect them in the community because anytime they attend to a customer nicely, they [the customer] will forever respect them and talk about them in every gathering. Before there was no respect. They were taught the topic to respect each other; when you respect yourself you should respect other person.” (Mentor KII, Port Loko)*



### 5.1.5. Impact Question 2. How might EAGER Mentors be applying what they learned through EAGER materials and trainings to their own lives and improving their own capacities, status in their households, community and financially to meet their own goals?

Recall that EAGER shifted its design after Baseline findings to increase support to Mentors and to consider them as beneficiaries as data revealed that the majority of Mentors had room for learning and empowerment themselves. In order to maximise EAGER's support to Mentors and provide practical training, as one EAGER Leadership staff explained, EAGER also worked with Mentors in creating their own customised Empowerment Plan:

*“Understanding a lot more about Mentors’ capacity, we decided to have a lot more touch points through the learning clusters. They did go through an extensive training on the Empowerment Plan as well as follow-up sessions. The way we designed the training was an experiential learning process. The Mentors did have their own Empowerment Plan – they set their own goals (for the four domains). I do believe that’s a very helpful process for anyone to go through. They also had their goals – they followed the template, though an adaptive version. Anecdotally, we have been hearing back from the teams about how the Mentors are doing and that they enjoy the training and we have been getting feedback from the Officers as well as mention of some challenges. It seemed like Mentors did very well and I can’t remember what the challenges were off-hand but staff would address those in the learning clusters.” (EAGER Leadership KII)*

After training, EAGER would meet regularly with Mentors through Learning Clusters. As described in the Midterm Evaluation Report, Learning Clusters are both a coaching mechanism and a peer network that brings Mentors in a geographic area together for regular meetings. As a member of the CCU specified,

*“We did trainings with [LS] Officers and then there were step-down trainings. Four or five days with the step down and then every month we would have learning clusters with the Mentors.” (EAGER Leadership KII)*

EAGER staff also emphasised how Mentors remained pivotal to the transition design, both in assisting with materially preparing girls for the next phase of their EAGER participation, but also serving as on-going coaches. Mentors continued to receive their stipend for a portion of the Transition Phase. Another EAGER staff elaborated more on EAGER's evolving relationship with Mentors:

*“We had learning cluster meetings. In those learning cluster meetings, we discussed lots of approaches related to the Transition Phase – how to do the distribution [of the Empowerment Package and cash] (following consortium guidelines) and how we do our ongoing support for girls. It was not as if immediately after the Learning Session we were going to let go of the Mentors. We did not let them go - they are also supporting the Learning Sessions. We will keep them until March – when they will complete check-in two.” (EAGER Leadership KII)*

Results from Endline interviews with Mentors indicate that Mentors sampled spoke overwhelmingly positively about their experiences with EAGER, both in terms of their own specific Empowerment Plan, but also in terms of the general impact that their roles as Mentor had in their daily lives. The impacts include: enhanced ability to communicate with others to make a point or convince them of something, ideas around improved household management, financial management skills, and gaining respect from community members because of their important and clearly impactful role in helping girls. These Endline findings build upon Midterm findings that demonstrated that Mentors, like many girl beneficiaries, were experiencing empowerment within their communities, including confidence to share their opinions and serving as role models and community resources<sup>64</sup>.

### **Empowerment Plan**

Mentors verbally shared their own empowerment goals; most who specified their plans (12 of 20 Mentors interviewed) were engaged in business (n=10) while others (n=2) had plans to continue their education either through formal schooling or vocational training. Three excerpts below provide vivid illustration of changes Mentors have experienced across various facets of their lives:

*“What I have learned from supporting the girls’ goal and Empowerment Plan which I can apply to my own life is [the importance of] being educated. I have learnt that, with more education I can do better things in life. My experiences within the four domains of empowerment to reach my own goals, e.g, as I have said it earlier, I need to further my education and currently I am receiving a little bit of support from EAGER with regards to my education.” (Mentor KII, Kailahun)*

*“I also used my own money as a single mother to do petty business doing the programme and also, comprehend some business skills through listening and observing what the girls were being taught at the programme. At first, I had no money to give to my child for her to attend school and when she normally asked me for her schooling, I told her to ask her father wherever he is in the world. But, as soon as EAGER came into our lives and empowered us, I’m the one taking care of my kids and myself. Now the oldest one has continued from where she stopped in school. And she’s now in JSS2.” (Mentor KII, Kono)*

*“Yes, the programme make a change in my life. I now know how to do braids. I was not making money out of it but after listening to the programme I am being paid for braiding a hair and saving money out of it and I am inspired to do more. I also believe that without finishing my education I can still do other things like skilled work.” (Mentor KII, Koinadugu)*

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<sup>64</sup> Sarr, K. G., Trembley, A., Heaner, G. & Mull, A. C. (2021). Midterm Evaluation Report Midterm Evaluation of the Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER) project within the Girls’ Education Challenge (GEC) - Leave No Girl Behind project (LNGB). IMC Worldwide.

### **Financial management and business skills**

Mentors attributed much of their business success and improved general management of household finances to the financial management skills that they had to learn in order to support EAGER girls:

*“Through the process of [teaching] the girls at the Cohort 1 programme, I’ve also learnt how to set up my own goal and how to manage whatever resources that I have. Moreover, I also learned how to think, plan and prepare myself before embarking on a certain business.” (Mentor KII, Kenema)*

*“In my house, I have set my goals. For example the money given to us by EAGER, we should not just take it and eat it or buy materials things with it. You have to plan good things for yourself, your children and your husband or you develop something that will benefit the family... For example, my own financial goal that I set is to contribute my money in a club [VSLA/osusu] and at the end of the year when I collect it, I can plan something good. Currently we are building a house and it is thought the monies we saved up to December. You know the money is small but, if you choose to save it for a year, you can do a lot of things with it.” (Mentor KII, Bo)*

### **Confidence and ability to communicate**

Because one role of the Mentors was to continuously work with girls who may be discouraged from participating in the programme, or who may have other barriers that kept them from attending, Mentors also learnt skills in communicating a message clearly, respectfully, and convincingly. Twelve of the 20 Mentors interviewed highlighted these skills. One explained:

*“At first when this programme came, the girls didn’t know the importance of it. They refused to go for the programme even after registration. So, I used my skills of persuasion by visiting them house to house and asking them ‘Have you not registered for the EAGER programme?’ I would explain to them what the programme is all about. So, I encouraged them, talked to them to see the importance of the programme. When we are at the Safe Space, some girls even didn’t want to talk. So, I would call them privately and talked to them to encourage them. That helps a lot during the programme. These skills have helped me personally.” (Mentor KII, Bo)*

Mentors also described how enhanced communication skills, and as with girls this was sometimes manifested as being ‘respectful’, helped them particularly in their homes:

*“Now I am married and I have prepared my business to go and sell and if my husband stops me, I will have to talk nicely with him to allow me [to go] but if I put it in that aggressive manner he will not allow it.” (Mentor KII, Kambia)*

*“[Being a Mentor brought] confidence and patience in me, because there are some children who, during sessions you will see them not looking happy; they are stressed from their homes. [I know how to] get their attention, and to draw them closer to you. Whenever they have problems at home they will now be excited to meet you and explain to you... [One change as a result of this learning is] how me and my husband were before is different from how we are [now] living peacefully. I am a changed person now. I am not ashamed to talk.*

*I don't give him problems and he, too, he does not give me any problems.”  
(Mentor KII, Kambia)*

*“I thought that I couldn't talk to other people because I did not finish my secondary school but from the EAGER programme - and they have helped me! - I have learnt a lot. I now know that I can talk to anyone no matter my educational background. Besides, I was not respectful to elders but now the EAGER programme has helped me a lot to be respectful and have the right to talk in public.” (Mentor KII, Koinadugu)*

### **Stress management**

Five of the Mentors interviewed at Endline specified that they had been using the skills around stress management in their own lives. They explained how working directly with the EAGER girls sometimes required patience and this experience helped them to practise those skills while also Mentoring to girls to develop those skills themselves:

*“I learnt how to be very patient and also to give listening ears to the girls and to cooperate with what they wanted for themselves and moreover on how to control my temper because I must say that I was a hot-tempered person.”  
(Mentor KII, Kono)*

*“I learned how to handle stress [because] before I didn't know how to handle stress but now I can manage the situation.” (Mentor KII, Koinadugu)*

Midterm results indicated similar enthusiasm for EAGER-taught stress management practices. Accordingly, nearly all shared how they have also applied the strategies in their own lives, including singing, playing with their children, speaking with a friend and breathing exercises. One Mentor from Bo explained how the strategies have helped her deal with a challenging situation with her husband while a Kono Mentor described how she employs the strategies to help her conquer her concerns about teaching.<sup>65</sup>

### **Respected by the community**

Mentors also often (n=8) specified that they had gained a newfound respect in the community as a result of their demonstrably good work with girls:

*“In the community, people now love me so much. The community has now seen the girls we were Mentoring doing well. What they had not been doing in the community they are now doing. Even at their matrimonial homes there are changes now. So, people appreciate my work, and they love it so much that they call me in any activity that involves the community.” (Mentor KII, Bo)*

*“Before now, I was nothing in this community but with EAGER materials and trainings I have become engaged in the community. I am now being looked at as a role model in the community. I have maximum respect from everyone in the community and people ask me questions and listen to whatever I say to them.” (Mentor KII, Kailahun)*

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<sup>65</sup> Sarr, K. G., Trembley, A., Heaner, G. & Mull, A. C. (2021). Midterm Evaluation Report Midterm Evaluation of the Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER) project within the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) - Leave No Girl Behind project (LNGB). IMC Worldwide, p. 68.

Many of these findings reflect a continuation of positive impacts that Mentors reported during Midterm Evaluation interviews.

5.1.6. Impact Question 3. What obstacles or challenges do stakeholders still perceive as preventing young women from achieving their goals within their communities? What could be done to mediate them?

As discussed in Effectiveness 1, a number of challenges remain and may continue to prevent young women and girls from achieving their goals within their communities. As that Section outlined, girls in the quantitative sample specifically see their main barrier to be a lack of money. Qualitative data also revealed that, in addition to financial means, having support from families and partners was critical as well to a successful transition. The table below summarises the barriers frequently identified by stakeholders and beneficiary girls as it relates to girls in their communities more generally. The table lists barriers in order of those most frequently mentioned by stakeholders, to those less frequently mentioned, as well as perceptions from the beneficiary girls *about other girls*, not necessarily about their own experience. Importantly, some of the barriers stakeholders and girls articulated were *not* those that were most commonly noted by girls themselves as their own actual barriers experienced. As such, these perceived barriers merit discussion not only in order to understand the situation of some girls who may have not been represented in the sample of EAGER beneficiaries or girls excluded from EAGER, but also to understand the remaining perceptions around barriers that may not exactly match the reality of the situation in the community. The barriers are explained along with the evaluation team’s preliminary reflections around how EAGER may mediate those barriers given the balance between actual barriers observed and those perceived. These possible mediations are reviewed in more depth in the Recommendations Section.

Table 34: Perceived Barriers in Order of Most to Least Prevalent

Barrier type	Details on barrier
<b>Pregnancy and early marriage</b>	<p>Nearly all stakeholders continue to see pregnancy and early marriage to limit or stop girls’ pursuit of empowerment goals, noting that there is little girls can do beyond household duties once they enter a marriage or have a child.</p> <p>Beneficiary girls interviewed with children, girls who married early, and girls who are pregnant and/or who are mothers revealed their ability to pursue empowerment goals. However, they do indicate having some challenges with childcare and domestic needs. Some communities have established by-laws to discourage early marriage so that girls can pursue other goals (See Sustainability Section below.)</p>
<b>Partner interfering with work or education</b>	<p>Stakeholders and girls note that some partners may interfere with a girl’s business or education (stealing her money, forbidding her from going to work or study). This was rarely mentioned as an actual barrier experienced by beneficiary girls, but one that stakeholders identified to be a possibility (stemming from a man’s jealousy or insecurities of a successful partner).</p>
<b>Parent refusal to support</b>	<p>Stakeholders frequently mention parents’ enduring refusal to send girls to school or training because of their need to stay at home to help with domestic tasks. Notably, this perception was not revealed by any caregivers, nor the majority of beneficiary girls.</p>

<b>Insufficient cash transfer</b>	While the EAGER cash transfer amount is demonstrably sufficient for most girls to start small business despite girls and other stakeholders frequently suggesting that the amount should be increased (see Effectiveness 2 above), there remains a real uncertainty that cash and compounded profit is sufficient in case of emergency, or that girls are able to operate businesses that are sufficiently profitable to maintain the business while also covering regular and emergency family expenses.
<b>Family or partner requiring domestic help</b>	Some partners, families, and community leaders require girls to engage in domestic duties during times that, per their Empowerment Plan, they should be engaging in their own work or education. Some communities have established by-laws that discourage such behaviour. Rarely, girls did note this to be something they experienced (see Effectiveness 1).
<b>Lack of skills training</b>	Stakeholders in particular note that there are limited opportunities for skills training in centres (often, none are nearby, or they are prohibitively expensive) nor have there been any opportunities for direct skills training from EAGER. This limits non-petty-business opportunities for girls. Girls also note that they have been unable to undertake skills training as per their Empowerment Plan and have shifted to petty trading instead, but less frequently see the barrier to be lack of skills training centres as compared to stakeholders (see Effectiveness 2).
<b>Competing Economic Priorities</b>	Girls surveyed cited needing to spend the money on something else, such as an emergency, as the most common barrier to achieving financial goals. Those who did not spend their cash transfer according to their Empowerment Plan cited emergencies such as a household member falling sick or dying more than any other reason. Their economic and social marginalisation means that other important and urgent needs in their life often will take precedent and prevent their full realisation of the programme's goals.
<b>Being asked to loan money</b>	Girls and stakeholders report that a girl with some business income or savings is at risk of being asked to give out loans to friends and family, and that money is not always returned. Girls and stakeholders also report that in some cases, partners require that girls use the business money on household needs rather than maintaining it for the business. Rarely, did girls note this to be something they actually experienced (see Effectiveness 1).
<b>Poor market conditions</b>	A poor market (expensive goods, low demand) may limit a girls' successful business regardless of her effort and skill. Both girls and stakeholders identified this barrier; girls usually articulated the problem in terms of goods being too expensive and the solution being needing more money, rather than commenting on observation of market needs and adapting a business.
<b>Bondo / secret society</b>	Initiation into Bondo is said to "make room" for early marriage and is still said to be a barrier by stakeholders because of the time spent during the initiation (one month) and other duties related to Bondo that fall on women. Some communities indicate that the practice is lessening, helped by community-level by-laws that restrict it or ensure that it does not interfere with girls' business or education activities. Beneficiary girls did not indicate this to be a barrier they personally faced (though it is worth noting that this is unlikely to be openly discussed by girls).

Having closely examined barriers and offered preliminary solutions, the next Section further investigates the likelihood of lasting change at various societal levels.

## Sustainability

Two questions comprise the Endline Evaluation's response to the Sustainability criterion. The first investigates the possible longevity of changes that girls have experienced while the second addresses the potential evolution of gender norms and structural changes. Both Sections draw heavily upon results from the Effectiveness and Impact responses above.

### 5.1.7. Sustainability Question 1. What is the likelihood that the project benefits will remain after the intervention? What can the project do to further support sustainability?

The response to this first question examines changes that girls have experienced specifically. Analysis draws from qualitative interviews with beneficiaries as well as related stakeholders. When interviewed, all 30 girls indicated that they believed the changes they had experienced (see Impact Section above) would continue in the short-term (2 years) and in the long-term (10 years and beyond). Nearly all boys interviewed, and 3 of 4 Caregivers groups also agreed that changes would be long-lasting. As one beneficiary indicated:

*"What I have acquired to EAGER is going to help me the rest of my time because with what I have got so far from the training I know is not going to depart from me hence I am using it. And, the more I use it, it is going to be part of me." (Girl KII, Kono)*

*"Learning is an empowerment that will never be taken from you up to your grave, so if they have gone to school and have learned to read and write, that alone is a gift that is eternal. Also the changes are not only in the literacy and numeracy but the moral education that have so transformed her lives and behaviors. The sense of responsibility she has already engaged in doing that is also admirable and I am sure it will last more than two years." (Male partner KII, Kailahun)*

Like the beneficiary cited above, many of the EAGER participants explained how they have gained new competencies that help them to manoeuvre more deliberately within the home, economy and larger community. Many pointed to skills they had learned through the Literacy and Numeracy sessions as well as Life Skills sessions, for instance, being able to read and write, to sign their names, to count change but also to speak freely in public, to greet people appropriately, and for some, to speak better Krio. Speaking better Krio also came up at the Midterm Evaluation as a huge breakdown of a social barrier, and one which many caregivers recognised as well. Many girls also cited stress management, better hygiene, and the ability to manage their menstrual cycle, as important gains made during their time in EAGER. At least two of the beneficiaries interviewed expressed a more realistic point of view, recognising that not all girls will succeed in the long-term. Other stakeholders, especially male partners, caregivers and boys similarly analysed the likelihood of lasting learning gains.

Secondly, many girls and other stakeholders noted that the independence and empowerment that many girls had felt through steps towards financial goals would also continue to motivate EAGER beneficiaries and result in sustained benefit. As one male partner indicated,

*"Once someone has started realising the benefit of things, they would hardly move away from such. For most these girls, their lives have been changed for the better. All they would want now is to keep improving. Some have decided to even empower themselves more because they plan to go for other skills training programmes. Some are going back to school. I would say even for the*

*next 15 years they will continue in these directions. I don't see them going back to what they were before the coming of the project." (Male partner KII, Bo)*

While all the girls interviewed indicated feeling that they had made positive strides, gains may be precarious, particularly because they are often tied to a girls' newfound financial independence. Recall from above that many male partners expressed satisfaction with EAGER beneficiaries being able to contribute to household expenses. Only one of the male partners interviewed recognised the interconnected nature of family income. He noted that he could destabilise his wife's efforts if he were to decrease his own contributions to supporting the home:

*"One major challenge that often face most businesses in the community is when members of the family or even the male partners take part of the profits or reneged on their responsibilities and shift the burden of running the home to the wife. As long as the wife has to use a portion of the profits to address family matters, the prospects of the business will dwindle." (Male partner KII, Kenema)*

This important scenario underlines how many of the beneficiaries remain highly susceptible to external shocks. The cases of beneficiaries having to spend the EAGER cash transfer on medical care, or even funeral expenses, provides an example of unexpected circumstances that could easily derail a beneficiaries' progress towards her empowerment and longer-term goals. EAGER Leadership has also pointed out how Financial Literacy sessions highlight saving for emergencies, potentially equipping girls with improved resilience to challenging circumstances.

Other stakeholders' apprehensions that changes could be ephemeral are also worth noting. A male caregivers FGD in Kambia noted that children can be unpredictable and it is likely that situations could quickly change. A male partner (#1) in Tonkolili noted both his pleasure of what he saw as improved behaviours and recognition of new by-laws, but he also indicated that EAGER's formal presence should continue. He argued that EAGER needs to maintain contact with girls because once women earn money they may also lose respect for their partners. Analysis did not reveal other similar sentiments among other stakeholders, but it is possible that others, male partners especially, may share this same concern. EAGER Leadership has indicated that they are addressing this concern more directly with Cohort 2 in including male partners purposefully within community dialogue sessions.

In addition to the mitigation strategies noted in the table in Impact 3 above, EAGER might be able to lessen risk by investing efforts in structural, rights-based and policy-focused solutions. These are the topic of the next Sustainability Section.

#### 5.1.8. Sustainability Question 2. What visible structural or behavioural changes have the potential to remain after the end of the intervention? What signs exist of changing gender norms at the individual, household and community level, including attitudes towards girls' education, equality and realisation of girls' rights?

Both Baseline and Midterm data showed that gender norms continue to be deeply entrenched in sampled EAGER communities. EAGER's design recognises this reality and aims to "enable the girls to think critically about their empowerment goals, and to explore whether they can safely step beyond the restrictions and assumptions about the activities that girls can and should do in their



homes and communities.”<sup>66</sup> At the same time, Midterm data also suggested a willingness across stakeholder groups to challenge and negotiate many of those norms. Findings from the Endline show the same, and to some extent, further demonstration of approaches that may stretch and flex norms within a complex environment. Beneficiaries having more economic power during the EAGER Transition Phase introduces a new dynamic that we explore within this Section according to spheres of activity, at the individual, household and community level respectively. Results draw from both quantitative and qualitative data.

### Change at the individual level

Baseline and Midterm Evaluations included a Life Skills Index Score that measured various values, sentiments, knowledge, and practices of beneficiaries. As part of one component, Gender Norms and Supportive Relationships, girls surveyed responded to 11 statements (see table below) regarding relationships at Endline. The component is a scaled index from 0 to 100 and is based on how strongly respondents agree or disagree with statements. Statements are constructed so that higher scores indicate greater equity in gender roles and behaviours. Some minor changes were made to clarify the intention of some questions between Baseline and Midterm. At Midterm, the average Index Score increased a statistically significant amount from 50.2 to 66.1. At Endline, the Index Score increased to 67.9, a statistically significant increase over the Midterm average. The consistent increase after Midterm underlines that changes in opinions, and not changes to the tools, drove the improved scores. This change is particularly meaningful given that beneficiaries, by design, distance themselves from EAGER’s main messages during the Transition Phase and may suggest that change may be lasting, at least in the short-term.

*Table 35: Supportive Relationships Index Over Time*

Category	Baseline Mean	Midterm Mean	Endline Mean
<b>Supportive Relationships</b>	50.2	66.1*	67.9*
Sample Size (Girls' Combined Survey)	2,073	2,173	1,612

Across all statements, the percent to provide a desired response increased between Midterm and Baseline. Similarly, every statement received more desirable responses at Endline than Midterm. Some statements had particularly dramatic changes since Baseline. For example, the number of beneficiaries that disagreed with the statement “A woman should accept violence from her husband or partner to keep the family together” increased by over 30 percentage points since Baseline. Others increased a small amount since Baseline: at all three evaluation points, the statement “A man has more responsibility to earn money to provide for the family than a woman” had the lowest percentage of desirable responses, and only increased by 12.8 percentage points.

<sup>66</sup> EAGER. (n.d.) EAGER Transition Design – An Overview, p. 1.

Table 36: Percent replying with desired response

	Question	Desired Response	Baseline <sup>67</sup>	Midterm	Endline
1	If a girl experiences violence is she the one who should be blamed for what happens	Disagree	N/A	76.1%	78.5%
2	If you love someone it means you must always have sex when they want it – even if you do not want it.	Disagree	N/A	68.9%	72.5%
3	A man is the only one who should make decisions for the household.	Disagree	N/A	63.6%	72.8%
4	A woman should accept violence from her husband or partner to keep the family together.	Disagree	55.4%	81.5%	85.4%
5	It is good for a man to beat his wife if she does not agree to have sex with him.	Disagree	69.2%	90.6%	90.7%
6	Girls and women have the right to use contraception including asking their partners to wear a condom.	Agree	N/A	75.8%	76.6%
7	It is only important to educate boys.	Disagree	N/A	85.7%	86.4%
8	Girls and boys should share household chores.	Agree	56.4%	79.5%	87.5%
9	When a man offers a girl money or gifts in exchange for sex the girl is at risk.	Agree	54.1%	62.7%	64.2%
10	A man has more responsibility to earn money to provide for the family than a woman.	Disagree	13.7%	20.9%	26.4%
11	Girls and women should not be limited to the work normally done by females, because they are capable of doing many different things.	Agree	67.2%	77.6%	86.3%
	Sample Size (Girls' Combined Survey)		2,073	2,173	1,612

These results reflect girls' individual understanding of their capabilities and expectations within relationships based largely on their gender. The next Section builds upon these findings to explore household dynamics more closely, bringing in voices of multiple stakeholders.

<sup>67</sup> For a handful of questions the phrasing was changed between Baseline and Midterm to clarify the intention of the statements. No changes were made between Midterm and Endline While the Index collectively remains comparable across all three, some individual questions are not appropriate to compare.

### Changes at the household level

Building on these findings as well as earlier arguments in the Impact Section that explored beneficiaries' attitudes towards marriage and sexual and reproductive health, we now turn to an exploration of possible change at the household level. This Section recognises that beneficiaries may live with caregivers and/or their male partners.

#### Embracing household responsibilities

Similar to Midterm results, and as indicated by various findings and quotes from earlier Sections, both beneficiaries and other stakeholders, namely caregivers and male partners, express enthusiasm and gratitude for girls changing their behaviours to be more respectful. Recall from the Relevance and other earlier Sections that the complexity of girls' situations requires a nuanced analysis and that girls may be navigating existing cultural norms while finding space for embracing greater control and power. Many girls seem to exhibit a new approach to interactions within the household in which they take up their chore burdens more deliberately and effectively. Many beneficiaries express being able to manage her day more effectively and take care of family members and the home with great pride. Utterances indicate that many of these behaviours may endure in at least the short-term.

