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REPORT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The Center for Evaluation and Development (C4ED) is conducting the Knowledge Management Study (KM Study) on the programme *Improving Adolescents' Lives in South Asia*, launched by the Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP) section in the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA). At the country level, implementation of the UNICEF *Improving Adolescents' Lives in Pakistan* (IALP) programme was commenced in November 2016. Building on UNICEF's existing work as well as government initiatives in the area, a range of project activities in Sindh and Punjab provinces were initiated, including but not limited to the formation of adolescent groups, trainings for influential community members and the provision of alternative learning opportunities. As part of the KM Study, the research team conducted the Pakistan Country Study, which spanned from June 2018 until April 2019. The field mission was conducted in October 2018.

The main objective of this study was to document evidence, lessons learned, and good practices from the partners and communities in Pakistan that have worked with UNICEF. It assessed the effectiveness of selected interventions supported by the UNICEF Child Protection, Communication for Development (C4D) and Education Sections to improve adolescent lives and well-being, their self-empowerment, and their participation in Pakistan society. This report presents findings from the Pakistan Country Study.

The study aimed to review the following research questions according to three intervention domains defined by UNICEF:

Domain 1: Adolescent participation and empowerment	a)	What was the outreach of the interventions to the adolescents?
	b)	How effective were the adolescent groups at reinforcing peer learning among adolescents?
	c)	How gender-responsive were the adolescent groups and the Life Skills Training based on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit?
	d)	How did these interventions influence change in knowledge, social and gender norms among the concerned adolescents?
	e)	How effective were these interventions in increasing the empowerment and participation of the adolescents?
Domain 2: Enabling environment for adolescents	a)	What was the outreach of the training for Key Community Influencers?
	b)	How effective was the Key Community Influencers training aiming to engage influencers to increase their awareness and knowledge about social and gender norms?
	c)	How did the Key Community Influencers engage parents and the community to challenge harmful social and gender norms and promote child rights?
	d)	What was the outreach of the Community Intergenerational Dialogues and other community-based media campaign activities?
	e)	How did a gender-responsive community-based media campaign influence adolescent participation and empowerment?
	f)	How effective was the community-based media campaign to engage parents and community members to challenge harmful social and gender norms and promote child rights?
	a)	What was the outreach of the Alternative Learning Programme?

Domain 3: Service provision for adolescents / hard-to-reach adolescents	<p>b) How effective was the Alternative Learning Programme in delivering adolescent-oriented services and providing them with quality education?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How effective and appropriate was the Alternative Learning Programme in taking into account adolescents' needs and delivering adolescent-oriented services? - How effective was the Alternative Learning Programme in providing adolescents with quality education?
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Background

More than one-fifth of the total population of Pakistan is between the ages of 10 and 19. Given the importance of this cohort and the needs that are specific to this age group, adolescents are a specific target group for national policies. While the goal of universal primary education is close to being achieved, adolescents, especially girls, face several additional challenges. Child marriage and other harmful social practices remain predominant and need to be addressed holistically. According to the Multiple Indicator Survey 2014 (Sindh Bureau of Statistics 2015; Punjab Bureau of Statistics 2015), 16.3% of girls aged 15-19 in Sindh and 9.2% of girls aged 15-19 in Punjab are currently married or engaged. Gender discrimination and disrupted access to health services are additional hurdles that both girls and boys face. The studied interventions that UNICEF supports seeks to eradicate these issues and promote the empowerment and participation of adolescents as agents of change. The studied interventions are the adolescent groups, the Life Skills Training (LST) based on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit, the training for Key Community Influencers (KCIs), the community-based media campaigns, the community intergenerational dialogues and the Alternative Learning Programme (ALP).

Methodology

This mixed-methods study employed mainly qualitative methods from the social sciences, complemented by a quantitative survey and a review of secondary data and documents.

Primary qualitative data was collected during field visits in Islamabad and in the implementation districts of Punjab and Sindh through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). In total, 30 adolescents who were receiving at least one of the *Improving Adolescent Lives* interventions covered by the KM Study were interviewed. Data was also collected from adults during IDIs with nine parents of adolescent beneficiaries and seven KCIs, two ALP teachers, as well as during eight FGDs with 59 community members. In addition, KIIs took place with the UNICEF and NGO staff as well as with the ministries' representatives involved in the design, planning and implementation of the *Improving Adolescent Lives* interventions, both at country and field level, in the Punjab and Sindh provinces. This study is mainly based on the analysis of 76 interviews or FGDs with 135 beneficiaries and/or key partners of the programme. A short quantitative tablet-based survey was also administered to 42 adolescents, including 23 girls and 19 boys who took part in the qualitative interviews. Furthermore, the research team conducted a desk review of documents as well as secondary data at both global and country levels. The researchers used the primary and secondary data sources to derive and triangulate the findings.

Main findings

Peer-learning

The adolescent group and the LST based on the Empowerment Toolkit were implemented following a peer-to-peer model whereby trained adolescent champions deliver the training to other adolescents, who were adolescent group members, but also peers from their community and nearby villages. These peer-to-peer learning sessions, called Trickle-Down sessions, were meant to reach out to a greater number of adolescents and deliver to them the learnings of the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit in a friendly way. The adolescent female and male members of the adolescent groups were satisfied with learning from an adolescent champion, who they felt was able to share information easily. Each adolescent group member was made responsible for trickling down the training with twenty community adolescents. At the time of the data collection, little qualitative evidence could support whether the targeted number of peers had been reached. As a consequence, it is recommended to introduce third-party monitoring and to increase efforts to track adolescents' participation, for instance, with the help of attendance sheets.

Strengthened participation and empowerment

The LST based on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit contributed to confirming positive attitudes and increasing knowledge among adolescents who took part in the Master LST and became champions (or leaders), as well as those who were peer-trained during the Trickle-Down sessions at the adolescent group.

The adolescents who participated in the LST and in the adolescent groups reported an increase in knowledge not only concerning their rights, but also their identity as adolescents. Moreover, the adolescents reported being confident in making both every day and future planning decisions. Adolescents noted the positive changes they perceived in talking with their parents, in particular their mothers and siblings. Challenges were reported about approaching fathers and to some extent motivating friends.

The comparison between Sindh, where the intervention had been rolled out for several months and Punjab, where the intervention has been stopped and only resumed around the time of the data collection period, allowed the research team to capture possible trends that signal positive change. The findings indicated that the adolescents' exposure to the adolescent group could bring about more specific knowledge about child rights and confirm positive attitudes about them, for example the disapproval of child marriage. Nonetheless, traditional gender roles were still strongly espoused by adolescent boys and girls.

The requirement in Sindh of having literacy skills, in order to take part in the Master LST to become champions, has excluded adolescents with low literacy from being trained and taking on this role. In Punjab, the training material was adapted to allow adolescents with low literacy to become champions. Nonetheless, at the time of the field mission, limited master training had taken place in Punjab and therefore no adolescent champions with low literacy were observed by the research team. In order to ensure that hard-to-reach adolescents also have access to the intervention, the eligibility criteria used when recruiting adolescent champions and adolescent group members may have to be adapted.

Shifting social and gender norms: perceptions, knowledge and behavioural changes

The adolescent groups were designed in a gender-sensitive way to provide a safe environment, and the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit conceived in a gender-neutral way to address the needs of both adolescent boys and girls. The adolescent girls and boys between the age of 11 and 18 met by the research team, who were members of the adolescent group or had received the LST as champions, reported being more aware and knowledgeable about their rights. Notably, in Sindh, adolescents mainly reported having learnt about the harm associated with child marriage for the first time in the adolescent groups. Some adolescents revealed having promoted new ideas and practices in favour of education or against child marriage within their family, and among peers.

Due to the relatively short time-exposure to the programme, especially in Punjab where activities had only just resumed at the time of the field data collection, few instances of actions in favour of adolescents or against harmful practices, notably child marriage, were reported by adolescents. Only a few had mobilised to denounce such practices, irrespective of the relatively short programme implementation period. In order to create an effective and sustainable change of social and gender norms and practices, however, the further engagement of parents, in particular fathers, with parental training and information sessions, needs to be contemplated.

Creating an enabling environment for adolescent development: changing minds and attitudes among parents and influencers, increasing intergenerational dialogue and confidence

The training for KCIs sensitised them to the challenges faced by adolescents, especially girls, in their communities. As a result of the training, the KCIs reported an increase in their level of awareness of certain gender-related social norms and practices, particularly child marriage. Gender trends appeared regarding the dissemination of the training's learnings in the community: Whereas male KCIs were able to reach out to a wider audience, female KCIs' outreach was mostly restricted to household members and relatives. Overall, the community's response to the KCIs' engagement seemed to be positive, according to community members met during FGDs. They however noted that, messages denouncing unequal treatment of girls and boys faced some resistance, especially among male community members. The KCI trainings should be followed up with additional capacity building that deepen KCI's knowledge on child protection issues and allow for additional skill development, especially in the area of community mobilisation.

The community-based media campaign was implemented in Sindh at the time of the KM field mission. The campaign included street theatre performances, local event news coverage through text messages and the distribution of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials. Both male and female respondents stated that they trusted the information disseminated as part of the community-based media campaign. Participation in the activities increased the community members' awareness of and knowledge on child protection issues. In line with street theatre performances' popularity among study participants and their accessibility to both literate and illiterate individuals, it is recommended to further expand this intervention.

The Intergenerational Dialogues (IGDs) held in Sindh at Union and district level aimed to engage both adolescents and the older generations in open discussions about adolescents' issues and concerns. Moreover, the IGDs constituted a platform for adolescent champions and KCIs to share their learnings from the programme with the wider community. According to study participants' testimonies however, the active involvement of young people in the discussions was not always assured. Indeed, some IDI and FGD participants revealed that adolescents were not always considered equal partners in dialogue by the adults. To institutionalise adolescents' role in the chairing of the discussions, the IGDs should be used by adolescent champions to introduce their activities and seek support for their

action plans. Moreover, given their importance for inter-generational communication, the frequency of the gatherings could be increased.

Providing vulnerable adolescents with quality education and adolescent-oriented services through the ALP

Although the ALP was initially designed to address the needs of illiterate adolescent girls exclusively, UNICEF decided to enable access to the intervention for out-of-school boys as well (who constituted roughly 39% of the currently enrolled students in 2018) in response to the requests from the implementation communities. While the future students were approached via multiple community-based channels to encourage them to join the ALP, the KM study was unable to document the existence of a transparent selection process with fair criteria fostering the enrolment of less accessible and privileged adolescents.

The adolescent students and the Non-Formal Education (NFE) teachers interviewed emphasised the flexibility of the ALP, not only in the selection of the students but also in the development of the school timetable, the decision on the location of lessons and the use of learner-centred teaching and learning methods. However, even if those flexible aspects seemed to help the young respondents to reconcile their daily work duties with school, absenteeism and dropouts due to child labour, child marriage or migration remained a challenge. Moreover, holding the class in private homes sometimes implied the absence of toilet facilities which might have affected the gender responsiveness of the programme.

The NFE policy of the Sindh province, adopted in 2017, gave UNICEF and the Indus Resource Centre a collaborative framework for supporting the School Education and Literacy Department (SE&LD) and exploring the possibilities to scale up the ALP throughout the province. While the SE&LD developed the compressed curriculum, the Teaching and Learning Materials and trains the ALP teachers, UNICEF supports the NFE centres with the procurement of school supplies and health kits. Overall, the NFE facilitators interviewed within the KM Study were satisfied with the quality of the materials provided by UNICEF. They nevertheless expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the short duration of the training, the insufficient time allocated to each subject as well as the absence of follow-up sessions. Finally, some limitations in the sustainability of the programme were flagged by key informants, as the NFE students were not provided with certificates, which affected their reintegration into the formal school system. Aware of this challenge, the Sindh authorities indicated however their willingness to issue official certificates to allow an easier transition into the mainstream school system. In addition, it seems that some contextual issues previously addressed by the NFE centres (e.g. school too far away, lack of girls' school, parents not allowing their daughters to leave the village, involvement in labour activities) re-emerged once the primary education of the students is completed, especially for girls. Furthermore, of the three packages of the NFE curriculum, only the components A and B had been delivered to the ALP students at the time of the data collection in October 2018, which posed questions as to whether there will be enough time to deliver the remaining 14-month curriculum part before the end of the implementation phase in 2019.

ALP students' integration into the secondary school system could be furthered if the latter were provided with certificates. Moreover, seeking partnerships with vocational training centres and public schools, that is promoting cooperation across both education streams, is key to ensuring the sustainability of the NFE centres.

ACRONYMS

ALP	Alternative Learning Programme
CO	Community Organisation
C4ED	Center for Evaluation and Development
C4D	Communication for Development
DCAR	Directorate of Curriculum, Assessment and Research
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoP	Government of Pakistan
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IALP	Improving Adolescents' Lives in Pakistan
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDI	In-Depth Interview
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IGD	Intergenerational Dialogue
IRC	Indus Resource Centre
KCI	Key Community Influencers
KII	Key Informant Interview
KM	Knowledge Management
LST	Life Skills Training
LSO	Local Support Organisation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
M&S	Monitoring Information System
MoEPT	Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training
MT	Master Trainer
NFBE	Non-Formal Basic Education
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OOS	Out-Of-School
PCO	Pakistan Country Office
RCT	Randomised Controlled Trial
RSN	Rural Support Network
RSPN	Rural Support Programmes Network
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SE&LD	School Education and Literacy Department
SO	Support Organisation
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRSO	Sindh Rural Support Organisation
TLM	Teaching and Learning Material
ToC	Theory of Change
ToT	Training of Trainers
UC	Union Council
UoM	University of Mannheim
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UN ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNICEF ADAP	UNICEF Adolescent Development and Participation Section
UNICEF ROSA	UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia

VEC	Village Education Committees
VO	Village Organisation
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescence as the age range between 10 and 19 years. It is the transition period between childhood and adulthood characterised by a vast amount of rapid physical, psychological, and physiological changes. This critical stage shapes the foundation of future adult life. Adolescence can be a complex period in an individual's life, which can be accompanied by feelings of disorientation, questions of independence, identity, and relations to peers and significant others. It can also be the time for social discovery and critical decision-making regarding education, work, sexuality, social life, drugs, and alcohol. Therefore, the age of adolescence requires the particular attention of policymakers and should not be overlooked.

Adolescents' experiences vary significantly across countries and regions. In South Asia, the average adolescent has unique characteristics and needs, which also differ by gender. As stated by the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) in the concept note for this Knowledge Management study (KM Study), *although the situation of adolescent boys and girls does not differ much in terms of accessibility to basic services and decision-making in their lives, boys still tend to enjoy greater freedom, while girls tend to face more extensive limitations in their ability to move freely and to make decisions affecting their work, education, marriage, and social relationships. With the prevalence of gender discrimination in the region, as well as social norms and practices, girls become exposed to the possibility of child marriage, teenage pregnancy, child domestic work, [lack of] education and health, sexual abuse and exploitation and violence* (UNICEF ROSA-C4ED Concept Note, 2017, p.2).

The UNICEF ROSA KM Study seeks to demonstrate the effectiveness of interventions targeted at adolescents as part of the UNICEF-IKEA programme *Improving Adolescents' Lives in South Asia 2015–2020*. The KM Study is conducted within a four-year cycle and expects to identify and document evidence and key lessons from interventions across seven countries of South Asia. The Nepal, Bangladesh and Afghanistan reports were respectively approved by UNICEF in January 2018, July 2018 and June 2019. This fourth country report documents evidence and key lessons learned from selected interventions that were initiated by the UNICEF Pakistan Country Office (PCO) under the *Improving Adolescents' Lives in Pakistan* (IALP) funded by the IKEA Foundation¹. The study was conducted based on a content analysis of qualitative fieldwork and complemented by a short quantitative survey used to identify trends. It focussed on recommended UNICEF-supported districts in the two provinces of Pakistan where IKEA II is being implemented: Ghotki and Khairpur in the province of Sindh, and Bahawalpur and Rahim Yar Khan in the province of Punjab. Both provinces had previously also been targeted under another project funded by the IKEA Foundation. The specific districts were selected to reach the most marginalised and vulnerable populations and to build on the existing work of UNICEF and its governmental partners: the Child Protection Units under the Social Welfare Department, the Literacy Education Department, the police and the judiciary, and Department of Youth, among others (UNICEF ROSA 2017b).

In October 2018, the study team met forty-two adolescent boys and girls aged between 10 and 19 years, nine parents and nine community influencers and teachers during in-depth interviews as well as 59 community members during eight focus group discussions. In addition, various implementers of the project at national, provincial and district level were met individually or in a focus group discussion. The limited sample size and the non-experimental design do not allow for determining the causal effects of the interventions. Instead, the study topic is approached from a different

¹ Also referred to as *IKEA II*.

epistemological approach which aims at examining the social significance of the programme rather than its statistical significance.

At the time of the field mission, the activities at community level were ongoing in the districts in Sindh while community-level implementation was starting in Punjab. The delays in implementation in Punjab were due to the cancellation of UNICEF's partnership with one of its implementing partners in December 2017 (CYAAD), and the subsequent search for an adequate successor. A new implementing partner (Bunyad) for programme implementation in the province was eventually contracted in September 2018.

CONTEXT

DEMOGRAPHIC AND GEOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PAKISTAN

Socioeconomic and demographic context. Pakistan, a lower-middle income country situated in the north-western part of the South Asian subcontinent, has a population of about 208 million inhabitants, making it the sixth most populous country in the world (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2017). It figures among the top nine countries expected to account for more than half of the world's projected population growth during 2015-2050 (UN DESA 2015). With close to 37% of its population living in urban areas, it is also one of the most urbanised countries in South Asia (World Bank Open Data 2018b). Pakistan is home to a variety of ethnicities and characterised by high linguistic diversity. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan (*Land of the pure* in Urdu) is the only country to have been established in the name of Islam in the Muslim-majority areas of the Indian subcontinent as a result of the partition of British India in 1947 (The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World 2018), triggering massive inflows of Muslim refugees from India and outflows of non-Muslim minorities, such as Sikh and Hindus. Today, 96.2% of the population is Muslim (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2017) while non-Muslim minorities include Christian, Hindus and Parsis.

In recent years, increased economic activity in a range of key sectors comprising agriculture, industry and services, accompanied by an increase in average consumption, has led to significant progress in poverty reduction. From 2001 to 2005, the share of Pakistanis living below the national poverty line fell from 64.3% to 24.3% (World Bank 2018). However, development challenges remain, as 38% of adults continue to live in multidimensional poverty, while about 50% of Pakistani children are believed to be poor (UN ECOSOC 2017). The incidence of poverty varies significantly by province, as does the existence of laws and regulations related to child and adolescent protection. The autonomy of Pakistan's four provinces is notable; in 2010, the 18th Amendment to the Constitution further increased the policy, administrative and budget authority of the provinces.

BEING AN ADOLESCENT IN PAKISTAN

With a median age of around 24 years (CIA 2018), Pakistan is not only a large and growing country, but also a comparatively young one. 39% of its population comprise children, i.e. below 18 years of age, while 21% of its inhabitants are adolescents, i.e. between the ages of 10 and 19 (UNICEF 2017). Since its working population is expected to rise to 67% by 2030 (compared to 55% in 2013), the country's Framework for Economic Growth marks the transition from the *youth bulge* to a *demographic dividend* as one of its main challenges (UNICEF 2013).

Adolescents' participation in the Pakistani economy and society. Overall, net primary school enrolment rates in the country have increased, and gender disparities in enrolment slightly decreased. However, whilst Article 25-A of Pakistan's Constitution guarantees the right of every child to education, 7.3 million children of primary-school age are out-of-school (OOS), with girls still being disproportionately affected (UNICEF 2013). During the last few years, there has been a substantial decline in primary completion rates, as up to 63% of boys and 77% of girls are reportedly leaving school before reaching grade 5 (United Nations 2012). Moreover, access to education is particularly limited for older adolescents, resulting in many of them lacking crucial vocational and life skills. Only 47.1% of boys aged 15-19 and 35.5% of girls in the same age range are currently enrolled in school (RSPN 2017a). As stated in a survey by the Centre for Poverty Reduction and Social Policy Development, a lack of education is the biggest problem faced by young people in Pakistan, followed by unemployment (UNICEF 2013).

Adolescents' access to education – Despite the adoption of the 18th amendment of the Pakistani Constitution in 2010, which commits the country to provide all Pakistani girls and boys with an equal and universal access to education (National Assembly of Pakistan 2010), Pakistan has the second highest number of OOS children in the world (UNICEF Pakistan 2015). With 25 million OOS children aged between 5 and 16, the country has prioritised the expansion of basic education to address the lack of literacy and the increase of participation and empowerment among vulnerable populations through education. As defined in the National Education Policy of 1998-2010, this objective needs to be achieved via formal and informal educational modalities (UNICEF Pakistan 2015). The objectives of the policy laid the foundations for the new National Education Policy of 2017, which identified alternative learning modalities such as literacy and Non-Formal Education (NFE) programmes, and crucial measures to address the lack of literacy among OOS children and adults. While the literacy programmes are targeted more towards providing the adult population with basic education and skills development, the NFE programmes target younger children and adolescents aged 5 to 16 (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training 2017). The aim of this NFE strategy is to draw on already available resources, infrastructure and services from the public and private sectors (MoFEPT 2017). In light of this policy context, Alternative Learning Programmes (ALPs) are offered to children who have missed out on months or years of formal schooling due to conflict or crisis. These programmes provide a condensed curriculum, allowing children to catch up with their primary education and eventually reintegrate into formal schools.

THE PERSISTENCE OF HARMFUL SOCIAL AND GENDER NORMS IN PAKISTAN

Child marriage. Despite the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 setting at the federal level the minimum age for marriage at 18 years for males and 16 years for females, the proportion of early marriages contracted in Pakistan, albeit lower than in its neighbouring countries, remains elevated. 21% of women in Pakistan aged 20-24 were married before the age of 18 and approximately 14.2% of girls aged 15-19 are currently married. For poor households, and in rural areas, these figures are even higher (RSPN 2017a). Practices such as marriages to settle a blood feud (*vani/swara*), marriages with the Holy Quran, and exchange marriages (*watta satta*) continue to exist. In Sindh, the Sindh Child Marriages Restraint Act 2013 increased the legal age for marriage for females to 18 years, while in Punjab, the Punjab Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act 2015 aims to enforce higher sanctions for contracting child marriage. While legislation banning forced marriages of children has been put in place, the government and community are often accused of not taking adequate action to end the latter. Child marriage in Pakistan is rooted in deeply entrenched gender norms and expectations about girls' value and roles. It is linked to school drop-out, early pregnancy and pregnancy-related

complications, increased HIV Aids risk as well as domestic and gender-based violence against teenage brides (UNICEF ROSA 2015).