*“Yes, my life has change because of EAGER, I was rebellious and I was not obedient with my parents but after EAGER programme and the encouragement they gave to me, I am respectful, doing household chores, and respecting my parents and elders.” (Girl KII, WAU)*

*“Taking care of my home and my children is a good thing and it will continue and I love the peace I have now.” (Girl KII, Koinadugu)*

Findings from previous Sections indicate that many EAGER participants have found greater economic empowerment during the Transition Phase. Still, more than one third (12 of 30) of girls interviewed at Endline expressed aligning their attitudes and behaviours with traditional gender roles that demonstrate deference to male partners. Recall, too, from Effectiveness 1 above that Mentors often taught girls to be deferential. Overwhelmingly, male partners and caregivers also conveyed their delight at this change. Like Midterm interpretations, it is possible to understand that EAGER may have helped many girls to practice assertive communication and to understand how their actions may elicit particular responses from those around them. Girls may be more skilfully negotiating and navigating their home situations and relationships to reach the outcomes they desire. Given above findings about confidence in the household space, it is possible too, that girls may find more purpose and perhaps recognition in these roles. They also may use this technique in order to free up space for their own activity, such as attending EAGER Learning Sessions (as seen at Midterm) or in order to participate in business or other income-generating activity (during transition). Indeed, many beneficiaries expressed their capabilities to contribute economically to the household at the same time that they have increased their respect for their husbands:

*“Previously I was not respecting my husband and if I ask him for money for food and he did not give me I would quarrel with him and disrespect him but since EAGER came if I go to him and ask for money for food, if he says he do not have money I will not quarrel with him. Instead, I will improvise from the business that I’m doing for all of us to eat. I am really respecting him now to the fullest.”*

*“Yes, even in my household it has helped immensely because of me involving in business helps the day-to-day expenses. EAGER has help us even in our marriages as we were been taught to respect and honor our husband.” (Girl KII, Kenema)*

It is worth noting that an exploration of EAGER Life Skills curriculum indicates that respect for partner and/or caregiver or effective performance of household responsibilities is not an overt component. Given the prominence, however, of both girls’ and Mentors’ expressions of having learnt these normative behaviours through EAGER, findings suggest that simply bringing girls of the same age together for guided discussion and networking has resulted in behaviours that value peaceful household interactions and less overt conflict and using their skills to strengthen their role and say within the household. Behaviours also seem to align with expected roles for young women within the greater Sierra Leonian context. At the same time, girls’ choice of behaviours suggests that they may deliberately choose to follow gender norms with the knowledge that girls can deliberately create power for themselves in doing so.

#### Improved caregiver understanding of girls’ needs

In addition, stakeholders also express improved relationships between caregivers and girls and increased understanding of girls’ needs. Participants in a female Caregivers’ FGD in Kono expressed that community members are now more aware of what girls may need to be successful and are helping them in ways that they did not before. Two other parents within the group provided the example of having more patience and understanding the relationship between girls being in need, for something as simple as lunch during the school day, and unsafe sexual practices. They referred to a revelation inspired by radio programming:

*“Before now I use to be very mad at my girls when they asked me for lunch which I believe now that it was very bad because some of these girls are attending schools that are very far away and if they go to school without lunch and transport her only option is to go and get a man that can help her out. But, I have learned all that in this [radio] programme, and that is a very big change in the community and family members” (Female Caregivers, Kono, FGD)*

Similarly, results from BBC Media Action’s audience research on its *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* radio show identified that parents may be developing more positive attitudes towards sharing domestic chores equally between girls and boys, as well as caregivers having an improved perspective on potential trajectories for young mothers<sup>68</sup>. BBC Media Action’s second round of audience research from June-July 2021 also indicates that parents and their children are experiencing greater comfort having discussions about sensitive issues, though reluctance still remains. BBC Media Action indicates that the radio drama will specifically respond to this finding by presenting more sensitive issues through the lens of fictional characters, but link this to contextual, solutions-oriented discussions that will be aired immediately following the broadcast of the drama episode.

#### Improved respect for women’s earnings

In addition, some male partners reported having greater awareness that women have rights to money earned through farming and agricultural activities:

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<sup>68</sup> BBC Media Action. (March 2021). Leave No Girl Behind: Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER): Audience Research Report.

*“Myself, standing here, I used to beat my wife, but by now, after the intervention of EAGER program, I do it no more. I’ve changed now. After prepared a small garden together with my wife, I hand the money over to her, I say, here. At first, I use to hold on the money, but now, I don’t do anymore. Because, the EAGER stuff is here. EAGER had changed us now.” (Male Partner KII, Bo)*

*“Yes, women can now handle monies by themselves, without the husbands taking it from their hands. A woman can be having two hundred to about three hundred thousand Leones on her own, wherein, the husband can no more take from her hands.” (Male partner KII, Pujehun)*

## Reductions in GBV

Qualitative data indicate that many beneficiaries report fewer disagreements with male partners as a result of new approaches they have learned through EAGER. Some of the interviews with boys, male partners and other stakeholders also indicate a possible reduction in abuse and violence towards EAGER girls. In addition, statistics from Sierra Leone identify high rates of violence towards women and girls suggesting that a better relationship with partners may very well mean less physical abuse. According to the 2017 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), 29.9% of women (and 6.5% of men) aged 20-24 were first married before the age of 18 years. A fifth (21%) of all girls between the age of 15 and 19 had begun child rearing. In addition, nearly two-thirds of women (63%) and a third of men (34%) think beating your wife is justified<sup>69</sup>. Similarly, the 2019 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data<sup>70</sup> for Sierra Leone, 61 percent of women age 15-49 have experienced physical violence by anyone since age 15 and 7 percent have experienced sexual violence. The same proportion (61%) of ever-married women have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence by their current or most recent partner. This number has increased from 51 percent in 2013. Just under a third of ever-married women have sustained injuries. Experience of violence is also higher for women with less education. It is possible that these proportions may be even higher in reality as some survey respondents may be reluctant to identify abuse on a survey<sup>71</sup>.

Qualitative Endline data provide examples of male stakeholders reporting a decrease in abuse of women related to EAGER programming. Community leaders in Kailahun and Port Loko as well as five male partners (of 20 interviewed) in Bo, Kenema, Pujehun and Tonkolili all indicate change. Three reports from male stakeholders made a specific link to EAGER’s SBCC initiatives. A boy in Port Loko indicated that he has learned that certain behaviors are unacceptable because of a *Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap* episode:

*“Yes I am aware of the BBC programme for Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap and I have been listening to it. As I am talking to you now, if you tune Kiss FM Radio station you always hear advice given as to how we should support our sisters to become better people in society and how if they become better people in society they will help improve our communities...Changes have taken place*

<sup>69</sup> Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2017). <https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/3210>

<sup>70</sup> Statistics Sierra Leone Stats SL and ICF. (2020). Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey 2019. Freetown, Sierra Leone, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: Stats SL and ICF. <https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-FR365-DHS-Final-Reports.cfm>

<sup>71</sup> Sarr, K. G., Trembley, A., Heaner, G. & Mull, A. C. (2021). Midterm Evaluation Report Midterm Evaluation of the Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER) project within the Girls’ Education Challenge (GEC) -Leave No Girl Behind project (LNGB). IMC Worldwide, p. 102.

*from the radio information I have been listening to and I have learnt a lot from it and that has changed me. For example, touching a woman's buttocks...I did not know it is a crime I just thought it is a fun." (Boy KII, Port Loko)*

*"Yes, it is as a result of the episode I'm not beating my wife again." (Boy KII, Pujehun)*

The first excerpt indicates a growing awareness for the importance of girls to society at large and how males within the community can support their empowerment. At the same time, the comment continues to emphasise patriarchy. Both comments indicate important reported changes in behaviour regarding physical abuse and how the boy in Port Loko now understands it is wrong to touch a woman's buttocks without consent. The second boy reports no longer physically abusing his wife. In addition, a male partner in Kono similarly expressed that he has applied what he learned from the radio show and now has a more peaceful relationship with his wife. This testimony mirrors many beneficiaries' reports that they have applied learnings from EAGER to now enjoy a better relationship with their husbands, which may possibly entail less physical abuse.

### **Changes at the community level**

In investigating community-level changes to gender norms, we begin with an examination of community dialogues, EAGER's most obvious mechanism for change at the collective level. Community Dialogues have the goal to "increase understanding and inspire action at the community level to foster a safer and more supportive environment for girls to move in and be able to make decisions and take action for themselves."<sup>72</sup> Cohort 1 implementation focused on a series of seven dialogues including a girls' listening session that began in December 2020/January 2021. Each dialogue concluded with reflections on actions that would help in fostering support and accountability for improved respect of girls' rights and safety. These reflections later informed small community action plans that were the focus of Quarter 13<sup>73</sup>. The dialogues used visual aids, storytelling and girls' voices as facilitation tools. LS and BLN Officers led the dialogues with support from Mentors and Facilitators. Interviews with EAGER Leadership indicate important changes for Cohort 2 community dialogues, reflecting the project response to recommendations from the Midterm Evaluation as well as other project learning. Changes include that each community dialogue will follow a listening session and that dialogues will include influential people along with partners and boys. EAGER will facilitate a parallel series of dialogues for caregivers. This is an addition from the Cohort 1 experience.

At Endline, qualitative data reveal that in 5 of 6 sampled districts, Community Leaders participating in FGDs indicated attending community dialogues, most commonly around three times, but in Kailahun, attendance is reported to be more regular - up to seven times. The group of female community leaders sampled in Port Loko reported awareness of the community dialogues and even the Community Action Plan but that they had not been invited to attend the meetings. The reason for this disconnect is unclear, though may simply indicate that the leaders who participated in Endline data collection were not the same leaders targeted for the community dialogues.

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<sup>72</sup> EAGER Q10 Quarterly Report. (February 2021), p. 8.

<sup>73</sup> EAGER. (2020). EAGER Quarter 12 Report.

Only 6 of 20 male partners interviewed had attended community dialogue meetings. Four community leader FGDs and male partners from 7 districts reported that their community had developed community action plans. The objectives of community action plans conveyed are as follows:

- Fines against actions damaging to girls (Kailahun)
- Supporting girls' learning (Pujehun)
- Building community center (Kambia)
- Purchasing farming equipment (Port Loko)

### Development of community-level policies in support of girls

Structural changes, like policy development and budget allocations, often signal the potential that changes could be long-term. While there was no discussion of funding changes to support girls' education and empowerment, qualitative data indicate that communities have instituted by-laws and fines to support girls as well as applying stronger sanctions in the case of sexual violence. Eight of the 10 communities investigated have initiated bylaws to promote girls' empowerment and girls' education. This may be an increase since Midterm as only two communities had indicated such developments at that time. The focus of the bylaws varies but may include ensuring that children (and girls, in particular) are going to school, discouraging early marriage, ensuring consensual marriage, and persecuting sexual and gender-based violence. Leaders in Kailahun, Kambia and Port Loko all indicated the application of fines for behaviours damaging to girls while other stakeholders identified the use of stronger sanctions against those accused of rape in Kambia, Kono, Port Loko and Tonkolili.

To illustrate, caregivers in Kono as well as a local councillor in Koinadugu pointed to a law that requires if a boy impregnates a girl, causing her to stop her schooling, that the boy should also be suspended from school for the same period. At the same time, this by-law reduces access to schooling to both boys and girls in this situation. Additional support to these communities using a less punitive approach in which both the boy and girl could continue their schooling would be more appropriate.

In Kailahun, stakeholders indicated multiple initiatives, for instance,

*“First and foremost, we now have laws on child marriage which used to exist but we had expunged that one in our traditional and religious context. Secondly, anyone who impregnates a girl child will not be dealt as usual but now will be handed over to the police because it has been criminalised. Also, we used to accept marriage proposals for our daughter without her consent and approval and so many other laws have been changed as a result of the EAGER Programme.” (Male partner KII, Kailahun)*

This community in Kailahun may present an illuminating case, as multiple stakeholders (male partners, community leaders and a local councillor) all underlined policy changes benefitting women. New initiatives seem to include fines for men sleeping with girls, criminal persecution of rape offenders, and fines for physical violence of wives. According to various stakeholders, not only do new by-laws exist but an existing law forbidding the participation of women and girls in decision-making has been abolished. These changes may be even more meaningful given that this community in Kailahun was chosen for inclusion in the qualitative sample due to its conservative Muslim beliefs.

At the same time, a conversation during a girls' FGD in the same community in Kailahun provides a reminder that gender norm transformation takes time and that there is much more work to be done. The comments strongly triangulate the above community-specific findings.

*Beneficiary 1: "Well, before this time, you hardly see girls engaged in doing business by herself especially if you are already married. The husband will not allow it because they had the impression that if some girls are empowered under their roof, she will not respond to their control so they will go all out to stop the business."*

*Beneficiary 2: "That is true and it's happening even now because one of the EAGER Colleague's business tray was seized yesterday from her by her husband and case is currently with the Mother's Support Group Chairlady. I am sure they will sit [deliberate] on the matter this evening. According to the girl, she wanted to go to the nearby town market for purchasing with some money she had saved and the husband said they should go to the farm. The lady said, 'No, this market gathering is done once a month and people from other communities must have brought decent goods to sell and at reasonable price.' The husband said, 'No,' and the girl sneaked and went to the market to the market. When she returned home, the husband seized the goods."*

*Beneficiary 3: "She was lucky not to have been mercilessly beaten by him..."  
[They girls argue and laughs amongst themselves.]*

*Beneficiary 2: "You know why? They were doing things unceremoniously because they are the men but, since we started taking the EAGER class and we have known much of our rights, they hardly misbehave on us. Also, since the community leaders started intervening on our behalf in the town, they mostly listen to them and the situations of girls have really improved." (Girls FGD, Kailahun)*

The qualitative data collectors noted that all of the girls agreed that the situation had improved, and the girls noted the development of by-laws to protect girls. It may be interesting to continue to watch the developments in this Kailahun community in particular.

### [Initiatives to eliminate early marriage and foster consensual marriage](#)

Community attitudes towards early marriage and consensual marriage received specific focus during Endline investigations, in part because the detriments of early marriage had been a topic of EAGER's community dialogues. This Section investigates both girls' perspectives and those of other community stakeholders. This topic, in particular, marks a merging of the individual, household and community spheres.

Various stakeholders interviewed expressed that early marriage is on the decline in their communities, due in part to the EAGER programme, including male partners, caregivers and community leaders. Such views surfaced in 5 communities but were especially consistent and triangulated in Kailahun, Koinadugu and Port Loko sampled communities. Community leaders and male partners emphasised the community's requirement of consent for marriage in Kailahun in particular. Recall, too, from Impact 3 that there remains a strong perception among stakeholders that early marriage and pregnancy remain core barriers for girls' advancement.



Some EAGER beneficiaries also report having changed their perspectives about early marriage in particular, since having begun the EAGER programme. These findings enhance above impact-level findings and underscore the complex nature of early marriage, clearly involving multiple considerations. Findings indicate that for some girls, while it is too late to change their own situation, that their new awareness may benefit the next generation. The following quote is particularly moving and it demonstrates how EAGER-related financial empowerment may allow her to make a different choice for her daughter:

*"I got married at an early age; it was in my husband's house that I began to observe my menstruation. Because I was so young, I had three miscarriages. I would not be aware that I was pregnant and would be doing all sorts of work. It was only when I saw blood coming from my vagina that I realised that I was pregnant. Now, I have a different mind about marriage and childbirth. Women's role for some are still the same while for some, it has changed. Some women still allow their young girl child to get married to an elderly man. I will never allow my girl to get married early especially now that I have a business to do so that I will take good care of her." (Girl KII, Tonkolili)*

Similarly, a girl interviewed in Koinadugu celebrated that EAGER has led discussions within the community to halt early marriage. At the same time, she made it clear that she will be entering into an early marriage herself within the coming months.

*"My parent had collected money from a man's hand for me since I was a child and I will be getting married in March of this year [2022] and I am only thirteen years old. I would not want my younger sisters to get married early like me, in as much as I don't love the man, but I have to get marry him for my people are poor and this man in question has been taking care of me since I was small, like paying for my initiation fee, buying palm wine for my parents and household utensils. I am getting married to him now that my breasts have grown and I know how to do house chores. A curse will be laid on me if I say I didn't want him and the curse may even affect my family if I denied him." (Girl KII, Koinadugu)*

While this beneficiaries' situation is lamentable and cannot be changed, another girl within the same Koinadugu community indicated that she is now able to refuse early marriage, in part because she is more financially independent. A beneficiary in Kambia said similarly:

*"There were times in this village when if a girl is not engaged in anything for a while they will push you to get married but, for me I told them that am not ready to get married yet. No one can push me into marriage. Since the programme came, I can speak in public. I can't be forced me to marry early at all. Because of this program, I was able to stay without getting married because when I went there for the training, I did not look at anyone...and I would tell them that I am not interested in men yet because I wanted to focus on my training first."*

Taken together, these perspectives and experiences indicate momentum to decrease the frequency of early marriage as well as recognition of the capabilities of young women. Discussion also recognises the multifaceted and institutional nature of early marriage practices and linkages. Claims that early marriages have ended completely in a community are likely exaggerated but may indicate a future decline in a positive direction.

## Change at the systems-level

The EAGER project design focuses on the individual, household and community levels. At the system level, the project works mainly at the policy-influencing level. EAGER has made efforts to inform local councilors, and regional ministry representatives of EAGER's work. Endline findings point to important relationships at the highest ministerial levels. All of this occurs within a challenging context. For example, the external Baseline Evaluation report reported how challenges at the national level that made it difficult to establish national-level objectives<sup>74</sup>. These included a reshuffling of cabinet ministers and reorganisation/division of ministries that occurred around the time of the project launch.

The Midterm Evaluation found that systems-level sustainability was limited and that the project may not have fully taken advantage of opportunities to effect change. At the same time, Midterm Evaluation findings and EAGER's sustainability plan<sup>75</sup> point to multiple areas of alignment between EAGER's objectives and government policies including the MBSSE Radical Inclusion Policy, the new Out-of-School Strategy, the 2023-2028 Education Sectoral Plan, the National Strategy for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy and Child Marriage (2019-2023), Male Involvement Strategy for the Prevention of GBV, and the National Gender Strategic Plan.

Endline findings of national-level efforts rely upon document review as well as interviews with EAGER Leadership, the IRC Country Director, the FM representative and FCDO Country Officers. Analysis of KII data indicate that EAGER has developed strong relationships with highest levels of the two key line ministries (MBSSE and MGCA) yet there was little evidence of meaningful relationships at the technical level, which, according to EAGER leadership, may be a reflection of the limited or fragmented governance and coordination structures that have been available on non-formal education opportunities and out-of-school issues until most recently. The evaluation team conducted interviews with both the Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education and the Minister of Gender and Children's Affairs (MGCA), which confirms EAGER's strong linkages with those entities. EAGER Leadership described frequent contacts with ministerial officials at multiple levels. All ministerial-level officials interviewed confirmed these contacts and some described communications with the IRC Country Director. At the same time, while there may be substance to these exchanges these interactions seem to be ad hoc and informal, which may be appropriate at a strategic level. Unfortunately, the evaluation team received no valuable insights from interviewed officials and the CCU on the nature of contacts with technical level individuals. It is worth noting that higher-level relationships were not evident to the evaluation team at the time of the Midterm Evaluation, only seven months earlier. This difference either suggests that EAGER has made considerable efforts to strengthen relationships during this recent period or that for various possible reasons, the CCU was not able to put the evaluation team in touch with national officials as effectively during Midterm Evaluation data collection<sup>76</sup>.

The evaluation team could not reach more technical-level counterparts for interview even with project interventions, however. The technical level refers to civil servants who fulfill operational

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<sup>74</sup> Sarr, K. G., Trembley, A., Heaner, G. & Mull, A. C. (2020). 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). IMC Worldwide.

<sup>75</sup> At the time of writing, EAGER's sustainability plan (Sustainability Matrix) was still in draft form with track changes. While now in Year 4 of the project the plan may be of little benefit to the current project.

<sup>76</sup> The Minister of BSSE had participated in a high-level mission with UK Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Girls' Education Helen Grant in May 2021 that included a visit to an EAGER safe. This finding did not surface during Midterm data collection and does not figure within the Midterm Evaluation report.

roles rather than strategic ones. The CCU provided names and contact information for an individual at each of the key ministries. Unfortunately, the MBSSE official was occupied with an important visit and then a health emergency while the MGCA official was traveling internationally and was unresponsive to requests for an interview. Moreover, the relationship with the Directorate of Non-Formal Education (NFE) within the MBSSE seems particularly tenuous. EAGER Leadership, the IRC Country Director and FCDO Officials agreed that the lukewarm relationship between EAGER and the NFE Directorate may reflect larger systems-level challenges and resource constraints. The NFE Directorate has meager resources which can cause unrealistic expectations towards a larger and more well-resourced NGO like the IRC. When interviewed, the Director of NFE indicated some awareness of the project and that EAGER staff have contributed to curriculum reviews, but she also made clear that she is not fully conversant with project details.

FCDO and EAGER Leadership interviewed indicate that EAGER has taken up opportunities to contribute to policy influence and development when able, including contributing with other stakeholders to the MBSSE's writing of an implementation plan for the Radical Inclusion Policy that was in process at the time of data collection. The Sustainability Plan further indicates other planned activities including engaging MBSSE, and along with it, the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) and the Non-Formal Education Directorate, so that learnings from EAGER can feed into the implementation plans of the Education Sector Plan (ESP) and the Radical Inclusion Policy Implementation Plan, as well as teachers' professional development and NFE curriculum review processes. The plan also indicates that EAGER will engage MBSSE to help the government explore strategies for how to systematise pathways for community-based volunteers to enter teaching qualification schemes, mentorship schemes, Girls Clubs within schools and NFE opportunities. The plan notes that EAGER views materials like community dialogue materials, curriculum materials and radio shows, and tools for referrals to services as contributions that may potentially have an extended life within government.

With the exception of influencing NFE curriculum revisions, findings indicate that these developments may be further enhanced. Ministry officials interviewed commented that joint workplan development and capacity-building of ministerial staff would also be welcome. They also expressed concerns that the MBSSE would like the curriculum to align with the newly revised basic education curriculum. The CCU seems to have a different vision of what curriculum influence is possible, however, and instead points to opportunities for EAGER to influence new NFE outcomes set within the ESP and/or integrating EAGER approaches within the formal curriculum. Clearly, greater opportunities and platforms for coordination are needed to agree upon areas where EAGER's experience may inform the governments' approach to education.

While dissemination tracking of EAGER monitoring and evaluation findings figures prominently as a means of measurement and verification within EAGER's sustainability plan, none of the government counterparts interviewed indicated having seen any of the evaluation reports. This finding is surprising at this third evaluation point and contradicts statements from EAGER leadership who insist that full reports and evaluation briefs were shared methodically. It is unclear why such discrepancies would exist though they may reflect how high-level ministerial positions may not be as aware of email exchanges as technical staff, though unfortunately these individuals were not available for interview. Exchanges between the EE and EAGER Leadership indicated that an EAGER learning event is planned for May 24, 2022<sup>77</sup>. Interviews with key EAGER staff (EAGER Leadership #3) indicated enthusiasm for the event and recognised the potential that such an event might have for sustaining momentum around EAGER and its accomplishments

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<sup>77</sup> Emails between EAGER Director and EE – including copies of the guest list and the run of show (May 13, 2022).

and policy-influencing. Leadership noted that the dissemination activity could be “strategic and powerful”. Interviews with both key line Ministers confirm their interest in formal reporting activities. The Minister BSSE urges EAGER to make research presentations that may inform policy. Similarly, the GCA Minister expressed her yearning to learn more about EAGER’s results and how they may inform other programming:

*“There are some really good gems in there that are showing face – if it is something we can piggy-back on or share or incorporate into the work that we are doing, it would be important to share it.” (Minister SWGCA, KII)*

In response, the CCU indicated a shared interest in such exchanges while also noting challenges within governance and coordination structures. This same minister offered during an interview to convene a multi-sectoral meeting with fellow ministers and technical staff to discuss EAGER and its implications for the protection and education of girls in Sierra Leone.

In addition to resource constraints noted above, several challenges surfaced that may have limited systems-level interventions. EAGER Leadership argued that EAGER just does not have the scope and capacity to initiate systems-change but that it may be able to influence policy through various means. The project looks largely to FCDO counterparts to use their leverage as a major international donor to share news of EAGER’s impacts and outputs that could be of use to the GoSL<sup>78</sup>. EAGER Leadership and the FM representative interviewed also clarified that support at the systems-level had also suffered during a period of turnover at the FCDO Country Office. The turnover stalled progress with the relevant line ministries. IRC’s Country Director also pointed to the structural challenge of working with two ministries and how neither Ministry may feel appropriate to take full ownership of the project. Conversations with EAGER Leadership also made clear that EAGER Leadership and the IRC Country Director are aware of the need for future programming for adolescent girls to include dedicated systems-level strengthening. According to stakeholders interviewed, future interventions might include continued policy influencing, systems-level capacity building, joint mission trips, and having a colleague embedded within relevant ministries in order to foster sustainability.

### **Value for Money Analysis**

Per inception discussions, the Endline Evaluation aimed to undertake a more rigorous approach to the Value for Money (VfM) analysis than at Midterm. The analysis was to apply a moderate approach to VfM analysis<sup>79</sup> and include considerations of cost data and budget allocation to programme activities alongside stakeholder perspectives on valuable project activities. Despite requests initiated at the inception phase in November 2022, at the time of writing, EAGER had not yet been able to provide per-girl cost data. The CCU indicated that the calculation was complex and that they had solicited assistance from the Best Use of Resources department at Headquarters. IRC intends to submit the cost efficiency analysis as an annex alongside the post-Endline research. This present Endline Evaluation Report instead presents broader budget figures that indicate proportions of project budget relative to various EAGER components. A subsequent section pairs those data with insights from target beneficiaries on the most valuable project activities.