Violence and harassment. Abuse, exploitation and violence is prevalent across the country. According to the Pakistan 2012-2013 Demographic Health Survey, 28% of adolescents aged 15-19 years have been exposed to physical or emotional violence (RSPN 2017a). Especially girls and women are targets of sexual harassment and domestic violence, including corporal punishment, physical disfigurement and homicide (U.S. Department of State 2017). Pakistan has one of the highest rates of acid-throwings, dowry-murder and honour killings (*karo kari*) in the world. There is a lack of reliable statistics, however, as many of these offences go unreported and unpunished, due to conservatism, illiteracy, poverty, shame, fear of stigma, and weaknesses in national, provincial and local protection systems (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan 2018).

Gender discrimination. Pakistani society is strongly influenced by patriarchal values. With gender being one of the organising principles of Pakistani society, women across classes, regions and the rural-urban divide are commonly confined to their homes, expected to fulfil the duties of mothers and wives, while men act as sole breadwinners in the public sphere (Asian Development Bank 2000). This traditional division of roles has led to Pakistani families and the state investing fewer resources in females than males, specifically neglecting female education. As only 22.54% of Pakistani women are currently participating in the labour force (World Bank Open Data 2018a), their economic advancement remains a considerable challenge, as does their access to justice, provision with reproductive health services and political representation.

The following section provides an overview of UNICEF-supported activities which make up the UNICEF-IKEA *Improving Adolescents' Lives in Pakistan* (IALP) programme and the ongoing impact evaluation based on a randomized controlled trial design which characterizes the programme implementation.

UNICEF-SUPPORTED INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE ADOLESCENTS' LIFE SKILLS AND EMPOWERMENT

The Impact Evaluation. Since 2015, the University of Mannheim (UoM) and UNICEF PCO have been conducting an impact evaluation of the IALP, also referred to as IKEA II, in Punjab and Sindh. The impact evaluation aims at measuring the causal impact of the activities administered and implemented by different units of UNICEF Pakistan: activities by the Child Protection Unit (the adolescent groups and the Empowerment Toolkit LST for adolescents as well as the training for KCIs, the community-based media campaign and the IGDs) and activities by the Education unit (the ALP), which address two mechanisms, change in gender roles and access to secondary education, respectively.

The impact evaluation is a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) design developed by the UoM². In 2015, 70% of all the 204 eligible Union Councils (UC) in the four study districts were randomly assigned to the treatment group (139 treatment UCs) to receive the Child Protection Unit interventions and 30% were assigned to the control group (65 control UCs). Similarly, but only in Sindh, eligible villages were randomly assigned in 2017 to a treatment group to receive the ALP intervention of the education unit, or to the control group.

The Child Protection interventions were further randomised at revenue village level, with the following variation of the modalities of implementation: 1) in some villages, the adolescent groups, the life skill training, which are based on the Empowerment Toolkit, were supposed to target only girls and the training of KCIs only to females; 2) in some villages these interventions were only supposed to target boys and male community member; 3) finally, in some villages, these interventions were targeted at both male and female members. In the latter, activities were nonetheless conducted in a gender-segregated setting. The ALP intervention was not delivered following the gender-based treatment arms described above.

The following paragraphs describe the different components of the programme.

THE ADOLESCENT GROUPS

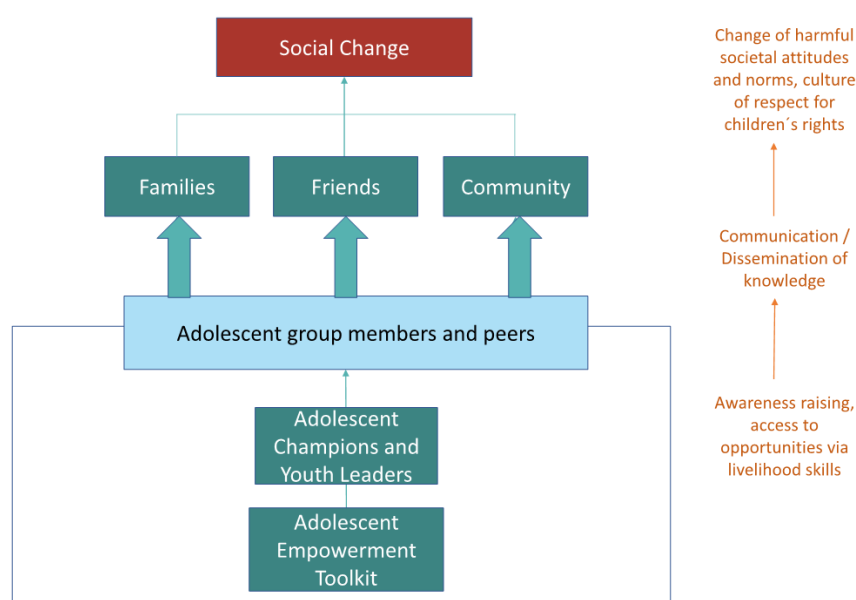
Adolescent groups allow girls and boys from project areas to discuss, share information on and influence decision-making within their environment, thus increasing their autonomy over decisions impacting their lives. According to the programme documents, the groups are made up of 15 to 20 participants between 10 and 19 years of age and comprise both OOS as well as school children. Along the peer-learning approach, adolescent champions, trained on life skills with the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit via master training, lead the group meetings with the support of a social worker from the implementing agencies. Attendees are encouraged to exchange views on adolescent-related issues.

During group sessions, participants engage in various activities. They are trained on life skills by the adolescent champions in a peer-to-peer approach, based on the *Knowing Ourselves and Others Workshop Pack* of the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit (Booklet 5 - UNICEF 2016). With the support of social workers following the *Project Planning Workshop Pack* of the Empowerment Toolkit

² See baseline report for original design: Avdeenko, Frölich, Vasquez-Escalón, 2015: "Baseline Report. Improving Adolescents' in Pakistan". See Pre-Analysis Plan for full impact evaluation design by Avdeenko, Frölich, 2019: Improving Adolescents' in Pakistan. Unpublished manuscripts. Available upon request.

(Booklet 6 - UNICEF 2016), the adolescent group members develop action plans. In the past, planned actions have included football matches for girls, speech competitions and small-scale trading activities, among other things. The adolescent groups decide which kind of action they would like to take, and UNICEF's partners may support them with financial resources or materials whenever possible.

Figure 1: Achieving Positive Change Within the Adolescent Groups



Source: Authors' own

THE ADOLESCENT EMPOWERMENT TOOLKIT

The Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit is a training on life skills aiming to enable adolescent boys and girls from the programme areas to act as change agents for themselves and their communities. It is first delivered by UNICEF partners to the adolescent champions or youth leaders already identified in collaboration with community structures on the ground, local Support Organisations (SOs), and Village Organisations (VO). This first cohort of adolescent is then requested to organise Trickle-Down sessions and lead their own training to the adolescent group members, who in turn pass on their experience and knowledge to 20 additional peers of their choice (also called *peer group*).

The Training of Champions or Trainers (ToT) on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit is based on a curriculum designed by UNICEF (Booklet 5 - UNICEF 2016). Originally designed in 48 modules, the format was revised and simplified by UNICEF to deliver the training to the adolescents in 16 sessions. In 2017, the adolescent champions and youth leaders received a four-day long preparatory training covering eight modules of the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit that lasted about four hours each. The training package focuses on the following four key themes:

1. **Section 1: Identity and self-esteem:** I am, I have, I can (questions and answers, story writing); Ourselves on the inside and outside (drawing self-portrait); Relationship map, what we do (brainstorming and role-playing); Our days (drawing of typical days); Personal interests; What do we share (game on similarities and differences); Confidence and self-

esteem; Humans of our community (writing short stories on someone); Contagious emotions; Basic needs; Connecting with emotions.

2. **Section 2: Empathy and respect:** Animals, birds, insects stories; Recognising emotions; Silhouettes; Create an emotion story; Seeing from different perspectives; Safe places and unsafe places; Contributions of women; men; boys and girls; Emotional robot; Trust-building; Empathy in disagreement; Identify feelings and needs; Drawing emotions and needs.
3. **Section 3: Communication and expression:** Silence and sounds; Personal goal setting; Verbal and non-verbal communication; Assertiveness; Decision making; Active listening; Communicating without words; Speak with *I* and speak with *you*; Empathetic listening; Sharing our stories; How do we normally listen?; Listening that connects us.
4. **Section 4: Coping with stress and managing emotions:** Cross the river game; Our challenge, our solutions; How many faces are there?; Different ways to handle conflict; River of family life; Imagination sculptures; switches to anger; Resolving interpersonal conflict peacefully; The garden; Conflict murals; Disagreement machine; Facts and interpretations.

Key learning objectives include:

- Adolescents build self-esteem and gain a deeper understanding of multiple influences to their own identity and the identity of others
- Adolescents gain a deeper awareness of the feelings of others and respect for the inherent dignity of all peers and community members
- Adolescents enhance their ability to express themselves and communicate effectively about issues that are important to them
- Adolescents develop their ability to manage emotions and engage positively with conflict situations in family and peer groups.

UNICEF-SUPPORTED INTERVENTIONS TO PROVIDE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

THE TRAINING FOR KEY COMMUNITY INFLUENCERS

KCIs receive training to acquire more knowledge on adolescents' rights and to identify, monitor and act to protect young people from abuse, neglect, exploitation and other rights violation, for instance child marriage. Stakeholders and duty-bearers are thus encouraged to actively participate in the intervention and use their status and networks to address prevailing social norms and societal attitudes that may be harmful to adolescents' psycho-social well-being.

Using scoping, mapping and assessment techniques, UNICEF's partner organisation Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) and its sister organisation in Sindh, the Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO), identified KCIs eligible for further training. They include local religious leaders, village elders, teachers, office bearers of VOs/LSOs (Local Support Organisations) and other notable people who have the power to positively influence behaviours at the household and community level.

In 2017, RSPN through SRSO organised their first round of ToTs in Ghotki and Khairpur, providing selected KCIs (102 males and 113 females) with information, support and training which they were expected to use to conduct roll-out sessions about adolescents' problems and rights in their respective communities. The goal is for each trained KCI to reach out to at least 50 adults and 5 adolescents through community mobilisation activities organised by VOs/LSOs (RSPN 2017b). Over a period of three days, ToT participants attended interactive workshops such as *Understanding the Child Rights* (Convention of the Rights of the Child), *Who Are Adolescents and Stages of Adolescent*

Development? and *Gender and Equality in Adolescents Programming*. They also receive an introduction to the four main themes underlying adolescents' programming and learned how to plan and deliver community mobilisation activities themselves, with a toolkit providing readily available guidance. Additionally, district and province representatives of Child Protection Units from Khairpur and Sindh advise KCIs about referral mechanisms and the role of available protective services in districts.

THE COMMUNITY INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUES

Using a participatory approach, IGDs between parents, community leaders, local authorities and adolescents are set up to raise awareness of and support action to promote a protective and empowering environment for adolescents. Dialogues are facilitated by UNICEF's partner organisations and held in a communal place, allowing attendants to engage with each other in an informal setting. Participants usually include religious leaders and other local key influencers, parents, but also adolescent champions. At district level, government representatives from, for instance, the Department of Labour, the Social Welfare Department, the Education Department, and the police, are invited to attend and respond to the issues being discussed. This approach not only seeks to generate dialogues among community members but also extend the outreach of the programme to members from nearby communities.

THE COMMUNITY-BASED MEDIA CAMPAIGN

The community-based media campaign, conducted in participating districts, aim to inform people about adolescent development as well as challenges and support action to delay child marriage and other harmful social norms and practices. Interventions such as street theatre, participatory youth journalism (magazines and newsletters), participatory arts projects, radio spots and drama are used to explore gender roles and explore related attributes among adolescents, their families and communities.

UNICEF-SUPPORTED INTERVENTIONS TO SUPPORT THE SERVICE PROVISION TO ADOLESCENTS, INCLUDING THE MOST HARD-TO-REACH ONES

THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME

In Pakistan, the formal education system is not only under-resourced, but also faces several other challenges such as human resources shortages, environmental constraints and political limitations. Currently, it is not possible to reach all children, for example because services are lacking in many remote areas, or because parents are not willing or able to utilise them. Thus, in order to supplement the system in place, ALPs have been developed (MoFEPT 2017). Catering to the specific needs of OOS children, they provide a degree of flexibility that national or provincial education systems simply cannot offer. For instance, class schedules can be adapted to the agricultural calendar or the working days of parents and children, curricula tailored to the needs of the community and the local environment, ALP teachers recruited from within the local community, and alternative ways provided to gain an education and qualifications. Furthermore, this programme aims to allow the NFE students to pursue their education and reintegrate into the public system after Grade 5.

UNICEF, in collaboration with the Indus Resource Centre (IRC) and the School Education and Literacy Department (SE&LD), has been implementing NFE centres in the Sindh province since 2017.

This KM Study aims at producing knowledge about selected interventions supported by UNICEF Pakistan Child Protection, Education and Community for Development (C4D) sections. For this, it gathers and describes evidence of good practices. The following section examines the methodological elements which guided the qualitative research component of this KM Study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this study mainly consists of qualitative methods from the social sciences and aims to document knowledge on seven UNICEF-supported interventions in the framework of the IALP programme in Pakistan. The interventions are the adolescent groups, the life skills-based training to adolescent champions, the training to KCIs, the IGDs, the Community-Based Media Campaign and the ALP³. The research methodology included a desk review of primary and secondary data combined with primary observational data collected during the three-week field visit in October 2018. Moreover, it is complemented by a short quantitative survey analysis which will be the basis to compare the different interventions across all South Asian countries within the scope of the four-year *Knowledge Management Study on Improving Adolescents' Lives in South Asia 2015–2020*.

Primary data was collected in Islamabad and in the implementation districts of Punjab and Sindh through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). In total, 30 adolescent boys and girls benefitting from at least one of the *Improving Adolescent Lives* interventions covered by the KM Study were interviewed. Adults were met during IDIs with nine parents of adolescent beneficiaries, two ALP teachers and FGDs with seven KCIs. In addition, KIIs took place with the UNICEF and NGO staff as well as with the ministries' representatives involved in the design, planning and implementation of the IALP interventions at both country and field level. This study is based on the content-analysis of the above-mentioned qualitative interviews with direct and indirect beneficiaries and key partners of the programme. Following a mixed-method approach, a short quantitative tablet-based survey was also administered to 42 adolescents (19 males and 23 females) in the districts of Ghotki and Khairpur in Sindh and of Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalpur in Punjab, including the 30 adolescents already interviewed during the IDIs in October 2018. It was ensured that questions do not overlap. The quantitative questionnaire uses questions designed by Avdeenko et al. (Unpublished manuscript). The limited sample size and the non-experimental design do not allow for the determination of causal effects of the interventions. Instead, the study topic is approached from a different epistemological perspective which aims to determine the social significance of the programme rather than its statistical significance.

The researchers attempted to triangulate the evidence from different sources of information to derive the findings. Indeed, the research team conducted a desk review of documents at both global and country levels. Global-level documentation included a literature review of studies, reports, global policy documents from UNICEF and scientific papers on the key concepts of the research questions to be answered. Country-level documents were drawn from a number of sources, including policy documents from the Government of Pakistan (GoP), UNICEF and other United Nations agencies and the implementing NGOs in Pakistan. They included annual country reports from UNICEF PCO, annual and quarterly progress reports prepared by PCO and UNICEF implementing partners, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) reports from external agencies and PCO internal programme documents. A list of references and documents reviewed is provided in the Annex.

Research goals and purpose. The purpose of this study is to give adolescent beneficiaries a voice. It captures stories and perceptions about being an adolescent in Pakistan, the social and gender norms and the IALP interventions themselves. A set of specific research questions was developed in close collaboration with PCO, based on an evaluation grid compiling the knowledge management

³ The seven interventions covered by this study were identified in close collaboration with UNICEF PCO. This list however does not reflect the entire scope of intervention of the *IALP* programme.

needs for the specific proposed interventions. These research questions are aligned with the three intervention domains of the IALP programme:

1. Domain 1: Adolescent participation and empowerment

- What was the outreach of the interventions to the adolescents?
- How effective were the adolescent groups at reinforcing peer learning among adolescents?
- How gender-responsive were the adolescent groups and the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit?
- How did these interventions influence change in knowledge, social and gender norms among the concerned adolescents?
- How effective were these interventions in increasing the empowerment and participation of the adolescents?

2. Domain 2: Enabling environment for adolescents

- What was the outreach of the training for Key Community Influencers?
- How effective was the Key Community Influencers Training aiming to engage influencers to increase their awareness and knowledge about social and gender norms?
- How did the key community influencers engage the parents and the community to challenge harmful social and gender norms and promote child rights?
- What was the outreach of the Community Intergenerational Dialogues and other community-based media campaign activities?
- How did a gender-responsive community-based media campaign influence adolescent participation and empowerment?
- How effective was the community-based media campaign to engage the parents and community members to challenge harmful social and gender norms and promote child rights?

3. Domain 3: Service provision for adolescents/hard to reach adolescents

- What was the outreach of the Alternative Learning Programme?
- How effective was the Alternative Learning Programme in delivering adolescent-oriented services and providing them with quality education?
 - How effective and appropriate was the Alternative Learning Programme in taking into account adolescents' needs and delivering adolescent-oriented services?
 - How effective was the Alternative Learning Programme in providing adolescents with quality education?

Based on these research questions, research findings illustrated with selected quotes from the study participants will be presented for each domain, followed by key conclusions on and lessons learned from the programme.

Disclaimer. Important delays in implementation in Punjab were flagged shortly before the KM Study field mission started. These delays were subsequent to the interruption of the programme during nine months since early 2018 in the two districts of implementation in Punjab, the cancellation of the partnership with the initial implementing partner, CYAAD, in December 2017, and contracting of a new partner, Bunyad, in September 2018⁴. Therefore, no adolescent groups in Punjab had been formed at the time of the KM field mission (though adolescent champions had been identified), impacting the observations that the field team could make. The KM field mission was nevertheless

⁴ A major factor in the delay was that CYAAD was denied its Non-Objection Certificate to operate in the field, according to UNICEF PCO Officers. In order to implement the activities, CYAAD relied on a multitude of local organisations instead. These organisations appeared to not be able to deliver the programme outputs and to comply with the RCT design. Moreover, CYAAD did not adhere to the focus on OOS adolescents.

conducted in Punjab and efforts were dedicated to shedding light on the inception of the adolescent groups at village level and documenting lessons learned from the implementation delays.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT – EVIDENCE FROM CHILD PROTECTION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS IN PAKISTAN

DOMAIN 1 – ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

A – WHAT WAS THE OUTREACH OF THE INTERVENTIONS TO THE ADOLESCENTS?

THE ADOLESCENT GROUPS

Access and participation in the adolescent groups. Until the end of 2017, 270 UNICEF-supported adolescent groups were established in Ghotki and Khairpur districts in Sindh, with about 15 to 20 adolescent members per adolescent group. Up to December 2017, 3,057 adolescents were enrolled in the adolescent groups, about half of them being girls (52%) (2017 Annual Progress Report UNICEF ROSA 2018a). Until December 2018, according to the most recent Monitoring Information System (MIS) data available confirmed by UNICEF, 5,429 adolescents (of whom 51% were girls) were members of adolescent groups in Sindh. Of these, 1,269 were OOS children.

Until the end of 2017, in Punjab, 45 adolescent groups were established in the Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalpur districts, with an average of 30 adolescent members per group, against the initial target of 258 adolescents. The groups comprised 1,399 adolescent members (MIS UNICEF Pakistan 2018). Due to the interruption of implementation, this figure did not change in 2018. At the time of the research field mission, the adolescent group members were being re-identified, after the interruption of the initial partner's operations in Punjab. It was confirmed by field social workers from the new implementing partner, Bunyad, during the field data collection that adolescents who were first identified in December 2017 were, at least partially, replaced with adolescents newly identified by Bunyad in September 2018.

The short survey conducted with all 42 adolescents met in the implementation villages of both provinces revealed that on average, at the time of the KM Study field mission in October 2018, the adolescents had spent about four months (0.34 years) in the adolescent group (Annex Table B), which is a relatively short exposure time. In comparison, in Bangladesh, the membership of adolescents in the UNICEF-supported adolescent clubs and their participation in the Life-Skill Based Education APON training was of 3.3 years and 2.7 years respectively. In Afghanistan, under *the Improving Adolescents' Lives in Afghanistan* programme, adolescents reported being members of the Multi-purpose Adolescent Groups on average for 1.20 years. When disaggregating by province, the survey data confirmed that in Punjab adolescents have been a member of the adolescent group for a marginal amount of time (0.02 years) while in Sindh the average time spent in the adolescent group was 0.65 years.⁵

The number of adolescent groups and participation in the groups is reported in Table 1 in the following section.

⁵ Outlier values over two years were replaced with missing values since the implementation started in 2017, less than two years before the field mission.

Recruitment of the adolescent group members. Enrolment into the adolescent group in both Sindh and Punjab was based on a community-based approach. With the support of the KCIs, including religious leaders and teachers, community mobilisers/social workers reached out to the adolescents and their parents. In Sindh, adolescent champions also participated in the recruitment of new members.

The Community Facilitator came to the elders in our village. She told us that there is a team who is here to teach about adolescent rights. Then we went with the Community Mobiliser for a session. The group has 20 members (...). They asked us questions, and whoever gave good answers joined.
Zimal, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

Mr. X selected some boys from our class and told us about this [the group]. He also informed us to participate today in Jam Atique's house, that's why we came today.
Muhammad Azhar, male adolescent group member, 12, Punjab

I joined the [adolescent] group one and a half year ago. We got to know that there is a project on improving adolescents' lives in Pakistan. So, I have joined to learn to make my future better. I have joined through the champion. There was a theatre play in which we participated, and that's how I joined this group. I know the Champion; he is my friend.
Abdul Rahman, male adolescent group member, 14, Sindh

M: Do you know that there has been an adolescent group formed here? Can you tell something about it? Who told you that a group is being formed?

A: Representatives from an organisation came.

Q: Bunyad?

A: Yes, from Bunyad.

Q: What did they tell you?

A: They got all the children together and wrote their names, and they told it is to teach them.

(...)

Q: Did you let your son join easily?

A: Yes.

(...) Q: Has your son started any meeting or training in the group? Do you know?

A: It hasn't happened until now.

Q: Has any other organisation ever approached you to talk on adolescent rights?

A: No.

Tirdad, father of Zimran, 59, Punjab

In Sindh, mobilisation of the adolescent groups was operated with the support of LSOs which are the structural base of the Rural Support Network (RSN). In Punjab, identification and mobilisation of the adolescent members were first operated by CYAAD and towards the end of the intervention, resumed by Bunyad. This interruption introduced the challenges of identifying previously identified groups and remobilising them.

M: Are you forming the [same adolescent] groups again? Haven't you found groups that were already made as part of CYAAD?

S: We still haven't found any adolescent or KCI of CYAAD until now.

Bunyad Officer, Punjab

Schooling and literacy status of the adolescent group members. According to UNICEF officers, attention was paid to include the most marginalised adolescents, defined as children from a low-income household, working children, runaways or OOS children, and children at greater risk of child marriage. In Punjab, it was planned to engage children from ethnic minorities, according to an officer of Bunyad.

The literacy and schooling status of the adolescent members differs between regions. In both provinces, the goal was that at least 70% of adolescent group members should be OOS children. In Punjab, OOS children were targeted to take part in the LST based on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit, and therefore to become champions. For this, the Empowerment Toolkit material was adapted to be delivered to children with low literacy level. In contrast, in Sindh, the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit required literacy skills, excluding de facto most OOS children. Instead, their inclusion occurred at the level of participation in the adolescent group.

In December 2018, 1,269 adolescent members in Sindh were OOS children (22%), therefore the objective of 70% of OOS children in the adolescent group was not achieved. The short survey completed by adolescent group members revealed that 57.1% of respondents were attending school (Annex Table B). In Sindh, 76.2% of the group members surveyed were attending school while in Punjab, 38.1% of the adolescents in the newly established adolescent groups were. In Punjab, the median last grade achieved by the respondents was 5th grade; in Sindh, the median last grade achieved was 7th grade. These results indicated that the adolescent members met in Sindh were more likely to be attending in school than the adolescents in Punjab. Moreover, these results, suggesting that education was the main activity of the study participants in Sindh were above the estimates of the DHS 2017 (Government of Pakistan 2019)⁶ suggesting that 35.0% in Sindh attend middle/secondary school (43.5% of boys in Punjab) and 26.2% in Sindh (46.7% of girls in Punjab). This can be explained by the fact that in Sindh, literacy was a prerequisite to take part in the Life Skills Training based on the Empowerment Toolkit. However, it was not a requirement to join the adolescent group as member. The literacy prerequisite was not mentioned by implementers in Punjab.

In Punjab, the UNICEF Child Protection officer shared the challenges faced at an early stage to ensure that the implementing partner included OOS children in the adolescent groups. According to UNICEF Country Office Child Protection officers met in Islamabad, there was a lack of clear eligibility criteria and assurance system to ensure that the targeting effectively included the hardest-to-reach children.

Format of the adolescent group sessions. The format of the adolescent group activities encouraged the adolescent champions to meet with their peer groups once every week. Interviews with adolescent club members indicated that some would meet the other adolescent group members once a week. Yet testimonies from several adolescents in Sindh suggested that groups met less often, for instance twice a month. Sessions were planned to last between one and two hours, though the time may be adjusted to adolescents' daily routines (Training Manual B2 UNICEF 2016).

We meet twice a month, at our home and done by my sister Zimal. This place is at my home, so it is easy to access.

Sanaya, female adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

The [adolescent group] meetings take place once in a month, and the location is given by a community person. About seven meetings were conducted and I have attended all. The meeting place is near to our house.

Zayn, male adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

Although the regularity of adolescents' participation in the adolescent group's sessions was not pointed out as a concern by implementers nor adolescent members themselves, little information was also available to ensure that adolescents participate on a regular basis to the meetings. Drop-out

⁶ Net attendance ratios

was reported in Sindh but not considered as a major issue, according to UNICEF Child Protection officers. It happened mostly due to migration related to flood and extreme weather events. According to UNICEF Child Protection officers, cases were nonetheless reported in which adolescent girl champions were prevented by their parents from participating and conducting the adolescent group sessions and LST.

THE LIFE SKILLS TRAINING TO ADOLESCENT CHAMPIONS AND TRICKLE-DOWN SESSIONS

Adolescent champions were defined as adolescents from the adolescent group who received the Master LST based on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit and later engaged as peer leaders among the adolescents of their group and in their community. The LST was implemented differently in both the provinces. In Sindh, at the inception of the adolescent groups, some eloquent and literate adolescents were identified by SRSO social workers within the adolescent groups and provided the LST Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit modules together with additional non-formal education skills. Additional adolescents in newly established adolescent groups were also later trained. The trained adolescent champions were encouraged to become youth leaders in their community and to facilitate peer-to-peer learning within the adolescent groups, to other adolescent group members and outside the group with adolescents in the community. In Punjab, on the contrary, all members of the adolescent groups were invited by Bunyad to receive the Master LST based on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit and become an adolescent champion (called youth leaders in Punjab).

Access and participation in LST based on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit. In Sindh, up to December 2017, 3,057 adolescents had been identified and joined the adolescent groups, of whom 1,029 were designated as champions/youth leaders and were trained on life skills to further disseminate the LST (2017 Annual Progress Report UNICEF ROSA 2018a). More than half of the adolescent group members were girls (1,620). Between December 2017 and December 2018, an additional 797 adolescents received the training, amounting to 1,826 adolescents trained on life skills at the end of 2018.⁷ Additional 242 new adolescent champions will be trained in 2019.

In Punjab, at the start of the roll-out in 2017, 2,622 adolescents were trained on five modules of the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit (UNICEF ROSA 2018a). Due to interruption in the programme, the training was discontinued, and no additional adolescents were trained on life skills in 2018. Activities resumed in October 2018 with the identification and recruitment of new adolescent members to be trained by 2019.

Eligibility criteria to select adolescent champions age; adolescent champions should be between 10-19 years old. In Sindh, eligibility criteria also included literacy skills, since the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit material was based on a prerequisite of literacy. This excluded OOS girls and boys from being trained on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit and therefore from becoming an adolescent champion. Instead, OOS adolescents were to be addressed via the peer-to-peer mechanisms at the level of the adolescent groups. In Punjab, all adolescents in the adolescent groups, including those little or no literacy skills (mostly represented by the OOS children), were invited to take part in the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit training.

⁷ UNICEF PCO shared with the research team a value of 1,758 unique adolescent champions trained until December 2018. Nonetheless, the research team presented the cumulative value of adolescent champions trained in 2017 and 2018, 1,826.

One UNICEF field officer noted that in Sindh, the most vocal adolescents among the adolescent group members tended to be selected to be trained on life skills. Involvement of adolescents from ethnic minority groups and from poor communities was considered challenging by one field officer due to access, literacy levels, economic priorities and lack of awareness. Involvement of adolescents with disabilities was also challenging due to the absence of disability-friendly access to facilities. Challenges reported by one national officer at RSPN/SRSO included the delayed printing and delivery of adolescent training toolkits.

The adolescent champions will be the ones who perform well and work in the project, are more responsive in action plans and project activities and ensure sustainability. They will receive incentives, awards and certificates on the basis of their progress in executing project activities.
Bunad project staff, Punjab

Access to the MIS data allowed the research team to extract implementation figures. However, a significant limitation to understanding the true reach of the LST is the absence of third-party monitoring, the MIS data relies on implementing partner's data and is not considered fully reliable by UNICEF officers. To mitigate this, the research team decided to present only the most recent available data and seek validation by UNICEF PCO. The figures presented below are provided for the reader's information but should nevertheless be treated with caution. This limitation raises a point of attention for the better management of evidence regarding the reach of the intervention.

Table 1: Number of adolescent groups and adolescent group members and champions in the two study provinces as of December 2018

	December 2017		December 2018	
	Sindh	Punjab	Sindh	Punjab
Number of adolescent groups	270	45	n/a	n/a
Total number of adolescents participating in the adolescent groups (share of female members)	3,057 (52%)	1,399 (n/a)	5,429 (51%)	1,398 ¹
Total number of adolescent champions trained in Life Skills (share of female champions)	1,029 (50%)	2,622 ²	1,826 ³	n/a
Total number of community adolescents reached by adolescent champions	8,035	28,101 ⁴	-	-

Notes:

¹ MIS Data accessed in January 2019.

² These figures were reported in the 2017 Annual Report.

³ In 2018, 797 new unique adolescent champions were trained.

⁴ This figure, provided by UNICEF includes adolescents reached through a wide range of initiatives, such as sessions on life skills, the celebration of international days, community dialogues, street theatre and adolescents' involvement in implementing social action projects.

Source: Annual progress report 2017 (UNICEF ROSA 2018a) and MIS data accessed on 28.01.2019.

Participation in the Trickle-Down sessions and action plans. Each adolescent champion trained was expected to conduct Trickle-Down sessions with a group of 20 peers in their revenue villages. The champions conducted the Trickle-Down sessions in different location such as classrooms, after school, in a public space of a notable person, at their own home or that of any peer member, or at the Multi-functional community centres established under the previous programme IKEA I.

Action plans and Trickle-Down sessions. The outreach of the peer-to-peer mechanisms is reflected in the UNICEF ROSA 2018 Annual Progress Report and in the MIS data. According to the MIS data (MIS UNICEF Pakistan 2018), 800 action plans were developed in Sindh and Punjab. Financial and material support was provided by the local implementing partner. According to a Social Officer, the action plans were fully decided by the adolescent groups during their peer-to-peer learning sessions with the adolescent champions. MIS data showed that the most implemented activities included the Trickle-Down sessions and additional sport and arts activities in the two districts of Sindh:

Table 2: Number of Trickle-Down Sessions and of the Seven Main Activities part of the Action Plans in Sindh, by District⁸

	Trickle-Down ¹	Cricket	Race	Drawing	Mehndi ²	Singing	Speech	Volley Ball
Ghotki	237	102	35	76	75	32	45	20
Khairpur	261	120	13	77	25	2	13	63
Total Sindh	498	222	48	153	100	34	58	83
Note: ¹ In the MIS both the mention of rollout sessions and Trickle-Down sessions appeared. The figure presented in the table compiles both rollout sessions and Trickle-Down sessions. ² Also called <i>henneh</i> .								

Source: UNICEF Child Protection Monitoring Information System (MIS) accessed on 28.01.2019.

Until December 2017, in Sindh, the 1,029 adolescent champions led the Trickle-Down sessions and implemented the action plans with 8,035 peers in their communities (UNICEF ROSA 2018a). The Annual Progress Report also records that in Punjab, the adolescent groups reached out to 28,101 boys and girls in their communities with a wide range of initiatives (LST sessions, a celebration of international days, community dialogues, street theatre events) (UNICEF ROSA 2018a). While this figure is more than three times the number of adolescents reached in Sindh over the same period, it includes activities other than the Trickle-Down sessions, such as the celebration of international days, community dialogues, street theatre events and adolescents' involvement in implementing social action projects. Such activities targeted a wider range of adolescents than the Trickle-Down sessions.

An additional 91,178 boys and girls were reached via peer-to-peer participation mechanisms, until December 2017 (UNICEF ROSA 2018a). This includes adolescents who were reached by the U-report activities (presented in Annex). As part of other activities targeted to the community adolescents, adolescent workshops were organised in Sindh, including on photography and journalism. Nine such sessions were reported up to December 2018, involving a total of 448 adolescents (MIS UNICEF Pakistan 2018).

⁸ No such table could be provided for Punjab, as detailed information on the number of outreach activities implemented by adolescents in this province, divided into categories such as trickle-down sessions and main activities, was not available. From our understanding, UNICEF's partnership with CYAAD was also compromised by the lack of reporting and monitoring materials provided by the implementing partner, which explains why data on Punjab activities is sometimes missing for 2017 and 2018, as compared to Sindh activities. Furthermore, no Trickle-Down sessions had been initiated by the new implementing partner, Bunyad, at the time of the data collection in October 2018.

B – HOW EFFECTIVE WERE THE ADOLESCENT GROUPS IN REINFORCING PEER-LEARNING AMONG ADOLESCENTS?

The peer learning model. *Peer education is used to affect changes in knowledge, attitude, beliefs, and behaviours at the individual level. However, peer education may also create change at the group or societal level by modifying norms and stimulating collective action that contributes to change in policies and programs (UNAIDS 1999, p.6).*

The concept of peer education and learning is a key component of the IALP interventions (UNICEF Pakistan 2016a). This model stems from the strategy of reaching out to a specific group of people by harnessing the potential power of its members (Shiner 1999). Peer learning allows children to become change makers, not only by placing them in the role of peer leaders or mentors but also by creating a positive synergy among the adolescents to increase their life skills and hence their capacity for self-determination. Moreover, this model fulfils young people's needs to be accepted by their peers and to be members of a group that both supports and reinforces their personal identity, at a time of life when physical and emotional changes can affect self-esteem (Powell 1993). Peer programming is a tool very often used when working with adolescents and young adults, especially in the sector of reproductive health and life skills development (Abdi and Simbar 2013). This learning model has proven valuable in terms of risky behaviour reduction among adolescents in cities, suburbs and rural areas as well as in terms of community outreach (Fahs et al. 1999).

At the time of the data collection, Bunyad had just initiated dialogues with the adolescent group members in Punjab (in the Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalpur districts), and their parents, to gain community acceptance. The data collected in the villages visited by the research team indeed showed that the adolescents had newly joined the groups and had not yet participated in any meetings or trainings prior to being interviewed. Most of the adolescents met could not even describe the purpose of the intervention they had enrolled in. One adolescent girl, for example, explained that she was participating in the programme because she wanted to learn to sew, although sewing classes are not included among the activities provided by the adolescent groups. This section will, therefore, focus on the implementation of the intervention in Sindh. As of October 2018, only Bunyad project staff had been trained on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit in Punjab in preparedness to train the adolescent groups at a later stage.

In Sindh, the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit was first delivered by trained community facilitators or Master Trainers (MTs) from the UNICEF implementing agency, RSPN/SRSO, to 15 to 20 selected adolescent champions and youth leaders. This first cohort of trained adolescents was then expected to cascade the training to their respective adolescent members and peer groups, who in turn passed on their know-how to non-group members. The RSPN/SRSO staff were responsible for delivering the training and supporting its roll-out in the targeted districts. During the ToT, the MTs taught the young participants a broad set of social and behavioural skills to become actors of change in their communities and question harmful social norms related to education, gender equality, health, nutrition, child protection and especially child marriage and early pregnancy. Guidelines for the training material were designed by UNICEF to train the young champions and leaders on developing leadership skills, planning and Trickle-Down sessions with their peers as well as taking on their new roles and responsibilities in their community. The manual itself does not include a discussion on adolescent rights, nor explicitly mentions teenage pregnancy or child marriage. Instead, it is based on indirect mechanisms that rely on games and discussions to tackle these issues. The MTs reported adopting adolescent-friendly approaches, such as energisers, role play, group work, and drawing, as well as participatory learning methods.

The adolescent champions interviewed by the research team explained that they had received a toolkit with the training material necessary to cascade their newly gained knowledge to the group members. However, at the time of the data collection, only one adolescent champion interviewed had received the full training package of 16 modules. Indeed, the majority of the respondents had only participated in a four-day training on the first eight sessions of the curriculum. One of the RSPN MTs interviewed justified the use of this progressive learning strategy with the need to follow a learner-friendly approach, to enable the beneficiaries to acquire and consolidate their skills and knowledge.

When we deliver the four-day training to the adolescent champions, we train them on eight sessions. The Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit originally had 48 workshops plans but it is not possible to deliver all of them at once. The beneficiaries would not be able to process all of it. This is why we train them from time to time. During the four-day training, we deliver eight sessions on life skills and ask them to cascade their knowledge to their respective peer group. For this, they hold weekly meetings, at a day of their convenience, mostly on Saturdays or Sundays.

Hania, female MT, RSPN, Sindh

[During the training], we first learn about “I can do this”, “I can go there”, “I can work”, “I can play cricket”. This is what we do first. Then we learn about child rights. Then we have a drama. Someone is assigned – for instance, we play the role of a girl who is not allowed to go to school. And then we say “Uncle, please let her go to school!”.

Arham, male adolescent champion, 13, Sindh

[The Life Skills Training] is about understanding life. We understand how we should spend our life. We didn’t know this before. We learned that we have the power to make decisions.

Zimal, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

During the Life Skills Training, we learned how to become a good leader, who we are, what we can do, who are our relatives. We learned about emotions, nutrition and health, child rights, and the current discrimination prevailing in our society towards men and women.

Gohar, male adolescent youth leader, 17, Sindh

After the ToT, adolescent champions were requested to form their peer groups and deliver sessions on life skills to their respective 20 members. In Sindh, the Trickle-Down sessions started in September 2018 and their frequency varies from community to community. While some peer groups met on a weekly basis, other adolescent champions and group members described holding Life Skills sessions once or twice a month.

According to RSPN project staff, the initial cohort of trained adolescents needed to first develop a plan with their MTs on how they will recruit their group members, keeping in mind the need to give priority to OOS children and vulnerable adolescents of their communities. All members of the peer groups interviewed reported having joined the intervention via the adolescent champions, sometimes with the help of the VOs and KCIs. The data collected suggest that the champions use their different social networks and enrol adolescents from their close neighbourhood, such as their friends, school mates, and young family members. The age proximity between the champions and the group members seems to play a key factor in the mobilisation and motivation of their peers to join the adolescent groups. However, the research team observed the absence of OOS children in several groups visited, indicating a potential bias in the enrolment policy due to the lack of tangible and transparent selection criteria.

*I have joined the group one year and a half ago to learn about how to make my future better. I joined the group through the adolescent champion, who is my friend.
(...)*

In the adolescent group, I have good friends who give us fruitful pieces of advice; but outside this group, we don't get such advice.

Hamza, male adolescent group member, 14, Sindh

I joined the group last month [September 2018]. The adolescent champion motivated me to join the group. I joined the group to learn about children's rights. There are 20 members in the group. The group is open for girls from 10 to 19.

Sanaya, female adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

By following the peer mentoring model, the IALP programme allows a more interactive and contextual training delivery for adolescents and creates an easier transmission of knowledge. As the project beneficiaries share similar socioeconomic backgrounds and life experiences, the peer mentor can deliver the training content in a contextual way that is easier for the adolescents to understand. The adolescent champions and leaders interviewed for this study reported designing their peer-to-peer sessions based on the UNICEF Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit they received from RSPN during the ToT and feeling comfortable while passing on their new knowledge to their peers. Overall, the majority of the adolescent trainers and their group members described creating and experiencing, respectively, a safe environment encouraging self-reflection, exploration, and mutual respect. This might stem from the fact that belonging to the same age group and social networks increases the emotional proximity to the adolescent champions. Most of the adolescent champions in the study highlighted their positive influence on their peers and acting as role models, therefore gaining social recognition from their peers and community members.

I hold the [life skills] sessions every 15 days on Sundays because all the girls are free, from 1 pm to 4 pm. I use a large sheet; I keep writing and making them understand whatever they don't understand (...). I give them pencils and erasers, as an incentive to come.

(...)

My friend used to rarely go to school. After a training session, she started going to school regularly. Then her mother came to me asking what magic I have done. This girl is always thanking me, so I tell her "there is nothing to thank me for".

Zimal, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

We hold weekly sessions. The first session I have conducted was "I am", "I have", and "I can do". When I conducted this session, the group members first could not understand what this was about. We stood in a circle and I asked everyone in the group to think about the meaning of those sentences. One boy said, "It is about us, about self-awareness, about who we are and what we can do". So, we took the time to think about ourselves.

(...)

Once I had the opportunity to mentor non-group members in a school. Those were students from different classes. Now they invite me for other sessions, and I told them that when I have free time, I will deliver another session.

Gohar, male adolescent champion, 17, Sindh

When I stand with girls from grade eight or nine, I can tell you that my behaviour is the best among all in the school. Everyone tells me: "you are very nice; we really like you". Then they encircle me. Because I told them that I am getting trained.

Azra, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

The interviews conducted with the young respondents and RSPN field staff revealed, however, a lack of monitoring on the level of the participants' attendance in the peer sessions led by the adolescent group members with non-group members. It remains therefore unclear to the research team whether each peer group member did or will receive all training modules given the absence of an effective

follow-up framework. Furthermore, it appeared that only one respondent, out of all peer group and adolescent members interviewed, had started delivering sessions on life skills to non-group members. Both aspects raise questions about the effectiveness of the multiplier effect inherent to the peer learning model, and thus the effects of the programme in the long term. Moreover, the lack of training material similar to the toolkit provided to the adolescent champions was listed as one of the main challenges encountered by the adolescent group members when planning to cascade their knowledge to the third cohort of adolescents (non-group members). Finally, one adolescent champion flagged the issue of the accessibility of the training content for uneducated adolescents.

I received a training from the adolescent champion of our group and (...) mentored 15 adolescents. I use the methods taught by the adolescent champion. I have used the method of lecturing and gave practical examples like how smoking harms your health. The main purpose of mentoring is keeping harmful social practices away from the lives of adolescents.

Hamza, male adolescent group member, 14, Sindh

I have not conducted any mentoring sessions with other adolescents but talk about our meetings with some friends.

Shaima, female adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

[To improve the Life Skills Training] I suggest providing us with the training kit, book, and other material.

Zahan, male adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

There is a difference [between teaching in school and out-of-school adolescents]. The girls studying in schools can understand me better because they are studying. But the training that I conduct in the village – there are girls who are educated, and some who dropped out of school or never enrolled in school. So those girls have difficulty in understanding.

Azra, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

When asked about the learning advantages of the peer education model over mainstream education, the opinions of the adolescent respondents varied, which did not allow the research team to identify a strong trend towards one specific approach. While a significant group of adolescents expressed their enthusiasm for the alternative content and format of the mentoring sessions, others placed more trust in schoolteachers and the quality of their teaching.

In school, it is only about teaching and learning with stress. But here in the group, there is no stress and we get a chance to talk. We also get a chance to speak in school but less. We were not scared during the training and there were no right or wrong questions.

Gohar, male adolescent group champion, 17, Sindh

Peer mentoring is better. Teachers are cold (...). This way, you teach with love.