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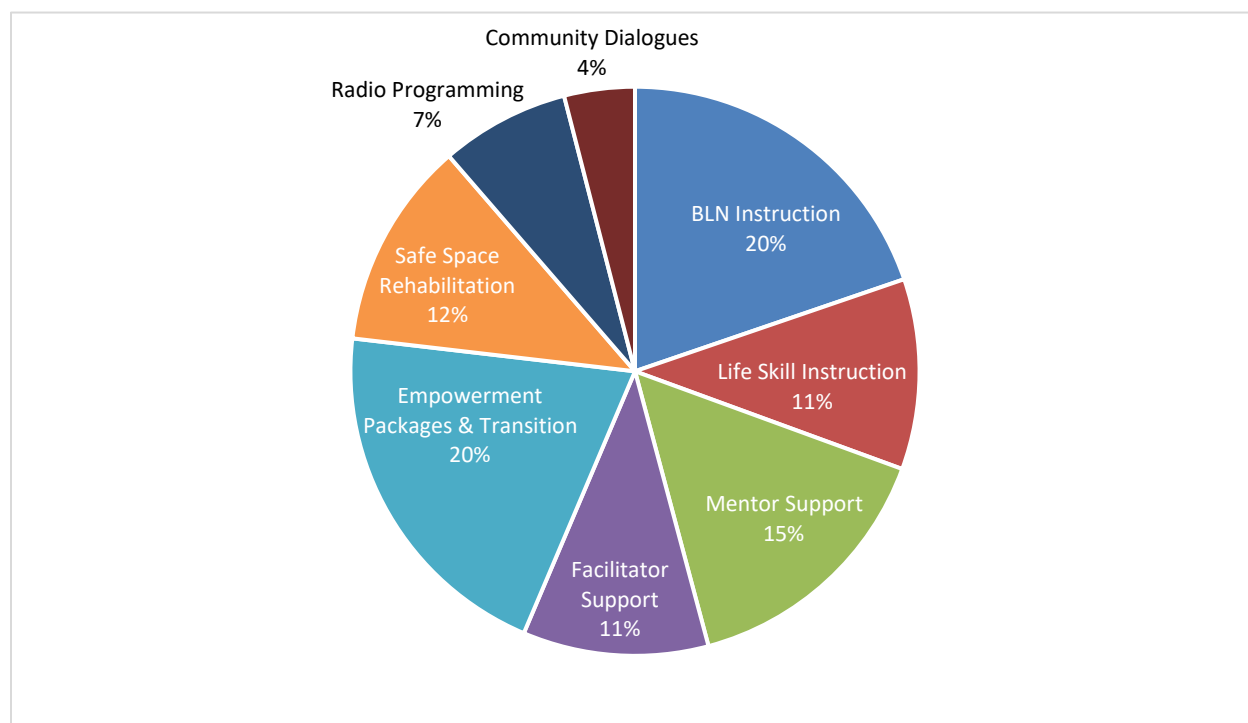
<sup>78</sup> The United Kingdom also has the distinction of being the former colonial power of Sierra Leone which allows for a unique and influential relationship between the two countries.

<sup>79</sup> Shah, V. (2021). How to integrate Value for Money assessments within the External Evaluations of the GEC. Girls Education Challenge.

### Cost breakdown by project activity

As indicated above, while per-girl cost data was not available, the CCU provided the evaluation team with data on the cost of various project activities across the four partners. EAGER Leadership indicated that available figures apply to Cohort 1 experiences and are current up to October 2021. Figures do not include direct and indirect project delivery support costs as they were not provided to the evaluation team. Amounts indicated within this analysis are partial and do not fully represent the complete cost of project activities. The data available provide limited insights, though there is hope that the subsequent per girl cost analyses, anticipated with submission of post-Endline research, will provide greater clarity. Salaries for both local and international staff, local and international travel, utilities, maintenance and all other office running costs are not included within these calculations. The figure below presents the proportion of the activity budget allocated for each project component relevant to transition. Together, these costs represent approximately 11 percent of the total project budget (£17,487,181, as of the August 2021 budget realignment).

*Figure 10: Breakdown of EAGER Activity Costs (without project delivery support costs)*



As the figure above indicates, the greatest portions of provided activity costs align with Empowerment Packages and transition (20 percent), followed by BLN instruction (20 percent) and then Mentor support (15 percent). The CCU has clarified that the calculation for Empowerment Packages and transition includes the cash distribution, Empowerment Package materials as well as items for the Girls' Clubs. This category may be most costly as packages

consisted of items distributed to every single beneficiary. The category of “Mentor support” reflects the cost of Mentor stipends paid monthly<sup>80</sup>.

### **Beneficiary perceptions of value**

To the extent possible, this Section attempts to identify the benefit of various programme components according to the perspectives of EAGER beneficiary girls. The analysis builds upon midterm findings which culled perceived value across all stakeholder groups. Because not much time had passed between the Midterm and Endline data collection (7 months between data collection points), the Endline focuses instead specifically on girls’ perspectives. Given the holistic approach of EAGER, especially during the Transition Phase, it is impossible to fully disentangle the various complementary elements that make up project activities. In addition, the nature of EAGER’s activities and its objectives requires that skills compound, for instance, one needs to have basic numeracy skills to be able to count, in order to make change, in order to run a business, in order to have greater influence within her family, etc. We rely upon both quantitative and qualitative data for this analysis.

The Endline Evaluation beneficiaries’ survey asked girls to identify which aspects of the programme were most important and which ones were least important to achieving their Empowerment Plan. As the table below indicates, 42.9 percent of beneficiaries stated that the financial support (i.e., cash transfer) was the most important aspect, and 38.2 percent stated that the Learning Sessions were the most important. Peer support was cited as the least important aspect by 41.8 percent of respondents, and financial support was cited as the second least important element (17.3 percent of respondents). It is notable that financial support is noted among the most and least important aspects. This result likely stems from claims from some beneficiaries that the EAGER cash transfer was insufficient, but this contradiction may also reflect beneficiaries having different needs. The challenging and resource meager contexts in which EAGER girls likely influence their perceptions of the critical importance of receiving financial support. Recall also from the Effectiveness 2 Section above that in some cases, girls interviewed demonstrated having pivoted from an idea requiring more financial means to one that was one reasonable with a fair amount of reported success. Nearly all of the 7.4 percent beneficiaries noting “other” aspects being least useful replied that all aspects of the programme were useful and they could not pick one as least useful.

When comparing perceived importance to the Activity Costs outlined above, there are no clear high-cost, low-importance activities or low-cost, high-importance activities. Perceived importance and costs are largely in line with each other. Learning Sessions appear to be the largest driver of costs and the greatest perceived benefit. Financial and In-Kind Empowerment Packages (which are not separated above but estimated here) are perceived to be important to achieving goals within girls’ Empowerment Plan. Mentor support falls in the middle in terms of relative importance and costs.

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<sup>80</sup> The corresponding category for BLN instruction would be Facilitator Support, which accounts for the monthly stipends paid to Facilitators.

Table 37: Beneficiaries' ranking of EAGER project components

Which of the following aspects is the most/least important for you to achieve your Empowerment Plan?	Most Important	Least Important	Relative Importance <sup>81</sup>	Relative Costs <sup>82</sup>
Learning Sessions	38.2%	9.9%	★★★★★	⊗⊗⊗⊗⊗
Financial Support	42.9%	17.3%	★★★★	⊗⊗⊗⊗
Mentor Support	10.2%	12.1%	★★★	⊗⊗⊗
Empowerment Package	6.9%	11.5%	★★	⊗⊗
Peer Support	1.1%	41.8%	★	⊗
Other	0.8%	7.4%	N/A	N/A

Source: Girls' Combined Survey (n=1,612)

Qualitative data support these findings above. Each of the 10 FGDs with EAGER beneficiaries in the 10 sampled districts ended the discussion with a final question asking them to reflect on their experiences and to identify the most helpful part of the EAGER programme. The responses varied significantly in their tone and style and likely reflected the special characteristics of the Safe Spaces as well as the specific EAGER participants gathered as part of the focus group. The figure below displays narrative responses as a word cloud. The size of the word aligns with the frequency of the word within responses. The 3 most commonly used words to describe EAGER's most helpful aspects were "money" (28 utterances), "business" (20 utterances) and "read" (19 utterances)<sup>83</sup>.

<sup>81</sup> Note: Relative Importance scored as the percentage who identified each characteristic as the most important minus the percentage who scored it as the least important. Other was excluded from ranking.

<sup>82</sup> Relative Costs made use of the Activity Costs outlined previously. Similarly, they exclude some project delivery costs borne by the Development Partners not shared to the EE. Beneficiaries were not asked about some activities they may not perceive as important, such as Safe Space rehabilitation and community dialogues (which they were not the primary targets of).

<sup>83</sup> The word cloud reflects paragraphs of text responses from interview participants. As this exercise was qualitative, girls' responses were elaborate and included not only precise activity-related words but also other words required to convey their ideas in full sentences. For this reason, we also see words like "set," "well," and "someone" included in the word cloud. This observation makes the repetition of key words like "money," "business" and "read" even more meaningful as they needed to compete with a multitude of words to surface within the analysis.





Nonetheless, both quantitative data and qualitative data available at Endline demonstrated that Learning Sessions and the EAGER cash distribution were the most commonly cited activities when girl beneficiaries were asked to identify the most important activity. Learning sessions included BLN Instruction, Life Skills instruction, Mentor support and Facilitator support, a total of 56.4 percent of costs according to the figure above. Recall that these costs are incomplete, however, and do not take into account project delivery costs. Including the 11.8 percent of the budget allocated for Safe Space renovations, i.e. where EAGER activities took place, increases this calculation to 68.2 percent of the activities budget. At the same time, Endline findings clearly show that many EAGER girls are applying skills and knowledge learned during Learning Sessions to their decisions within the Transition Phase of how to use the EAGER cash provided. Noting that a full analysis of project efficiency was beyond the scope of the Endline Evaluation and not being able to separate out activities leaves little meaningful conclusion other than to reiterate that EAGER activities have demonstrated value for many of the girls sampled at Endline. It seems that these monies were generally well-spent. These results require careful interpretation, however, as including support costs may drastically change these calculations.

## 6. Conclusions

The conclusions synthesise the findings above. They are organised thematically in order to condense findings that are common across multiple OECD criteria. Some of the ensuing recommendations may be more appropriate for future programming and this is detailed within the Recommendations Section.

### Generally Positive Experiences of Transition Phase

1. Girls and other stakeholders are overwhelmingly positive about EAGER generally, and the Transition Phase specifically. EAGER's approach to transition is **highly relevant** in coaching Mentors and beneficiaries through the development of an **individually-customised** Empowerment Plan that encourages specific goal setting, and detailing steps and plans to achieve that goal. This includes, by design, accommodations for girls with disabilities or other special needs. Additional support could be provided for girls interested in pursuing specific vocations, where applicable, as well as scaffolding for girls seeking to attain more advanced business skills.
2. EAGER meets girls' needs within the normative cultural boundaries in which they live, most significantly in supporting girls to make a plan that enables her to define what empowerment means to her within the context of her own life circumstances. At the same time, the project has made gains towards greater gender equity and transformation of gender norms.
3. **Mentors report overwhelmingly positive experiences with EAGER.** They acquired skills and knowledge similar to girls and developed their own plans for personal empowerment. Mentors reported enhanced communication, household management, financial management skills. They report higher status in their community because of their role in helping girls.

### Programmatic Elements

4. **EAGER cash transfers were also essential for enabling girls to realise their Empowerment Plan** and 42.9 percent of beneficiaries identified the cash distribution as the most important ingredient to achieving their goals. Interview data from girls and other stakeholders also generally indicate that the amount received was reasonable for petty business start-ups or growth to existing petty businesses that were in line with the types of business skills that girls had learnt. The amounts were also sufficiently small by design in order to mitigate safety risks. Qualitative data also indicate that for some girls, their financial goals may not have been appropriate to contextual realities and needed to be revised.
5. The acquisition of foundational skills (basic Literacy; Numeracy; Life Skills) through the **EAGER Learning Sessions** was also critical and provided relevant supplements to whatever goal a girl set for herself. Girls were not only nominally appreciative of having these skills, but were able to provide numerous specific examples of how they were using them in the pursuit of their Empowerment Plan. In addition, learning foundational skills also clearly contributed to girls' confidence and had implications beyond the pursuit of their Empowerment Plan. EAGER seems to have achieved a well-designed scaffolding of skills that provided girls with adequate support in the Transition Phase.

6. EAGER girls' **self-efficacy, communication skills, stress-management skills, financial knowledge and financial management skills, and saving habits** have continued to improve since the end of Learning Sessions. Constructive behaviours and self-confidence have iteratively continued to improve and be reinforced by their transition experiences. Less often, specific skills around negotiation, customer service, planning around profit and savings, and market conditions, were mentioned. Rarely did girls succeed in pursuing vocational training, due in part to restricted availability of vocational programming.
7. In practice, there is a **functional disconnect between girls' conceived Empowerment Plan and the plans expressed within the written Empowerment Plan tool** that provides useful documentation. At present, EAGER emphasises the written tool in its monitoring efforts and the conceived plans that continue to guide the majority of girls remain uncaptured as project data. The project should consider ways to better capture girls' conceived plans in recognition of lower literacy capacities. Gaps in monitoring data at the Empowerment Plan sign-off phase indicate the need for revised and tightened monitoring systems for Cohort 2.
8. While the Transition Phase is designed to address four domains (learning, household, community and financial), **nearly all beneficiaries reported pursuing financial goals<sup>84</sup> and very few girls indicated pursuing goals in the other three domains.** Many reasons may account for this imbalance. Firstly, given girls' limited access to capital and opportunities to earn money for themselves their excitement at receiving the cash distribution may result in greater focus on this area. Girls also worked for many weeks on the pieces of the financial goal during Financial Literacy sessions. These factors may have heightened girls' excitement for the financial domain more than the other three domains. In this respect, EAGER's implementation should be adjusted so that results may more fully align with the transition design's innovative emphasis on all four domains. Girls will require more specific and tailored coaching in order to be successful in the other domains. In addition, coaching to focus on medium-term as well as short-term goals would strengthen girls' empowerment experiences.
9. **Empowerment Packages** were well received though room for improvement remains, and EAGER Leadership has already determined a way forward. Not only do items contribute to helping girls materially as they begin the Transition Phase, they are conceived to reduce risk to girls. Moreover, the Empowerment Packages create a connection between many households and EAGER and seem to be money well spent in exchange for the good will and affections for EAGER achieved among other stakeholders.
10. Girls seem to view Girls' Clubs favourably and there is indication that some of the groups of girls within the sampled qualitative communities are actively engaged in Girls' Club activities. In many cases, meetings were organic and largely dependent upon the Safe Space experience. More can be done to encourage Girls' Clubs fully acknowledging that it is outside EAGER's scope to provide active support during the Transition Phase, including adequate timing of materials distribution and modelling prior to the end of the Learning Phase.

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<sup>84</sup> Recall that "business" is a broad term that encompasses small-scale trading, services and production.

11. **SBCC messaging** through the Wae Gyal Pikin Tinap radio show has been largely effective and data illustrate impressive stories of impact. More can be done to promote Mentors' and girls' listening of the show, particularly during Learning Sessions, as data indicate interest as well as the potential that girls and Mentors can help connect other key stakeholders to programming.

### Supportive and Hindering Factors

12. **Community, family, and partner support** also was said to strongly affect the degree to which a girl was able to pursue her Empowerment Plan. There was nearly unanimous general support from communities, families, and partners for girls' pursuit of conceived Empowerment Plan and, in many cases, support was more explicit in the form of material support, or advice. In a few cases there were implicit support-related barriers that limited a girl's ability to pursue her Empowerment Plan (e.g. being asked to do domestic duties). In rare cases, girls were explicitly forbidden or stopped from EAGER classes or in activities to pursue their Empowerment Plan.
13. Individual barriers such as lack of **childcare, health emergencies, or having to spend time on domestic duties** hindered some girls from pursuing their empowerment goals. Other barriers identified often by stakeholders but less so identified in girls' actual experiences included family or partner demands for domestic help, and lack of skills / vocational training centres. Many, however, endured despite these challenges. Macro factors, such as local market conditions, availability of vocational training centres and seasonality of some businesses were identified as barriers to girls' success.
14. There are **notable differences between barriers that girls report experiencing, and the barriers perceived by stakeholders** to be most common for girls. Stakeholders most often perceive pregnancy and early marriage to be the main barriers for girls, while girls themselves indicate lack of finances and limited partner and/or family support to be most critical.

### Sustainability

15. Stakeholders overwhelmingly express their beliefs and desires that project benefits will remain into the near and far future. At the same time, analysis of challenges experienced as well as the fragile context in which almost all of the EAGER participants exist suggests that there is a high level of uncertainty and a small margin for business loss. In short, beneficiaries remain highly susceptible to external shocks. Future efforts to strengthen structural and policy-focused solutions may help solidify gains.
16. A systems-level analysis demonstrates that EAGER has made some critical efforts to influence policy and begin to develop relationships with key government officials even though structural systems-level change is not part of EAGER's design. Impressive relationships at the highest ranks within the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs (MGCA) were evident at Endline even though meaningful linkages with technical civil servants were not apparent. More formal dissemination activities with national government scheduled for May 2002 may have great potential for sharing EAGER's results and perhaps amplifying influence during EAGER's remaining implementation period.

## Transformation of Gender Norms

- 17.** Endline evidence demonstrates that many EAGER girls receive increased respect from community members and experience greater confidence as they may play more active roles in community affairs. The complex environment in which girls live and manoeuvre requires a nuanced understanding of how they may be able to assert greater control and power without compromising their safety. Findings indicate that many girls are mindfully practicing behaviours that value peaceful household interactions and less overt conflict at the same time that they use their skills to strengthen their role and say within the household. These changes may be appropriate given the extensive timeframe required for gender transformative change of norms.
- 18.** Positive developments within households and communities include improved caretaker understanding of girls' challenges and potential, the development of policies (by-laws and fines) to support girls within the community, and initiatives to reduce GBV and early marriage. Much work remains to be done to strengthen developments at the community and policy-level.
- 19.** Findings also demonstrate mixed effects on girls' marital and parental status. Contraception use among sexually active girls has fallen precipitously since Midterm. More investigation is warranted to clarify response and mitigation opportunities.

## 7. Recommendations

The following recommendations flow from the findings and conclusions above and also reflect dialogues with EAGER Leadership. Given that EAGER’s formal engagements with Cohort 1 are nearing their end, recommendations in the first table focus specifically on Cohort 2. A second table specifically identifies future-oriented recommendations. These suggestions may be relevant for future programming focused on improving the lives of out-of-school girls in Sierra Leone Tables below indicate the suggested actor or actors responsible for the recommendation. The final column at right presents the project response to evaluation team recommendations.

### Cohort 2 Recommendations

This first table presents recommendations for EAGER’s ongoing work with Cohort 2 specifically.

#	Recommendation	Actor to Address	Project Response
<b>Empowerment Plan Development</b>			
1	Identify mechanisms to capture the whole Empowerment Plan conceived by girls during the transition planning process as written plans seem to inadequately capture beneficiaries' conceived plans. EAGER will need to circumvent low literacy skills of many girls as well as some Mentors. Revisions to the form may also help for monitoring processes if sections can be developed for Mentor comments. As EAGER Leadership have indicated that changes to the Empowerment Plan are not feasible at this project stage, the project should implement a documented review process at the time of Empowerment Plan sign-offs in which Mentors make additional notes about girls' conceived plans in order to strengthen project monitoring. Mentors can refer to these notes to guide their Check-ins meetings with girls.	EAGER CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist	<p>The written Empowerment Plan is a novelty for the girls and their Mentors, and it was expected that they would have some challenges in reflecting their ideas in writing. However, the act of thinking through their goals and the steps to reach each goal, and writing these down in their Plan is an important exercise for the girls. Even if the written Empowerment Plan are not exactly consistent with the girls' goals as explained to their Mentors, they are still a helpful tool to guide girls through the process of reflecting on what they have learned in the programme, thinking about how they want to use this, and practicing their writing skills. There is value in maintaining this in a written form.</p> <p>Trainings with Facilitators for Cohort 2 were designed to provide additional support to them on how to mediate differences between the</p>

			<p>spoken and written Empowerment Plan. The project emphasised to Mentors that it was accepted for girls to not write complete sentences in the plan so that they would be more able to write for themselves. Girls may also be more likely to be able to read it and remember their ideas if they write themselves on the plans. Questions were developed to help guide Mentors and Facilitators as they support girls in completing their Plans.</p> <p>At the end of the learning programme in Cohort 1, Life Skills Officers and BLN Officers reviewed each girl's Empowerment Plan and used an Empowerment Plan Assessment and Sign-Off tool for this purpose, which already documents this review. This process was new to EAGER staff, and learnings were gathered about what worked well and what may need adjustments for the current Cohort. An improved and simplified version of the tool will be rolled out for Cohort 2 to better support Officers in assessing the plans, whilst meeting the needs of managing shorter timelines.</p>
2	<p>Adjust staff training and continuous professional development in order to provide enhanced and targeted support to girls as they prepare for and navigate the Transition Phase.</p> <p>BLN Officer and Facilitator training and CPD: Revise to more appropriately guide beneficiaries more effectively towards realistic possibilities given cash amount.</p>	<p>EAGER CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist, Education Specialist</p>	<p>Learnings on the Empowerment Plan process were gathered between November 2021 and February 2022 through monitoring and systematic discussions and feedback loops with project teams. This informed the Empowerment Plan and Transition trainings that were delivered in March 2022 for Cohort 2 volunteers. Emphasis was put on the value of setting goals and steps to ensure that staff and volunteers</p>

	<p>LS Officer and Mentor training and CPD; Work with girls to navigate barriers to support by anticipating barriers that may be relevant to different girls and strategising with them in advance to address barriers. For example, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of the Empowerment Plan development could include discussions of girls' existing domestic obligations and to anticipate how they might shift as a result of implementing the Empowerment Plan. Then, girls could brainstorm a mitigation strategy with the Mentor.</li> <li>• Role-play may be a particularly useful tool for addressing issues, including family and community members asking to borrow which may derail a girl's steps towards her financial goal.</li> </ul>		<p>were invested in supporting girls through the process. Additional focus was placed on how to guide girls towards small, realistic, and time-bound goals that they could reach within a shorter period to experience a sense of achievement. The same emphasis was placed on setting a realistic financial goal within the scope of the resources available to girls through EAGER – and in some cases with supplemental savings and/or family support.</p> <p>In addition to trainings, a joint Learning Cluster was introduced to provide an additional opportunity to build Mentors' and Facilitators' understanding of the Empowerment Plan model and their capacity to support girls, and to enhance collaboration, practice and peer learning.</p> <p>While training and CPD materials were developed ahead of this recommendation, conversations about barriers and mitigation strategies can be built into group discussions with girls, as these are likely to be common themes experienced by many of the girls and they can work together to find solutions.</p>
3	<p>Reinforce and accentuate learning/training on identification of market opportunities and how to shift business plans. Develop additional training for BLN Officers and Facilitators on market shifts and potential pivots in order to better advise beneficiaries.</p>	<p>EAGER CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist</p>	<p>Although this is a good idea, it is not possible to add another training at this time. The revised Training of Trainers and the Financial Literacy Curriculum include aspects of being flexible and creative to ensure a successful business. It should be noted that the curriculum's main focus is purposefully on Financial Literacy to ensure</p>



			that all girls gain basic skills for managing both household finances and income generation activities. As the financial goal is designed to be broad and not all girls will be starting a business, the curriculum only touches briefly on specific business skills.
4	Strengthen EAGER materials and coaching of girls (and related Facilitator training) to include sensitisation for girls on long-term potential of small investments managed well.	EAGER CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist	It is not possible to revise curriculum materials at this stage of the project. However, the curriculum does focus on basic skills of savings and making smart decisions with how to spend money. Trainings and Joint Learning Cluster are designed to reinforce Mentors' and Facilitators' capacity to guide girls in this process.
<b>Capacity-building &amp; Networking</b>			
5	Reinforce gender training with field staff (District staff, LS Officers, etc.) and Mentors to discuss understanding of traditional gender norms and intersection with a gender transformative approach. Adapt community dialogue approach as necessary.	EAGER CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist; Project Partners	Discussions on gender norms and roles have been incorporated into recent trainings as much as possible alongside the technical content. The aim is to ensure that staff and volunteers are thinking critically about where and how to challenge these norms in a way that supports girls to push through the barriers they face in accessing opportunities. The community dialogues and related training were adapted ahead of Cohort 2 to continue building staff and volunteer awareness on unequal gender norms.
6	Consider ways to keep EAGER Mentors engaged in supporting beneficiaries but also their own growth and empowerment, particularly those Mentors working with Cohort 1-only communities. Strategies might include in-person meet-ups, WhatsApp groups, etc.	EAGER CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist	Most Mentors do not have smartphones that would enable connection through WhatsApp groups. However, project teams have maintained connections with Mentors in Cohort 1-only communities through calls and periodic

			visits. This communication has been essential for ensuring the success of the second Empowerment Plan Check-in with girls, and for tracking the Girls Clubs, which girls were encouraged to start up with initial guidance from Mentors. EAGER leadership is working on longer-term recommendations for ways to keep Mentors and Facilitators engaged in supporting girls at the community-level and to promote the Mentorship model as one that could potentially be adapted across other programmes and even educational institutions where feasible.
<b>SBCC</b>			
7	Given emerging effectiveness and impact of SBCC activities, identify ways to encourage engagement with soon-to-launch radio drama and discussion show. Take advantage of EAGER Learning Sessions to extend topics discussed and connect girls to peers beyond community boundaries.	EAGER CCU; Protection & Empowerment Specialist; BBC Media Action	BBC Media Action has been working closely with project teams to create a strong integration with the radio drama and discussion show. Several EAGER communities have been selected to engage with the drama content and have their discussions recorded, which will then be broadcast as a strategy to catalyse further discussion amongst listeners. This was determined to be an ideal point of connection as these communities have been actively engaging in reflection and discussion on girls' barriers and needs through the EAGER community dialogues and are more likely to bring forward points and solutions that are more supportive to girls. By focusing on Cohort 1-only communities, this is another strategy to keep community members engaged in these discussions and give them a platform to be role models for other