Zimal, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

I have studied three classes and dropped out of school. I like both methods; learning in school and learning in the adolescent group. I find learning from the champion more effective as she shares everything in a friendly manner.

Shaima, female adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

There is a difference [between mainstream education and peer mentoring] because here the champion is teaching and at school there are teachers. Learning with an adult teacher is more effective as he is more educated.

Shaima, female adolescent group member, 11, Sindh

I think a teacher is aware of everything and has a lot of experience (...). They can explain better. Also, we can forget certain things which the teachers do not forget. So, I think that teachers are better than adolescents.

Azra, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

C – HOW GENDER-RESPONSIVE WAS THE ADOLESCENT GROUP AND THE LIFE SKILLS TRAINING BASED ON THE ADOLESCENT EMPOWERMENT TOOLKIT?

THE ADOLESCENT EMPOWERMENT TOOLKIT AND THE ROLL-OUT OF TRAINING SESSIONS

Increasing adolescent participation and empowerment is strongly linked to ending harmful discriminatory social and gender norms and practices that can delay the social and psychological development of both girls and boys and impede their life aspirations. The overall objective of gender-responsive programmes is to equally benefit women and men as well as correct gender imbalances (UNESCO 2003).

The analysis of the gender-responsiveness of the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit is based on the criteria set by UNESCO policy documents on gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive life skills-based education (UNESCO 2003, 2008). According to the UN agency, a gender-responsive LST should:

1. Define a content-relevant curriculum and an inclusive learning process that avoids prejudice and discrimination
2. Promote gender equity and support adolescents with developing critical faculties

1 - Defining a content-relevant curriculum and an inclusive learning process that avoids prejudice and discrimination

Life Skills Based Education promotes learning strategies such as exploration, curiosity, and discussion. Gender-responsiveness in such approaches can ensure that these skills are equally available to and utilized by both sexes. (UNESCO 2008, p.3)

The training manual constitutes the fifth booklet of a curriculum pack designed by UNICEF in 2016 that provides its staff, programme coordinators and MTs with technical and practical tools to support adolescents in the provinces of Punjab and Sindh (UNICEF Pakistan 2016a). The guidelines take a gender-sensitive approach as they emphasise the need to target all adolescents regardless of their gender and to address their needs. Moreover, they provide guidance on how to collect gender-disaggregated information, reach out to vulnerable girls and boys, create a safe and gender-sensitive environment for adolescent activities, build gender-sensitive teams of educators, as well as to set up an M&E system in consultation with the young beneficiaries (UNICEF Pakistan 2016d). All sections of the training manual (identity and self-esteem, empathy and respect, communication and expression, coping with stress and managing emotions) invite the adolescent group members to reflect on their identities as girls and boys and examine the ways in which being male, or female shapes their lives, experiences and opportunities. In addition, the training participants should question their community social structure as well as their role and responsibilities in society. The manual itself does not include a discussion on adolescent rights. Instead, it is based on mechanisms that rely on games and discussions to tackle these issues, such as drawing, storytelling, dance and collages (UNICEF Pakistan 2016a). The topics covered in the training are expected to develop competencies within boys and girls – knowledge, skills, and attitudes – for negotiating the existing

rights of adolescent's girls, and their enforcement, with their parents and peers in the community. Ultimately, this is expected to lead to the reduction of child marriage and the reduction of teen pregnancy. Although the booklet contains 48 sessions, the training was reduced to 16 units to make its content less compact and more accessible to all adolescent boys and girls, especially to the illiterate ones.

Overall, and apart from a few minor exceptions (the session on family), the adolescent girls and boys interviewed reported enjoying learning about the curriculum topics and feeling at ease during the training on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit and the roll-out sessions. The adolescent respondents were encouraged to share with the research team the types of activities and issues they welcomed discussing. The energisers such as *One lie, two truths* along with the session on *Identity and Self Esteem*, in particular, *I am, I have, I can*, seemed to resonate with most both girls and boys. Compared to the beginning of the programme, the respondents felt that they were better equipped to identify their strengths and assess the quality of their relationship with their community members.

The champion teaches us about child development and the rights of adolescents like the rights to participate, to be protected and educated. He also briefs us on the project "Improving adolescent lives in Pakistan". The topic I like is the "right to participate in decisions". All topics were fine, and I did not feel uncomfortable with any topic.

Zayn, male adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

I like learning the session on identify and self-esteem (I am, I have, I can do) because now I know my capabilities and I can identify the positive and negative relationships. I also like games.

Sanaya, female adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

[My peer group likes] one lie, two truths. They also like "I can, I am". They say that they feel powerful by knowing that they can do things (...). They don't like the topic of family life, because they say there is too much work at home.

Zimal, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

As a result of a consultation with adolescents on the key priority topics to be addressed during the training, UNICEF and RSPN created an additional module on SRH. It came nevertheless to the attention of the research team that SRH was neither addressed in the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit nor in the roll-out sessions in the adolescent groups. This session on reproductive health and early pregnancy is in fact not directly delivered by the adolescent champions to the adolescent group members, but by the project staff only to married adolescent girls and boys in the presence of their parents. Even if this approach proves to be culture-sensitive and indicates UNICEF's willingness to adjust project activities to meet the beneficiaries' interests and needs, the fact that such a sensitive and vital piece of information was not provided to all adolescent group members is inconsistent with the UNICEF-stated objective to support the right to information for all adolescents about matters that concern them (United Nations 1989).

Attending the training on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit was sometimes an obstacle for female adolescent champions. According to the interviews conducted with UNICEF field offices and the implementing agencies, the participation of girls in the training is a challenge because of the gender norms in place restricting the mobility of girls and women.

At the district level, for example, girls from Khairpur or Ghotki from far-flung villages had to go to certain places for this training. So initially for girls, it was a bit of a challenge to get permissions from their parents, but the social mobilisation part and the engagement of the community played an important role in convincing them.

UNICEF Child Protection Officer, Sindh

The ability of the MTs or adolescent champions to provide the adolescent members with a safe place for both sexes is a key element to create an inclusive learning environment. Key informants from RSPN explained that they adopted a flexible approach regarding the meeting place for the roll-out sessions in the communities and left it to the adolescents to choose a place where they feel most at ease to learn. Data collected by the research team suggests that the training is usually delivered in a centrally located community or in private spaces, such as the adolescents' homes. As a result, the adolescent girls and boys in Sindh reported feeling safe on their way to, from, and during the training sessions, mainly due to the short walking distance and, for female members, the fact of not having to leave the village. In only one case did an adolescent girl explain that she had faced pressure from her community not to attend the group sessions, because of the presence of boys, even if the groups were implemented in a gender-based separate way. In Punjab on the other hand, some adolescents met by the research team shared their concerns about the location of the communal place where their first meeting was held, as it was very far away from their homes.

We do meet every month. The last meeting was last Sunday, at our teacher's house. This place is nearby and easy to access, and it is not dangerous to go there.

Maira, female adolescent group member, 11, Sindh

The place of meeting is in the centre of our village. And we conduct meetings on a monthly basis (...). It takes five to ten minutes to reach the meeting place.

Gohar, male adolescent group champion, 17, Sindh

We used to have problems previously. We used to go some days and sometimes couldn't. But since the training, I fight for myself and go on my own. [Before] there were permission issues for me and also there used to be boys there, so people would tell me not to go to because of the presence of boys and that it is not ok for a girl to be there. This is why we never went. My mom used to accompany me but now I am so confident about myself that if I am alone somewhere, I can do everything on my own. (...) I do it [the training] at my home. But I told them [the peer group members] that the training can be done anywhere they want. But everyone agreed for the training to be at my house. They said "you can train well in the comfort of your house, and maybe you might not be able to explain well in someone else's house. So, we will be more comfortable at your house".

Azra, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

2 - Promoting gender equity and supporting adolescents with developing critical faculties

The selection strategy of the adolescents has followed a gender-sensitive approach, with 51% of participants in the adolescent group intervention being girls and 49% being boys (according to the MIS data available in March 2019). Opening the group membership to boys indicates UNICEF's interest in an inclusive approach to prevent violations of children's rights.

In terms of equal access to and participation in the adolescent groups and the LST, some limitations were observed in the implementation of the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit and the roll-out sessions. While the facilitation guide of the curriculum pack recommends designing adolescent-focussed activities for all levels of literacy (UNICEF Pakistan 2016b), the adolescent group members interviewed reported a more classical training setting involving mostly lecturing sessions by the adolescent champions and writing tasks for the group participants. This raises questions about the accessibility of the training content for illiterate adolescents, especially girls, in a country with disparate literacy rates of 69% for men and 45% for women (Central Asia Institute, 2019). Moreover, in Sindh, the data collected suggested that only literate and sometimes already confident adolescents

were selected as adolescent champions, which prevents the most vulnerable OOS children from becoming role models. The literacy requirement also accounted for RSPN's difficulty in recruiting adolescent champions in Khairpur and Ghotki. According to the RSPN programme staff, it is difficult to find adolescents who are able to write and read. In Punjab on the other hand, the selection criteria for the adolescent champions seemed to focus more on the level of participation and activism of adolescents in their communities than on their level of education and competency.

Usually, there is a tendency that the most empowered and those who have a leading role in the community get selected [to become adolescent champions]. So, they are the ones who come first, and it is a challenge to involve people who belong to ethnic minority groups and are from poor communities. Since the very beginning, we are talking to our implementing partner and making sure that there is inclusion (...). Adolescent champions, as I said, should be school-going and that automatically excludes out-of-school girls and boys to be champions.

UNICEF Child Protection Officer, Sindh

Given the prevalence of gender-related traditional values in Pakistan, UNICEF PCO encouraged the separation of the adolescent groups for their workshop sessions and activities (UNICEF Pakistan 2016b). In Punjab and Sindh, the adolescent group interventions were implemented based on the design developed by the UoM for the ongoing RCT on the *IALP* programme. The study methodology is based on different treatment arms implying both mixed and gender-segregated groups⁹. However, it does not mean that all adolescents are sitting in the same room during the group sessions, but rather that both boys and girls from the same community can benefit from the intervention. Meetings were always held separately and supported by MTs from the same gender group, who have been trained by RSPN on the gender responsiveness of the intervention and the use of participatory and inclusive methods to make sure that everybody's voice is heard (UNICEF Pakistan 2016a). The curriculum pack provides the training facilitators with guidance and case studies for the facilitation of sessions with boys and girls (UNICEF Pakistan 2016c). This approach to gender does not only ensure that the adolescent group members are provided with a gender-sensitive environment, but also promotes social acceptance of the community. This way, parents with strong traditional precepts would still allow their children to join the groups.

This gender-segregated learning setting was supported by the study participants, in particular by the adolescent girls who were enthusiastic about an intervention focussing on their education, especially in the cases where there was no school within their reach. In cases where the community only had either a female or a male adolescent group, most of the adolescent respondents, supported by RSPN programme coordinator, were in favour of extending the intervention to the other gender group. Their arguments were based on the concept of equal access to information for all adolescents and the necessity to train both female and male adolescents in order to achieve social change in the communities.

Even mixed groups are separated. From my observation of from my field visits and review meetings with partners, meeting and talking with adolescent girls and boys, I think it's a good strategy because it is culturally sensitive. Female groups or female adolescent champions who make their groups, they are very energetic, and they feel that it's an opportunity for them to be engaged in certain activities.

UNICEF Child Protection Officer, Sindh

If we look at Khairpur and Ghotki, there are no schools for girls and there is no exposure to education. It is difficult for girls here. The boys are still literate as they can go to school. But for the girls, this is the first time that they participate in such groups.

⁹ In the case of mixed groups, the training is still delivered separately to boys and girls.

Hania, female MT, RSPN, Sindh

The first time we visited the group, I saw that girls were given importance and it was so surprising. I was so proud that it was a girls-only group. I had never expected that only girls could be given training too. I had heard that there are vocational training centres for girls and boys. But we had never expected that adolescent girls and boys could get training too. I was shocked and so happy.

Azra, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

There is more success with mixed groups because you have discussions with both girls and boys (...). Both groups have access to the same information.

RSPN Social Sector Specialist and Overall Coordinator, Islamabad

There are only boys in the adolescent group. There are adolescents from my village and my brother is also a member of our group. No one is out of school. There should be a mixed group as the girls should also know about the activities of the boys and ideas.

Hamza, male adolescent group member, 14, Sindh

There should be a mixed group of boys and girls. (...). Girls usually conduct their meeting at home while boys are outside. I am in contact with the leader of the girls' group. We discuss with each other. I have tried to form a mixed group, but the girls are shy and hesitant.

Gohar, male adolescent group champion, 17, Sindh

Although some adolescents met during the study were able to critically reflect on their community's harmful gender-based practices, such as the lack of access to education for girls, child marriage and early pregnancies, a large majority still reported a clear distinction between what girls and boys can achieve (See Domain 1, Section D).

D – HOW DID THE ADOLESCENT EMPOWERMENT TOOLKIT AND ADOLESCENT GROUPS INFLUENCE CHANGE IN SOCIAL AND GENDER NORMS AMONG THE CONCERNED ADOLESCENTS?

Social norms are shared beliefs about behaviour that are considered typical and appropriate for a specific reference group or community. They can be defined as rules of behaviour and attitudes that people in a group conform to because they believe that: (a) most other people in the group conform to them and (b) most other people in the group believe they should conform to them. These beliefs shape mutual expectations about appropriate social behaviours of individuals within these groups (Germain, 2009). Traditional gender norms shape how male and female members of society see themselves as men or women, their social relationships, their sexuality, and their share of power and resources (DFID, 2016).

The following section explores trends in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour changes in relation to the LST based on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit and the adolescent groups.

Life Skills Education is not routine work, but an approach which is [delivered] all through plays and games, so that [it] is a really new approach.

RSPN Social Officer, Islamabad

At the time of the field visits, most adolescent group members met in Sindh had received between one to two sessions of the LST based on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit, covering workshops from the sections Identity and Self Esteem, and Empathy and Respect.

I have participated twice in the session. I had participated thoroughly. Madam complimented me that I am very smart. Yes, I talked during the session Identify and self-esteem ("I am, I have I can do"). I talked on positive and negative relations, good and bad people and the kinds of these relations. (...)

The last session was on the map of relationships: I suggested my peers to take the training properly and to understand it thoroughly so we could also communicate the same message to others. I also suggested to others to concentrate and to not consider it a joke. Moreover, the students repeatedly clicked their pens during the session which disturbed the whole session, so I suggested them not to do that, at least for the sake of others who came to learn something.

Sanaya, female adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

Perceived increased knowledge. Five adolescent champions who received the LST based on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit directly were interviewed during the mission. They perceived a general increase in their own knowledge, compared to before their participation in the training.

Q: What did you know about the life skills workshop before you started taking part in it?

A: Nothing much! (...) This information is new to me.

Q: On which aspect do you feel different?

A: I feel more knowledgeable now. My awareness level has raised.

Q: Did you ever think of these as an issue before attending the group?

A: No.

Zainab, female adolescent champion, 16, Sindh

When asked about what they had learned, the adolescent respondents shared their new knowledge. This either related to introspection and knowledge about oneself or knowledge about rights. Child rights, as mentioned above, are not explicitly mentioned in the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit manual but were nonetheless discussed throughout the training, according to the respondents. Most adolescent boys and girls that were trained on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit, directly via master training or indirectly via peer-learning during the roll-out sessions in the adolescent group, reported that they could identify and explain their rights related to protection, education, and child marriage. Yet, a Life Skills MT in Sindh noted that there were important differences in learning outcomes between boys and girls:

Because firstly, they get to know about their rights, so they see that they didn't know about this before. Especially girls say that they didn't know that they had the right to education and survival, and freedom of opinion because no one took their consent related to marriage, and what they want to become when they grow up. So, we see a lot of change in girls. Even boys feel very confident because we have a session on mentorship. So, boys like that champions change a lot. Also, when we document success stories, we witness a lot of change. (...) Yes, there is a lot of difference. This project, if we look at Khairpur and Ghotki, there are no girls' schools and there is no exposure. So, the girls have a lot of difficulties. The boys are more literate and have exposure, so they go out easily. But for the girls, this is the first time that they have made such groups. This itself is a big thing. So, training for girls is comparatively more difficult than boys.

Hania, female MT, RSPN, Sindh

Q: From all the sessions, which one did you like the most?

A: Basic rights.

Q: Why?

A: Because I didn't know before that I had rights too. Now, I know that we have rights too.

Zeeshan, male adolescent champion, 18, Sindh

Although the adolescent group allowed many respondents to access new information about child rights, many respondents also reported using school and television as sources of information. School

was reported by two adolescents as the place where they first heard about their rights. Adolescent girls and boys from both Sindh and Punjab mentioned television as a way to get general information. 88% of them had a TV at home (Annex Table B).

Knowledge about child marriage. One key learning of the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit training sessions was intended to be child marriage and its consequences, and indeed, this was mentioned by several respondents as one of their learnings. Similarly, the other adolescent group members who were trained by the adolescent leaders in Sindh could identify their rights to protection against child marriage. Most identified the consequences of child marriage. Although not part of the training material, the topic seemed to have been raised indirectly during the sessions in Sindh, in line with the training concept described in Domain I, Section B, by an RSPN staff in Islamabad.

Q: Have you ever thought of early marriage as an issue before the training?

A: No.

Q: What were your thoughts?

A: We used to believe it's the family's choice whenever they get their children married.

Arham, male adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

Q: So, tell me, in one session of the group, what all do you do? The session in which you are given training...

A: When we go there, we are taught about basic things, about our society, about our mental and physical health and about the steps that are to come in our life. And also, we are told about child rights... what rights we have. Child protection, and how a child may succeed. We are taught all this. (...)

Q: Now, what information do you have which you did not have before joining the adolescent group?

A: Before joining this, I didn't know about the fact that people ages 10-18 are categorised as children. I didn't know that people this age cannot get married.

Q: Anything else that you were not told in school?

A: Secondly, I didn't know that child marriages could be mentally and physically torturing. This we weren't told in school.

Azra, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

A: We were told that early marriages are bad.

Q: Didn't you know this before?

A: No.

Q: What did you think?

A: We used to say that this is a personal matter. But now we think of it as a social.

Zimal, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

Q: As you said, you are a member of a group where adolescent champion gives you a session. So, what did you learn from it?

A: Yes, we received a session on the child marriages and on the rights of the adolescents.

Q: So, what did [you] learn regarding child marriages?

A: We learned that there are many disadvantages of child marriages, like their babies [are] not that healthy and often die. The adolescent mother experiences trauma during pregnancy.

Gulnaz, female adolescent group member, 16, Sindh

During the training, we learned that 0 – 18 years are under the child age group. The marriage of children under this age group is illegal and harmful to society. In my opinion, the best age for girls to marry is 20. At this age, she will have good health for marriage and to give birth. In early age, children will be born weak. For boys, the ideal age is 22; even my plan to marry is after 25. I have calculated my age for marriage from 2009. In 2025, I [will] have completed my studies and will get a good job

then (...) marry. In the case of boys' early marriage, they become weak. They are not mature enough and not fully adult. They could not afford marriage. They will not be able to take care of their children. (...) Everyone has his own opinions regarding child marriage. I myself didn't know about [the] disadvantages of child marriage before training. We never think about it before. We learned about child marriage in training.

Gohar, male adolescent champion, 17, Sindh

Yes, now I have learned the disadvantages of child marriage. It was discussed in adolescent group meetings.

Zayn, male adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

The champion teaches us about child marriage disadvantages and social evils.

Hamza, male adolescent group member, 14, Sindh

In Sindh, the adolescents reported having learned about child marriage for the first time through the adolescent group and the LST based on the Empowerment Toolkit. In Punjab, where the intervention had not started at the time of the mission, adolescents' attitudes also tended to be against child marriage. Most respondents stated that child marriage was not a new topic for them. One adolescent reported having discussed it at school and another one having discussed it with his family. Some adolescents mentioned the health complications that usually follow child marriage, both for the girls/mothers and the babies resulting from early pregnancies. The adolescents justified their stand referring to its illegality or to a religious injunction to not marry. Other adolescents disagreed with child marriage but could not articulate why. These equivocal testimonies in Punjab suggest that providing additional knowledge and awareness-raising about child marriage through the adolescent groups could eventually help consolidate knowledge and positive attitudes.

A: After 22 years for boys and after 26 years for girls.

Q: What are the advantages of marrying before 18?

A: No idea.

Q: And what are the disadvantages?

A: I think it is a sin

Khaan, male adolescent group member, 14, Punjab

Q: Since you are part of this [newly established adolescent] group did you ever discuss child marriage?

A: No.

Q: What do you think, child marriage of a girl is right or wrong?

A: This is a wrong act.

Q: What are the problems a girl can face in case of child marriage, what will be the effects on her?

A: They don't know anything about how to deal with domestic matters. They don't have much understanding. That should not be practiced.

Ebrah, female adolescent champion, 18, Punjab

Q: Do you have any information about child marriage?

A: Yes, I have information, there are effects.

Q: For example. Which type of effects if a boy gets married early?

A: He gets many kids, so he is affected.

Q: Any other loss or affect a boy can face?

A: I don't know... [respondent is being shy]

Q: Well, if you don't know about boys' effects then tell me about girls, which type of effects girls may have in case of early marriage?

A: A girl feels shame. There are many effects, her kids will not be healthy, so her kids also have affected. There is such a case in our village. A girl was married at early age. During birth, her baby died.

Q: At what age she was married?

A: She was about 14 or 15.

Q: So, when she gave birth, did her baby die?

A: Yes.

Q: And what was the age of a boy to whom she was married?

A: 18 or 20 years old.

Q: Then what happened?

A: She got caesarean and immediately after the caesarean her baby died.

Q: Now is she alright or sick?

A: She is sick.

Q: Is that why you think that marriage should not be at an early age?

A: Yes, these are the losses in early marriage. Mostly such types of experiences happen.

Q: Do you know about this issue yourself or somebody informed you [of the] "affects or losses of child marriage"?

A: My family members told me. We also know little.

Fazli, male adolescent group member, 17, Punjab

Q: And if they get married before 18, is there any advantage?

A: Yes definitely.

Q: What?

A: God has said that when a girl gets into puberty, she should not be made to stay at home unmarried because it is a sin. It is like a debt over parents' head. This debt is removed once she is married.

Q: Does it have any disadvantages?

A: No.

(...) [later contradicting herself]

Q: Are there early marriages?

A: Yes, that happens.

Q: Is this right or wrong?

A: This is wrong.

Q: Why?

A: Because they should at least be 18 years old.

Neha, female adolescent group member, 16, Punjab

Q: What do you think is the best of girl to marry?

A: 22.

Q: What do you think is the best of the boy to marry?

A: 25 or 26.

Q: Why a girl should not get married before this age? Why not at 15 or 16?

A: Because she does not have CNIC [Computerised National Identity Card].

Q: Ok, and are there any other problem besides to CNIC?

A: No.

Q: And why should not a boy get married early?

A: They would not continue their study.

Zayyir, male adolescent group member, 13, Punjab

Perceived importance of education. Another intended key takeaway from the adolescent group and the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit is the importance of and right to education for all children, especially for girls. An important goal to achieve in Pakistan is ensuring children, especially girls, make the transition from primary to lower secondary school, as mentioned in the Pakistan County Programme Document 2018-2022 (UN ECOSOC 2017) and the IKEA Regional Proposal on

Adolescents (UN ECOSOC 2017; UNICEF ROSA 2017b). Among the adolescent participants in the short quantitative questionnaire, 24 out of 42 attended formal school, an ALP or College while 10 did some noneconomic activities such as household chores as their main occupation. Four adolescents reported being engaged in full-time or part-time work and four in other activities. In Punjab, only 41.6% of male and 33.3% of female respondents (in total, 8 out of 21 adolescents) were attending formal school or college. The relevance of broaching this issue during the training is therefore clear. Interviews with adolescents who had received the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit and/or were participating in the adolescent group indicated that these interventions contributed to their understanding of the importance of education, and in some cases, their taking actions in the community regarding education.

Q: What are the topics that you like?

A: I liked giving the message that girls should go to school.

Q: On the importance of education?

A: Yes.

Q: Why?

A: Because there are many girls in the village who don't go to school. Some parents don't allow, and some are too poor. So, I liked it, that I go to every house and tell that girls should study.

Arham, male adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

The champion teaches us about adolescents' rights, child marriage disadvantages, and social evils. If any adolescent and young person [is] addicted on drugs and smoking, we must motivate them to avoid such habits. [...] I discuss more on the importance of education. Some parents don't provide education to their adolescents. We should inform these parents that education is our identity and if we don't have an education then we will be illiterate.

Abdul Rahman, male adolescent group member, 14, Sindh

Q: Do you want to share something else? Anything that can be made better?

A: We have learned a lot. [I] used to be very scared of education before, but now [I] think it is easy.

Q: Do you think you have learned about yourself from here?

A: Yes. I didn't know what I was capable of, now I know!

Zimal, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

Reflecting identity and feelings. The Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit training content emphasised reflecting the identity as boys and girls, but also to identify and express their feelings and improve self-consciousness. According to UNICEF ROSA and UNICEF PCO, life skills related to individual identity and self-expression, among others, were considered a prerequisite for the empowerment and participation of adolescents in their community. In combination with the intergenerational dialogue, engaging the community, these life skills lead to reducing child marriage practices (UNICEF ROSA 2017a; UNICEF Pakistan 2017): *Baseline findings substantiated UNICEF's approach to invest initially in the spheres of identity and self-expression for adolescent boys and girls, as well as intergenerational dialogue, as a means to ultimately achieve a positive change in child marriage practices* (UNICEF Pakistan 2017, p13).

A: This was about identity, "I can": This was about what all I can do... and then "I have", this was about what all I possess, and how can I benefit from all of that. I mean, our inner feelings were being expressed. This was the first session and it was amazing... I have, I can, and... I have... This expressed our feelings. So, from the very first session, we started thinking about ourselves. [...] One of the sessions was on feelings and empathy. So, we were told to draw. We had to draw to convey what our feelings were. And then we had to tell the reasons why it is the way it is. For instance, if I drew a crying face, I had to tell the reason that my glass broke. Why did it break? Because my brother broke it, which is why I am crying. So, we had to convey our feelings through drawings.

Q: So, you got an opportunity to explore your feelings.

A: Exactly, we got an opportunity to explore your feelings, and I was thinking what feelings I have. For example, it sometimes happens that someone does something bad and we get really angry or sad. Someone once tore my copy, and I got really angry.

Azra, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

Abilities, responsibilities and needs of adolescents. Importantly, the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit provided motivation and inspiration to the adolescents to reflect on what they can do, what they are capable of, as adolescents, and thereby, to empower themselves. Adolescents were asked during the field mission whether they could identify the differences between adolescents, children and adults. Asking about the differences between adolescents, adults and children allowed the research team to capture the attitudes of adolescents about their identity as adolescents and awareness of their needs. Interestingly, most adolescents in Sindh and a few in Punjab identified differences between adults, adolescents and children in terms of age, bodies, responsibilities and knowledge. They described adolescents as having more knowledge and responsibilities than children, but less than adults. While the specific needs of adolescents were included as part of the training content, these were not contrasted with those for adults or children. The needs of adolescents, compared to adults, were therefore, unsurprisingly, seldom mentioned as being different (only mentioned by one adolescent respondent).

There is a difference between child and adolescent: children have no responsibilities and we [as adolescents] have to get an education while the children are only interested in games. The adults are more sensible and have more knowledge and are more responsible.

Abdul Rahman, male adolescent group member, 14, Sindh

Yes, there is a little difference. The difference [between adolescents, adults, and children] is in understanding and wisdom.

Azhar, male adolescent group member, 12, Punjab

Beyond equipping the adolescents with new knowledge or reinforcing their knowledge, the LST, based on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit, being conducted at the adolescent group level, confirms and shapes positive attitudes about social and gender norms.

The appropriate age of marriage. Adolescent champions and adolescent group members reported having positive attitudes toward the appropriate age of marriage, both during the short survey and during in-depth interviews, in particular in relation to the appropriate age of marriage.

Of the 42 adolescents who participated in the short survey, three females were married, and an additional ten adolescents were engaged. Moreover, 33% of the respondents (corresponding mostly to the thirteen married or engaged adolescents) reported that they had been approached for marriage in the past. Although both boys and girls reported that they had been approached, the share of approached girls (39%) was higher than that of boys (26%). Of those who had been approached for marriage, the age at which they were approached ranged from 10 to 18, with a median of 14 years old (See Annex Table B).

In the short survey, adolescents were asked about the legal age of marriage and the age at which they thought it is appropriate for girls and boys to get married. Several trends were notable.

In Sindh, where the legal minimum age is set at 18 for boys and girls by the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Amendment Bill 2014, most of the respondents could answer the question correctly. All but two of the 22 respondents believed that the legal age of marriage is equal to or over 18 for girls, and

all respondents believed the legal age to be equal to or over 18 for boys. In Punjab, where the legal age of marriage is 16 for girls and 18 for boys, as defined by Federal law Pakistan's Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929, most of the 21 respondents responded that the legal age for boys and girls is equal to or over 18 (except four respondents, and three respondents, who believed the legal age for girls' marriage and boys' marriage, respectively, was under the actual age threshold). This indicates a relatively high awareness and positive attitude about being at least 18 to get married, among adolescent respondents in both regions (Table 3). Furthermore, across survey respondents, the average reported appropriate age of marriage for girls and boys was slightly over 19, and thus above the minimum age for marriage of 18, which is the widely accepted definition in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Table 3: Appropriate and Legal Age for Marriage

	Girls' Answers	Boys' Answers
<i>Sindh</i>		
Average reported appropriate age of marriage for girls	19.1	20
Average reported appropriate age of marriage for boys	19.5	19.6
Average reported legal age of marriage for girls	18.7	20.9
Average reported legal age of marriage for boys	19.6	20.9
<i>Punjab</i>		
Average reported appropriate age of marriage for girls	19.1	19.1
Average reported appropriate age of marriage for boys	19.7	19.5
Average reported legal age of marriage for girls	18.9	17.9
Average reported legal age of marriage for boys	19.9	18.5

The estimates presented above were collected on a sample of 42 adolescents and differed with answers from in-depth interviews. While these estimates tend to indicate a similar appropriate age for marriage for boys and girls, in the interviews, respondents mentioned a higher age to be appropriate for marriage of boys than they did for girls. Since the interview respondents were also part of the survey sample, this finding may suggest a social desirability bias in the interviews. Nonetheless, all adolescents expressed the view that it is harmful to marry early both for boys and girls.

18 or more than 18 years for boy and girls, also 19 or 20 years. Disadvantages of marriage before 18 years are that there is a risk at the time of birth of the child the life of child and mother at risk. There is not any advantage of marriage before 18 years.

Shaima, female adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

A: 18 years for boys and 18 years for girls.

Q: What are the advantages of marrying before 18?

A: No advantage.

Q: And what are the disadvantages?

A: Maternal and infant mortality.

Zainab, female adolescent champion, 16, Sindh

Q: Do you know the meaning of child marriage?

A: Marriage in young age. Girls should not be married at an early age as they are not adult at that age. If a girl is married before 18 that will be illegal and also against the religion.

Q: So, you are saying that girls should not be married before 18?

A: Yes, either its matter of boy or girl they should be married after 18.

Q: What will be the problems and effects if a girl gets early marry?

A: She could not give birth. I just know that.

Q: And if a boy gets early marry what types of problems he may face?

A: He has a loss for himself.

Q: How tell me in detail?

A: He will not be able to do work and earn and if he married in the same status, he will become a burden on his parents. First, he should be able to have a job then gets married.

M. Azhar II, male adolescent group member, 12, Punjab

What do you think that what is the best age for a girl to marry?

A: At least 18 to 20.

Q: And for a boy?

A: 18 to 24.

Q: But you for yourself said that you will get marry in 26 or 27?

A: Currently in our area boys of 16 also getting married. I mean an uneducated boy should get marry between 22 to 23 but an educated should get married after getting his job.

Q: So, in your village marriage is done at the age of 16?

A: Yes, in some places, usually it goes until 17 to 18 as it is adult age.

M. Azhar II, male adolescent group member, 12, Punjab

Supporting a positive value of girls and gender equality. In-depth interviews revealed that perceived social norms¹⁰ in the visited areas still strongly favoured boys, but that adolescents' personal norms¹¹ did not necessarily reflect the social norms. Adolescents acknowledged that adolescent girls were more restricted in their movement than boys and could not enjoy the same rights:

Boys are free to go outside while the girls can't walk freely outside. Also, girls get less education than boys (...). Boys are more independent. After school, they can go outside and perform games. But girls are not allowed to go outside.

Hamza, male adolescent group member, 14, Sindh

Boys have more rights here in comparison to girls. I do not know why.

M. Azhar, male adolescent group member, 12, Punjab

Nonetheless, based on the in-depth interviews with adolescents of both genders, in both provinces, boys and girls are still associated with specific gender roles. When asked what girls do better than boys, a large share of the adolescent respondents (13) from both sex groups, including adolescent champions, revealed perceptions related to traditional gender-segregated roles in the family. For instance, girls were seen as being better with specific household-related tasks, such as household chores, and boys with labour and physical tasks but also "running the household". Only two adolescents mentioned that girls and boys can perform all tasks similarly.

¹⁰ Also called subjective norms (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980), social norms can be descriptive and injunctive norms, whereby they reflect beliefs about how one ought to act based on expectations of what other people would morally approve or disapprove of (Cialdini et al. 1991).

¹¹ Personal norms are norms that provide the individual guidance on how to act. They are attached to the feeling of a moral obligation to perform a certain behaviour (Schwartz 1977), at least to some extent irrespective of social expectations (Thøgersen 2009).

Boys are better in doing outside work like working on the land and play sports. Girls are better at doing household chores.

Maira, female adolescent group member, 11, Sindh

I think men can run the house better than women. Their control is better, because even God has given a certain higher position to men. Although women and men are equal, but men have a higher level as said by God (...). They go out of the house and have more experience. They have friends who guide them well (...). Before marriage, a girl can work or study. But after marriage, they can handle the kids well especially if she is educated.

Azra, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

Girls can do household chores better and embroidery and boys can do outside work better.

Hamza, male adolescent group member, 14, Sindh

A: What you think boys can do better than girls and girls can do better than boys?

R: Which type of such works [thinking]... Girls can do domestic chores in a better way such as making bread, preparing food but boys have not such quality to do kitchen work.

Lubna, female adolescent group member, 16, Punjab

A: What do you think boys can do better than girls and girls can do better than boys?

R: Education, boys are better in getting an education. And girls can do home chores in a better way.

Fazli, male adolescent group member, 17, Punjab

Today girls can do anything. Right now, I have no idea in my mind that I can say that boys can do but girls can't. Boys can do a part-time job after school, but girls [should] not stay at home and learn the things at home.

Gohar, male adolescent champion, 17, Sindh

Valuing participation in secondary education. The adolescents surveyed appeared to value education highly, with most of them responding that adolescents should complete their education up to their Master's. However, the findings revealed an important gender bias. When asked about how long girls and boys should continue their education, the most popular response for girls was 12th grade (38%) while the most popular response for boys was a Master's degree (53%). (See Annex – Table 2). In Sindh, 28.6% of the respondents believed that girls should study until they achieve a Master's degree and 47.6% believed girls should study until 12th grade. In Punjab, the largest share of the respondent, nearly a quarter of the adolescents (23.8%), believed that a girl should go to school until 10th grade. This provincial difference could indicate that the adolescent groups in Sindh have started to have an awareness-raising effect concerning the importance of education. On the other hand, most adolescents met by the research team in Punjab were out of school and may have valued education less than their counterparts in Sindh.

During in-depth interviews, adolescent boys and girls from Sindh expressed that they perceived inequality in the access to education, disadvantaging girls, and that they aspired to greater gender equality in that regard. In addition, they were able to articulate the reasons they did not approve of gender inequality in education. Interestingly, one respondent in Punjab, who had not yet been exposed to the adolescent groups, justified these differences between boys and girls. Although this cannot be interpreted as representative of the situation in Punjab, this anecdotal evidence could suggest that the adolescent groups may be having the desired effect on changing the understanding and the opinions about education, and in particular girls' education. This might be a point of action in Punjab, or areas where adolescents are mostly OOS, to stress the importance of education and thereby contribute to shaping attitudes positively towards education.

Yes, less education for girls than boys. It is not good; both should treat equally. A girl can't go outside alone to market for purchasing thing.

Shaima, female adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

Q: On the importance of education?

A: Yes.

Q: Why?

A: Because there are many girls in the village that don't go to school. Some parents don't allow, and some are too poor. So, I liked it, that I go to every house and tell that girls should study.

Arham, male adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

Yes, less education to girls than boys, also due to poverty also not giving education. Also, a few parents, who don't earn themselves, send their boys to labour.

Maira, female adolescent group member, 11, Sindh

Q: Do they teach them both equally?

A: No boys are more educated.

Q: Is this right?

A: No.

Q: Why?

A: They say that girls would get married, so it doesn't matter.

Zaima, female adolescent group member, 16, Punjab

Relationships with members of the opposite sex. In in-depth interviews where the interviewee had built a good rapport with the adolescent, these respondents were probed about their interactions with persons of the other sex. Not only did the interviewees reveal a strong preference for gender-segregated adolescent group sessions, as presented in Domain 1, Section C, their testimonies also suggested that the adolescent group sessions had not contributed to modifying the perceptions about interacting (in discussions or play) with an adolescent of the opposite sex. Many adolescent girls reported that they did not interact with boys outside their family circle.

Q: If you don't mind me asking, can you tell me if you are friends with boys in your community?

A: I am not friends with random boys in the community, but I am friends with my cousins. But our relationship is only friendship.

Q: What is the reason for not being friends with boys?

A: If we become friends with boys in our community, the women take it negatively. This is how our society is.

Azra, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

Q: Now I have a sensitive question; do you have any boyfriend in your village?

A: No.

Q: Or has it happened that a boy approached you for having a friendship with you?

A: No, it never happened.

Q: I mean a fair and good friendship?

A: Yes, I know but it never happened (...). No, we are not like that. We do not do this.

Ebrah, female adolescent champion, 18, Punjab

Q: If you don't mind, do you play with boys?

A: No.

Q: Because you're not permitted?

A: No, we don't like it.

Q: And do they irritate?

A: No

Q: And do they misbehave?

A: *We don't get out of the house so why would they.*

Q: *Why?*

A: *We just go to school and dad drops us.*

Zaima, female adolescent group member, 16, Punjab

E – HOW DID THE ADOLESCENTS GROUPS AND THE ADOLESCENT EMPOWERMENT TOOLKIT INCREASE PARTICIPATION AND AGENCY OF THE ADOLESCENTS IN THEIR COMMUNITY?

Beyond changes in knowledge and attitude, a crucial outcome of the IALP in Pakistan included the changes in participation and agency of the adolescents in their community: *Outcome 1: By 2019, 705,200 adolescents are able to connect with each other and decision-makers through the implementation of participatory communication platforms and 117,500 have the opportunity to be agents of change in their communities.* (UNICEF ROSA 2017b, p47). For this reason, *the activities and approaches in [the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit] resource pack support adolescent girls and boys to express themselves, participate in decisions that affect them and achieve change in their families and communities* (Booklet 1 - Curriculum Pack Introduction UNICEF Pakistan 2016a, p19).

Building the confidence and communication skills to express an opinion in the family and public sphere was, therefore, one of the main changes sought from the participation of adolescents in the adolescent group sessions and in the LST based on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit. The KM Study explored perceived changes in these aspects. It also explored the future aspirations of adolescents. This section presents the results of the short quantitative survey about confidence levels and behaviour patterns of the adolescent group members and the adolescent champions.

The survey gathered data on age, gender, religious affiliation, and marital status of the adolescents; whether or not the adolescents were currently in school full time or pursuing other activities; their participation in adolescent groups, LST based on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit; how they learned about their rights; their access to and use of health facilities for adolescents; their confidence in making decisions about their lives and carrying out daily activities; their opinion on and knowledge of adolescent marriages, and finally, their opinions on corporal punishment. For readability, results are presented below by respondent gender.

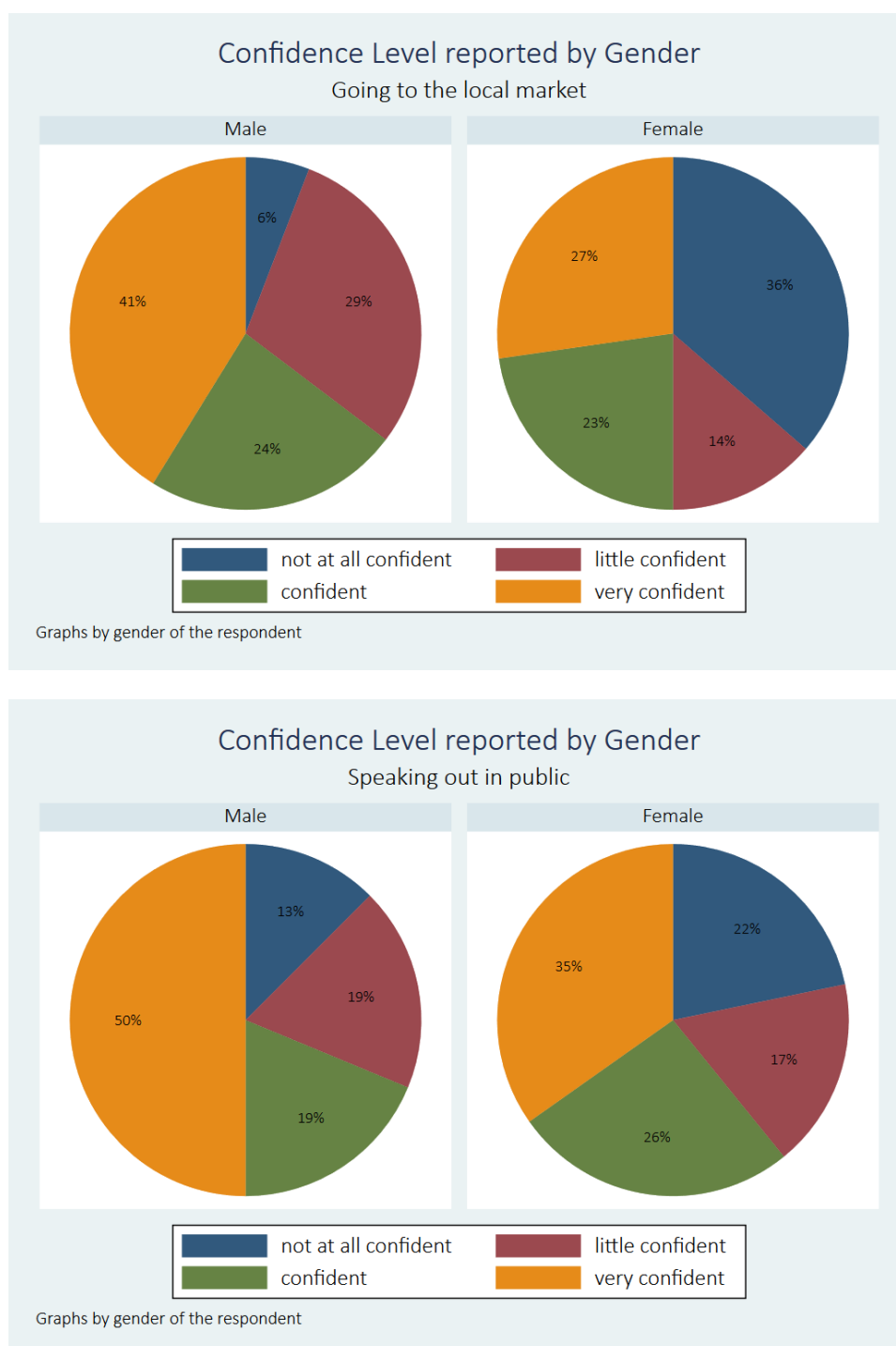
Gain in confidence. Gaining confidence is closely associated with an increase in critical-thinking skills and the ability to express an opinion. It is also related to future planning, involving lifetime decisions. The adolescents group members reported feeling more confident about speaking and expressing their opinion.

I feel no hesitation because all my fears and hesitations were wiped out during training. All the time, whenever my teacher invited someone to deliver the session, I stood up to do it. You may not believe me and think that I am appraising myself, but it was a reality that I always raised my hand for taking sessions. There were two groups, "A" and "B". Whichever the group was, I always the first one who raised his hand to take the session.

Gohar, male adolescent champion, 17, Sindh

I feel more confident and can easily talk to others. I have been taught the importance of talking.