			<p>communities through their supportive attitudes and positive actions for and with girls.</p> <p>Curricula have already been designed and Learning Sessions are currently being delivered, so it won't be possible to add an additional element to the session structures at this point in time in a meaningful way that does not require a reconsideration of session timings and flow.</p> <p>The project is also mindful of risks and complications of adding responsibilities or new approaches on Mentors and Facilitators at this point in the project, with a much larger Cohort and reduced time to deliver.</p>
<b>Empowerment Package and cash transfer</b>			
8	Continue advocacy to girls and others about the importance of maintaining business money separate and keeping savings in locked cash box; consider providing girls with cash box earlier in the programme to facilitate savings and reinforce good practices.	EAGER CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist	<p>The consortium will be distributing the lockbox earlier as part of the Cohort 2 revision strategy. Girls will receive this as they start their sessions on Financial Literacy. This will support girls to think about their savings in a more tangible way while they are still learning.</p> <p>As part of the curricula, girls learn about savings in different areas of their lives which do not necessarily require a lockbox for keeping cash. However, distributing the lockbox earlier on in the programme will help to reinforce saving practices.</p>
9	Increase the amount of the EAGER cash transfer for Cohort 2 to cover at least the cost of a 50-kilogram bag of rice.	EAGER CCU; Protection and	The EAGER consortium has increased the amount of the cash transfer in the most recent

		Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist	budget realignment to an amount that was possible within the budget parameters and also considered safe and reasonable within the project context. This amount does not exceed the amount of the monthly stipend that Mentors and Facilitators receive. The cost of a 50-kilogram bag of rice cannot be used as a benchmark as this varies significantly across the country.
10	Reaffirm efforts to procure Empowerment Package items, making adjustments that reflect Endline Evaluation and project monitoring findings to address item quality as necessary. Capitalise on popularity of items to leverage enthusiasm for EAGER at the community level.	EAGER CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist; Project partners	Consortium members have worked together to strategise on the specification of these items and find the best way forward to balance cost and quality. Given the positive responses received through evaluation findings and internal project monitoring, this was prioritised in the recent budget realignment to ensure that girls would be able to receive these items – and receive them earlier.
<b>Monitoring, Evaluation &amp; Learning</b>			
11	Share best practices with GoSL and other GEC programmes. EAGER stands out as a promising example of an ambitious approach to a customised transition process.	EAGER CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist; MEAL & Research Coordinator; FM	A Learning Event is planned for May 24, 2022 and invitations have been extended to all relevant government officials and partner organisations operating in Sierra Leone. This will be an ideal opportunity to disseminate the EAGER project approaches and key learnings, and advocate for best practices to support adolescent girls in Sierra Leone with relevant policy-makers and other key stakeholders. The event will create a platform for girl beneficiaries, Mentors, Facilitators, and Officers to share their experiences directly through panel

			<p>discussions, and will showcase a mix of media to ensure audience engagement in a way that will generate interest and open opportunities for further engagement and discussions with EAGER project leads.</p> <p>In addition to the Learning Event, research-focused presentations will be proposed to the MBSSE and the MCGAs to offer a deep dive in the evidence and learnings that EAGER has generated.</p> <p>Consultations with the FCDO and the FM are already ongoing to further expand dissemination and advocacy efforts both in Sierra Leone and internationally.</p>
12	Revisit monitoring processes of Empowerment Plan checks to ensure quality of Empowerment Plan (as conceived by girls) and to ensure that all girls are signing the plans as intended. Alternatively, revisit and revise the tools that will guide the transition and support project monitoring.	EAGER CCU; MEAL & Research Coordinator; Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist	While the Empowerment Plan template cannot be revised for Cohort 2 at this point, areas for improvement in the methods to guide girls to develop their Plans, as well as monitoring Empowerment Plan, have been addressed through technical trainings, learning clusters, and M&E trainings. Additional revisions and trainings will be provided for the Empowerment Plan Assessment and Sign-Off Tool.
13	Include research question on girls' sexual and reproductive health rights and practices for the external follow-on study to investigate contraception use and understand changes in practice between Midterm and Endline.	External evaluator	This specific line of questions is welcome to better understand the data.
14	Capitalise on expressed interest from the Ministers of BSSE and SWGCASWGCASWGCA to hold formal dissemination	CCU; IRC Country Director	Please refer to response to comment 11.

	events to share EAGER's results and identify implications for policy and national-level strategies.		
15	Take advantage of the Minister of SWGCA's offer to convene a multi-sectoral meeting with fellow ministers and technical staff to feature EAGER's results and potentially initiate sustained cross-sector dialogue on girls' education.	CCU; IRC Country Director	Please refer to response to comment 11.
<b>Preparation for Transition</b>			
16	Following some examples set by girls themselves, advocate for the development of an emergency fund among Safe Space groups separate from the EAGER cash transfer. Girls could be asked to contribute a specific amount or it could be provided by the project. If it is project-provided and not used by the end of the Transition Phase, the money can be divided among EAGER beneficiaries.	CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist	Girls are encouraged to set aside money for emergencies as part of the curricula and learning about savings. In the context of the girls, it would not be appropriate to ask girls to contribute money. Emergencies do happen, and even more so in the particular project context where the burden of malaria and other illnesses is high. Although the transition funds may go towards an emergency, it is empowering in itself that a girl has the funds she needs to support herself during this time. She is making a decision on how she is using her money, using the skills she has learned in the programme.
17	Reinforce Girls' Club design and implementation by timing procurement and distribution so that girls receive club materials prior to graduation. Support Mentors to strategise with girls about how to promote club success. Ask Mentors to provide scaffolding to at least two club meetings in order to support club development and transition from project guidance.	CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist; Project partners; Mentors	The reinforced focus on supporting girls to develop their Empowerment Plan and the need to navigate time constraints in this second Cohort make it important that conditions are created for girls to be fully focused on their Plans in the 4 months leading up to the graduation event. Providing guidance and materials to girls to form Girls Clubs ahead of this may be distracting and shift attention away from the Plans. The project aims to make these

			<p>items and guidance available shortly after graduation. At that point, girls will have started thinking and talking about ideas for the Girls Clubs, as this is introduced in their Life Skills sessions. Starting this up after graduation will give girls a reason for coming back together once their learning programme has ended, and Mentors will have greater bandwidth to support them at the initial stage to start up these meetings. Based on Evaluations findings as well as feedback and learnings from Mentors and Officers about the Girls Clubs in Cohort 1, the project will be updating the guidance for Girls Clubs and will consider this recommendation to provide stronger scaffolding.</p>
18	Facilitate the pairing or grouping of interested girls at Transition Phase to pool money and operate businesses jointly.	CCU; Project Partners; Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist	<p>The curricula already dedicates time to talk about partnership and what qualities and characteristics are essential for successful partnerships. This was already provided to Cohort 1 and has been reinforced in Cohort 2 to give girls the opportunity to choose whether to enter into a joint business or not based on their own contexts. The project will not intentionally push girls to build partnerships, but it will further support girls themselves to have the skills and knowledge to make smart decisions, including about potentially starting up partnerships where these are most appropriate.</p>

Community Engagement			
19	Work with community leaders to establish and enforce community by-laws that support girls' initiatives and prevent by-laws that limit their ability to carry them out.	Project partners	<p>The Community Dialogues model was adapted in November 2021 to build on learnings from Cohort 1 and reinforce these platforms for transformative discussions.</p> <p>A full series of listening sessions with girls and series of dialogues with caregivers was added on top of dialogues with influential persons in the communities. The latter also more purposefully includes caregivers, young men and girls' partners, where applicable.</p> <p>One of the programme design changes made in Cohort 2 to increase community leaders' accountability towards girls was to hold a separate Listening Session with girls before each of the seven Community Dialogues. This has enabled Life Skills Officers to update girls about action plans and by-laws so that they can respond back to leaders in the next dialogue.</p> <p>EAGER programme staff and volunteers are facilitating the process of Community Action Plans with key community leaders and girls. Representatives from the girls groups have been intentionally integrated into this planning process as stakeholders so that they can influence the decisions that are made on how to spend the fund provided by EAGER in a way that best supports girls.</p>



20	Promote exchanges between members of different communities to share promising practices addressing support for girls' education and girls' empowerment, in general.	Project partners	Chiefdom Level Meetings that bring together multiple EAGER communities have already been planned to enhance support for girls within the chiefdom. This enables the exchange of ideas and solutions for girls, as recommended. The EAGER consortium is in the process of finalising its exit strategy and is considering a range of recommendations for how to maintain momentum for positive change and sustained leadership on girls' education and empowerment within communities after the programme closes.
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## Future-Oriented Recommendations

This table presents recommendations for projects in the future that work with girls' education programming in Sierra Leone as well as in perhaps other areas with similar contexts.

#	Recommendation	Actor to Address	Project Response
<b>Transition design</b>			
1	<p>Projects pursuing a multi-pronged emphasis on learning, household and community goals in addition to the more tangible financial goal, should align Empowerment Plan development processes to allow for a balanced emphasis on all four domains. In addition to time spent with content during Learning Sessions, future programming should craft the design of the Empowerment Plan development process to adequately scaffold girls' identification of goals in the learning, household and community domains as well as financial goals. This approach will help girls feel more attached to all goals and help mitigate particular excitement they may feel for the financial goal area given challenging economic circumstances.</p>	<p>EAGER CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist, Education Specialist</p>	<p>As the project is working with some of the most marginalised girls, many of whom have limited access to capital and limited power over financial and other decision-making, it is no surprise that they are especially enthusiastic about their financial goals. This was expected, and was one of the reasons for the project to decide to incorporate the other goal domains to encourage girls to reflect more broadly and holistically on what changes they can make in their lives. The recommended approach aligns with the thinking behind building the Empowerment Plan directly into the Financial Literacy curriculum and Learner's Book for the second Cohort. In the second cohort, EAGER built on learnings from rolling out the Transition model for the first time in the first cohort. It incorporated these learnings in the second cohort by designing trainings and CPD activities with Mentors and Facilitators to support them to encourage and guide girls to think about their four dimensions on girls at the early stage of the learning program, so that girls can use the skills and knowledge they are learning through the Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills to actively think through other areas of their life which they can take action on.</p>

2	Develop opportunities for beneficiaries to collectively work on projects aimed at community empowerment during the Learning Phase and into the Transition Phase. Consider a participatory action research approach.	Project partners/MEAL & Research Coordinator; Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist	The project agrees and welcomes this recommendation, and examples of this in action have included engaging girls in community events to celebrate specific days such as International Women’s Day and International Day of the Girl Child. This was encouraged and left to the initiative of project teams and communities to organise within existing events as they saw fit. Given the many directed activities already layered within the project, at a time for the second cohort where scale is much increased whilst resources and time are reduced, there is limited scope for teams to guide and oversee additional community-led initiatives, which is encouraged instead through the Girls Clubs and Community Dialogues.
<b>Empowerment Plan Development</b>			
3	Investigate strategies to support girls with more advanced business skills or those interested in pursuing vocations. Should vocations be inaccessible to girls, Mentors and Facilitators should clearly redirect girls to seek alternative goals early in the development of the Empowerment Plan in order to establish realistic expectations.	EAGER CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist; District Supervisors Mentors	The project is not equipped to provide advanced business skills training to girls, as this would require additional training for volunteers and staff as well as additional curricula materials for girls. With limited staff, training time, and resources, the consortium took the decision to provide financial literacy sessions that could benefit all of the girls in their day to day life – rather than focusing on fewer girls with more advanced business plans, as per the original design. This felt like a more equitable approach for supporting all girls to pursue what was most meaningful to them.

			<p>Trainings already delivered to the staff and volunteers who will be guiding Cohort 2 girls through their plans have emphasised guiding and redirecting girls towards realistic goals as needed. They will be reminding girls to identify goals that they can reach within a 1-year time period based on the current resources available to them.</p> <p>Future projects can take this recommendations into account but careful assessment of context of available opportunities will need to be carried out to make such design viable and cost-effective.</p>
<b>Capacity-building &amp; Networking</b>			
4	<p>Capitalise on the expanding competencies and skills of Cohort 1 girls in the Transition Phase to share experiences with Cohort 2 girls. Develop mechanism for sharing, for example, creating peer advisors or mixed Cohort gatherings.</p>	<p>EAGER CCU; Project partners (in communities with Cohorts 1 &amp; 2); Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist</p>	<p>Cohort 1 girls who have stayed in the communities can be a great source of motivation and encouragement for Cohort 2 girls, and indeed many girls have indicated through multiple forms of data collection that they see themselves as role models for other girls. In communities where girls have started their own Girls Clubs, they may be even more visible through creating a collective voice for girls. Creating a more structured mechanism of peer advisors or cross-Cohort gatherings is a great idea, though one that would be difficult to implement in a consistent way across the consortium within the limited remaining timeframe of the project. Given these constraints, the project will consider how it might build in recommendations for peer support in the final iteration of the Girls Club guidance. However, further initiatives are beyond EAGER capacity to engage girls from project cohorts. Future projects operating in the same areas may be able to leverage the work that EAGER laid out in this</p>

			respect. The project will continue to work closely with Government counterpart to support mainstreaming of Girls Clubs practices in the education systems.
<b>Monitoring, Evaluation &amp; Learning</b>			
5	Document successful strategies that pregnant girls or mothers of young children from Cohort 1 have used in moving forward Empowerment Plan, particularly related to overcoming barriers. If time will not allow these learnings to inform Cohort 2 activities, they can inform other girls education projects in Sierra Leone and similar contexts.	MEAL & Research Coordinator	<p>Preliminary findings from the Endline evaluation have been used by the project to pull out important lessons learned to further tailor approaches for Cohort 2.</p> <p>As main report findings were not available until after the Empowerment Plan process was designed, EAGER M&amp;E will ensure key findings are shared in projects based in Sierra Leone, and other GEC projects.</p>
<b>Community Engagement</b>			
6	Implement enhanced sensitisation activities at the community level to focus on changing gender norms and girls' rights. Develop activities specifically to examine traditional roles for girls as they relate to girls' newly embraced roles (greater economic empowerment, awareness of SRHR). Include coverage of opportunities for men that arise as women take on new roles. Activities may include community dialogues or go beyond to involve more stakeholders.	CCU; Protection and Empowerment Specialist; Education Specialist; Project partners	The project was not designed with a specific community outreach and awareness-raising component beyond the community dialogues and strategic engagement with girls' families. These are the primary means for engaging community members in conversations about these critical topics, and the themes covered now include discussions about early pregnancy and contraception as a way to bridge the gap between what the girls are learning. Emphasis is placed on the idea that gender and culture are not fixed, and there can be flexibility in who does what roles. Through engaging community members in these conversations, the goal is to encourage critical thinking to examine and reconsider gender norms in order to make changes that will benefit girls. Depending on

			timeframes, resources, and priorities, future projects can leverage the learnings and resources developed by EAGER to expand this component further. EAGER will continue to work closely with the MBSSE to support similar activities as part of the Radical Inclusion Policy Implementation Plan and Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy, within its capacity until the end of the project.
<b>System-level Influence</b>			
7	Future projects should include a dedicated system-level change component with dedicated staff and an initial implementation plan to go beyond policy influencing. Activities to foster sustainability may deliberate trainings and on-going capacity building for government staff; a project staff embedded within relevant ministries, and periodic joint mission trips to project sites.	CCU, IRC, consortium partners, community of practitioners and organisations designing and implementing programmes for adolescent girls.	System-level change, or system strengthening, can be pursued in different forms. One of these is advocacy and policy-influencing, which EAGER in its own scope and design, is more suited to pursue. However, the effectiveness of such efforts is yet heavily conditional to the functioning and/or challenges of existing governance structures. More embedded designs would require different approaches and resources from the get-go and would need to be based on a careful system analysis that can identify structural gaps and room for opportunities to design interventions in close collaboration with national institutions to really support sustainable change at this level.

## 8. Project Response

The project welcomes the recommendations provided by the external evaluator (EE) for project improvements across many multi-faceted areas of the EAGER project.

The project initiated approaches that arguably respond already to some of the key Endline findings, predominately due to the built-in mechanisms for learning and adaptive programming in the project. The establishment of strong monitoring systems and feedback loops with project beneficiaries and staff enabled the EAGER consortium to often pre-empt adaptations that have been aligned to evaluation findings and recommendations. This enabled the project to continue to ensure quality and responsive programming whilst navigating highly challenging delivery timelines and contexts. The practice of sharing evaluation findings in a preliminary form with the project by the EE has also contributed positively to inform programme adaptations and this has been the case for this Endline Evaluation too, in recognition that the publication of the report was after the feasible timeline for project adaptation. EAGER would like to thank the EE for their efforts to produce analysis in key areas prior to the publication of this report to support programme adaptability and learning.

### **EAGER Transition: Empowerment Plan Development**

Transition is a novel and critical element of the EAGER project, and the project is pleased to see the EEs engagement with this component, particularly the development of the Empowerment Plan. As acknowledged in the Recommendations Section, changes to the Empowerment Plan are not feasible at this stage in the project due to project workplans. However, adaptations have been made to address earlier learnings and recent evaluation findings on this component. These adaptations are two-fold: first, areas for programme strengthening were addressed in the revised design of training materials and guides for Mentors and Facilitators, as well as the training approach adopted to train Mentors and Facilitators on the Empowerment Plan for Cohort 2 in March 2022. The consortium engaged with key emergent findings from project monitoring, research and feedback loops gathered through internal mechanisms, as well as Endline research to best respond to issues identified in Cohort 1. It can be noted that the difference between girls' conceived plans and what is in the actual written document may stem from the level of literacy of the girls and not being able to write full sentences. However, this was expected and the practice of writing Empowerment Plan has been maintained for the second Cohort to provide an opportunity to the girls to practice their skills and what they have learned in their sessions. The written format also help Mentors to remember what they will be reviewing with girls at the point of check-in. Training focused on reinforcing Facilitators' and Mentors' understanding of what SMART goals are: volunteers were given a set of questions to ask girls in order to ensure that their goals are realistic and achievable within the suggested timeframe of one year. Further, the project implementation plan has been amended to allow more time before sessions finish for girls to focus on each goal in all domains. It is hoped that this will in turn improve the standard of plans to adequately capture goals, and allow Mentors who require more support to have time to ask for feedback.

EAGER continues to recognise the importance of and invest in continuous professional development, including aiding Mentors and Facilitators to better prepare girls for the contextual hindrances specific to their communities. Project tailoring ahead of Cohort 2 has already addressed concerns in the project recommendations, such as building capacity and skills of EAGER volunteers through individual and combined Peer-to-Peer meetings for Facilitators and

Learning Cluster meetings for Mentors, as well as strengthening systems for market monitoring ahead of girls' conceptions of their financial goals.

Regarding the identification of market shifts and potential pivots, the project understands the importance of this activity, particularly in a larger context. However, the core emphasis of the curriculum is on building girls' financial literacy skills in a broader sense, rather than focusing heavily on business. Whilst it does touch on certain basic aspects of business skills, further training is out of the scope of this project and something to consider within Livelihoods programming or add-on projects.

### **EAGER Transition: Empowerment Package and Cash Transfer**

As acknowledged in the recommendations section, radical changes to the Empowerment Package and Cash transfer are not feasible at this stage in the project due to time and budget constraints. However, project tailoring has improved both of these components on an ongoing basis in response to both project data and preliminary findings provided by the EE. Consortium partners have worked to align procurement standards to ensure consistency in the quality and improve longevity of items across the project. This was based on feedback from girls and their household members, and coordinated throughout the budget realignment process to keep these key items in tact so Cohort 2 girls will receive a similar but enhanced package. These amendments have been done knowing that it is not feasible to have individualised Empowerment Packages for each girl due to the almost three-fold increase of beneficiary numbers since Cohort 1.

On a more granular level, the project has revisited its workplan to frontload large implementation strands, including the early procurement of cash boxes in order to distribute these items earlier in the programme, around a similar time to the start of the financial literacy sessions. This will help in making distributions more manageable and efficient, navigating tight timelines, while also providing girls with an additional, more tangible input to think about savings. Furthermore, the amount of cash distributed to girls has been increased. This increase is not to the value of a 50KG bag of rice as recommended, predominately due to a commitment to keep the distribution amount to below the monthly volunteer stipend, acknowledging the potential safety risks that holding a larger amount of money may bring to girls. There is also variety in the price of a bag of rice across the country, hence it is hard to use this as a benchmark.

### **EAGER Transition: Preparation for Transition**

Recommendations related to preparation for transition are linked to that of the Empowerment Plan and cash transfer, and therefore harder to make more radical changes.

The recommendation to recognise the immediacy of financial empowerment while also encouraging goal setting on the other domains of learning, household, and community aligns with the thinking behind the Empowerment Plan. This was intentionally built into the Financial Literacy curriculum and Learner's Book as a way to reinforce learning through direct and tangible application of financial planning, prioritising, and budgeting. The aim of integrating the other domains into the Empowerment Plan is to pull the different threads of the learning programme together so that girls can reflect back on the many different skills they have learned and how they may want to use these to take action in different areas of their lives. Especially considering the lack of power many of these girls have over their financial and material resources and assuming the strongest excitement would be in this area, the project intentionally integrated the other goal areas around the anchor of the financial goal. Ultimately, many of these separate goals can



support and reinforce each other as, for example, girls use their improved communication or negotiation skills to support their small business.

In terms of pairing or grouping girls to work on joint businesses during the Transition period, this is suggested as a possibility in the Financial Literacy sessions and it has been further reinforced in the adapted training and materials for Cohort 2. A stronger emphasis is placed on pairs, as organising for a collective project may require more planning and outlining roles and rules to avoid a breakdown and fallout. In line with the approach of providing information and ideas and letting girls make their own decisions, girls have the opportunity to form such partnerships if they already have someone and an idea in mind.

The recommendation to establish a collective emergency fund for girls has value, but also many compounding factors and risks. This would require creating clear guidelines for how the fund is to be set up, how it will be contributed to, who will manage it without bringing risks to themselves, where it will be kept safely, and how and in what emergency cases it would be distributed and documented to ensure transparency and fairness. The project has instead taken the approach of encouraging girls to individually set aside a small some amount of cash for emergencies. The emphasis on saving for emergencies in the Financial Literacy curriculum demonstrates the value of thinking and planning ahead for such instances, which are bound to come up at one time or another. This is even more likely in the context of girls enrolled in EAGER in Sierra Leone. As girls practice this strategy of keeping this amount separate from other savings and contributing small amounts to it regularly, they are more likely to feel empowered when they are able to respond to emergency situations that arise. In addition, as the evaluation found, many girls have joined an *osusu* as a way to gather together a larger amount of money at one time, some of which they could put aside for emergency situations.

As girls, Mentors, Facilitators, and Officers will be engaged through the end of the learning programme finalising sessions and working side by side with the girls to help them develop their Empowerment Plan, it will not be feasible to start moving ahead with Girls Clubs until after graduation. Pushing girls and volunteers to form Girls Clubs early may also act as a distraction from the development of the Empowerment Plan, when more time and support is knowingly needed for this, and has been added in by the project. Timing is key, and the few key items procured for the Girls Clubs will indeed be in ready for distribution immediately following the graduation event. This will be an ideal catalyst for bringing girls back together and encouraging their collective visioning of what they what the Girls Club to be. Mentors will be equipped with guidance on how to support girls to decide what they want, but the Girls Clubs must be the initiative of the girls themselves because they are ultimately outside of the scope of the project.

## **Capacity Building**

The project welcomes recommendations for improvements in Mentor capacity building, particularly related to sustaining the already evidenced growth and empowerment of Mentors.

Since Midterm, the project has continued to reinforce staff and volunteer awareness of gender norms through trainings, CPD, and resource materials. Discussions on harmful gender norms, limitations of gender roles, and gender-based violence have been incorporated as much as possible alongside technical content to ensure that staff and volunteers are thinking critically about where and how to challenge these norms in a way that support girls to push through the barriers they may face. The community dialogues and related training were further adapted ahead of Cohort 2 to continue building staff and volunteer awareness. All district staff and Officers were

required to read the short book “How to be a Feminist” by Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi, and had positive feedback and lively discussions based on what they found to be very familiar content.

The Community Dialogues model has already been adapted in November 2021 to build on learnings from Cohort 1 and reinforce these platforms for transformative discussions. A full series of listening sessions with girls and series of dialogues with caregivers was added on top of dialogues with influential persons in the communities. The latter also more purposefully include young men and girls’ partners, where applicable.

As acknowledged throughout this and previous evaluation reports, transforming unequal gender norms requires time and sustained opportunities for reflection and active discussion, and the project has used every opportunity to reinforce these messages. EAGER staff have acknowledged that they have also learned a lot through preparing for and leading the Community Dialogues, as they have had to step up as voices and advocates for positive change in the communities where they are working.

The acknowledgement of communication via Whatsapp groups is well noted but it must be flagged that this is contextually challenging in a resource poor environment, especially as many Mentors do not have access to a smartphone. The project aims to mediate this through the monthly Learning Clusters where Mentors come together regularly to share learnings.

## **SBCC**

EAGER has reviewed its SBCC strategy and plan for Cohort 2 with the aim of creating more opportunities for girls and communities overall to engage with both the factual and drama shows.

For Cohort 1, there was strong coordination between BBC Media Action’s radio production team and EAGER’s safeguarding and protection leads to harmonize the Life Skills curriculum and radio content to ensure that communication was mutually reinforcing. This coordination will be further bolstered for Cohort 2 with the consortium safeguarding and protection leads, as well as District Supervisors, Life Skills Officers and EAGER Mentors, joining relevant BBC Media Action production meetings. This will open more pathways to channel community ideas, issues and action plan points into radio content.