Isha, female adolescent group member, 18, Sindh

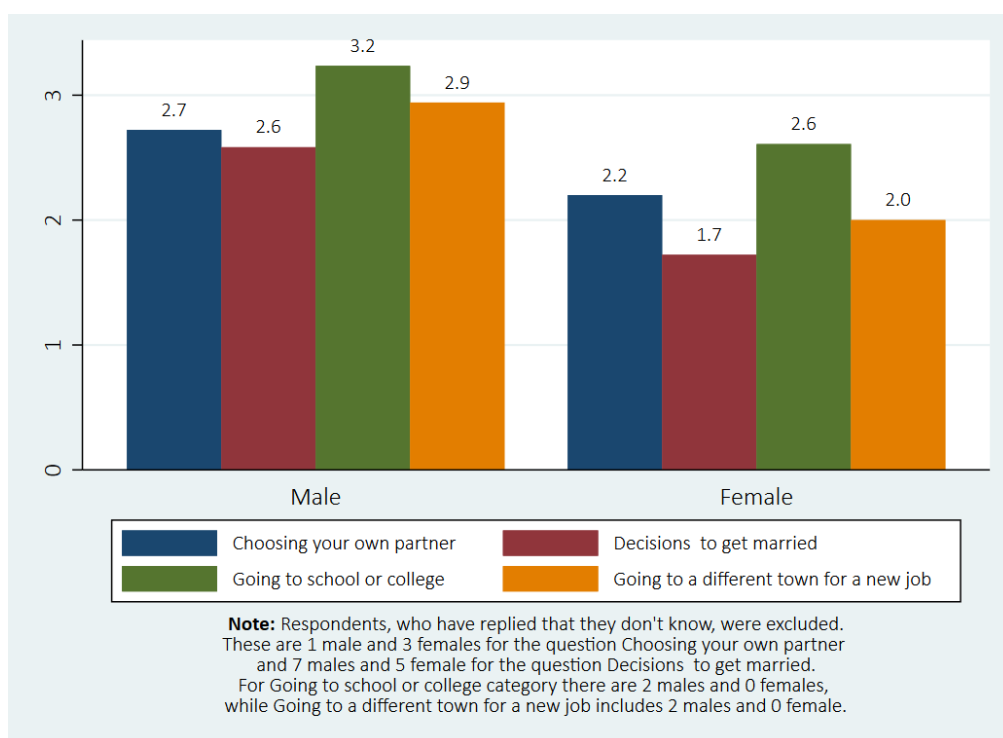
Figure 2: Confidence about Everyday Activities – Going to the Local Market and Speaking out in Public (n=42)

Confidence in performing everyday activities. Using a 4-point scale from 1 (*Not at all confident*) to 4 (*Very confident*)¹², adolescents were asked to rate how they felt about performing various activities on their own. Figure 2 above presents findings on how confident adolescents reported feeling performing the routine or everyday activities *going to the market* and *speaking out in public*. Overall, male respondents reported more confidence in performing these activities than their female

¹² 2 (*Little confident*), 3 (*Confident*). The option *I don't know* was also available. The latter was chosen by two males and one female for the question *Confidence about going to the local market* and by three males and no females for the question *Confidence about speaking out in public*.

counterparts. Indeed, more than two in five boys reported being very confident in going to the market (41%) and half stated that they were very confidence about speaking out in public (50%). On the other hand, the proportion of girls who reported being very confident about these activities was lower, 27% and 35%, respectively. Differences in confidence level can also be seen when examining the share of *not at all confident* responses. More than one-third of female respondents (36%) reported being not at all confident about going to the local market, compared to 6% of male respondents. Girls were also more likely to state that they were not confident at all about speaking out in public (22%), compared to 13% of male respondents. However, these aggregated findings mask divergent patterns by province, which are examined further in the Annex.

Figure 3: Average Reported Confidence Scores for Planning and Making Decisions for Future (n=42)



Confidence making decisions for the future. Figure 3 presents the average confidence scores reported by adolescents about making decisions for their future. Using the same 4-point scale as above, adolescent boys, on average, reported higher confidence levels than girls about making the different decisions, namely, the decision to get married, choosing a partner, going to school or college, going to a different town for a new job. Interestingly, the pattern of confidence scores across the different decisions was similar for both girls and boys. They reported feeling the most confident about deciding to go to school or to college (boys 3.2; girls 2.6) and the least confident about when to get married (boys 2.6; girls 1.7). Figures F, G, and H in the Annex provide additional information.

New abilities compared to before. When asked what they could do now and that they could not do before participating in the adolescent groups and receiving the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit, adolescents in Sindh named a range of areas where they felt empowered, such as making decisions, solving issues, mentoring, speaking in public, and speaking with parents.

A: We were told in the training that it is not important to interfere in every problem. There are certain problems that are related to adults. But where the problem concerns us and our life, we can interfere.
Q: So, you told me before, that you have the power to make decisions for certain things such as

education?

A: Yes, I told you I used to be shy and nervous, but after the training, I can speak boldly.

Azra, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

A: I feel I can do something now. I can become something. I was okay with what I was, but now I know I am much more than that. I know about my strength now. I can study with it, I can do everything

Q: Any other change?

A: No

Q: Do you think you have become more self-confident?

A: Yes

Q: What other knowledge do you have now?

A: I know how to resolve problems. If a boy used to tease us, we used to ignore. Now we talk to them.

Q: Have you solved any issues?

A: Yes, there were problems coming and going. So, my father and I discussed it with the teacher.

Zimal, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

Now I can mentor and can teach others and give good suggestions to others.

Hamza, male adolescent group member, 14, Sindh

Now I can speak with others but before this group feeling fear. Before this group, I was not participating in games, but now we're playing games. Now, I can speak with parents like I want to study more while before I could not speak.

Maira, female adolescent group member, 11, Sindh

I can also talk to my parents now (...). I can talk with my mother without any hesitation if anything requires to me and she will share with my father. Before this group, I felt shy and now I can speak with parents. If I need something I share with my mother and she shares with my father. I feel confident now after participation in this group.

Shaima, female adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

Now I can share the knowledge that I receive here to my parents, family, and friends. My confidence level improved now as compare to before.

Zayn, male adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

M: have you seen any difference in yourself since joining the adolescent group?

S: yes, I didn't have this much courage as I have now. Now I can talk about my rights.

Alaya, female adolescent group member, 16, Sindh

Future aspirations. The future aspirations of adolescents can also be informative about their empowerment levels, as they reflect, to some extent, their decision-making for the future. Interviewed adolescents were invited to talk about how they see themselves at 25 years old. Their responses revealed a variety of expectations for the future. In both Sindh and Punjab, girls imagined themselves working in a range of professions, from beautician and tailor to teachers and doctors. Other girls projected themselves as married housewives, though some girls in Sindh also expressed the desire to not be married at the age of 25. None of the interviewed girls in Punjab expressed the wish to not be married at 25. Boys projected themselves as workers, either as soldiers, engineers, nurses, or Qari or Hazif-e-Quran (religious scholars who have memorised the Quran by heart). Two imagined moving to the city. A few boys believed they would be married with children by the age of 25; on the other hand, one adolescent stated that he wanted to postpone the time of his marriage so as not to be a burden to his family.

A: I want to be a doctor and protect the country.

Q: Will you be married?

A: I don't know. I tell my father I don't want to get married.

Zimal, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

I will be doing a job and have become a teacher. This is my dream job.

Isha, 18, female adolescent group member, Sindh

Q: How do you see yourself when you turn 25?

A: I don't know.

Q: Career-wise?

A: I think if this centre opens, I might learn stitching, and I would be making money.

Q: Would you be married?

A: Yes definitely. I can't live like this [laughing].

Q: Would you be living here?

A: Most probably. Can't say anything. I don't want to praise myself [laughing].

Neha, female adolescent group member, 14, Punjab

When I am 25, I will complete my education and be an engineer. I follow my father and he take all the decisions. I can take a decision about my education as I want to be an engineer, it is my decision and I will study engineering.

Hamza, male adolescent group member, 14, Sindh

Q: Don't you think that you will be married when you are 25?

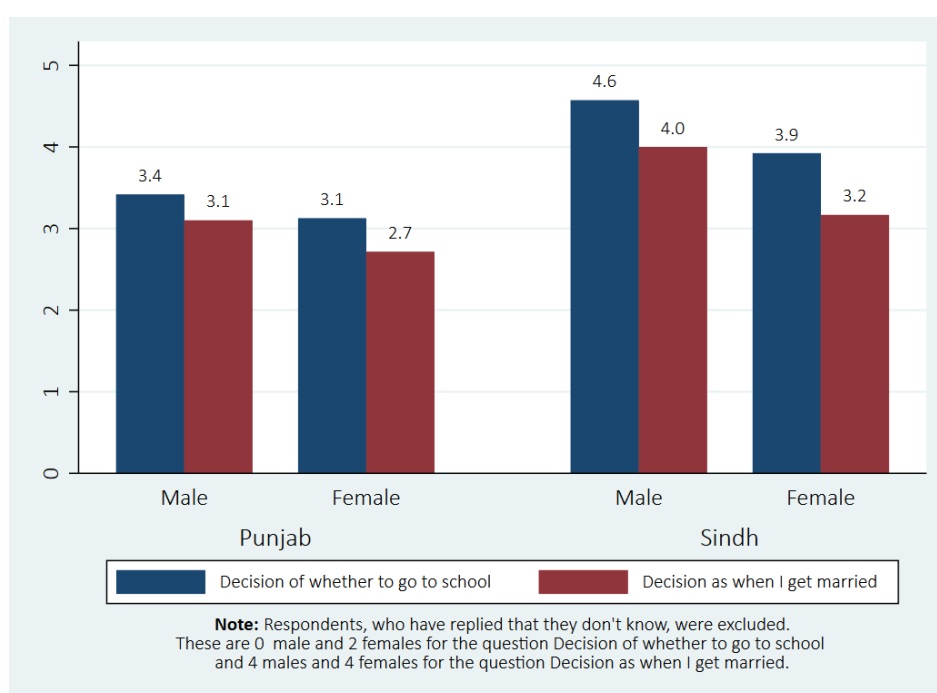
A: Marriage, it all depends on luck, may be or may not. I personally want that I get married at 26 or 27 or after 27.

Q: What is the reason for that?

A: Right now, I am studying. If I marry now, then I and my family will become a burden on my parents. I think that I should get marry when I will stand on my feet and be able to earn for my family. It's not the parents' duty to feed us and our next generation forever.

M. Azhar, male adolescent group member, 12, Punjab

Figure 4: Degree Parents Take Adolescents Opinions into Consideration (n=42)



Parents' consideration of their children's opinion (Figure 4). Increased participation in decision-making is a key outcome sought as part of the IALP. The influence of the adolescents on decision-

making can be reflected in adolescents' perception of the degree to which their parents took their opinion into consideration on certain decisions related to them. Analysis of adolescents' perception revealed gender-, geographical- and topic-related trends.

Overall, on a scale from 1 (*I don't give my opinion*) to 5 (*My parents fully accept my opinion and they do what I want*), male adolescents in both Sindh and Punjab reported feeling more included in decision-making than females. In general, adolescents from Sindh perceived that their opinions were taken more into consideration than adolescents from Punjab. Finally, both males and females, in both Sindh and Punjab, consistently reported feeling more included in the decision-making process for whether to go to school, compared to when to get married. Figure L and M in Annex provides further statistics.

Almost all adolescents interviewed mentioned that decisions in general were taken by someone else in their household, most often the elder male members of the family. Adolescents indicated that they could voice their opinion, and that their opinions were taken into consideration. Most, however, could not remember a situation in which they had given their opinion or where their opinion had influenced the decision ultimately taken.

Q: What are the activities that you can do now and couldn't do before joining the group? (...) Did you talk openly to your parents before?

A: No... but now I do. My father used to say, "don't go to college". But then we convinced him.

Q: How did you convince him?

A: We said: „father, look at all girls in the world are progressing so much. We will make you proud”.
Zimal, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

Q: What else can you do now?

A: I can take my decisions.

Q: Can you tell me one decision you took after joining the group?

A: Like they were getting me married off, so I said, "I don't want to get married right now".

Q: Who did you say this to?

A: To my father.

Q: What did he say?

A: He said: "why are you saying this?". I said: "because I want to study and make my future".

Q: Did he agree?

A: Yes.

(...)

Q: So, what did you say, at what age will you get married?

A: When I complete my education.

Q: How long do you want to study?

A: Until my Bachelor's.

Alaya, female adolescent champion, 16, Sindh

Q: So, you know about early marriage, but do you talk about child rights, education rights, etc. at home?

A: Father doesn't let us talk. He says: "you are young you shouldn't talk".

Q: And with mom?

A: Father doesn't even let us read if any such thing is written in books

Q: Who takes decisions in the house?

A: My father or his mother.

Q: Do they take your consent in any decision involving you?

A: No.

Armaan, male adolescent group member, 12, Punjab

Adolescents' activities in their free time. During the KM Study, adolescents were asked what they did in their free time, besides work and school, as a proxy measure for their degree of freedom.

Very few girls, two out of seventeen female adolescent interview respondents in Sindh and Punjab reported going outside the home. Other female respondents reported spending their free time at home, reading, chatting with family, and watching TV. Girls enrolled in school mentioned doing their homework. Household chores, such as cleaning or cooking, were mentioned by almost all female respondents. Regarding activities outside the home, some girls reported supporting agricultural activities, such as rearing livestock or picking cotton, while a small number of girls mentioned that they engage in sports such as cricket, running and hockey.

Unlike girls, boys reported participating in outdoors activities such as meeting their friends outside the home, playing sports, and in particular, cricket (mentioned by all the boys met in Sindh). These gender-specific practices were observed in both provinces, and little evidence was provided to illustrate that the exposure to the programme may have contributed to engagement in more similar activities between boys and girls. Nonetheless, the Adolescent groups provided a unique opportunity for girls to engage with other adolescents outside the home.

Q: Do you have Basant [kite] here?

A: Yes, but younger boys do it. Not girls.

Gulsan, female adolescent group member, 19, Punjab

Q: What do you do in a typical day?

A: I wake up at 6:30 am, I pray, read the Quran, then do house chores. I don't let my mother work. I cook food. I am talking about Sundays.

Q: Do you go to roam around?

A: I just do my homework. Talk to sisters.

Q: What do you do in your free time? Listen to Radio or TV?

A: No, I don't even have a phone.

Q: Do you read the newspaper?

A: Once a week.

Q: What are you fond of reading in the newspaper?

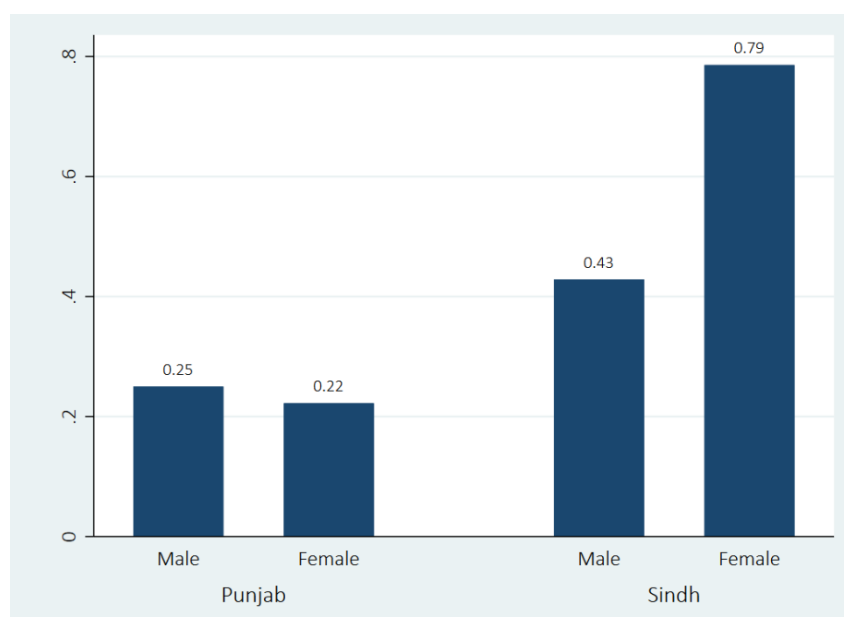
A: Funny news.

Alaya, female adolescent group member, 16, Sindh

I have a group of friends, about twelve and we plan to visit a fair and to go to the city. Once a year we go on a trip. I also participate in a cricket team. I also sometimes participate in role plays.

Zayn Ali, male adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

Promotion of new ideas/practices learned in the LST and adolescent group sessions. Beyond enabling personal changes in confidence and decision-making, the adolescent groups supported adolescents in promoting children's rights and life-skills in their immediate environment, with their family and peers. As part of the KM Study, the research team strove to gather evidence for whether adolescents had promoted the learning of the adolescent group sessions in their close environment. Figure 5 presents findings on the proportion of adolescents surveyed, who reported that they had shared information on the harmful effects of child marriage with their families.

Figure 5: Proportion of Adolescents who Reported Sharing Information on the Harmful Effects of Child Marriage with Parents/Siblings, by Province, by Gender (n=42)

Awareness-raising activities about the harmful effects of child marriage. Adolescents were asked if in the past three months they have shared information on the harmful effects of child marriage with their parents and/or siblings. Overall, over half of the females (57%) and about one third of the males (32%) shared information of such effects in their family (Table 4). However, clear geographical trends emerged when the findings were disaggregated by province. Indeed, in Punjab, where the UNICEF-supported interventions were not yet implemented, about one quarter of girls and boys (22% and 25%, respectively) reported having shared information about child marriage with their parents or siblings. In contrast, in Sindh, where the interventions have been implemented for several months, 79% of female and 43% of male adolescents reported that they had shared information on the harmful effects of child marriage. This finding suggests that girls may be more active than boys in disseminating information on child marriage to their relatives. Moreover, it indicates that the UNICEF-supported interventions may be having an impact on the dissemination of information on child marriage by adolescents.

Table 4: Share of adolescent boys and girls sharing information on child marriage (n=42)

	Female			Male		
	Mean	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max
Share information on child marriage - All	0.57	0.00	1.00	0.32	0.00	1.00
Share information on child marriage - Sindh	0.79	0.00	1.00	0.43	0.00	1.00
Share information on child marriage - Punjab	0.22	0.00	1.00	0.25	0.00	1.00

The survey findings were supported by findings from the interview data. Adolescents interviewed in Sindh reported feeling more confident speaking with their family and doing so about child rights issues. Eleven out of fourteen adolescent respondents reported that they had discussed some child rights issues, such as child marriage with their family members. One did so with the help of the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit training booklet provided to adolescent champions. While two adolescents, a boy and a girl, recalled the positive reactions of their parents, others reported

preferring to speak about these issues with their siblings or mother, rather than their father. Only three adolescents had never talked about child rights and child marriage with their family. It should be acknowledged that child marriage remains a sensitive topic to raise. One male respondent shared his difficulty with talking about child marriage, while one female respondent reported feeling hesitant about discussing *girl things* with her family.

Compared to adolescents in Sindh, the adolescents interviewed in Punjab on this topic appeared more reserved. Seven female respondents and three boys out of sixteen respondents never raised child protection issues, such as child marriage, with their families. There, two adolescents reported that addressing mothers and siblings was easier than discussing with fathers.

I discuss and share with my parents. And I discuss with friends regarding the group activities. I discuss child rights. The right to participation, empowerment, developments, etc. I have easily shared the right of participation in decisions and felt difficulty talking about the right of development. My parents also agree, and their reaction is positive on that. Yes, talked with my parents, they know better about the disadvantages of child marriage. They are satisfied with this, as in our family there is no concept of child marriage, even before this group.

Zayn, male adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

M: So, you know about early marriage, but do you talk about child rights, education rights, etc. at home?

A: Father doesn't let us talk. He says you are young you shouldn't talk.

M: And with Mom?

A: Father doesn't even let us read if any such thing is written in the book.

Armaan, male adolescent group member, 12, Punjab

Actions taken by adolescents in favour of their rights. *Adolescents can connect with each other and decision-makers through the implementation of participatory communication platforms and have the opportunity to be agents of change in their communities. (RSPN 2016, p5)*

Under this objective, the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit also expects adolescents to be able to speak up and identify and mobilise sources of support in their community. As a preliminary step, it is relevant to examine the extent to which adolescents can describe the function of the local government and other supports. The most-cited influential persons were landlords (cited by thirteen of thirty adolescents in Sindh and Punjab). Further, a few adolescents, in Sindh described local NGO staff and VO members, notably teachers or those who supported the organisation of the peer mentoring sessions, as trusted sources of support. In one village in Sindh, two adolescent girls referred to the KCI, who had been identified and trained as part of the IALP programme, as a source of support, providing positive evidence for this aspect of the programme (more detail on the training of KCIs is provided as part of Domain 2 below). Religious leaders were cited as important figures by adolescents in Punjab; in Sindh, in contrast, adolescents perceived that religious leaders did not have an important role.

It is noteworthy that several adolescents cited their own father or relative as a landlord or influential person in the community. This may suggest potential bias in the selection of adolescents into the programme activities, with more privileged adolescents more likely to be enrolled than the most vulnerable and out-of-reach.

There is a landlord in our village, and all follow his decisions. He is my uncle and he is influential in our village. And my father is second influential in the village we usually follow our father.

Hamza, male adolescent group member, 14, Sindh

If we have any issue concerning women, I would call all the VO members and discuss it with the president of the VO. If the men have an issue, then they discuss it with my father and uncle, etc. because they are involved in social work.

Azra, female adolescent champion, 15, Sindh

A: VO members solve all our issues. [...]

Q: Does the religious leader play any role in the decision making here?

A: After him, my paternal uncle, the councillor does the decision making in the community. [...]

Q: Do the community key influencers help in solving adolescents' issues and needs?

A: Yes, they do.

Q: To whom do you complain and raise issues about your village and community?

A: VO members.

Q: Do you approach them directly?

A: Yes! I do.

Q: Do they listen to the issue?

A: Yes! They listen.

Q: Last time which issue you complained about?

A: School enrolment. [...]

Q: Was the issue resolved?

A: Yes! It was resolved! Yes, they motivated the parents.

Isha, female adolescent group member, 18, Sindh

Q: There are some issues that can be solved within the household. But some issues are at the village level. So, who takes decisions on that?

A: The most important person in the village.

Q: Who is that? Counsellor? Imam?

A: Yes, our Imam does it.

Q: What kind of problems?

A: ... [silence]... About teaching, he also helps with marriage contracts.

Q: But what about quarrels?

A: Sometimes household members, sometimes.

Q: Lambardar [a person who has a landholder lineage]?

A: Yes, he does it.

Q: So, these people, who are influencers, do they take care of adolescent rights?

A: It has never really happened that they had to.

Q: Don't they try for gender equality?

A: No.

Q: Haven't you ever spoken about it?

A: No.

Gulsan, male adolescent group member, 19, Punjab

The field visits allowed the researchers to document actions that the group members had taken to address harmful norms and behaviours that they observed in their communities, and decisions in favour of the adolescents which were taken as a result of group members' influence. Potentially due to the short exposure to the programme at time of the data collection, the adolescents recalled few cases where they had raised complaints about the child marriage, or where they had promoted education and child rights. Anecdotal evidence, from adolescents in Sindh, suggested that some adolescents took actions against harmful social practices and promote child rights in the past. The data does not precise whether the programme had started at that time.

Q: Have you ever discouraged friends or relatives to marry early?

A: Yes, I have discouraged community members and they agree that child marriage should not be done.

Q: Have you stopped any child marriage?

A: Yes, there was a wedding fixed some months ago and we talked to our Wadera [feudal lord] to stop it.

Maira, female adolescent group member, 11, Sindh

A: I liked giving the message, that girls should go to school.

Q: On the importance of education?

A: Yes.

Q: Why?

A: Because there are many girls in the village that don't go to school. Some parents don't allow, and some are too poor. So, I liked it, that I go to every house and tell that girls should study.

Q: Have you met their parents too?

A: Yes! We asked them why they don't send their children to school.

Arham, male adolescent member, 13, Sindh

A: Yes, I discuss with my friend Aslam about the disadvantages of child marriage. He was 15-year-old, unfortunately, we could not stop the marriage. There is one adolescent member, Aslam married at 15-year-old, he was studying in 7th grade. I have discussed him not to marry but he shared that his parents would not agree to postpone his marriage.

Q: Has anyone from the group like a champion or KCI contacted his parents? Do you know any official phone number to share information about early marriage?

A: No one from KCI or group talked to Aslam's parent. And we have no information about any phone number.

Zayn, male adolescent group member, 13, Sindh

SUMMARY OF DOMAIN 1 – ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

UNICEF supported a peer-learning approach. This strategy consisted in the training of adolescent champions on life skills related to empowerment and communication, who were in turn responsible to further train other members of the adolescent groups and to disseminate messages promoting child protection to other community peers. This approached a wide number of community adolescents, although it remained unclear to what extent the most-hard-to-reach were included. The gender-responsiveness of the training material and training modalities was key to allow programme ownership of the communities.

The LST based on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit contributed to confirming positive attitudes towards social and gender norms and increasing knowledge among adolescents who took part in the LST and became champions, as well as those who were peer-trained during the adolescent group sessions. As part of the field data collection, the adolescents reported an increase in knowledge not only concerning their rights, but also their identity and perceived abilities. The comparison between Sindh, where the intervention had been rolled out for several months, and Punjab, where the intervention has been stopped and only resumed around the time of the data collection, allowed the research team to capture the trends that may signal positive change. Data indicated that longer exposure to the adolescent group could bring about more specific knowledge about child rights and confirm positive attitudes about them, for example the disapproval of child marriage. Both boys and girls who were exposed to the adolescent groups appeared to have benefitted from the activities to increase their knowledge. Nonetheless, traditional gender roles were still strongly espoused by the adolescents. It remains to be seen if, and to what degree, the intervention impacts relating to adolescent participation and empowerment will be observed in the randomised controlled trial being conducted in summer 2019.

DOMAIN 2 – ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR ADOLESCENTS

Creating and reinforcing an enabling environment to improve adolescents' lives is a key pillar of the UNICEF-supported interventions. This section focusses on the interventions' effectiveness in creating and reinforcing a supportive environment for adolescents.

Two important factors influence an adolescent's life: adult authority, and the wider social environment (Marphatia 2003). Adolescents interact with many different people in a variety of settings: the home, surrounded by the immediate family, parents, siblings and other relatives; their school, with the presence of teachers and school staff; and the wider community, including religious, and community leaders. Adolescent-adult relationships are a source of emotional, financial and material support as well as guidance (Marphatia 2003) that are critical for the development of the adolescents to become a grown-up and for their participation at the micro-community level.

The influence of these relationship on adolescents' development is essential for healthy growth. UNICEF is therefore keen to support interventions that create an empowering environment for adolescents to acknowledge their rights to develop and participate (UNICEF ROSA 2015). On the one hand, the interventions seek increased mobilisation from parents, the community, and religious leaders in supporting adolescents' rights and denouncing oppressive social and gender norms. Secondly, the aim of the interventions is to support positive, progressive adult-adolescent relationships, in other words, an amplified intergenerational dialogue, creating meaningful decision-making processes and an increased social and emotional support that contributes to the adolescent's development.

ENGAGING THE KEY COMMUNITY INFLUENCERS

A – WHAT WAS THE OUTREACH OF THE KEY COMMUNITY INFLUENCERS TRAINING?

Number of KCIs selected and trained per province, district, gender. In 2017, community engagement activities within the scope of IALP began in the targeted areas of Sindh and Punjab. As of December 2018, according to the UNICEF Child Protection MIS, 2,715 KCIs had been identified by RSPN/SRSO and CYAAD, which was later replaced by Bunyad. On average, 48% of the KCIs were women (Table 5). While female KCIs were under-represented in Punjab, the composition in Sindh was more gender-balanced.

Table 5: Total of KCIs Registered Between January 2017 and December 2018

	Number of KCIs registered between 2017 and 2018		
	Female	Male	Total reached
Sindh	965	908	1,873
- Ghotki	491	416	907
- Khairpur	474	492	966
Punjab	336	506	842
- Bahawalpur	158	251	409
- Rahim Yar Khan	178	255	433
Total	1,301	1,414	2,715

Source: UNICEF Child Protection MIS, March 2019

As part of the programme, UNICEF supported the provision of a foundational training to newly-recruited KCIs. According to the MIS data retrieved in March 2019, up to December 2018 589 KCIs from Sindh had received training on a tailored toolkit, including sessions on children's rights and informative modules on adolescents' psycho-physical development (Table 6). However, in its annual progress report, RSPN/SRSO reported having already trained 651 KCIs between January and December 2017 (RSPN 2017a). Similarly, UNICEF project staff stated that a total of 1,049 KCIs, 651 in 2017 and 398 in 2018, have received training. These discrepancies point towards inaccuracies in the programme's M&E framework, which were also mentioned in post-data-collection communication with UNICEF project staff.

In Punjab, the NGO CYAAD reportedly trained 683 KCIs during so-called orientation days in 2017 (Table 6). However, according to CYAAD's end-of-project report from December 2017 (CYAAD 2017) and UNICEF project staff, a total of 861 KCIs were sensitised on adolescent issues. As UNICEF discontinued its collaboration with CYAAD in December 2017 and contracted its successor Bunyad in September 2018 only, very few KCIs were trained in 2018. Bunyad project staff commented that they not only had trouble locating the KCIs recruited by their predecessor but also convincing them to continue participating in the programme. According to Bunyad staff, previously identified KCIs appeared to have been made exaggerated promises regarding the benefits to be expected from their involvement. Bunyad had, therefore, also started looking for new KCIs in Bahawalpur and Rahim Yar Khan.

Table 6: Total of KCIs Trained Between May 2017 and December 2018¹³

	Sindh		Punjab		Total
	Ghotki	Khairpur	Bahawalpur	Rahim Yar Khan	
Number of KCIs trained	432	157	299	384	1272

Source: UNICEF Child Protection MIS, March 2019

According to RSPN/SRSO and Bunyad project staff, KCIs were identified in accordance with three main criteria: the centrality of their place of residence within a community, their reputation among community members and their motivation to engage in volunteer work aimed at adolescent empowerment.

Q: Who are the KCIs, how do you select them? What is their role in the community?

A: In one village, we contacted the lady health worker. She has quite some influence in her village, people listen to her given her importance. (...) We usually focus on people who are well informed about the area, who are well connected among locals, who can convey our message effectively, and most importantly, who have public welfare in mind and want to foster the development of children aged 10 to 19. We engage this type of people.

Q: Have you contacted any religious leaders as well?

A: Absolutely, we are trying. Even a barber can play an important role in identifying people in the area. He usually has a lot of information; everyone visits his shop. So, we are involving people like barbers, lady health visitors, landlords, Imams, union council chairmen, teachers, etc.

Bunyad project staff, Punjab

In addition, VO and LSO presidents, being perceived as particularly outspoken, were specifically targeted. To maximise outreach in the community, however, project staff approached potential KCIs with a variety of backgrounds. Among those registered between January 2017 and December 2018,

¹³ The ToTs in Sindh conducted by RSPN/SRSO lasted for three days, while the orientation days in Punjab by both CYAAD and Bunyad were one day long.

nearly three-fifths had completed at least secondary education. Nonetheless, more than one in seven KCIs (148 %; see Table 7) were classified as illiterate. The most common occupations among those enlisted were housewife, farmer, teacher, and social worker, followed by landlord, shopkeeper, lady health worker, student, journalist, and imam. While efforts were made to include an equal number of men and women, UNICEF and its implementing partners reported difficulties in finding enough women who were willing to get involved in activities outside their homes and travel to possibly remote training sites. Moreover, they struggled to identify literate female KCIs, particularly in rural areas. Post-data-collection communication with UNICEF project staff revealed that the drop-out rate among KCIs was approximately 20%, primarily owing to economic migration, changes in family status due to marriage, and relocation for educational purposes.

Table 7: Highest Level of Education Reported by KCIs Registered Between January 2017 and December 2018 (n=2,715)

	Illiterate	Literate	Primary Education	Secondary Education	Bachelor	Master	Not reported
Number of KCIs	402	52	497	1,071	350	185	158
Share of KCIs	14.8%	1.9%	18.3%	39.5%	12.9%	6.8%	5.8%

Source: UNICEF Child Protection MIS, March 2019

Number and format of the training sessions. In Sindh, the first round of ToTs took place between June 15th and July 29th, 2017. Until the end of 2018, RSPN/SRSO had organised a total of 28 three-day training events for KCIs from Ghotki and Khairpur, according to UNICEF MIS data. The training modules, which consisted of lectures, group work, interactive sessions and teambuilding activities, were facilitated by Adolescent Development Officers, called MTs, as well as Training Officers, District Managers and Project Managers, who were all referred to as Lead Trainers. In addition, District Child Protection Unit Officers were invited to talk about child protection case management and referral mechanisms, and share the contacts of relevant departments, including Child Protection Units, with the trainees.

RSPN/SRSO reported the main challenges and lessons learned from their first round of training in Sindh in their programme documentation. First, they experienced logistical difficulties and material shortages. More importantly, whereas securing individuals' verbal support for adolescent programming in general, did not seem to pose much of a problem, project staff mentioned that several KCIs proved unwilling to attend multi-day training events. As stated in programme documents, commonly cited reasons for non-attendance of both male and female KCIs included other professional or personal engagements as well as *cultural, tribal and religious facts* (RSPN 2017b). If the refusal to attend was mainly a problem of opportunity cost, this raises the question of the incentives provided to promote KCIs' engagement. While all trainees received a participation certificate upon completion of their training, no additional rewards, such as, for example, financial compensation for lost labour, were provided as part of the programme. To this effect, issues with the timing as well as the location of the training sessions are also worth noting. In interviews, project staff reported that the training dates' overlap with the month of Ramadan and harvesting season exacerbated the problem of conflicting schedules. Moreover, holding the trainings at district level meant that some KCIs had to travel long distances to attend, which was particularly problematic for women. Further issues which made the training of female KCIs difficult could be identified, one of which was the gender divide in literacy in Pakistan (Central Asia Institute 2019). Refusal to attend

training may also be related to the project's sensitivity, particularly its non-conformance with certain socio-cultural norms in Pakistan.

We are working with male and female KCIs. We don't face many challenges with men, but even men must take time out for meetings because they work, and coordinate with project staff. For female KCIs, we find it very difficult to identify literate female KCIs. We do have a toolkit, and they do speak, but it remains challenging. The challenges we face with girls, they are similar to those related to female KCIs. They also say that it is better to do something that provides a source of income instead of attending a training.

(...) If no literate female KCI is to be found in a village, what can we do? If they are not literate, we can only try to get the VO presidents [to participate] because they are more vocal. We also try to arrange that project staff is there to support such KCIs so that the message is conveyed properly.

Hania, female MT, RSPN, Sindh

In addition to the trainings, it was planned that programme training officers would help KCIs who require more support and supervision, such as those who are illiterate, with the implementation of their roll-out and community mobilisation sessions. PCO reported that field staff regularly participated in the outreach activities conducted by KCIs and also provided them with on-the-job support if needed.

In Punjab, the UNICEF local implementing partner CYAAD followed a slightly different training organisation strategy. According to UNICEF Child Protection MIS, 41 one-day orientation days were held in Bahawalpur and Rahim Yar Khan in 2017. In UNICEF ROSA's annual progress report and next year plan, however, it was reported that 50 awareness workshops had been conducted with KCIs between January and December 2017 to familiarise potential KCIs on their role in adolescent protection and establish strong linkages between CYAAD and the communities visited. They were organised by selected Youth Associations. No further information on the workshops' content nor implementation could be retrieved from documentation shared or collected during the data collection field visit. At the time of the visit, Bunyad, the successor of CYAAD, had just started contacting KCIs again and the latter's testimonies confirmed that they had not participated in any meetings nor trainings prior to the interviews. Consequently, the following sections will mainly analyse the interventions' state of implementation in Sindh.

B – HOW DID THE TRAINING FOR KEY COMMUNITY INFLUENCERS INCREASE THEIR AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE TO CHALLENGE SOCIAL AND GENDER NORMS AND PROMOTE CHILD RIGHTS?

The core questions related to the engagement of the KCIs are (1) the extent to which the training activities contributed to increasing their awareness and knowledge about gender norms and behaviour, and (2) whether this increased awareness and knowledge brought about positive changes in their attitude and behaviour towards influencing gender norms in the community. Indeed, the buy-in of influential community members is a key prerequisite for the dissemination of positive messages to other community members and the encouragement of sustainable changes in norms and practices.

Gender-responsiveness of the KCI Training. While adolescent well-being and fundamental rights were the overarching themes of the training given to KCIs, gender was also one of its core components. According to programme material from the first round of trainings in Sindh¹⁴, trainees participated in two modules focussing on the latter: *Gender and Equality in Adolescents' Programming*

¹⁴ The research team was not provided access to the training material used in Punjab.

and *How to Conduct Session 4 – Gender Roles in Society*. Correspondingly, they received a lecture on the differences between sex and gender, the social construction of gender, and the concept of gender equality based on scientific and legal arguments. This was followed by an interactive role play asking them to question their own and one another's values and opinions regarding the roles of men and women in society. The specific needs of girls were mentioned with respect to their likely earlier drop-out of school and health-related problems on account of child marriage, and their difficulties in making their voices and opinions heard. Other topics covered during the trainings were children's rights, adolescents' psycho-social development, and harmful social practices, such as child marriage. While no evaluation forms were provided, trainees could informally share their feedback at the end of each event. Overall, they appeared to be satisfied with the training content. In Sindh, one female KCI reported that she would have liked to further see the issue of educational awareness addressed.

A combination of instructor-led and interactive training methods was used throughout the trainings, the underlying aim being not just to lecture the KCIs, but rather to engage them in a constructive dialogue about their responsibility in contributing to an enabling environment for both male and female adolescents.

During the trainings, our field teams basically orient the KCIs on assuming the perspective of children and adolescents. They are taught that what the entitlements of these children are, and how they can support them, how they can provide an environment so that they can access basic services, express themselves, gain more confidence and talk about issues that affect them. So, it is like creating a balance between equipping adolescents with more and more entitlement, and also sort of raising awareness for the influencers to be able to provide that environment to them.

Child Protection and C4D Specialist, UNICEF Country Office, Islamabad

Yes, the training helped me a lot. Initially, I had no knowledge about child rights. I had a general idea of adolescent rights, but what specifically those rights are I learned during this training. So, this training really helped me a lot. Moreover, I also liked to learn that girls cannot express their wishes related to marriage. Their marriage is fixed by their parents and girls are left with no option but to cry over this decision (...). These young girls don't know how to live in and adjust to a new household. So, how could they be married at such a young age? This is what the community has to be influenced, motivated, sensitised about in terms of not supporting child marriage.

Anadia, female KCI (district counsellor and private teacher), 30, Sindh

Types of messages learned by KCIs. The research team asked the KCIs whether they thought that boys and girls were treated equally in their communities. Of the seven KCIs interviewed across both provinces, all but one stated that female adolescents in their villages did not possess the same privileges as their male counterparts, in that they were much more restricted in their everyday movements and choices, and less likely to attend school or work outside their homes. Explaining this unequal treatment, several KCIs said that parents perceived their sons as future breadwinners, thus making investments in their education particularly attractive, whereas girls' prospects were typically seen as limited to becoming a spouse, mother, and housewife. In this context, a religious leader and male KCI from Punjab claimed that females were weak and ignorant, and adolescent boys were energetic and clever, the latter roaming around outside while the former stayed at home. However, he also argued in favour of girls receiving better access to education. Notwithstanding the prevalence of traditional gender bias observed by the research team, complaints about a lack of educational opportunities for girls were a common thread among KCIs met during the study. Almost everyone interviewed agreed that poor education, health, transportation, and public service infrastructure in their communities were problems disproportionately affecting female adolescents.

Q: Are girls and boys treated equally here?

A: No, boys are sometimes given more rights, girls have a lack of rights (...), for example, parents do not provide them with any inheritance. Everyone should be given equal rights.

Q: They don't provide any inheritance?

A: No, they don't. Sometimes, the father says that the girl has died, so they don't have to provide any inheritance.

Q: Are they given equal access to education?

A: No, girls don't [get the opportunity to] study as much. Some of the boys study, but girls hardly get to go to school.

Q: Is there a girls' school here, or in the neighbouring village?

A: There is a boys' school here, but no girls school. Yes, there is a school in the neighbouring village, but it is far away, so girls stay at home.

Attaullah Zakir, male KCI (religious leader), Punjab

The main risk is the lack of education, especially for girls. The community did not focus on girls' education. There is no school, so children cannot get an education, especially girls, and cannot prepare their future. There is no hospital close by, in case of an emergency no facilities are available, so lives are at risk here. [Adolescents] also face other hazards, such as unemployment, bad company, wandering, drug addiction, etc.

Nabi Bux, male KCI (social activist and government employee), 45, Sindh

The KCIs' testimonies suggest that they had already been aware of and partly knowledgeable on the predominance of certain discriminatory social and gender norms and practices in their communities prior to programme implementation. Although the KCIs in Punjab had just been contacted by Bunyad and did not have any previous experience in adolescent programming, those participating in a FGD were, for instance, quick to point out that child marriage did not happen in their village, and called for the establishment of more schools and vocational training facilities catering to the needs of female adolescents. In Sindh, where all interviewed KCIs had received training, it was difficult to distinguish between their level of awareness and knowledge before and after the programme was implemented, especially since most interviewees did not go into detail about their learning. Nonetheless, it became clear that, in the past, they had been lacking concrete and easily shareable information on adolescent development and children's rights. Finally, the training appeared to have been successful, albeit to a limited extent, in promoting the positive value of girls.

I talk to female adolescents on the importance of education and encourage them to share any problems they might have with their parents without a second thought. Moreover, I talk to them about the disadvantages of child marriage (...). I feel there is a difference between boys and girls when it comes to their [freedom of] expression in the community. For instance, boys are more outspoken about marriage at their choice and willingness, while females do not express anything. Parents also do not consult their daughters regarding marriage wishes (...). Initially, in our community, we preferred boys in every aspect, but now after training and awareness-raising, we know both have the same rights.

Anadia, female KCI (district counsellor and private teacher), 30, Sindh

C –HOW DID THE KEY INFLUENCERS ENGAGE PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY TO CHALLENGE HARMFUL SOCIAL AND GENDER NORMS AND PROMOTE CHILD RIGHTS?

According to project staff, once training concluded, KCIs were expected to assume a two-sided role in the programme, supporting the implementing organisations' representatives in their work in the field, and mediating between adolescents and parents in their communities. It was intended that trained KCIs would integrate their newly-gained knowledge into their interactions and discussions with community members, be it during daily life or designated events, thereby supporting gender equality and denouncing harmful norms and practices in their immediate surroundings.

If we want to tackle the issue of teen pregnancy, there should be strong community mobilisation because it is not the girls who are decision makers. These are the parents, religious leaders, influencers, policy makers and authorities also (...). The KCIs also started to conduct sessions with parents. So, the parents can mobilise other parents about children's rights, and the adolescents can mobilise their peers and help them understand how to empower boys and girls so that teenage pregnancies can be reduced.

Overall coordinator and social sector specialist at RSPN, Islamabad

It is very difficult for adolescents to talk about [sensitive issues such as reproductive health, or child marriage]. For that, we take help from the KCIs because they are already trained. We get together with them and the project staff and have a dialogue with married adolescents and their parents. [Through the KCIs] we connect with the LSOs and COs. We take help from them [to organise] broader meetings.

Hania, female MT, RSPN, Sindh

Data from the UNICEF Child Protection MIS suggested that KCIs from Sindh had led 513 roll-out sessions in Ghotki and 508 in Khairpur, thereby reaching 42,052 people with messages about children's rights, child marriages, as well as the psycho-social needs and well-being of adolescents. Moreover, KCIs organised several hundred community mobilisation events, which are similar in format to roll-out sessions, as well as international days (e.g. International Day of Families, World Youth Skills Day, Children's Day) in both Sindh and Punjab that were attended by 40,320 and 20,812 community members, respectively.