EAGER has also expanded its radio outreach plan to generate more awareness among Cohort 2 communities. Posters will be created and posted in public spaces to share information on broadcast schedules. Megaphone announcements will also inform people about radio broadcasts and topics. In areas where this may be most viable such as peri-urban contexts, recordings of the radio shows will be distributed through popular online means such as WhatsApp and audio-sharing sites so that girls and community members can listen to the shows during relevant activities or when they are free.

Further, EAGER girls and families, as well as local thematic experts, will be invited as panelists for the radio discussion show that will follow the broadcast of each drama episode. Through this discussion show, which will be pre-recorded for safeguarding reasons, they will be able to express their opinions and insights on the issues that the drama will touch upon, and to discuss solutions to overcome the barriers faced by girls.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning**

Given the EE's experience with evaluation and assessment practices, EAGER welcomes the expertise to review their practices in this area.

A key component of the sustainability plan is not only providing key outputs of MEAL exercises such as the Service Directory, but handing over best practices of monitoring and using data to better inform capacity building of community based volunteers. EAGER intends to work with the GoSL to best handover these practices. EAGER will also have the opportunity to further engage with this information transfer at the upcoming Learning Event. Furthermore, EAGER is committed and has already evidenced information sharing with other GEC programmes.

EAGER M&E has already put into place mechanisms to improve the sign-off process for the Empowerment Plans, yet acknowledges that the main improvements to this process will be the already-implemented steps of starting the Empowerment Plan earlier in the process, and taking steps to strengthen project staff and volunteer capacity.

### **Community Engagement**

EAGER has already evidenced many of the thoughtful recommendations provided by the EE through its work on the Community Action Plans; internal project monitoring has evidenced community bylaws supporting girls' initiatives, and strategised means with partners to support this initiative for Cohort 2. EAGER is also coordinating communication at the chiefdom and district level to promote exchanges between different communities, and support accountability mechanisms beyond the project timeline.

The recommendation to develop opportunities for girls to work collectively on projects as a way to experience empowerment at the community level is clear and reasonable. Examples of this in action have included girls' participation in community events to celebrate specific days including International Women's Day and International Day of the Girl Child. Such opportunities and experiences are encouraged by project teams at the community level during the Learning and Transition phases, based on what events are planned in the communities. By engaging with community leaders and other key stakeholders through the community dialogues, the project has generated an interest in supporting girls' empowerment and giving girls a wider platform for speaking for themselves. Building this synergy between adolescent girls and people with power in their communities can open up more opportunities for girls' engagement at the community level, especially as girls are required to work with community leaders to decide how they will use the fund provided for a Community Action Plan. Girls collective power can be further strengthened through the structure of the Girls Clubs. Given the limited timeline of the project, any further coordination and action must be led by the girls and community leaders themselves.

### **Sustainability at the system level**

The onset of COVID-19 in Sierra Leone coincided with the finalisation of the Baseline Evaluation report for the project. The pandemic delayed the research dissemination activities that the EAGER consortium had planned, as resources were re-pivoted to adapt the programme to the new reality of COVID-19 and support the response plans of the Government of Sierra Leone. The project research and adaptations contributed to the MBSSE's Emergency Education Task Force's Communication and Social Mobilisation Pillar and Psychosocial Support Pillar, which were activated as part of the Ministry's COVID-19 response. The IRC on behalf of the EAGER consortium participated in consultations and shared resources developed to address protection risks that further hampered OOS adolescent girls' access to learning. A selection of EAGER GBV prevention messages and Psychological First Aid materials were incorporated in the Government of Sierra Leone Psychosocial Support Manual as well as the Message Guide on GBV, Teenage

Pregnancy and Child Protection during COVID-19. IRC and partners actively participated in the review of the National Strategy for Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence by leveraging learning, among others, from EAGER. Data from Baseline, as well as additional COVID-19 surveys, informed these consultations.

At the district level, the project constantly engaged with District Education Officers and representatives of the Ministry of Social Welfare as well as the MGCAs. Project teams participated in regular meetings, both before COVID-19, and during the crisis, attending local response engagements. Officials in each District were engaged from the outset: they were informed about the project plans to pause and the reasons behind this decision and they were the first to be informed about the project adaptations plans as part of the response to COVID-19 when these were finalised.

As activities restarted after the pause in implementation due to COVID-19 in September 2020 and the project worked towards its Midterm Evaluation, the programme resumed plans to develop a wider dissemination strategy reflecting change brought by COVID-19 and the evidence about the effectiveness of a tailored learning model for OOS adolescent girls. As documented by email correspondence with key officials at both the MBSSE and MGCAs, the project team shared Baseline and Midterm research findings (including full reports and where already available, policy briefs) alongside regular updates of project adaptations and lessons learned with both ministries through bilateral in-person and remote communication. This engagement continued regularly through Midterm and Endline Evaluations and is culminating in a large learning event planned for May 24<sup>th</sup> this year. The event preparation is underway at the time of this report. Deep-dive, research focused presentations will be held with both the MBSSE and MGCAs to provide additional opportunities to support buy-in of key stakeholders in both ministries.

Evidence generated by EAGER through the evaluation assessments and additional research provides important data about the reality of marginalisation of adolescent girls in Sierra Leone, and best practices to promote empowerment and inclusion in society. The EAGER project was able to leverage this rich evidence base for policy influencing and dialogue in multiple instances.

As one key example, learnings from EAGER offer valuable inputs for the implementation of the MBSSE's Radical Inclusion Policy, which aims to create an inclusive education system accessible to all children. Learnings and project response to these provide evidence of what works effectively to support this population and can feed in improvement plans and any future review of the policy. The project was an active contributor of the development, review and validation of the Radical Inclusion Policy Implementation Plan from November 2021 to April 2022, which key elements of the EAGER sustainability model at the community level have feed into, namely about best practices for inclusive learning environments, continuous professional development, community engagement, and support to professional development and transition scheme for community-based educators into the formal system.

Similarly, the EAGER consortium contributed significantly to the development, review and validation of the National Standard Operating Procedures for the operation of Safe Spaces in Sierra Leone launched by the National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy in January 2022. The IRC, as the consortium lead of the EAGER consortium, hosted part of the data collection that was conducted to develop the SOP, and built on the EAGER strategies and learnings to provide technical support to this exercise. Contributions were also made to the review of the National Referral Protocol to ensure that learnings from supporting the most vulnerable girls at scale in Sierra Leone could inform the development of a responsive, sensitive, and

survivor-centered model. The EAGER project systematically engaged with the FCDO in Sierra Leone to strategise inputs into both these work streams and navigate to contextual challenges of often weak coordination mechanisms in the governance structure.

The project recognises that efforts made to elevate findings and lessons learned with the Government of Sierra Leone have been challenging and that barriers exist in the functioning of governance structures that are beyond the EAGER project and its mandate. The project advocates for enhanced coordination with, and better exposure of, development partners operating in programmes supporting the alternative provision of education and/or reaching to the most marginalised learners in Sierra Leone.

More embedded designs as recommended by the External Evaluator are welcome, but they would require different approaches and resources from the get-go and would need to be based on a careful system analysis that can identify structural gaps and windows of opportunities to design interventions in close collaboration with national institutions to really support sustainable change.

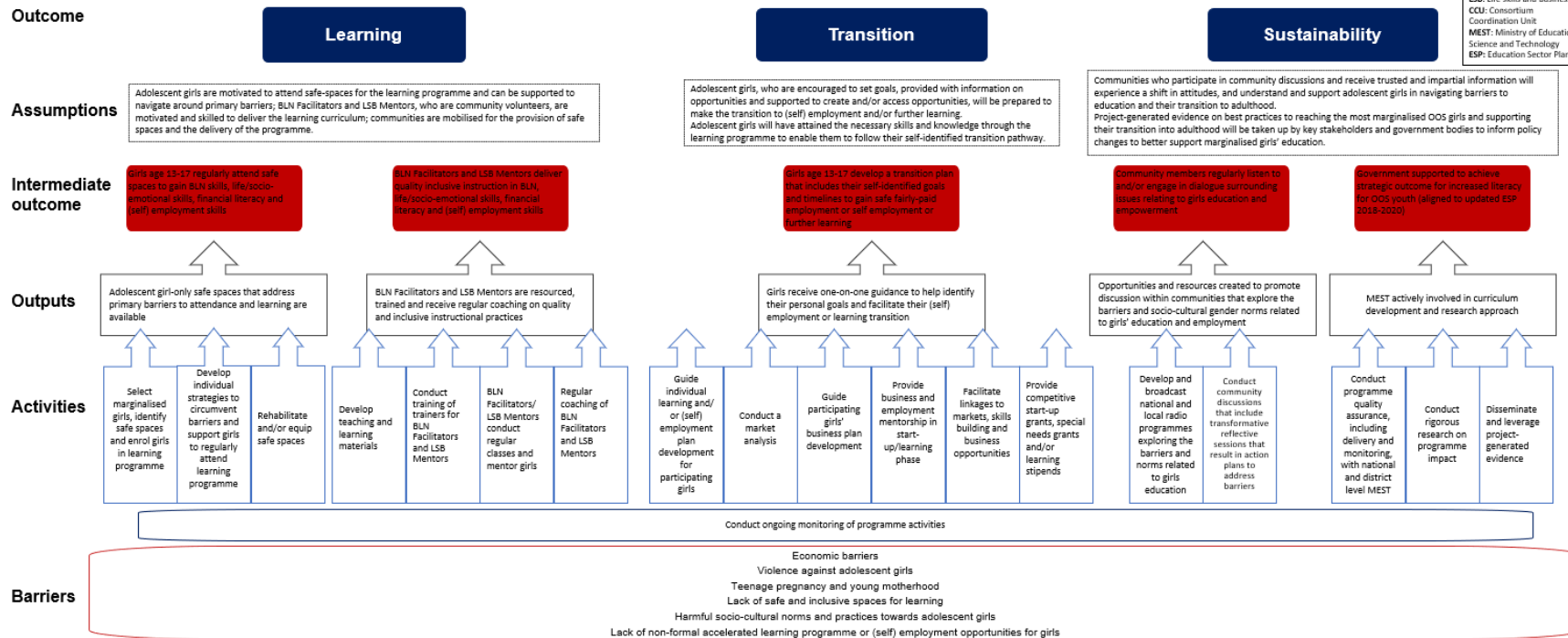
# 9. Annexes

## Annex 1: Project Design and Interventions

Figure 12: 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



## Topline analysis of EAGER's TOC

Review of EAGER's Theory of Change (TOC) concludes that the TOC shared with the external evaluating team is out of date and does not reflect significant changes to the project approach nor the operating environment. Due to COVID-19, and many rounds of programme restructuring required, as well as the additional demands of the increased Cohort, there has been greater emphasis and focus on the implementation plan instead of finalising the updated TOC. The lack of a clear rubric for assumptions also seems to complicate the articulation of pathways. Although the TOC elements relative to the learning outcome remain largely correct, the transition and sustainability elements need substantial revisiting. In some cases, like for transition, the TOC needs to be updated to reflect current project activities. For sustainability, the review needs to be fundamentally deeper to take into account unforeseen challenges to collaboration with government explored within the Midterm and Endline Evaluations.

### Transition

The transition portion of the TOC does not reflect the project's significant shift to an empowerment approach. The language within the TOC needs to be updated to from goals relevant to "self-employment or learning transition" to goals relevant to the project's four domains of empowerment: individual, learning, household and community. Similarly, activities listed are generally focused on business, start-up grants, etc. and do not align with programmatic changes and revised pathways.

### Sustainability

The timing of the Endline Evaluation, which focuses on Cohort 1, allows a slightly premature view of the project's emerging sustainability achievements. As the report's findings show, many beneficiaries and Mentors demonstrate profound changes in terms of their skills and knowledge, and their confidence within the home and the community. There are also some signs of community uptake, largely in support for beneficiaries to attend EAGER sessions, and more structurally, in the institutionalisation of by-laws. Findings indicate that the community-level pathways for sustainability remains on track.

At the government-level (now two ministries), however, the project has encountered more challenges and the pathways to sustainability require revision. Although EAGER is conducting rigorous research and monitoring and evaluation, government involvement at the central level is not fully functional and formal dissemination activities have not taken place. This may be due in part to COVID-19 response refocusing but seems to indicate that EAGER's approach to government collaboration needs to be re-conceptualised.

### Barriers

The design of the TOC does not specifically indicate assumptions but rather articulates barriers. This design is limiting as key assumptions are missing about the operating environment. The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light the importance of recognising functioning health systems and operating service structures as imperative to service delivery. Projects and implementation worldwide are confronting this realisation and it is not unique to EAGER. It is nonetheless surprising that the potential for health outbreaks is not listed as one of the barriers given the history of Ebola in Sierra Leone. Another notable barrier concerns adolescent girls with disabilities and the stigma they face as well as recognition of the specific resources and skills necessary to succeed with inclusive programming. At the same time, findings show that the project has addressed all of the barriers currently listed within the TOC, either within the original design or through project modifications

## Annex 2: Endline Evaluation Approach and Methodology

### Evaluation Framework

The Evaluation Framework is based on the revised EAGER logframe, and only includes the Outcomes and Intermediate Outcomes and related indicators that will be reported on at the Endline Evaluation.

Outcome/IO	Description	Indicator	Assumptions	Evaluation Method
<b>OUTCOME 2 - Transition (optional)</b>	Number of EAGER Research participants who have successfully implemented their Empowerment Plan	<p>A. # and % of girls who completed and signed off their Empowerment Plan disaggregated by age, disability, and additional learning needs.</p> <p>B. # and % of girls who completed a least one step per goal at Check In One disaggregated by age, disability, and additional learning needs</p> <p>D. For Endline evaluation and post-Endline research only: # and % of girls who have completed their Empowerment Plan.</p>	Same as assumptions for Literacy Improvement	<p>1. Girls' combined survey</p> <p>2. Data from IRC/CCU related check-ins on girls' Empowerment Plan; sample of Empowerment Plan</p>
<b>OUTCOME 3 - Sustainability</b>	<p>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).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o National level: Listening and engaging with EAGER radio programme results in more positive attitudes towards girls education and empowerment amongst wider population</li> <li>o Safe Spaces: Girls strengthen their social networks through the Safe Space approach, and continue creating a safe environment for each other outside of the physical Safe Space</li> <li>o Communities: Community leaders and caregivers report positive and empowering</li> </ul>	<p>A. % of radio listeners that foster more supportive attitudes towards girls' learning / education / entrepreneurship / participation in society (disaggregated by sex)</p>	Community members will have access to a radio and signal to pick up radio frequency	N/A (Reported through BBC Qualitative study)
		<p>B. % of girl groups that decide to continue meeting and creating a conceptual Safe Space for each other after completing the learning programme</p>	Girls learn through their Life Skills sessions that they can help each other stay safe through strong social networks, and help each other feel safe by being good friends to each other	<p>1. FGDs/KIIs (girls, Mentors, caregivers, male partners, district project staff)</p> <p>2. GCS- ask if girls plan to meet or have met with girls from the programme after Learning Sessions ended</p> <p>3. Document review</p>
		<p>C. % of community leaders, boys, and caregivers that report positive and empowering attitudes towards girls' education (disaggregated by sex)</p>	Community outreach under EAGER is effective in encouraging support for girls education and empowerment	<p>1. FGDs/KIIs with boys, community leaders, caregivers, local government officials, EAGER Leadership</p> <p>2. Head of Household/Caregiver survey</p> <p>3. Document review</p>



	attitudes towards girls' education			
<b>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 3</b>	Girls identify Learning, Household, Community, and Financial Goals that are empowering to them	A. % of girls who complete an Empowerment Plan that is realistic and achievable	Mentors and Financial Literacy Facilitator will be trained to coach girls in developing an Empowerment Plan; girls will be available and supported to attend individual Mentoring sessions; appropriate opportunities that girls can transition to will be available in communities	1. Girls' Combined survey 2. FGDs/KIIs (girls, Mentors, caregivers, male partners, district project staff, EAGER Leadership) 3. CCU data from review of Empowerment Plan
		B. % of girls who report making one or more new friends in their group since joining EAGER	Mentors will be trained to coach girls in Life Skills. Girls will be able to attend and participate in Life Skills sessions	1. Girls' Combined Survey 2. FGDs/KIIs (girls, caregivers, male partners,)
		C. % of girls who report believing that they can achieve the goals they set for themselves	-Mentors are trained and motivated to encourage girls in ways that strengthen their self-esteem and self-efficacy during Life Skills sessions -Mentors and Facilitators are trained and motivated to guide girls to set realistic goals that they feel they can achieve.	1. Girls' Combined Survey 2. FGDs/KIIs (girls, Mentors, caregivers, male partners, .)
	Girls apply Literacy, Numeracy, and/or Financial Literacy skills in their daily lives	% of girls who report that they have used skills learned in their Literacy, Numeracy, and/or Financial Literacy sessions	'-Facilitators are trained and motivated to lead Literacy, Numeracy, and Financial Literacy sessions in ways that empower girls to use the skills. -Facilitators regularly encourage girls to practice the skills they are learning.	1. Girls' Combined survey- 2. KIIs/ FGDs with girls, caregivers, partners of girls, Mentors
	Girls apply Life Skills in their daily lives	D. % of girls who report that they have used skills learned in their Life Skills sessions	-Mentors are trained and motivated to lead Life Skills sessions in ways that empower girls to use the skills. -Mentors regularly encourage girls to practice the skills they are learning	1. Girls' Combined Survey 2. FGDs/KIIs (girls, Mentors, caregivers, male partners, district project staff,)

<b>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 4</b>	Community members regularly listen to and/or engage in dialogue surrounding issues relating to girls' opportunities, education, and safety (disaggregated by girls, boys, men and women)	A. # of people reached (including frequency) through national programming	Community members will have access to a radio and signal to pick up radio frequency	1. Desk review 2. FGDs/KIIs (community leaders, caregivers, district project staff, local government officials, EAGER leadership, national government officials) 3. BBC Media Action evaluation* 4. HoH/Caregiver Survey
		B. % of radio listeners who report actively engaging with topics discussed in radio programming	Community members will have access to a radio and signal to pick up radio frequency	N/A (covered by BBC Media Action evaluation)
	Community members, including caregivers of girls, foster more supportive attitudes and/or behaviours towards girls' opportunities, education, and safety	C. % of community members that foster more supportive attitudes towards girls' opportunities, education, and safety (disaggregated by sex, role)	-Community members attend all 6 Community Dialogues. -Officers are trained and supported to understand the Community Dialogues approach. -Officers effectively facilitate the Community Dialogues. -Caregivers are engaged regularly through mother/female caregiver groups.	1. Desk review 2. FGDs/KIIs (girls, Mentors, community leaders, caregivers, male partners, district project staff, local government officials) 3. Combined Girls' Survey
	Girls report greater support for girls' opportunities, education, and safety in their communities	% of girls that report feeling safe and supported to make decisions and access opportunities	-Community members attend all 6 Community Dialogues. -Officers are trained and supported to understand the Community Dialogues approach. -Officers effectively facilitate the Community Dialogues. -Caregivers are engaged regularly through mother/female caregiver groups	1. Desk review 2. FGDs/KIIs (girls, Mentors, caregivers, male partners, district project staff) 3. HoH/Caregiver Survey 4. Girls' Combined Survey
<b>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 5*</b>	Government supported to achieve strategic outcome for increased Literacy for out-of-school (OOS) youth (aligned to updated ESP 2018-2020)	A. National level representatives of MBSSE and MGCA participates in the Baseline, Midterm and Endline data validation	Same as for IO Indicator 1	1. Desk Review (including meeting minutes from relevant Government ministries and other written communications) 2. KIIs (national and local government officials, EAGER Leadership, FCDO, FM)
		B. Number of informative project coordination meetings held with the National level representatives of MBSSE and MGCA annually	Same as for IO Indicator 1	

\*This intermediate outcome is not finalised.

## Evaluation Framework Part 2: Evaluation Questions with sources

Evaluation question	Qual data/analysis required to answer question	Quant data/analysis required to answer question	Relevant indicators
R1. To what extent are the project's objectives and design responsive to the needs and goals of beneficiaries as girls end the Learning Phase and enter into the Transition Phase? And to the needs of the diverse sub-groups served by the project?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FGDs/KIIs with girls, Mentors, caregivers, male partners, community leaders, local councilors, district project staff, EAGER Leadership</li> <li>Document review: Quarterly and annual reports, research studies, transition documents</li> </ol> <p>Analysis: thematic coding paying attention to differences between sub-groups and stakeholder perspectives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls combined survey(including Life Skills and Financial Literacy)</li> <li>HoH survey/Caregivers survey</li> </ol> <p>Analysis: Trend analysis; regression analysis; paying attention to differences between sub-groups</p>	N/A
Effect1. Which individual, household, community and macro factors support and hinder girls' effective transition?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FGDs/KIIs with girls, Mentors, caregivers, male partners, boys, community leaders, district project staff, local councilors, national government representatives, EAGER Leadership</li> <li>Document review: Quarterly and annual reports, research studies</li> </ol> <p>Analysis: thematic coding paying attention to differences between sub-groups and stakeholder perspectives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls' Combined Survey (including Life Skills and Financial Literacy)</li> <li>Caregivers/HoH survey</li> </ol> <p>Analysis: Trend analysis; regression analysis; paying attention to differences between sub-groups</p>	IO3B, IO3C, IO3D IO4B, IO4C, IO4D Outcome 2A, B, C
Effect2. Which programmatic factors support girls' realisation of their Empowerment Plan, including project resources and hard/soft skills learned during the Learning Phase? What opportunities exist for further supporting girls in the empowerment dimensions?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FGDs/KIIs with girls, Mentors, caregivers, male partners, community leaders, district project staff, community leaders, EAGER Leadership</li> <li>Document review: Quarterly and annual reports, research studies, Empowerment Plan</li> </ol> <p>Analysis: thematic coding paying attention to differences between sub-groups and stakeholder perspectives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls' Combined Survey (including Life Skills and Financial Literacy)</li> </ol> <p>Analysis: Trend analysis; regression analysis; paying attention to differences between sub-groups</p>	IO3A, IO3B, IO3D, IO3E IO4C, IO4D Outcome 2A, B, C

<p>Imp1. What changes in girls' behaviours and confidence are visible as girls navigate the Transition Phase? Are girls feeling empowered to meet their own goals since the end of the learning phase in the various empowerment dimensions?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. FGDs/KIIs with girls, Mentors, caregivers, male partners, boys, community leaders, district project staff, local councilors, EAGER Leadership</li> <li>2. Document review: Quarterly and annual reports, research studies,</li> </ol> <p>Analysis: thematic coding paying attention to differences between sub-groups and stakeholder perspectives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Girls' Combined Survey (including Life Skills and Financial Literacy)</li> </ol> <p>Analysis: Trend analysis; regression analysis; paying attention to differences between sub-groups</p>	<p>IO3 B, IO3C, IO3D IO4D Outcome 2A, B, C Outcome 3B</p>
<p>Imp2. How might EAGER Mentors be applying what they learned through EAGER materials and trainings to their own lives and improving their own capacities, status in their households, community and financially to meet their own goals?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. FGDs/KIIs with Mentors, community leaders, district project staff, EAGER Leadership</li> <li>2. Document review: Quarterly and annual reports, research studies</li> </ol> <p>Analysis: thematic coding paying attention to differences between sub-groups and stakeholder perspectives</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Imp3. What obstacles or challenges do stakeholders still perceive as preventing young women from achieving their goals within their communities? What could be done to mediate them?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. FGDs/KIIs with girls, Mentors, caregivers, male partners, boys, district project staff, EAGER Leadership</li> <li>2. Document review: Quarterly and annual reports, research studies</li> </ol> <p>Analysis: thematic coding paying attention to differences between sub-groups and stakeholder perspectives</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>IO3A, IO3D IO4B, IO4C, IO4D</p>
<p>S1. What visible structural or behavioural changes have the potential to remain after the end of the intervention? What signs exist of changing gender norms at the individual, household and community level, including attitudes towards girls' education, equality and realisation of girls' rights?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. FGDs/KIIs with girls, Mentors, caregivers, male partners, boys, community leaders, local councilors, district project staff, national government officials, EAGER Leadership; (Analysis of caregivers, community leaders and boys FGDs/KIIs will include an indicator scale for judging positive attitudes)</li> <li>2. Document review: Quarterly and annual reports, policy documents, research studies</li> </ol> <p>Analysis: thematic coding paying attention to differences between sub-groups and stakeholder perspectives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. HoH/Caregivers Survey</li> </ol>	<p>IO4C, IO4D Outcome 3 C IO3D, IO3C IO5 A, B</p>

<p>S2. What is the likelihood that the project benefits will remain after the intervention? What can the project do to further support sustainability?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. FGDs/KIIs with girls, Mentors, caregivers, male partners, boys, community leaders, local councilors, district project staff, national government officials, EAGER Leadership; (Analysis of caregivers, community leaders and boys FGDs/KIIs will include an indicator scale for judging positive attitudes)</li> <li>2. Document review: Quarterly and annual reports, policy documents, research studies</li> </ol> <p>Analysis: thematic coding paying attention to differences between sub-groups and stakeholder perspectives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Girls' Combined Survey</li> <li>2. HoH/Caregivers survey</li> </ol>	<p>Outcome 3 (B &amp; C)</p>
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## Evaluation Questions

DAC Criteria	Evaluation Question
<p><b>Relevance:</b> The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To what extent are the project's objectives and design responsive to the needs and goals of beneficiaries as girls end the Learning Phase and enter into the Transition Phase? And to the needs of the diverse sub-groups served by the project?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Effectiveness:</b> The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Which individual, household, community and macro factors support and hinder girls' effective transition?</li> <li>● Which programmatic factors support girls' realisation of their Empowerment Plan, including project resources and hard/soft skills learned during the Learning Phase? What opportunities exist for further supporting girls in the empowerment dimensions?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Impact:</b> The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What changes in girls' behaviours and confidence are visible as girls navigate the Transition Phase? Are girls feeling empowered to meet their own goals since the end of the Learning Phase in the various empowerment dimensions?</li> <li>● How might EAGER Mentors be applying what they learned through EAGER materials and trainings to their own lives and improving their own capacities, status in their households, community and financially to meet their own goals?</li> <li>● What obstacles or challenges do stakeholders still perceive as preventing young women from achieving their goals within their communities? What could be done to mediate them?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sustainability:</b> The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What visible structural or behavioural changes have the potential to remain after the end of the intervention? What signs exist of changing gender norms at the individual, household and community level, including attitudes towards girls' education, equality and realisation of girls' rights?</li> <li>● What is the likelihood that the project benefits will remain after the intervention? What can the project do to further support sustainability?</li> </ul>

## Evaluation methodology

**Briefly outline the evaluation methodology. Include any changes from the Baseline approach.**

- **What is the overall evaluation design? Quasi-experimental, pre-post, mixed-method, qualitative only? Why have these been chosen?**

Like the Midterm, the Endline Evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach and convergent design, in which, due to time constraints, quantitative and qualitative data collections occur simultaneously. The breadth of the quantitative approach allowed for a statistically representative sample of programme locations and participants while the qualitative component provided context and depth to the findings of the quantitative impact evaluation. Qualitative data also enabled triangulation of findings, thus increasing their validity. There were no changes in terms of design from the Baseline to Midterm and then to Endline.

- **How were GESI minimum standards incorporated into the evaluation to allow measurement of changes in gender dynamics and efforts to ensure social inclusion of girls across the range of characteristics, including disability?**

Like the Midterm, several Endline Evaluation components address gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) standards. In particular, the sampling approach specifically stratified to include the following vulnerable groups and worked closely with EAGER programme staff to promote recruiting girls from the following sub-groups during data collection:

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

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 at the Baseline and Midterm across key stakeholder groups. GESI standards, and the categorisation of GESI accommodating and GESI transformative characteristics, in particular, guided data analysis especially related to the sustainability of the project's objectives, per EAGER's logframe to key stakeholder groups. Further, at the Endline the evaluation team further enhanced efforts to incorporate girls that fall into the groups above into the data collection process in order to ensure that the Endline can make recommendations on how to further address gender and inclusion in EAGER programming for future Cohorts.

## Data collection process

**In this Section, outline the process taken to collect data (both quantitative and qualitative). Provide details on the following areas. Highlight changes since Baseline and why they occurred.**

The desk review informed the analysis for both qualitative and quantitative strands but included different materials from the Midterm Evaluation given the focus of the Endline Evaluation. The following documents were consulted during the Endline desk review:

#	File name
1	BBC Media Action_ EAGER ME Plan_ Revised_ June2021_ final
2	BBC Media Action_ EAGER Final Audience Research_ PowerPoint Report
3	Radical-Inclusion-Policy.pdf
4	Final EAGER Wave 1 Report_ Updated_ 2021
5	EAGER Sustainability workshop - key points.docx
6	EAGER Empowerment Plan-Bintu's Plan_FINAL.docx
7	EAGER Empowerment Plan-FINAL.docx
8	List Income Generating Activities.xlsx
9	EAGER Transition Flowchart.docx
10	EAGER Transition Overview.docx
11	EAGER Transition Timeline.xlsx
12	TransitionM&EFlowchart.docx
13	01. Empowerment Plan Assessment and Sign Off.docx
14	02. Progress Check 1.docx
15	03. Progress Check 2_End of Transition.docx
16	04. EAGER Cash Distribution Exit Interview.docx
17	CashGuidance_ID_ExitInterview.docx
18	EAGER Transition Distribution_Guidance for LS Officers.docx
19	Mentor Guide_Girls Empowerment Plan_FINAL.docx
20	EAGER Transition Design mini-RAM_Post MTRP RAM template.pptx
21	EAGER Transition Design mini-RAM.pptx
22	21-03-02 EAGER Q10 Quarterly Report.pdf
23	21-03-02 EAGER Q10 Workplan Tracker_consolidated clean_edited.xls
24	Cohort1_Empowerment_Plan_Assessment_and_Sign_Off.xls
25	Comms Materials for EAGER.msg
26	compiled_exitingcommunities_C1_november2021.xlsx
27	COVID Safety Guide.pdf
28	DRAFT EAGER Disabilities SOP_Jan 28.pdf
29	EAGER Girls Club_Guidelines.docx
30	EAGER Learner Book_Numeracy_FINAL.pdf
31	EAGER Q12 MTR_Revised Output Framework.xlsx
32	EAGER Q12 Quarterly Cover Page.docx
33	EAGER Sustainability Matrix_DRAFT (1).docx
34	EAGER Y3 MTR_Revised Output Framework_Annual.xlsx



35	EAGER_Cash_Distribution_Exit_Interview_analysis.xlsx
36	EAGER_Q11_quarterlytracker_consolidated.xlsx
37	BBC Media Action Comms Matrix.xlsx
38	BBC Media Action Sierra Leone - EAGER BCC project design document_FINAL.docx
39	BBC Media Action Sierra Leone_design document_recovered.docx
40	BBC resources for Endline Evaluation .msg
41	EAGER Topics so far.docx
42	BBC Media Action _EAGER_Social Media Strategy.docx
43	BBC Media Action - EAGER quality assurance plan.docx
44	BBC Media Action Sierra Leone - EAGER BCC project design document.docx
45	BBC Media Action _EAGER M+E Plan_June 2021.docx
46	EAGER Drama Approach.docx
47	Community Action Plan - Freetown.pdf
48	COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN - Tonkolili.pdf
49	Community Action Plan-Port Loko.pdf
50	Community action plan-Tonkolili.pdf
51	Community Action Plan.docx
52	Empowerment Plan- KA_20220111_0001.pdf
53	Empowerment Plan - MM_20220111_0001.pdf
54	220118 SL OOSC Strategy ToC v2.pdf
55	BBC Media Action strategy and coordination in EAGER_Feb2022.docx
56	BBC Media Action Strategy and Coordination in EAGER_Feb2022.pptx
57	EAGER Activity Based Actual Reporting 5 Outputs IRC SL V.Donor.xlsx
58	EAGER MTR_Output Targets and Monitoring Framework_Q11 progress_IP.xlsx
59	EAGER Q12 MTR_Revised Output Framework.xlsx
60	EAGER Q12 Programme Information Tracker.xlsx
61	EAGER Q12 Quarterly Cover Page.docx
62	EAGER Y3 APR Template.docx
63	BBC Media Action_EAGER Final Audience Research_PowerPoint Report.pptx
64	EAGER CIES 2021 Adolescent Girls' Psychosocial Wellbing during Covid-19 in Sierra Leone.zip
65	EAGER CIES 2021 OLA in Sierra Leone_Assessing literacy of out-of-school adolescent girls.pptx
66	EAGER Sierra Leone_Savings Template for RAM Process_FINAL.pptx
67	EAGER Transition Design_mini-RAM presentation.pptx
68	EAGER Transition Model Summary.docx
69	EAGER Y3 Annual Workplan Tracker.xlsx
70	EAGER Y3 MTR_Revised Output Framework_Annual.xlsx

71	21-11-30 EAGER Q13 Quarterly Cover Page_submitted.docx
72	Annex I. EAGER Transition Design_RAM presentation.pptx
73	Annex II. EAGER Transition Model Summary.docx
74	Annex III. EAGER Midterm Final Report.pdf
75	Annex IV. EAGER Girls, Mentors and Community Assessments Report_June 2021.docx
76	EAGER Q13 Programme Information Tracker.xlsx
77	LNGB Q13 Programme Information Tracker_consolidated.xlsx
78	Nov2021 EAGER Q13 Project Tracker_consolidated.xlsx
79	Girls_Empowerment_Plan_Check-in_1_analysisv3.xlsx
80	LS TOT_Trainer Guide_Cohort 2.pdf
81	Nov2021 EAGER Q13 Project Tracker_consolidated.xlsx
82	UNICEF Out-of-school-rates_2021-1_sorted by total %.xlsx
83	Updated logframe and eval framework.docx

### Pre data collection (quantitative)

- **How were quantitative sampling frameworks adapted for this evaluation (Please note the sampling framework(s) must be submitted in [Annex 11.](#)) What was the rationale for the sizes and composition of the quantitative sample?**

The quantitative research design developed before (and followed since) Baseline includes a longitudinal study of the same sample of to be representative of the 10 districts in which EAGER operates. Based on the evaluation parameters specified by the FM at the Baseline, a sample of 760 beneficiaries was necessary. Due to a strong interest in meeting the statistical power requirements for four marginalised groups defined at Baseline (girls with disabilities, girls with children, girls who are married, or working outside the home), the original sample was set at 2,160 respondents for the Baseline, Midterm and Endline. This final sample included a generous buffer to assume for a 30 percent attrition rate as well as replacement strategies.

At Midterm, no changes were made to the original Baseline sample framework, (specifically, 2,160 respondents) and included data collection from the original sampled communities at Baseline. The Endline replicated the sample from Midterm.

At Endline, no changes were made to the original framework. Because it was the final evaluation point, it was not necessary to add the 30 percent attrition rate buffer that was applied at Baseline and Midterm. As a result, the total sample goal was set at 1,512 beneficiaries. The final sample included 1,612 beneficiaries and 1,602 caregivers. This includes 13 caregiver surveys without matching beneficiary surveys and 23 beneficiary surveys without matching caregiver surveys. This results in 1,625 observations: 1,589 complete and 36 partial. When necessary, replacements were chosen from an ordered list that prioritised beneficiaries who took part in the Baseline or Financial Literacy Baseline. The final sample included 1,390 beneficiaries from Midterm and 164 replacements.

**Were any quantitative data collection tools revised or adapted from Midterm? If so, please explain how and why they were revised.**

The Midterm Evaluation was near the end of the Learning Sessions of Cohort 1 and marked the end of learning outcome measurement for the external evaluation component. As designed, the Endline Evaluation and its tools focus on transition. The Endline tools do not include the complete assessments in Literacy, Numeracy, Life Skills, and Financial Literacy. Several Life Skills Sections (Gender Norms, Self-Efficacy, Sexual and Reproductive Health, and Social Resources) and several Financial Literacy Sections (describing their business, saving habits, and their confidence in their Financial Literacy skills) were maintained and are comparable across all three evaluation points. Data from Midterm and Endline are matched to identify if past assessments are related to current Outcomes. In addition, as Learning Sessions have concluded for Cohort 1, the Endline did not include Learning Session observations, collect attendance sheets, or facility data (programme data sheets).

The Endline Evaluation also combined the Caregiver and Head of Household surveys into a single survey: responses and information from the two surveys were duplicative at previous evaluation points and findings from each did not provide greater insight. Instead, the relevant questions of the Head of Household Survey were combined into the Caregiver Survey, and only the caregiver was interviewed. If the caregiver was not available, the head of household was interviewed instead and noted in the survey.

*Figure 13: Modifications made to Baseline quantitative tools for Midterm*

Stakeholder	Changes
<b>Girls' Combined Survey (GCS)</b>	<p><b>Washington Group questions:</b> Unchanged since Baseline<sup>85</sup></p> <p><b>Literacy and Numeracy Assessments:</b> Removed</p> <p><b>Life Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removed Social-Emotional Response and Information Scenarios</li> <li>• Added more questions about Plan completion, approval, and confidence.</li> <li>• Added questions to clarify pregnancy and parental status</li> <li>• Added questions about how EAGER affected decisions related to number, timing, and spacing of having children.</li> <li>• Streamlining: Assessed whether any questions can be removed without affecting index to compensate for increased socio-emotional learning scenarios</li> <li>• A mistake in skip logic coding resulted in three questions going unasked: (1) on pregnancy prevention methods (though questions on sexual transmitted infection prevention), (2) where to acquire information about family planning (though where to acquire information about sexually transmitted infection information were included), and (3) the benefits to family planning (though questions on how EAGER has affected their family planning are included).</li> </ul> <p><b>Financial Literacy (FL) Survey:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintained questions describing business, saving and borrowing habits, and Financial Literacy confidence</li> <li>• Removed Section assessing knowledge</li> <li>• Revised questions related to chore burden due to poor question formulation in previous versions</li> </ul> <p><b>Transition and Application of Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added Section on the process of transition from Learning Sessions</li> <li>• Added Section on Empowerment Plan</li> <li>• Added Section on opinions on how helpful various aspects of EAGER are</li> </ul>

<sup>85</sup> The Midterm Report incorrectly stated that some Washington Group questions had been removed due to changes in disability status unlikely to change since Baseline. They were re-added before Midterm collection commenced.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added Section on opinions on what aspects they have applied since the end of Learning Sessions</li> <li>• Added questions on helpfulness of Mentors</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Sessions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removed Learning Session Observations (Cohort 1 Learning Sessions ended)</li> <li>• Removed Safe Space Data Sheet and Attendance Sheets (Cohort 1 no longer attending Safe Spaces)</li> </ul>
<b>Household Survey</b>	<p><b>Head of Household:</b> Combined questions into Primary Caregiver survey</p> <p><b>Primary Caregiver:</b> Added questions about BBC radio programming and Community Dialogue Meetings</p>

- **Which new quantitative data collection tools were designed for this evaluation point? Comment on any newly developed and calibrated tools and describe the calibration process.**

Questions were added to the Girls’ Combined Survey (GCS) to provide greater insight into the Transition Phase. They included process questions, such as whether beneficiaries had completed Empowerment Plan, received their Empowerment Packages, met with Mentors since the end of learning or participated in Girls’ Clubs. Questions were added to the Caregiver Survey to provide additional data about Community Dialogue Meetings and insights into the BBC radio programming. All tools and changes were approved by the EAGER CCU and FM with the Inception Report before collection.

- **How were quantitative data collectors recruited, what skills and experience did they have and what training did they receive ahead of quantitative data collection?**

As was completed at the Baseline and Midterm, IMC hired their local partner, Dalan Development Consultants, to provide the field team for this Endline Evaluation for data collection. As such, Dalan provided the quantitative data collectors and field supervisors for quantitative data collection. As a research firm with extensive experience in data collection across Sierra Leone and having worked with IMC on the Baseline and Midterm Evaluations, Dalan maintains a wide pool of candidates for conducting different types of research in different locations. All Endline data collectors had satisfactorily participated in collection during either or both of the EAGER Baseline and Midterm Evaluations. Dalan selected a team of 36 quantitative data collectors (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,
- Experience with the Baseline Evaluation and/or Midterm Evaluation,
- Experience undertaking education surveys, and,
- All collectors operated in sub-teams of two and included at least one woman.

IMC also ensured that those quantitative data collectors who had poor performance during the Baseline or Midterm Evaluation were not included on the Endline evaluation team.

- **Were quantitative tools piloted and if so, what were the main findings? Were any adaptations made to the quantitative tools as a result?**

Quantitative tools were piloted at Baseline, but not the Endline Evaluation point.

#### **During data collection (quantitative)**

- **When did quantitative data collection take place? Were dates different for different tools or by areas?**

Quantitative data collection took place from January 23<sup>rd</sup> to February 12, 2022. Each sub-team consisting of 1 field supervisor and 1 quantitative data collector travelled to a community for 1-2 days and administered all quantitative tools at the same time. Data collection took place in all 10 districts and the sampled communities all at the same time.

- **What protocols were followed when collecting the data, particularly to ensure ethical and child protection standards? What was done to ensure the safety of the quantitative data collectors during quantitative data collection?**

As with the Baseline and Midterm Evaluations, all field supervisors and quantitative data collectors were briefed on safeguarding and child protection policies during the training. IRC presented their Child Protection Policies and Safeguarding policy at the training and then the field staff signed the Acknowledgment of Receipt of Child Safeguarding Policy and were provided a copy as well. Child protection and safeguarding, as well as the consent process was discussed throughout the training as well by the international evaluation team and was part of the training process. This 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. Like the Midterm, the consent process was modified to include a statement that data could be held for future usage. This was highlighted during the training to ensure the quantitative data collectors covered this consent consideration with respondents. The training also reviewed 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 (for example, conducting survey in a private space), as well as COVID-19 protocols for the protection of both the respondents but also the field team.

As with the Baseline and Midterm, IMC established a reporting system should there have been any protection or safeguarding issues that came up during data collection. This included providing quantitative data collectors with a Child Protection Issue Reporting Protocol form to be completed. IMC also prepared referral information sheets that included contact information for each district and EAGER partner in case there was a child protection or safeguarding issue.

The quantitative field team also provided nearly daily updates, which included any challenges they were facing including health issues or safety. There were none that arose during the data collection.

Finally, as with the Baseline and Midterm, IMC and their partner ensured that data was collected and stored securely. This included requesting the quantitative data collectors to upload their data daily if possible and also using data collection devices provided by Dalan. All data was uploaded up onto a secure platform and beneficiaries were tracked using their Beneficiary ID number.

- **What re-contact protocols were followed to track Cohort girls from Baseline(if any)? Was this approach successful? Did you have to replace girls due to attrition, and if so, how did you sample these replacement girls?**

The quantitative data collectors went to the same communities and Safe Spaces as the Baseline and Midterm Evaluations. The intention was to survey the same beneficiaries as was the Midterm Evaluation sample. The quantitative data collectors were provided respondent lists with the beneficiaries from the Baselines ample to use first with a backup list if the main sample girls were not available. If the beneficiaries were not available/not able to be found, and they could not survey at least seven girls from the original sample list, the quantitative data collectors then used the backup sample list. The backup sample list were beneficiaries from the Financial Literacy Baseline that was completed in early 2021 who were not on the original sample list.

- **What data quality assurance processes were used during quantitative data collection?**

During data collection, there was a WhatsApp group for the quantitative team with all the field supervisors and the international Quantitative Specialist, as well as Dalan programme managers. The field supervisors were trained to provide daily updates that had the following information:

- Sub-Team number
- Supervisor
- Quantitative data collectors' names
- Date of visit
- District
- Safe Space name
- Number of Beneficiaries surveyed
- Number of beneficiaries from main sample
- Number of beneficiaries from replacement sample
- Number of Girls' Combined Survey completed
- Number of Caregiver/ Head of Household Surveys completed
- Challenges:
- Data synced: yes/no
- Survey comments:

This quality assurance measure ensured that each quantitative data collection sub-team completed the correct number of surveys and survey type at each Safe Space visited and allowed the international Quantitative Specialist to identify issues while the quantitative data collectors were still in or near the communities. While some field supervisors followed the protocol, there were some sub-teams whose updates were not provided regularly. Additionally, the WhatsApp group was used by the quantitative team to submit questions or challenges they were having (and that other sub-teams were likely having) and the international Quantitative Specialist could answer their questions and make sure all the other sub-teams saw the response.

Once data was uploaded, 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 quantitative data collectors in the field:

- Issues with connectivity for uploading data daily: some sub-teams were unable to upload on a daily basis due to a lack of internet connection. The teams uploaded data as promptly as possible Quantitative specialist checked for errors as soon as the data was uploaded.

- Tablet/phone malfunctions the first few days of data collection that led to a loss of data.

For a discussion on challenges, please see Section 3 of the Endline Report.

The Quantitative Specialist monitored real-time data submission remotely and the WhatsApp group. Data entered was spot checked by field supervisors and the international Quantitative Specialist for errors. Field supervisors ensured that all data was uploaded at the completion of every day that they had internet connectivity<sup>86</sup>.

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 risks 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 quantitative data collectors were briefed regarding the need to regularly return to locations with internet access. Some quantitative data collectors experienced delays of several days before uploading, but these instances were flagged as they happened by supervisors and communications issued to quantitative data collectors to prioritise uploading.

- **What were the final sample sizes for each of the quantitative tools and did these differ to intended sample sizes?**

The final sample size met the intended sample for the Endline Evaluation. Data collection took place in a representative number of communities from each district. The sample only included beneficiaries from Cohort 1. In total the Endline Evaluation final sample sizes were as follows: 1,612 beneficiaries from 212 Safe Spaces; 1,602 caregivers from 212 Safe Spaces. As such, on average there were 7.6 girls per Safe Space group; 89 percent were part of the previous Midterm Evaluation sample.

*Table 38: Total numbers of surveys completed per tool type*

Tool	Observations
Girls' Combined Survey	1,612
Caregiver/Head of Household	1,602

<sup>86</sup> 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.

Table 39: Quantitative Sampling by Location

Districts	Original Design <sup>87</sup>		Results	
	Sample	Safe Spaces	Sample	Safe Spaces
Bo	168	24	172	25
Kailahun	147	21	188	21
Kambia	147	21	155	21
Kenema	154	22	174	22
Koinadugu	147	21	157	21
Kono	147	21	155	21
Port Loko	161	23	154	23
Pujehun	147	21	167	20
Tonkolili	147	21	166	22
WAU	147	21	137	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,512</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>1,625</b>	<b>216</b>

- **What accommodations or adaptations were made to data collection protocols and tools to ensure inclusion of girls with disabilities? For learning assessments and surveys?**

During the original sample design at Baseline, the minimum sample size was nearly doubled in order to ensure the sample of four sub-groups were large enough to be large enough for reporting. Those sub-groups included including those with disabilities, married, parents, or working outside the home). As was completed at Baseline and Midterm Evaluations, any stimuli used were produced in large print in an easy-to-read font to make it more visually accessible. Additionally a large pictographic visual aid is used to help conceptualise responses to Likert-scale questions. During the training it was emphasised that there are no time limits or language constraints when describing and explaining any aspect of the surveys.

#### **Post data collection (quantitative)**

- **How was the quantitative data cleaned and checked for consistency?**

On completion of data collection, the quantitative data collection sub-teams and Dalan management and the international Quantitative Specialist undertook an iterative process of cross-checking and cleaning. The different instruments were matched using beneficiary identification numbers, names, and demographic information. All beneficiary-identifiable data were aggregated into a single dataset.

All survey data was collected in real-time on handheld mobile devices using ODK versions of the quantitative survey tools. Raw data were uploaded to secure servers daily. Data consistency was monitored in three ways during the data collection process:

- (1) By direct supervision of quantitative data collectors by field supervisors and a Dalan Coordinator staff member;

<sup>87</sup> Original design here refers to agreed-upon proportionality before commencement of data collection.



- (2) By the international Quantitative Specialist, who would download the data multiple times per week and run automated consistency checks using Stata
- (3) By the international Quantitative Specialist reviewing the data manually multiple times per week to identify any unexpected response patterns.

Any unexpected response patterns would be flagged and discussed with the Dalan Coordinator and quantitative data collection teams within a day of identification using WhatsApp.

On conclusion of the data collection, the Dalan Coordinator cross-checked the full combined dataset for inconsistencies, missing values or missing data blocks. This process was supervised and further cross-checked by the international Quantitative Specialist.

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 early March 2022. 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 the CCU as part of the assignment deliverables.

- **How was the quantitative data stored and analysed, including relevant reflections of quantitative data collectors and researchers while in the field? What analytical process were used for the data?**

Quantitative data were stored initially on the secure ODK servers. Upon completion of the collection period, they were deleted from these servers. They were downloaded onto the international Quantitative Specialist's computer and stored as encrypted files, and backups maintained on an encrypted server. Data were cleaned and combined using STATA, and all edits to the original files can be verified in the provided coding files. Personally identifiable information, such as beneficiaries' names and phone numbers, are kept in a separate file from the analytical dataset.

Statistical constructs described as indexes (e.g. Financial Literacy Confidence and Self-Efficacy) include Likert Scale questions where the strongest level of agreement is the most (or least) desirable outcome are graded on a graduated scale from 0 to 1, depending on the level of agreement. For example, in the Financial Literacy Confidence assessment, respondents are asked "I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I set for myself." For this scale, respondents can respond Strongly Agree for 1 point, Agree (0.75 points), Neither Agree nor Disagree (0.5 points), Disagree (0.25 points), or Strongly Disagree (0 points).

Analysis made use of probability weighting to account for minor differences in the distribution of the sample by district and distribution of the beneficiary population by district as of Baseline. Probability weights were used at Baseline, Midterm, and Endline and are based on the same assumptions of beneficiary population to ensure comparability.

#### **Pre data collection (qualitative)**

- **Were any qualitative data collection tools revised or adapted from Midterm? If so, please explain how and why they were revised.**

All qualitative tools were significantly revised from the Midterm Evaluation given the objective and scope of the Endline Evaluation was different from the Midterm Evaluation and focused on the Transition Phase.

- **Which new qualitative data collection tools were designed for this evaluation point?**

The design of the Endline qualitative tools was guided by the Endline Evaluation Questions and the Evaluation Framework and informed by ongoing conversations with the EAGER Consortium Coordination Unit (CCU). Qualitative tools responded to both Evaluation Questions and indicators, where relevant, and took into account concerns noted in the Evaluation Questions. Questions were customised for each beneficiary respondent group in order to capture relevant information. Different from the Midterm Evaluation the Endline Evaluation qualitative tools focused on:

- If EAGER's objectives and design are responsive to the needs of beneficiaries specifically for the preparation of girls for transition
- Emphasis on beneficiaries' goals, goal-setting experience and steps made towards their goals
- Photographs of Empowerment Plan of girls who participate in FGDs; this approach allowed triangulation with project monitoring data of Empowerment Plan
- Factors that hinder or support transition
- Programmatic factors that impact girls' transition
- Possible areas for strengthening EAGER programming to help girls achieve their Empowerment Plan and have successful transition
- Girls' perception of their skills related to achievement of the Empowerment Plan
- Mentors' perceptions of how their capacity was built and if they feel more empowered in their lives
- Gender norms and perceived changes
- Emerging signs of structural or behavioural changes due to programme
- Signs of sustainability after programme

Changes made to the qualitative toolset and sampling include:

- Instead of having FGDs with boys in select communities as was done at Midterm, 2 KIIs were held with boys in each community
  - KIIs with local government councilors rather than district level government officials as was done at Midterm.
  - Girls' who participated in data collection activities were asked to bring their Empowerment Plan to the KII/FGD so that data collectors could photograph it for analysis
  - KIIs were held with FCDO Country Office Staff whereas they were not at the Midterm Evaluation
  - Interviews with EAGER District Staff focused solely on LS Officers given their critical role to the transition process. Facilitators were not included in the Endline Evaluation
- **What qualitative methods were selected and what tools were developed for data collection?**

While KIIs and FGDs were held at the Baseline and Midterm Evaluations with nearly the same stakeholder groups, all new tools were developed for the Endline Evaluation, and changes were

made to the sampling and stakeholder groups engaged (see above). As such, the following qualitative tools were developed for data collection at the Endline Evaluation:

#### **Key Informant Interview guides**

- Beneficiary girls
- Male partners
- LBS Mentors
- Boys 13 – 17 (community members)- (FGDs were held with boys at Midterm)
- LS Officers- (no Facilitators were interviewed whereas at Midterm they were)
- Local councillor- (not included at Midterm)
- National Government
- EAGER Leadership
- FCDO Country Office staff- (not included at Midterm)
- FM staff member

#### **Focus Group Discussion guides**

- Beneficiary girls
- Mothers or female caregivers of beneficiaries
- Fathers or male caregiver of beneficiaries
- Community Leaders
- **What sample sizes and sampling approaches were identified for each qualitative data collection tool? What was the rationale for the sizes and composition of the qualitative sample?**

Data was collected from the same 10 communities (1 per district) as the Baseline and Midterm Evaluations. Below is a table that shows how many interviews or FGDs were done with each stakeholder group.

Table 40: Sampling plan for Endline Evaluation data collection

Respondent Type	Intended # and FGD or KIIs per community	Notes / quotas	Who is conducting data collection
Girls 13 – 17 (beneficiaries)	1 FGDs – all communities	One group with diverse ages; include as possible some girls with disabilities, married girls, girls with children/pregnant, girls working outside the home	One female facilitator, one female notetaker
Mothers or female caregivers of beneficiaries	1 FGD – only 2 communities (prioritising communities where there are active Mothers/ Female caregivers groups)	To represent both mothers and community members; mixture of higher and lower education levels and SES as possible; may want to randomise if easier for EAGER staff	One female facilitator, one female notetaker
Fathers or male caregiver of beneficiaries	1 FGD – only 2 communities	To represent both fathers and community members; mixture of higher and lower education levels and SES as possible; may want to randomise if easier for EAGER staff	One male facilitator, one male notetaker
Community Leaders	1 FGD – 3 male groups, 3 female groups (6 different communities)	Rotating between male and female groups of community leaders	Pair of facilitators (should be gender same)
LBS Mentors	2 KIIs – all communities	Both EAGER Mentors sit for interviews	One female who will interview and take notes
Girls (beneficiaries)	3 KIIs – all communities	Three girls from each community; attention will be paid to representation from various sub-groups; variety between girls in sub-groups and not across the sample	One female who will interview and take notes
Male partners of participating girls	2 KIIs – all communities	Two males from within the community who have their partners participating as beneficiaries within the programme; attention will be paid to representation from various sub-groups – may want to randomise if easier for EAGER staff	One male who will interview and take notes

Boys 13 – 17 (community members)	2 KIIs – all communities	Mixture of in school and out of school boys typical of community; should be cousins/siblings living in the households of beneficiary girls. (Not partners); may want to randomise if easier for EAGER staff	One male who will interview and take notes
Programme Staff	1 KII – all communities	In certain areas, it will likely be necessary to conduct this interview at the regional office for programme staff, but the person selected should be responsible / have experience working in the community selected.	One male or female who will interview and take notes
Local councilor	1 KII – all communities	To be informed based on suggestion of IRC and partners. (Replaces KIIs with regional ministerial officials held at Baseline and Endline)	One male or female who will interview and take notes
National level government officials	2 KIIs	1 representative each from MBSEE and Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs	Evaluation Team Leader (remote)
Fund Manager/FCDO Sierra Leone office	2 KIIs	1 KII with Fund Manager technical staff, 1 KII with FCDO representative	Evaluation Team Leader (remote)
EAGER Leadership	8 KIIs	(CCU members -- 4; 1 representative from each of consortium partners)	Evaluation Team Leader (remote)

Since community leaders, female caregivers and male caregivers were only done in select communities, some communities had more data collection activities than others. The decision to not conduct all data collection activities in all communities was made at the Midterm Evaluation where it was decided to cut back on the qualitative data collected to allow for deeper analysis during reporting. Care was taken to spread the activities as evenly as possible across the communities. The figure below shows which activities were undertaken in each community:

Figure 14: Activities per community

	District of Community										Total
	Bo	Kambia	Koinadugu	Kono	Pujehun	WAU	Port Loko	Kailahun	Kenema	Tonkolii	
FGD Girls	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
FGD Female Leaders					1			1	1		3
FGD Male Leaders		1				1	1				3
FGD Female caregiver			1	1							2
FGD Male caregiver		1						1			2
KII Girls	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30
KII Male partners	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	20
KII Boys	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	20
KII Mentors	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	20
KII LS Officers	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
KII Local Councilors	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
<b>Total # activities</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>130</b>

Through qualitative data collection, the Endline Evaluation Reached 213 individuals (134 females and 79 males, including 61 beneficiaries). The Team Leader conducted 17 virtual KIIs with EAGER CCU members (4), EAGER partner staff (10), donor/FM (3), government officials (4). At Endline Evaluation the evaluation team aimed for a higher quota of girls from various sub-groups. This is reflected in the sampling:

- 52 of 61 beneficiaries interviewed were mothers (33 have 2+ children)
- 37 of 61 girls were married
- 42 of 62 girls never attended school
- 1 beneficiary interviewed had a disability, according to data collectors

Please note that the evaluation team paid close attention to the number of beneficiaries with disabilities participating in the Endline evaluation. Although one beneficiary was identified as having a disability among the sample, it is worth noting that this individual was not identified by the project registry as having a disability. The reason for the discrepancy was not clear to the evaluation team. In order to seek greater clarity, post-facto cross-checking of identities of girls who participated in qualitative activities with the Endline quantitative dataset revealed that four of the girls participating in Endline qualitative data collection activities have disabilities according to their survey responses to Washington Group questions.

- **How were qualitative researchers recruited, what skills and experience did they have and what training did they receive ahead of qualitative data collection?**

### **Recruitment of team**

As with the quantitative data collection team and at Baseline and Midterm, national partner Dalan Consultants was responsible for recruitment of qualitative data collectors. The qualitative data collection field team had 12 qualitative data collectors that were broken up into 3 teams of 4 qualitative data collectors. Each sub-team had a field supervisor that participated in the Training of Trainers and helped the other team members during the training and in the field and conducted data in 3-4 districts. All three supervisors and nearly 55% of the qualitative data collectors were also on the Baseline and Midterm teams and only 2 team members were completely new to the EAGER evaluation process. Recruitment and selection of the individuals was on the basis of:

- Previous experience conducting qualitative interviews and focus groups;
- Ideally experience with Baseline and/or Midterm Evaluations;
- 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 in accordance with good practice of research of this nature.

### **Training**

Since the international team was not able to travel to Sierra Leone due to COVID-19 precautions, the training of the field team was done remotely by the international team members from the USA. To account for this, the team held a Training of Trainers prior to training the full team training. This allowed the field supervisors to have extra training ahead of the full team training so they could more adequately facilitate and assist with the training of the remaining team members. This pre-emptive focused training also ensured they had a solid understanding of the sampling plans, data collection tools, ethical protocols and quality assurance. Details on the training of trainers can be found in the main report above in Section 3. After the Training of Trainers, the full team had an in-person training that included piloting for one day. Details on this can be found in Section 3 of the report.

- **Were qualitative tools piloted and if so, what were the main findings? Were any adaptations made to the qualitative tools as a result?**

Qualitative tools were piloted for 1 day in 3 programme communities in the WAU district: Moyeba, Culvert and Red Pump. Piloting took place on January 19, 2022 during the training week with the full qualitative team participating. The team was divided into 3 groups of 4 data collectors (2 females and 2 males) per community and all the tools were piloted except for the FGD guide for male caregivers, EAGER Leadership KII guide, FCDO and FM KII guides, and the National Government officials KII guide. The male caregivers group was not possible due to availability of stakeholders, while the other interviews would be conducted by the international team and were not within the responsibilities of the Dalan team.

In terms of results of the piloting, teams provided feedback on questions that were more difficult than others or ones that needed rephrasing. Very few changes were made to the tools themselves based on feedback from the piloting. Some included: a) inserted a prompt for data collectors to ask the KII participants if they can share their empowerment plan to be photographed, b) making grammatical changes to some questions, and c) adding precision to the LS Officer question to

specify the partner names and names of line ministries. Field testing also called the attention of data collectors to some challenges taking pictures of Empowerment Plan. This allowed data collectors to raise the issue immediately to the CCU as well as to prepare for greater flexibility and focused quality assurance in the field.

There were some issues with the beneficiary sampling lists related to the piloting Safe Spaces. In one of the three pilot communities (Moyeba) the beneficiary list (pulled from the Cohort 1 registry that was shared with IMC) was not correct. When the team arrived, the Mentor looked at the list and said it didn't have the names of the girls who graduated with Cohort 1. She gave the team another list and they worked off of that for data collection. The list in Culvert also had errors with about half of the girls in the Cohort 1 registry having graduated, according to the Mentor. She provided additional names. The list in Red Pump was fine. This experience also alerted data collectors to be attentive to participant lists and to provide clear documentation and related quality assurance.

### **During data collection (qualitative)**

- **When did qualitative data collection take place? Was sequencing used so that qualitative data was collected after initial analysis of the quantitative data? Were dates different for different tools or by areas?**

Qualitative and Quantitative data collection took place at the same time. Qualitative data collection took place in the 10 districts from January 23<sup>rd</sup> to February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022. Virtual data collection undertaken by the international Team Leader ran from January 31<sup>st</sup> to March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022, with a final interview occurring on April 1, 2022. All tools were used during the data collection period and the same tools were used in each district, except for in the cases of the FGDs with male and female caregivers and community leaders, which were only used in select districts as noted above.

- **What protocols were followed when collecting the qualitative data, particularly to ensure ethical and child protection standards? What was done to ensure the safety of the researchers during quantitative data collection?**

In terms of child protection and ethical standards, as with the Midterm, at Endline all data collectors were briefed on safeguarding and child protection policies during the training. the CCU presented their Child Protection Policies and Safeguarding policy at the training and then the field staff signed the Acknowledgment of Receipt of Child Safeguarding Policy and were provided a copy as well. Child protection and safeguarding, as well as the consent process, was discussed throughout the training as well by the international evaluation team and was part of the training process. This 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. Like the Midterm, the consent process was modified to include a statement that data could be held for future usage. This was highlighted during the training to ensure the data collectors covered this new consent consideration with respondents. The training also reviewed 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 (for example, conducting interviews in a private space), as well as COVID-19 protocols for the protection of both the respondents but also the field team. The qualitative team was trained to hold interviews and FGDs and a quiet space but within view of other people (so data collectors were not alone with respondents).



As with the Midterm, IMC established a reporting system should there have been any issues that came up during data collection. This system included providing qualitative data collectors with a Child Protection Issue Reporting Protocol form to be completed. IMC also prepared referral information sheets that included contacts for each district and relevant EAGER partner in case there was a child protection or safeguarding issue. All data collected was anonymised to the extent possible and in accordance with consent procedures and names as well as any identifying information have been removed from transcripts before being shared with the CCU and the Fund Manager.

▪ **What accommodations or adaptations were made to data collection protocols to ensure inclusion of girls with disabilities?**

At the Endline, as with the Baseline and Midterm, girls with disabilities, as well as other sub-groups of focus (i.e. girls who are mothers, girls who are Head of Household) were meant to have a higher quota. Prior to data collection, the Team Leader prepared sample lists of beneficiary girls using the EAGER Beneficiary Registry data that included girls from the various sub-groups for data collection. These were provided to the qualitative data collection teams to use for recruiting the girls for data collection so that we could ensure the various sub-groups were represented. Below provide the total numbers of beneficiary girls from the various sub-groups that were part of the qualitative sample:

- 52 of 61 beneficiaries interviewed were mothers (33 have 2+ children)
- 37 of 61 girls were married
- 42 of 61 girls never attended school
- 1 beneficiary interviewed has a disability

(See above for more information.). Data collection procedures were flexible in order to accommodate the needs of different beneficiaries. Data collectors were trained to set up the interview in a location convenient for the respondent. Interviews were oral in nature and did not require the use of braille or other deciphering aid. The evaluation team was not made aware of any needs for further accommodations in the case of hearing impairment so no additional accommodations were made.

▪ **What data quality assurance processes were used during qualitative data collection?**

For Quality Assurance in the field, data collectors were asked to produce handwritten interview notes that were used to: a) enable the international evaluation team to provide same-day spot checks on the quality of data being recorded in the FGDs and KIIs; b) enable the team to observe in real-time some emerging themes that would then guide the qualitative field team to hone in on key areas that would benefit from additional probing during future qualitative activities. A WhatsApp group was established for the qualitative team to communicate with the international Team Leader daily and also with each other. If there were any issues in the field, the Team Leader would reply immediately via the WhatsApp group and all the other teams could see the feedback in case they were having the same issues. Similarly, teams were able to share best practices as well as mitigations to challenges. While the team was trained to share their handwritten field notes daily, some of the teams did not do this regularly. Additionally, the qualitative data collection team was trained to photograph the Empowerment Plan from girls who were interviewed and in some cases this did not take place as the girls did not have their plans or they had been taken by the project staff.

Qualitative data collectors worked one-on-one with respondents during interviews as they did at Midterm. Similarly, each FGD had between 5 and 8 participants of the group type (girls, caregivers, etc.), and the discussions were held in an area that was private and quiet. In order to mitigate data quality issues, a FGD facilitator led the conversation while a notetaker wrote key takeaways from the conversation in English. For KIIs, one data collector conducted the interview and took notes (in English) at the same time. For KIIs and FGDs with girls and Mentors, all interviewers and notetakers were female.

- **What were the final sample sizes for each of the qualitative tools and did these differ to intended sample sizes?**

Below is the sample table for the qualitative data collection by tool. The table displays the intended sample and the actual sample per tool.

*Table 41: Sampling for Endline by stakeholder group*

Tool	Beneficiary group	Intendent sample size	Actual sample size	Remarks on why there are major differences between anticipated and actual sample sizes (if applicable)
FGD	Girls 13 – 17 (beneficiaries)	1 FGDs – all communities with 5-8 participants (50-80)	61	Met anticipated size
KII	Boys 13 – 17 (community members)	KII with 2 boy-all communities (20)	20	Met anticipated size
FGD	Mothers or female caregivers of beneficiaries	1 FGD – only 2 communities with 5-8 participants (10-16)	12	Met anticipated size
FGD	Fathers or male caregiver of beneficiaries	1 FGD – only 2 communities with 5-8 participants (10-16)	11	Met anticipated size
FGD	Community Leaders	1 FGD – 3 male groups, 3 female groups – 6 different communities) with 5-8 participants (30-48)	33 (19 female; 14 male)	Met anticipated size
KII	LBS Mentors	2 KIIs – all communities (20)	17	Mentors that were not interviewed were not available the day of data collection in specific community. At least 1 Mentor was interviewed in each community visited.

KII	Girls (beneficiaries)	3 KIIs – all communities (30)	30	Met anticipated size
KII	Male partners of participating girls	2 KIIs – all communities (20)	20	Met anticipated size
KII	Local Councillors	1 KII-all communities (10)	9 (1 female; 8 males)	Respondent in 1 community was unavailable for interview the day of data collection.
KII	LS Officers	1 KII – all communities (10)	10 (9 females; 1 male)	Met anticipated size
KII	National-level MBSEE and Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs	At least one person per key ministry (2)	4	Exceeded anticipated size
KII	EAGER Leadership	CCU members -- 4; 1 representative from each of consortium partners (8)	14: 4 from CCU; 10 from EAGER partners	Exceeded anticipated size
KII	FCDO Country office staff; Fund Manager	1 KII with FCDO and 1 with FM (2)	3 (1 from FM; 2 from FCDO)	Exceeded anticipated size

### Post data collection (qualitative)

- **Was qualitative data recorded on audio, using written notes, or through a combination of the two?**

Data was recorded via audio and also written notes. Specifically, during FGDs, a FGD facilitator led the conversation while a notetaker wrote key takeaways from the conversation in English. For KIIs, one qualitative data collector conducted the interview and took notes (in English) at the same time. For KIIs and FGDs with girls and Mentors, all interviewers and notetakers were female. The conversations were also recorded and subsequently translated and transcribed by Dalan. Data was then entered into an MS Excel database by transcribers in a secure file.

- **What volume of qualitative data was produced in total (numbers of hours of recordings or pages of notes)? Was this data transcribed verbatim or summarised? (Please note that two qualitative transcripts must be provided, as outlined in Annex 10)**

There were 173.23 number of hours of recordings. The data were transcribed verbatim during the transcription process for all interviews and FGDs except for the interviews with EAGER Leadership, FCDO, FM and the national government officials, where those transcripts were summarisations but very close to verbatim. These interviews were also all in English.

- **How was the qualitative data stored, coded and analysed, including relevant reflections of quantitative data collectors and researchers while in the field? What analytical processes were used for the data?**

Qualitative data were recorded by data collectors and then submitted for transcription along with a cover page for each interview/FGD. The transcripts were stored in a secured database and as

transcription took place, data was entered into a Google sheet file and sorted by Evaluation Question. The transcribers entered cover sheet information for each interview or FGD which included the following information: District, Interview/FGD number, Respondent Type, Date of Interview, Start and End times of interview, Facilitator Name, Notetaker Name, Number of males or females, Language of KII/FGD, Consent provided by all respondents (Yes/No), and Notes from Interviewer. This last category, “notes from the interview” allowed space for data collectors’ reflections on the process and emerging themes. In addition, teams were asked to post regular updates in which they also commented on the process and data quality and relevance. Transcripts were then further reviewed for clarity, comprehensiveness, identifiable information removed and data was pre-coded under subheadings by research question. The Team Leader reviewed transcripts for quality before approving the transcripts.

The cleaned and categorised data were 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. Transition, Sustainability), and subtopics. 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 (the international Team Leader and international 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 the Evaluation Questions (e.g. parent codes for “Effectiveness 2”). As the notes were reviewed iteratively in more detail, additional sub-codes were assigned. As appropriate, sub-sub codes were created. 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 over 250 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.

When available, the team relied upon quantitative analysis to inform responses to Evaluation Questions as well as 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 was used to indicate scope and spread of indicated phenomena but 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.

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. Mentors, male partners, boys, government officials, community leaders, etc.). The logframe also provided indication of whether indicators would rely upon quantitative or qualitative data and informed the process.

- **In what language was the analysis conducted? Was all or some of the qualitative data translated at any point?**

Analysis was conducted in English. As necessary, field-level data were translated during the transcription process. All interviews were translated except for those held with EAGER Leadership, FCDO, the FM, and National Government representatives.

### **Challenges in data collection and limitations of the evaluation design**

**Please describe any identified limitations and challenges related to the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the evaluation. This Section should:**

- **Outline any methodological challenges to the approach (including any biases, attrition etc.) and how these were mitigated.**

Please see the Challenges and Mitigation Table in Section 3 of the main report.

- **Provide a summary of any limitations and challenges that were faced during this evaluation point (for both quantitative and qualitative aspects) either pre-fieldwork, during fieldwork, or post-fieldwork.**

#### **General Issues**

- There were some difficulties recruiting girls and respondents during data collection since the Learning Sessions had ended in July 2021.
- Training of field staff held virtually due to COVID-19 and travel restrictions which made it more difficult to ensure the team was trained properly prior to data collection.
- COVID-19 and ensuring the protection of all team members and respondents during training and data collection.
- Financial data of cost per activity per girl difficult to acquire for the VfM analysis.

#### **Limitations for Quantitative Data Collection**

- Some phones were misconfigured for the first three days of data collection, making them unable to submit the data to servers. Teams in the three districts with a deficit of five or more surveys (Kailahun, Port Loko, and WAU) had at least one phone configuration problem. The data was not able to be retrieved from the phones.
- Due to a skip logic coding mistake, three questions in the Girls' Combined Survey were skipped for all respondents: These questions were: (1) if they could name methods for preventing pregnancy, (2) what the benefits of family planning are, and (3) where to obtain information on it.

## Limitations for Qualitative Data Collection

- Girls Empowerment Plan had been taken from them and were therefore not available for review by the evaluation team
- Team members struggled to keep their mobile devices charged or were in remote areas with limited service during data collection. Therefore, the qualitative team did not provide the daily updates as requested during the training which made providing quality assurance difficult.
- In some communities, it was not possible to meet with some key stakeholders. For instance, one Mentor was ill and after repeated tries, it was not possible to meet with a local councillor.
- Though limited, some of the beneficiary information from the IRC Beneficiary Registry that was used to make the sample for recruiting beneficiary girls did not match with the beneficiary list at the Safe Spaces.
- **Explain how these challenges affect/may affect the robustness, reliability and comparability of any findings, and the degree to which findings should therefore be caveated.**

As indicated within the main report, with one exception, none of these challenges impacted the robustness, reliability or comparability of any findings from the Endline Evaluation. The exception is the small sample of Empowerment Plan collected. The report provides additional information about this limitation. The evaluation team mitigated the limitation through detailed description of challenges and careful application of findings from the analysis of the available plans.

- **Describe how participant attrition potentially affected results. Include a description of the characteristics and Baseline learning levels of the girls in the Baseline sample that dropped out of the programme or were unable to be located in future evaluation points.**

The quantitative sample design aimed to maintain a representative proportion of interviewed beneficiaries from each district by selecting a number of communities for the sample that was proportional to the number of communities in that district that were part of the project. In addition, all analysis (unless otherwise noted) is weighted to ensure representativeness by sample. The only significant deviation from this plan took place at Baseline in Tonkolili, where there was a Lhasa outbreak in the middle of collection. A full analysis can be found in the Baseline report.

*Annex Table 2.1: Sample by District*

District	Baseline sample (n)	Midterm sample (n)	Endline Sample (n)	Baseline sample (%)	Midterm sample (%)	Endline Sample (%)
<i>Total</i>	<b>2,073</b>	<b>2,262</b>	<b>1,625<sup>88</sup></b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Bo	237	249	172	11.4%	11.0%	10.6%
Kailahun	210	232	188	10.1%	10.3%	11.6%
Kambia	209	221	155	10.1%	9.8%	9.5%
Kenema	211	269	174	10.2%	11.9%	10.7%

<sup>88</sup> One caregiver record did not include a recorded district, resulting in the total observations more than the sum of the districts.

Koinadugu	209	200	157	10.1%	8.8%	9.7%
Kono	208	214	154	10.0%	9.5%	9.5%
Port Loko	226	233	154	10.9%	10.3%	9.5%
Pujehun	212	213	167	10.2%	9.4%	10.3%
Tonkolili	134	214	166	6.5%	9.5%	10.2%
WAU	206	206	137	9.9%	9.1%	8.4%

Of all 1,625 Endline observations<sup>89</sup>, 1,331 were successfully matched to Midterm observations, and 854 were successfully matched to Baseline observations. While attrition is typically assumed to be the result of beneficiaries dropping out of the programme, it is measured by how successful unique records can be matched to each other. Attrition is estimated as the percentage of the sample from one evaluation point that can be matched to another evaluation point.<sup>90</sup> However, several challenges made this difficult. Baseline records did not include unique identifiers, so they had to be generated by the evaluator. At Midterm, the CCU provided new beneficiary lists for to use for the sample, but those lists did not contain unique identifiers that could match to the original Baseline sample: furthermore, the names of several Safe Spaces (especially in Port Loko) were changed, making matching a challenge. As a result, evaluator records often included duplicate records for a single person: if an evaluator selected a record with the same name but a different beneficiary code, they would result in a mismatch. This was further complicated by the fact that many beneficiaries have similar or identical names, and name spelling often varied. As a result, attrition rates are often overestimated in certain districts. For example, in Port Loko, where Safe Space names were changed, attrition between Baseline and Endline is estimated at 81.2 percent between Baseline and Endline: in reality, this is likely due to an inability to reconcile conflicting record sources. In comparison, estimated attrition in Koinadugu is only 9.4 percent. Since Midterm and Endline did not require reconciling with a new unmatched beneficiary list, attrition levels are substantially lower. Overall attrition rates leveled at 18.0 percent – that is, 82.0 percent of Endline observations could be matched to their Midterm data. However, this number is driven up primarily by persistent challenges matching Port Loko data.

*Annex Table 2.2: Estimated Attrition based on matching*

District	Baseline-Midterm Attrition	Baseline-Endline Attrition	Midterm-Endline Attrition
<b>Total</b>	<b>31.6%</b>	<b>52.6%</b>	<b>18.0%</b>
<b>Bo</b>	13.1%	32.0%	4.1%
<b>Kailahun</b>	23.8%	20.0%	1.6%
<b>Kambia</b>	20.6%	52.4%	34.2%
<b>Kenema</b>	36.0%	43.0%	3.4%
<b>Koinadugu</b>	49.3%	9.4%	14.6%
<b>Kono</b>	22.1%	46.3%	25.3%

<sup>89</sup> Total observations include complete observations (including a girls combined survey and a caregiver survey) and partial observations (either a girls combined or caregiver survey). See the section on Pre-data Collection.

<sup>90</sup> Attrition between Baseline and Midterm is calculated as the percent of Baseline that was successfully recontacted at Midterm. Because the Endline sample size is 30 percent smaller, attrition to Endline is calculated as the percentage of Endline respondents that were interviewed at a previous evaluation point.

<b>Port Loko</b>	24.8%	81.2%	63.0%
<b>Pujehun</b>	31.6%	26.9%	7.8%
<b>Tonkolili</b>	21.6%	31.4%	18.1%
<b>WAU</b>	69.4%	41.3%	16.1%

Age distributions (See Annex Table 2.3) follow predictable patterns between evaluation points: each evaluation point is roughly one year after the previous. Unsurprisingly, the average age increases from 15.8 at Baseline to 16.7 at Midterm and 17.7 at Endline. While random selection did not stratify by age, the Cohort appears to be represented similarly at each evaluation point.

*Annex Table 2.3: Evaluation sample breakdown by age*

	Observations (N)			Percent of Sample		
	Baseline	Midterm	Endline	Baseline	Midterm	Endline
<b>Aged &lt;10 (n)</b>	0	1	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Aged 10-11 (n)</b>	63	6	4	3.0%	0.3%	0.2%
<b>Aged 12-13 (n)</b>	143	92	30	6.9%	4.1%	1.9%
<b>Aged 14-15 (n)</b>	438	322	140	21.1%	14.2%	8.7%
<b>Aged 16-17 (n)</b>	1378	1192	548	66.5%	52.7%	34.0%
<b>Aged 18-19 (n)</b>	46	503	631	2.2%	22.2%	39.1%
<b>Aged 20 or more (n)</b>	1	93	258	0.0%	4.1%	16.0%
<b>Age unknown</b>	4	53	1	0.2%	2.3%	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,073</b>	<b>2,262</b>	<b>1,612</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

A description of disability data and potential causes for lower levels at Endline can be found near the beginning of the Relevance Section of the report.

*Annex Table 2.4: Evaluation sample breakdown by disability status*

		Baseline		Midterm		Endline	
		%	N	%	N	%	N
	<b>Girls with at least one disability</b>	14.6%	296	10.9%	241	8.13%	131
	One Domain	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7.07%	114
	Multiple Domains	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.05%	17
	One Subdomain	9.2%	187	7.0%	159	3.41%	55
	Multiple Subdomains	5.4%	109	3.6%	82	4.71%	76
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Subdomain</b>						
<b>Seeing</b>	Difficulty seeing	0.8%	16	0.1%	2	0.81%	13
<b>Hearing</b>	Difficulty hearing	0.7%	14	0.8%	17	0.74%	12



<b>Walking</b>	Difficulty walking or climbing steps	0.9%	19	0.7%	15	1.05%	17
<b>Cognitive</b>	Overall Cognitive	4.8%	102	4.2%	95	2.48%	40
	Difficulty with self-care	0.3%	7	1.5%	33	1.12%	18
	Difficulty with communication	0.5%	11	0.4%	8	0.68%	11
	Difficulty learning	1.7%	34	1.1%	24	0.81%	13
	Difficulty remembering	1.7%	34	0.9%	20	0.74%	12
	Difficulty concentrating	1.0%	19	0.5%	11	0.81%	13
	Difficulty accepting change	1.4%	28	1.4%	30	0.87%	14
	Difficulty in behaviour	1.1%	21	0.2%	5	0.62%	10
	Difficulty making friends	1.7%	33	0.5%	12	0.56%	9
	Overall Psycho-social	8.5%	180	6.3%	140	5.09%	82
<b>Psycho-social</b>	Anxiety	7.3%	142	4.0%	89	4.53%	73
	Depression	4.9%	96	4.2%	93	3.91%	63

*Table 42: Sources of Disability Calculation*

<b>WG Child subdomain</b>	<b>Indicator Variable</b>	<b>Calculated from Variable(s):</b>
Difficulty seeing	ggdis2seeing	wgcf2 wgcf3
Difficulty hearing	ggdis3hearing	wgcf5 wgcf6
Difficulty walking or climbing steps	ggdis4walking	wgcf8 wgcf9 wgcf10 wgcf11 wgcf12 wgcf13
Difficulty with self-care	ggdis5selfcare	wgcf14
Difficulty with communication	ggdis6communication	wgcf15 wgcf16
Difficulty learning	ggdis7learning	wgcf17
Difficulty remembering	ggdis8remembering	wgcf18
Difficulty concentrating	ggdis9concentrating	wgcf19
Difficulty accepting change	ggdis10acceptingchange	wgcf20
Difficulty in behaviour	ggdis11behavior	wgcf21
Difficulty making friends	ggdis12makingfriends	wgcf22

Anxiety (feeling anxious)	ggdis13anxiety	wgcf23
Depression	ggdis14depression	wgcf24
One Disability	ggonedisability	
Multiple Disabilities	ggmultidisability	

All disability questions were asked as part of the Washington Group questions in the Girls' Combined Survey.

### Annex 3: Characteristics and barriers

Annex Table 3.1: Evaluation sample breakdown by characteristic sub-group

	Sample Size (N)			Proportion of Sample (%)			Variable Name
	Baseline	Midterm	Endline	Baseline	Midterm	Endline	
<b>Beneficiaries with Disabilities Overall</b>	296	241	131	14.6%	10.9%	8.1%	ggdis0all
<b>Under 15 at Baseline</b>	399	421	349	15.9%	19.1%	21.7%	ggagegrp1
<b>15 to 16 at Baseline</b>	1,140	1192	717	40.0%	54.0%	44.5%	ggagegrp2
<b>17 or more at Baseline</b>	581	596	545	44.1%	27.0%	33.8%	ggagegrp3
<b>Orphan</b>	870	901	673	63.4%	63.5%	41.7%	ggorphan
<b>Married</b>	943	977	878	44.1%	43.2%	54.5%	ggmarried
<b>Has Children</b>	1,373	1,426	1103	57.5%	64.3%	68.4%	ggmother
<b>Pregnant</b>	N/A	176	166	N/A	7.9%	10.3%	ggpregnant

Annex Table 3.2: Evaluation sample breakdown by barrier

	Sample Size (N)			Proportion of Sample (%)			Variable Name
	Baseline	Midterm	Endline	Baseline	Midterm	Endline	
<b>Works</b>	712	1,454	1397	38.8%	65.6%	86.7%	ggwork
<b>Owens Business</b>	625	1,145	1289	34.0%	51.6%	80.0%	ggownbusiness
<b>Work: Farming</b>	919	642	687	47.4%	29.0%	42.6%	ggwfarm
<b>Work: Petty Trading</b>	N/A	1,032	1238	N/A	46.5%	76.8%	ggwtrade
<b>Chore Burden</b>	868	293	370	41.0%	13.3%	23.0%	ggchoreburden
<b>Impoverished</b>	874	716	551	43.1%	32.4%	34.4%	ggpoor
<b>Food Insecure</b>	914	187	421	45.5%	24.4%	26.3%	gghungry

<b>Beneficiary is Head of Household</b>	181	98	N/A	9.2%	4.4%	N/A	ggownhoh
<b>Beneficiary is own Caregiver</b>	124	302	1288	6.3%	13.7%	79.9%	ggowncaregiver
<b>Low Caregiver Support</b>	134	222	108	6.3%	9.8%	6.7%	gglowsupport

The intersectionality table below (Annex Table 3.3) is best read as the percentage of the column group that is in the row group. For example, 18.3 percent of beneficiaries with a disability are under the age of 17. Conversely, 6.9 percent of beneficiaries under 17 have a disability. Asterisks denote when there is a statistically significant difference of prevalence of characteristic (row) by sub-group (column). For example, overall, 10.2 percent of respondents were pregnant. Only 4.3 percent of respondents under 17 were pregnant, which is significantly lower than the pregnancy rate among those who are 17 or older. Tests were proportion tests of equality at the 95 percent confidence interval with Bonferroni corrections applied.

*Annex Table 3.3: Evaluation sample intersectionality between sub-groups and barriers*

	Overall	Disability	Under 17	17 to 18	19 or More	Orphan	Married
<b>Disability</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	X	6.9%	8.9%	7.9%	5.8%	6.2%
<b>Under 17</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	18.3%	X	X	X	16.2%	10.9%*
<b>Age 17 to 18</b>	<b>44.5%</b>	48.9%	X	X	X	41.0%	46.4%
<b>Over 18</b>	<b>33.8%</b>	32.8%	X	X	X	42.8%	42.6%*
<b>Orphan</b>	<b>67.0%</b>	50.6%	64.3%	63.7%	72.0%	X	78.0%*
<b>Married</b>	<b>54.0%</b>	41.2%	27.5%*	56.8%	68.6%*	71.6%*	X
<b>Has Children</b>	<b>67.9%</b>	55.7%	32.4%*	71.1%	87.9%*	78.0%*	91.7%*
<b>Pregnant</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	14.5%	4.3%*	10.3%	14.1%	14.0%	15.8%*
<b>Working</b>	<b>86.0%</b>	66.4%*	78.5%*	87.0%	91.4%*	88.3%	91.5%*
<b>Owns Business</b>	<b>79.3%</b>	58.8%*	67.6%*	81.3%	86.1%*	81.7%	88.0%*
<b>Work: Farming</b>	<b>49.2%</b>	34.5%	49.6%	50.6%	47.0%	43.6%	56.8%*
<b>Work: Petty Trade</b>	<b>88.6%</b>	89.7%	91.6%	89.1%	86.3%	94.4%*	88.4%
<b>High Chore Burden</b>	<b>22.8%</b>	32.1%	23.2%	28.5%*	15.6%*	9.8%*	24.4%
<b>Impoverished</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	31.7%	34.7%	37.9%	30.4%	23.7%*	32.5%
<b>Food Insecure</b>	<b>26.5%</b>	17.5%	28.6%	29.0%	21.9%	19.4%*	26.9%
<b>Own Caregiver</b>	<b>80.6%</b>	84.8%	81.4%	83.5%	76.2%	81.8%	82.8%
<b>Low Caregiver Support</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	4.6%	4.3%	4.5%	10.8%	9.7%	8.1%

Annex Table 3.3: Evaluation sample intersectionality between sub-groups and barriers, continued

	Overall	Has Children	Pregnant	Works	Owens Business	Work: Farming	Work: Petty Trading
<b>Disability</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	6.6%	11.4%	6.2%*	6.0%*	4.4%	6.3%
<b>Under 17</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	10.3%*	9.0%*	19.6%*	18.3%*	19.8%	20.3%
<b>Age 17 to 18</b>	<b>44.5%</b>	46.3%	44.6%	44.7%	45.3%	46.1%	44.9%
<b>Over 18</b>	<b>33.8%</b>	43.5%*	46.4%	35.7%*	36.4%*	34.1%	34.8%
<b>Orphan</b>	<b>67.0%</b>	70.2%*	79.7%	67.3%	66.8%	66.9%	69.5%*
<b>Married</b>	<b>54.0%</b>	73.0%*	83.7%*	57.5%*	60.0%*	66.4%*	57.4%
<b>Has Children</b>	<b>67.9%</b>	X	83.7%*	72.7%*	74.6%*	75.0%	73.3%
<b>Pregnant</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	12.6%*	X	10.6%	10.9%	12.2%	10.9%
<b>Working</b>	<b>86.0%</b>	92.0%*	89.2%	X	100.0%*	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Owens Business</b>	<b>79.3%</b>	87.1%*	84.9%	92.3%*	X	94.0%	92.3%
<b>Work: Farming</b>	<b>49.2%</b>	50.7%	56.8%	49.2%	50.1%	X	44.7%*
<b>Work: Petty Trade</b>	<b>88.6%</b>	89.5%	91.2%	88.6%	88.7%	80.5%*	X
<b>High Chore Burden</b>	<b>22.8%</b>	23.9%	29.5%	23.5%	25.1%*	34.8%*	20.8%*
<b>Impoverished</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	33.8%	32.7%	36.4%*	37.9%*	42.0%*	34.4%*
<b>Food Insecure</b>	<b>26.5%</b>	26.2%	27.2%	27.7%	29.0%*	31.4%	26.1%
<b>Own Caregiver</b>	<b>80.6%</b>	81.1%	81.1%	80.1%	80.6%	85.4%*	79.0%
<b>Low Caregiver Support</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	7.3%	9.0%	6.6%	6.9%	7.3%	6.6%

Annex Table 3.3: Evaluation sample intersectionality between sub-groups and barriers, continued

	Overall	Chore Burden	Impoverished	Food Insecure	Beneficiary is own Caregiver	Low Caregiver Support
<b>Disability</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	11.4%	7.3%	5.3%	8.3%	5.6%
<b>Under 17</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	21.9%	21.7%	23.4%	21.9%	14.2%
<b>Age 17 to 18</b>	<b>44.5%</b>	55.1%*	48.8%	48.8%	46.3%	30.2%
<b>Over 18</b>	<b>33.8%</b>	23.0%*	29.5%	27.8%	31.8%	55.7%*
<b>Orphan</b>	<b>67.0%</b>	47.5%*	50.0%*	53.5%*	67.2%	80.2%
<b>Married</b>	<b>54.0%</b>	57.8%	51.2%	55.3%	55.7%	65.7%
<b>Has Children</b>	<b>67.9%</b>	71.4%	66.4%	67.0%	68.1%	74.1%
<b>Pregnant</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	13.2%	9.8%	10.5%	10.3%	13.9%
<b>Working</b>	<b>86.0%</b>	88.6%	90.9%*	90.0%	85.6%	85.2%
<b>Owns Business</b>	<b>79.3%</b>	87.6%*	87.3%*	86.9%*	79.5%	82.4%
<b>Work: Farming</b>	<b>49.2%</b>	72.9%*	56.7%*	55.7%	52.4%*	54.3%
<b>Work: Petty Trade</b>	<b>88.6%</b>	78.4%*	83.6%*	83.4%	87.3%	89.1%
<b>High Chore Burden</b>	<b>22.8%</b>	X	33.9%*	30.6%*	20.2%*	20.4%
<b>Impoverished</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	52.2%*	X	76.8%*	41.2%*	37.0%
<b>Food Insecure</b>	<b>26.5%</b>	36.1%*	58.3%*	X	30.1%*	31.5%
<b>Own Caregiver</b>	<b>80.6%</b>	72.4%*	96.2%*	91.7%*	X	86.1%
<b>Low Caregiver Support</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	5.9%	7.3%	8.1%	7.2%	X

#### **Annex 4: Logframe**

The logframe for the EAGER programme has been included as a separate document. Please note that the logframe used at the Endline Evaluation was a revised version from the logframe used at Midterm and Baseline Evaluations. The logframe was updated during the Midterm Evaluation. The EE is unaware of any external targets added since the Midterm.

## Annex 5: Beneficiaries tables

### Project guidance

Please provide cumulative numbers of direct and indirect beneficiaries by Cohort that the project has reached. The data for these tables should come from the Total Reach tab on your project’s quarterly workplan tracker. Please report the **unique** total beneficiaries reached without double counting beneficiaries reached over multiple quarters. Do not simply add up reach totals across your quarterly workplan reporting.

Tables should include details for all Cohorts and Cohort types that the project has and is reaching—for example, formal track and nonformal track. Please add on row(s) as needed for disaggregating by Cohort *type* and Cohort *number*.

Annex Table 6.1: Direct beneficiaries

	Learners			HT/Teachers/other “educators”			MoE/District/ Govn’t staff			Parents/ caregivers			Community members		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
[Cohort 1]	7,088	0	7,088	600	345	945	-	-	-	2,753	-	2,753	3,939	3,108	7,047

Annex Table 6.2: Indirect beneficiaries

	Learners			HT/Teachers/other “educators”			MoE/District/ Govn’t staff			Parents/ caregivers			Community members		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
[Cohort 1]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

### Project guidance

Please provide the cumulative numbers of direct beneficiaries reached by intervention/activity type. Disaggregate direct beneficiaries by gender. You might report the same beneficiary in multiple interventions/activities if your project is targeting multiple interventions/activities to each girl. However, do not double count beneficiaries in the total and do not simply add up beneficiaries across interventions/activities. The total direct beneficiaries reported in this table should be the same as in Table 6.1.

Tables should include details for all Cohorts and Cohort types that the project has and is reaching—for example, formal track and nonformal track. Please add on row(s) as needed for disaggregating by Cohort *type* and Cohort *number*.

Please update the table with your project’s specific interventions/activities and add columns as needed.



Annex Table 6.3: Direct beneficiaries by intervention/activity

	Intervention/activity						Total
	Enrolment	Life Skills Sessions	BLN Sessions	Menstrual Hygiene Distribution	C-19 Hygiene Promotion	Financial Literacy Sessions	
[Cohort girls] 1 -	7,432	7,432	7,432	7,235	7,432	7,088	
[Cohort boys] 1 -	-	-	-	-	-	-	

## **Annex 6: External Evaluator's Inception Report**

The Inception Memo has been submitted as a separate document as requested.

## Annex 7: Quantitative and qualitative data collection tools used for Endline

Consent language is included in all of the tools at the beginning of each tool for quantitative tools, and for qualitative tools there is a packet of Consent Forms submitted as a separate attachment along with the tools. The tools and consent forms have been submitted separate files as requested.

Tool	Qualitative/ Quantitative	Data use and Data Access requirements
Girls Combined Survey tool	Quantitative	Data collected will be stored and may be used for future studies but never connected with respondent's name. Data may be important for designing future studies and helping other girls in Sierra Leone and elsewhere. Any information used in reporting on this study will be presented in a way that it cannot be associated with respondent's name
Survey with Head of Households and caregivers	Quantitative	Data collected will be stored and may be used for future studies but never connected with respondent's name. Data may be important for designing future studies and helping other girls in Sierra Leone and elsewhere.
Key Informant Interview Guide-Beneficiary Girls	Qualitative	Any information used in reporting for the Endline study will be presented in a way that it cannot be associated with respondent's name. It also will not be possible to connect respondent's comments to their participation or impact their participation in the EAGER project. Data collected will be stored and may be used for future studies but never connected to respondent. This information may be important for designing future studies and helping other girls in Sierra Leone and elsewhere. Picture of the data collection activities may be taken, but picture will be professional and respectful and used only in reporting. They may be stored and used in the future. Respondent name will not be associated with the picture.
Key Informant Interview Guide-Partners of girls	Qualitative	Any information used in reporting for the Endline study will be presented in a way that it cannot be associated with respondent's name. It also will not be possible to connect respondent's comments to their participation or impact their participation in the EAGER project. Data collected will be stored and may be used for future studies but never connected to respondent. This information may be important for designing future studies and helping other girls in Sierra Leone and elsewhere. Picture of the data collection activities may be taken, but picture will be professional and respectful and used only in reporting. They may be stored and used in the future. Respondent name will not be associated with the picture.
Key Informant Interview Guide-Local Councillors	Qualitative	Any information used in reporting on this Endline study will be presented in a way that it cannot be associated with respondent's name. Respondent comments will not affect any girl's participation in EAGER activities. Data collected will be stored and may be used for future studies but never connected to respondent. This information may be

		important for designing future studies and helping other girls in Sierra Leone and elsewhere. Pictures of the data collection activities may be taken, but picture will be professional and respectful and used only in reporting. They may be stored and used in the future. Respondent name will not be associated with the picture
Key Informant Interview Guide- LBS Mentors	Qualitative	Any information used in reporting on this Endline study will be presented in a way that it cannot be associated respondent's name. Respondent comments will not affect any girl's participation in EAGER activities. Data collected will be stored and may be used for future studies but never connected to respondent. This information may be important for designing future studies and helping other girls in Sierra Leone and elsewhere. Pictures of the data collection activities may be taken, but picture will be professional and respectful and used only in reporting. They may be stored and used in the future. Respondent name will not be associated with the picture
Key Informant Interview Guide- EAGER Leadership	Qualitative	Any information used in reporting on this Endline study will be presented in a way that it cannot be associated respondent's name. Respondent comments will not affect any girl's participation in EAGER activities. Data collected will be stored and may be used for future studies but never connected to respondent. This information may be important for designing future studies and helping other girls in Sierra Leone and elsewhere. Pictures of the data collection activities may be taken, but picture will be professional and respectful and used only in reporting. They may be stored and used in the future. Respondent name will not be associated with the picture
Key Informant Interview Guide- National Government	Qualitative	Any information used in reporting on this Endline study will be presented in a way that it cannot be associated respondent's name. Respondent comments will not affect any girl's participation in EAGER activities. Data collected will be stored and may be used for future studies but never connected to respondent. This information may be important for designing future studies and helping other girls in Sierra Leone and elsewhere. Pictures of the data collection activities may be taken, but picture will be professional and respectful and used only in reporting. They may be stored and used in the future. Respondent name will not be associated with the picture
FGD guide- Beneficiary Girls	Qualitative	Any information used in reporting on the Endline study will be presented in a way that it cannot be associated with respondent's name. It also will not be possible to connect respondent's comments to their participation or impact their participation in the EAGER project. Data collected will be stored and may be used for future studies but never connected to respondent. This information may be important for designing future studies and helping other girls in Sierra Leone and elsewhere. Pictures of the data collection activities may be taken, but picture will be

		professional and respectful and used only in reporting. They may be stored and used in the future. Respondent name will not be associated with the picture.
FGD guide- Caregivers (mothers and fathers)	Qualitative	Any information used in reporting on this Endline study will be presented in a way that it cannot be associated with respondent's name. Respondent's comments will not affect any girls' participation in EAGER activities. Data collected will be stored and may be used for future studies but never connected to respondent. This information may be important for designing future studies and helping other girls in Sierra Leone and elsewhere. Pictures of the data collection activities may be taken, but picture will be professional and respectful and used only in reporting. They may be stored and used in the future. Respondent name will not be associated with the picture.
KII guide- Boys	Qualitative	Any information used in reporting on this Endline study will be presented in a way that it cannot be associated respondent's name. Respondent comments will not affect any girl's participation in EAGER activities. Data collected will be stored and may be used for future studies but never connected to respondent. This information may be important for designing future studies and helping other girls in Sierra Leone and elsewhere. Pictures of the data collection activities may be taken, but picture will be professional and respectful and used only in reporting. They may be stored and used in the future. Respondent name will not be associated with the picture
FGD guide- Community Leaders	Qualitative	Any information used in reporting on this Endline study will be presented in a way that it cannot be associated respondent's name. Respondent comments will not affect any girl's participation in EAGER activities. Data collected will be stored and may be used for future studies but never connected to respondent. This information may be important for designing future studies and helping other girls in Sierra Leone and elsewhere. Pictures of the data collection activities may be taken, but picture will be professional and respectful and used only in reporting. They may be stored and used in the future. Respondent name will not be associated with the picture
Key Informant Interview Guide- Fund Manager/FCDO Sierra Leone office	Qualitative	Any information used in reporting on this Endline study will be presented in a way that it cannot be associated respondent's name. Respondent comments will not affect any girl's participation in EAGER activities. Data collected will be stored and may be used for future studies but never connected to respondent. This information may be important for designing future studies and helping other girls in Sierra Leone and elsewhere. Pictures of the data collection activities may be taken, but picture will be professional and respectful and used only in reporting. They may be stored and used in the future. Respondent name will not be associated with the picture

Data collection checklist	Qualitative	Not applicable – no consent process
FGD and KII cover sheets	Qualitative	Not applicable – no consent process

## **Annex 8: Qualitative transcripts**

Three Qualitative transcripts have been included as separate attachments.

## **Annex 9: Quantitative datasets, codebooks and programmes**

The Quantitative data sets and codebooks are included as separate attachments.



## **Annex 10: Quantitative sampling framework**

The quantitative sampling framework has been included as a separate attachment.

## **Annex 11: External Evaluator declaration**

Name of Project: Endline Evaluation of the Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient programme

**Name of External Evaluator:** IMC Worldwide

**Contact Information for External Evaluator:**

Alexandra Cervini Mull, Managing Associate at IMC Worldwide,  
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Arlington, VA 22209 USA

**Names of all members of the evaluation team:**

Karla Giuliano Sarr  
Andrew Trembley  
Gwen Heaner  
Alexandra Cervini Mull

Alexandra Cervini Mull certify that the independent evaluation has been conducted in line with the Terms of Reference and other requirements received.

The following conditions apply to the data collection and analysis presented in the Midterm report:

Quantitative and Qualitative data were collected independently by the EE and quantitative and qualitative data were provided by the project for analysis (Initials: ACM)

The data analysis conducted independently by the EE and provides a fair and consistent representation of findings (Initials: ACM)

Data quality assurance and verification mechanisms agreed in the terms of reference with the project have been soundly followed (Initials: ACM)

The recipient has not fundamentally altered or misrepresented the nature of the analysis originally provided by IMC Worldwide (Company) (Initials: ACM)

All child protection protocols and guidance have been followed (Initials: ACM)

Data has been anonymised, treated confidentially and stored safely, in line with the GEC data protection and ethics protocols (Initials: ACM)

Alexandra Cervini Mull

(Name)

IMC Worldwide

(Company)

May 20, 2022

(Date)

## **Annex 12: Midterm Report**

The Midterm Report has been submitted as a separate document as requested.