Table 8: Reported Total Reach of Participants by KCIs During Roll-out Sessions Between May 2017 and December 2018

	Girls	Boys	Women	Men	Total reached
Sindh	5,547	5,403	17,023	14,079	42,052
- Ghotki	2,855	2,777	8,693	6,814	21,139
- Khairpur	2,692	2,626	8,330	7,265	20,913

Source: UNICEF Child Protection Monitoring Information System, March 2019

Table 9: Reported Total Reach of Participants by KCIs During Community Mobilisation Events and International Days Between May 2017 and December 2018

	Girls	Boys	Women	Men	Total reached
Sindh	11,348	14,019	7,847	7,106	40,320
- Ghotki	1,628	2,586	1,502	1,396	7,112
- Khairpur	9,720	11,433	6,345	5,710	33,208
Punjab	5,723	8,620	3,239	3,230	20,812

- Bahawalpur	3,155	4,476	1,556	1,492	10,679
- Rahim Yar Khan	2,568	4,144	1,683	1,738	10,133

Source: UNICEF Child Protection Monitoring Information System, March 2019

Nonetheless, the KCIs' testimonies indicate that their awareness-raising and educational work is often organised on an individual rather than community level, with many meetings taking place spontaneously in an informal setting. Some KCIs reported that they went from door to door, while others took advantage of wedding parties, religious ceremonies or other public outings as occasions to promote their learnings from the training. Generally, a certain lack of structure and definition in what concerned their activities was addressed, as interviewees mentioned that they did not usually coordinate their activities with other KCIs and rather communicated with community members on a one-to-one basis. These findings highlight the importance of the planning workshop that was part of the first round of ToTs in Sindh and comprised an introduction to the format of Trickle-Down sessions and the modalities under which coordinated outreach activities were to be conducted by KCIs.

Types of messages shared, and actions taken by KCIs. In their interactions and discussions with community members, the influencers focussed on two main messages, the harmful effects of child marriage and the significance of education. They also reported addressing children's rights and corresponding legislation, as well as promoting adolescents' participation in decision-making both in public and in private life. One of the KCIs reported telling parents about the importance of leisure activities for adolescents' mental, social and physical development. KCIs advised adolescents to, among other things, take their education seriously, and to get married at a later age. They also encouraged them to communicate more openly with their parents. A female KCI from Punjab explained that girls usually would not receive enough information on their sexual and reproductive health needs, and that the intervention could potentially change that.

The KCIs met by the research team reported their engagement against child marriage by trying to convince the parents of the most vulnerable adolescents of the harm of this practice. At the time of the study, however, there was only anecdotal evidence suggesting that decisions in favour of the adolescents had been taken as a result of the KCIs' influence.

A1: I interact with both boys and girls. I have also attended training on child rights. I have also attended one adolescent group meeting and talked with adolescent members and support them in activities and learning (...).

A2: We sensitise the parents to send their children to school, and not to marry them before they are 18 years old, because if they marry at an early age, they won't be able to handle it and take care of their children. We also delayed two to three marriages in our community.

A3: During counselling sessions with parents, we tell them that in the case of child marriage girls' lives are at risk during pregnancy and childbirth. I also helped five to six adolescent girls to get permission from their parents to go to school and now they are going to school.

A4: Now people are aware and recently there has been no case of early marriage.
Female FGD participants, Sindh

Perceived relevance of engaging religious leaders to challenge social and gender norms. Most study participants interviewed on the topic considered numberdars¹⁵, government officials, landlords, and above all, religious leaders as best placed to influence community members to protect

¹⁵ Lambardar or numberdar is a title used in the Indian subcontinent that confers on its holder a state-privileged status which is hereditary and goes hand-in-hand with social prestige and wide-ranging governmental powers, such as revenue collection and a share in it, as well as collaboration with the local police.

adolescents. At the same time, women's authority was affirmed to be limited, particularly in the public space. One female KCI, a private teacher from Punjab, stated that she did not have much say in her community, while elders did, and she thus doubted her own level of influence. Through interviews with female KCIs, it emerged, however, that women do play an integral role in promoting positive beliefs, behaviours, and parenting practices at home, engaging not only with female relatives that would be hard to reach in a non-private environment but also with their husbands and male relatives.

The women in my community give more value and importance to what I am saying. I also conduct dialogues with my husband, male relatives, and other community members. At first, they did not pay too much attention to what I was saying, but now they understand it. Before they used to ridicule me, but now they appreciate my work and give it importance. They acknowledge that I have an education and that I communicate messages which are good for them (...). Male community members specifically object against love, they argue in favour of arranged marriages. Nonetheless, no one disagrees about the importance of education. Both male and female community members understand the importance of education and they make sure their children receive an education.

Anadia, KCI (district counsellor and private teacher), 30, Sindh

*Q: So, influential people like you, or an imam, or a landlord, how can you protect adolescents' rights?
A: I cannot say much. The elders of the community can do something, and government officials.*

Hajra, female KCI (private teacher), 21, Punjab

Challenges perceived during discussions with community members. When asked about the community's reaction to being informed about child protection issues, all male and female KCIs reported that their response was mostly positive, especially among the relatively well-educated. Generally, it was noted that most people were hesitant at first, with some judging the messages delivered as inappropriate or even subversive, but as time passed acceptance reportedly grew. However, differences across provinces were observed. According to project staff, Punjabis were more likely than Sindhis to question and react negatively to the programme. In this context, child marriage was named as a particularly sensitive topic that could not be addressed directly in certain parts of Punjab. Moreover, gender differences also emerged. It appeared that women were easier to take on board than men, who were more likely to question the KCIs' authority, in particular, if they were women, and to defend traditional social norms and practices.

Q: What are the challenges?

A: It depends on the project implementation. If you go to a community without KCI involvement, then you really notice the difference.

Q: If we talk specifically about IKEA II, what is the response of the community?

A: It is very positive because UNICEF had already been present in these communities before, as IKEA I was also implemented in these districts. There is continuity, and the impact can be seen.

Director of the Social Welfare Department, Punjab

A: We have a very good response in Sindh. People in Punjab are very difficult to get on board. For Sindh, you can teach them anything and they will learn, but in Punjab, they will look at it critically (...). However, Bunyad has an added value in that they already had been present in Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalpur before. Bunyad's head, Shaheen Atiq-ur-Rehman, has also been a Minister. So, she has a good reputation.

Q: Have there been any negative responses from the community?

A: Firstly, working with adolescents is not easy. CYAAD had a lot of difficulties that people were not trusting them. They wouldn't send their adolescents to any training point. They used to have parents come with them. So, there are such issues. Also, you cannot talk about child marriage, even though

child marriage is prevalent in Southern Punjab. Since you cannot openly talk about it, we don't talk directly about it.

UNICEF Child Protection Officer, Punjab

Continuous exposure to the intervention and familiarity with the implementing organisations seems to play an important role in increasing the community's acceptance of the programme, as it allows for trust-building between project staff and the local community. Thus, sudden changes in project partners and delays in implementations, as were the case in Punjab, may have an adverse effect on communities' openness and willingness to engage with programme activities not only from a short-term perspective but also in the longer-term.

Both project staff and programme beneficiaries mentioned the need for the programme, including its trainings, to be sustained and, if possible, extended, as community members were only slowly gaining awareness and knowledge on children's rights and adolescent well-being. The KCIs interviewed were aware that attitudinal and behavioural changes would take time to manifest, with several interviewees expressing their motivation to continue supporting children and adolescents in their communities.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

D – WHAT WAS THE OUTREACH OF THE COMMUNITY INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUES AND OTHER COMMUNITY-BASED MEDIA CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

With a view to closing the communication gap between generations and fostering mutual understanding between parents and their children, the programme also envisaged the conception and implementation of initiatives that would bring people of different ages together. To this end, IGDs as well as other community-based media campaign activities were initiated in the study districts in the second half of 2017. By December 2018, a total of 66 IGDs reaching circa 6,214 community members had been conducted in Sindh (Table 11). Participation was almost gender-balanced, with females being slightly overrepresented. According to RSPN/SRSO project staff, the gatherings were organised at the union council and district level, taking place once a year and once during the programme period, respectively. The dialogues were facilitated by adolescent champions as well as KCIs, who were supported by project staff.

In Punjab, 13 IGDs with 622 participants were organised between June 2017 and December 2017.¹⁶ However, in Rahim Yar Khan, only older generations attended the dialogue, somewhat undermining its original purpose. Due to implementation delays, no data was recorded for Punjab in 2018. Correspondingly, most study participants from Sindh confirmed having taken part in at least one IGD, while neither adolescents nor parents or community leaders from Punjab were aware of the latter.

Table 10: Reported Total Reach of Participants During Intergenerational Dialogues Between June 2017 and December 2018

	Girls	Boys	Women	Men	Total reached
Sindh	1,694	1,550	1,605	1,365	6,214
- Ghotki	601	494	553	561	2,209

¹⁶ According to CYAAD's project end report from December 2017, 15 IGDs with 656 participants were conducted in Punjab in 2017.

- Khairpur	1,093	1,056	1,052	804	4,005
Punjab	138	156	146	182	622
- Bahawalpur	138	156	74	106	474
- Rahim Yar Khan	0	0	72	76	148

Source: UNICEF Child Protection Monitoring Information System, March 2019

The community-based media campaign included additional activities, such as street theatre, local event news coverage through text messages, which were documented in the MIS data, as well as the dissemination of information, education and communication (IEC) materials.

Q: UNICEF is also implementing communication projects, such as mass media campaigns or community-based media campaigns. Do you have information on that?

A: They don't know about any mass media campaign, except for the street theatre.

Q: So, you haven't witnessed any mass media campaign, only a community-based campaign?

A: Yes, the street theatre was only about child marriage.

Q: When was this?

A: This was part of the project. So, it was in the last quarter, and last year and this year; 20 theatres in Ghotki and 30 in Khairpur.

Haina, female MT, RSPN, Sindh

Between July 2017 and September 2018, 60 and 89 street theatre events were organised in Ghotki and Khairpur, respectively. At the time of the field study, the street theatre events were about the harmful effects of child marriage. As stated in post-data-collection communication with UNICEF project staff, RSPN/SRSO hired the services of a local theatre group for each performance, and adolescent champions helped organise the events and ensure the community's participation. An estimated total of 44,639 Sindhis (43.5% female) have seen the role play, thereby being exposed to its message (Table 12).

Table 11: Reported Total Reach of Participants During Street Theatre Performances Between July 2017 and September 2018

	Girls	Boys	Women	Men	Total reached
Sindh	10,147	14,136	9,265	11,091	44,639
- Ghotki	4,095	6,760	2,822	4,368	18,045
- Khairpur	6,052	7,376	6,443	6,723	26,594

Source: UNICEF Child Protection Monitoring Information System, March 2019

In connection with the community-based media campaign, text messages were sent out to raise awareness of the celebration of international days in their communities, such as International Day of Families, World Youth Skills Day, or Children's Day. In addition, texts were used occasionally to promote street theatre performances. In Sindh, 52,771 text messages had been circulated between July 2017 and September 2018. During the field study, however, the researchers did not meet any adolescents, parents or community members that mentioned using their mobile phones to be kept informed about the occurrence of community-based events.

Table 12: Total Number of Text Messages Sent Between May 2017 and November 2018

	Sindh		
	Ghotki	Khairpur	Total
Number of messages	15,068	37,703	52,771

Source: UNICEF Child Protection Monitoring Information System, March 2019

E – HOW DID A GENDER RESPONSIVE COMMUNITY-BASED MEDIA CAMPAIGN INFLUENCE PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT?

As part of the community-based media campaign, the IGDs were intended to create a space for encounter and dialogue, allowing adolescents to share their views and experiences in a public setting, an opportunity often conferred only to people in positions of power, and to partner up with community leaders to identify solutions to their problems. This study aims to understand the ways and extent to which the IGDs and other community-based media campaign activities have contributed to changes in the knowledge, attitude and behaviour of parents and community members, to support adolescent empowerment. Due to the absence of interviewees who heard about or participated in community-based media campaign activities in Punjab, the following documentation is based exclusively on data and documentation on the programme in Sindh.

Messages spread through the community-based media campaign. Within the scope of IGDs, the main topics discussed were children's rights, child and adolescent health, access to education, adolescents' consultation and participation in decision-making, as well as parenting practices. Among these topics, the importance of creating equal opportunities for education was addressed most often, according to study participants. During an FGD in Sindh, female community members expressed their frustration about the absence of educational facilities in their village that would cater girls' needs and credited the dialogue with bringing this issue to community leaders' attention.

The street theatre aims to endorse children's rights, especially equal treatment of boys and girls. It was reported that its theme would change each year. As described above, at the time of the field study, the performances staged in participating districts were about child marriage, and its negative effects on girls' education and health. Similar messages were covered in the IEC materials distributed to programme beneficiaries.

A1: During the dialogue, the basic rights of children were discussed.

A2: We talked about girls' education and we discussed that there should be a school in our village so that girls can get an education (...). We also learned about the disadvantages of child marriages, and parents' responsibility for ensuring their children's well-being.

A3: Education is equally important for both girls and boys. However, in our village there is no separate school for them, and there is no secondary and higher secondary school close-by. So, parents do not send their female children to school in the city.

A2: Due to these meeting, people now concentrate on children's well-being. They focus on their education and their future.

A3: Equal rights should be given to boys and girls. Also, girls' education is important as a lack thereof is a major issue in our community.

Female FGD participants, Sindh

Q: I would like to ask you about the use of media in your community, such as street theatre.

A: Yes, I have seen the street theatre here last year. It was about child marriage. They performed in order to give us a message about the disadvantages of child marriage. It negatively affects the health of the bride and her future children. Young girls don't know anything about married life and running a household. Therefore, children should not be married before they have turned 18.

Q: Do you agree with this message?

A: Yes, I do.

Razia, Mother of adolescent champion, 35, Sindh

Acceptance of the community-based media campaign and changes in attitudes and values. Asked whether participation in the IGDs and other community-based media campaign activities were

gender-mixed, RSPN/SRSO project staff confirmed that they were. Accordingly, it was rare that girls and women encountered any barriers to attendance, and precautions such as separate seating arrangements were taken to encourage female participation. UNICEF Child Protection MIS data also confirms the observation that females could participate to the said events. However, the testimonies of IDI and FGD participants revealed that adolescents were not necessarily considered equal partners in dialogue, assuming the role of passive listeners rather than active facilitators while mostly older community members led the discussions.

Street theatres are mixed. There are many events like this in which males and females are sitting together (...). Participation is mixed. It's not as if females couldn't come.

Project manager at RSPN, Sindh

Q: Have you ever taken part in dialogues for adolescent rights that were attended by elders, too?

A: They don't let us sit with them.

Q: Why? Have you tried?

A: I have tried, but it makes no difference.

Alaya, female adolescent champion, 16, Sindh

Q: We have heard that there was a dialogue in your community, have you participated?

A: Yes, I have (...). My husband and two children came with me. Males, females, adolescents and children were there. Both girls and boys attended the dialogue; half sitting on one side, half on the other side.

Q: What was discussed as part of the dialogue?

A: It was fine. They talked about children's rights, child marriages and education for adolescents. I listened and also talked during the dialogue. I said that adolescents should not get married at an early age, especially girls. They should get an education and work, so they don't get involved in harmful practices.

Q: Did adolescents also talk during the dialogue?

A: No, they are only kids. So, they just listened.

Rutaba, KCI (housewife), 38, Sindh

Street theatre events were labelled as a best practice by UNICEF project staff as well as programme beneficiaries. Both groups of respondents felt that role plays are a good way to communicate and engage with people, as they provide both entertainment and education. Moreover, their reliance on visual communication makes them accessible to all people, no matter their educational background, and aids the audience's ability to recall the lessons imparted. The street theatre performances were reportedly also well received by religious leaders in the communities.

A1: There was a theatre event close to our village. It was about the importance of education (...).

A2: The theatre was conducted by SRSO last year and a huge audience watched it. Males, females, children and people from other villages also participated.

A3: Some recorded the performances on their mobile phones and disseminated them to the wider community.

A4: There should be more theatres because people learn from visualisation.

A3: Theatre is a good way create awareness; it is liked by people.

Male FGD participants, Sindh

Q: Are the religious leaders satisfied with the street theatre concept?

A: They are because it has no songs or dances. It's only a role play which delivers a message, and since it's a drama, the message stays with the audience.

Project manager at RSPN, Sindh

Regarding IEC materials, various respondents in Sindh, including both project staff and adolescent as well as adult direct and indirect beneficiaries, reported that posters and stickers about child protection were used. Nonetheless, the majority of the study participants indicated that they had not seen any such materials in their communities. Those who did, however, were able to reproduce the topics covered, albeit in rudimentary form, and agreed with the messages the materials conveyed. Nevertheless, the poster and stickers require further adaptation if they are to reach all segments of society, particularly the most vulnerable populations. For instance, an illiterate female adolescent champion from Sindh called for more visual poster presentations, as she was not able to decipher the messages herself but required help from family members to do so.

Q: What were the messages that you encountered in the media in your community.

A: I am not literate so I cannot understand written messages.

Q: So, are they good?

A: Yes. I asked my husband to tell me about them.

Q: Most of the population in your village is illiterate, then how are the posters a good medium for information-sharing?

A: They are good, but more pictorial posters would serve their purpose better than written messages.

Q: Tell us about the message of the poster which was pasted near your household?

A: They are about child marriages and the rights of the adolescents.

Q: Did you have this information before?

A: No.

Q: So, have you learned these things from the posters, or in the adolescent group?

A: I have learned this from the group.

Gulnaz, female adolescent champion, 16, Sindh

The IGDs, street theatre events and IEC material were generally seen as a reliable source of information. Based on interviewees' testimonies, however, it was difficult to identify and isolate the impact of participation in community-based media campaign activities. This is because many of the interviewed adolescents, parents and community members were already aware and partly knowledgeable on child protection issues due to their involvement in other programme interventions, i.e. the adolescent groups, the life skills-based training to adolescent champions, or the training to KCIs. Several respondents also reported having been exposed to government-financed media campaigns with similar content even before the programme started.

F – HOW EFFECTIVE WAS THE COMMUNITY-BASED MEDIA CAMPAIGN IN ENGAGING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO CHALLENGE HARMFUL SOCIAL AND GENDER NORMS AND PROMOTE CHILD RIGHTS?

The intergenerational gap in beliefs and values resulting from different life experiences may inhibit the dialogue between the adolescents and their parents and communities. Regarding adolescents' empowerment, parents can play an important role in helping their children acquire or strengthen their behaviours, skills, attitudes, and motivation. Therefore, UNICEF-supported interventions intend to equip parents and community members with the tools to understand adolescents' challenges and to take action to support them in protecting and promoting their rights and overall well-being.

Despite the fact that some of the study participants were already familiar with the community-based media campaign's contents, the IGDs and street theatre events, in particular, can nonetheless be credited with consolidating previously acquired knowledge and initiating awareness-raising on child protection issues among community members who participated in the activities. Further, these

community members carried on the discussion in other contexts, thereby increasing the number of indirect beneficiaries of the programme. Two adolescent group members from Sindh reported that the IGDs and street theatre performances had been instrumental in preventing child marriages in their communities. However, there was only limited evidence of additional actions taken in support of adolescents' rights and well-being as a result of the community-based media campaign activities.

Q: Does your community hold dialogues where adults and adolescents are brought together to discuss adolescents' rights?

A: Yes, we do. I went there. They take place at someone's house or at the communal place.

Q: What was discussed?

A: That child marriages are harmful.

Q: Did the elders understand?

A: Yes, they did. The decision that there should be no more child marriages was taken.

Zeeshan, male adolescent champion, 18, Sindh

SUMMARY OF DOMAIN 2 – ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR ADOLESCENTS

In the framework of the IALP programme, so-called KCIs, community members with authority and influence in their villages, were engaged to promote an enabling environment to adolescents. To this end, the KCIs attended a training sensitising them to the needs and rights of adolescents and subsequently organised community-based events aimed at the wider diffusion of child protection issues. Nonetheless, not all KCIs reported actively sharing their newly-gained knowledge with others, and acceptance of the messages shared as part of the programme, specifically regarding gender discrimination, was mixed.

To reach the wider community, UNICEF also supported the implementation of a community-based media campaign in participating districts. With the help of adolescent champions and KCIs, IGDs and street theatre events were organised. These activities, which focussed primarily on denouncing harmful traditional norms and practices such as child marriage, were generally well received by both male and female participants, not least due to their participatory format. Nonetheless, it appeared that adolescents, especially girls, still faced barriers to attendance and encountered difficulties making their voice heard during the IGDs. Additionally, there was only anecdotal evidence that the community-based media campaign in itself promoted changes in attitudes and behaviour, as its sustained interplay with other interventions means that it might be a complementing rather than driving factor.

DOMAIN 3 – PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR ADOLESCENTS AND IN PARTICULAR HARD-TO-REACH ADOLESCENTS: THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME

In Pakistan, nearly 22.5 million children are OOS, including 32% and 21% of primary school-age girls and boys, respectively (Human Rights Watch 2018). In order to reach the OOS children in disadvantaged and vulnerable circumstances, as well as to give the adolescents who are too old to enrol in school a second chance, UNICEF, together with its implementation partner IRC and the SE&LD of Sindh, is providing these children with non-formal educational services, such as the ALPs. UNICEF has been implementing ALPs in Sindh since 2017.

These alternative learning modalities are in line with the National Education Policy adopted by the MoEPT in 2017, which places NFE as the overarching mechanism to reach out to illiterate children and provide them with elementary knowledge (MoEPT 2017). Furthermore, the existing policy on non-formal basic education (NFBE) in Sindh gives UNICEF the opportunity to directly support the SE&LD with the programme implementation and the development of educational standards (SE&LD 2017). The key challenge of this alternative learning approach is not only encouraging school enrolment but also preventing dropouts. ALPs, therefore, offer a more diversified education system aiming to respond to the local context and considering the specific learning needs of OOS and over-aged children (SE&LD 2017). This context-sensitive approach is also addressed within the Sindh NFBE policy, which advocates for the use of customised learning pathways, as well as for more flexibility in the learning process, in order to ensure the same similar learning outcomes as in the mainstream educational system (SE&LD 2017).

This section describes the outreach and perceived impact of the ALPs in Sindh.

A – WHAT WAS THE OUTREACH OF THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME?

Access and Participation in Classes. As explained by UNICEF PCO and the field officers, the IALP under IKEA II selected Sindh as an implementation province as there already existed UNICEF-supported NFE centres in Punjab. Furthermore, the newly adopted policy on NFE in Sindh gave UNICEF a collaborative framework for supporting the SE&LD and to explore the possibilities to scale up the ALP throughout the province. In 2017, a total of 1,878 Pakistani children were enrolled in 60 NFE centres. At the end of 2018, a total of 100 centres were established with the support of UNICEF, of which 51 were in Khairpur and 49 in Ghotki, which equals the target set by the programme.

According to UNICEF programme officers and the IE team of the UoM, the intervention was originally designed for OOS girls exclusively. However, during the rollout of the programme, UNICEF implementing partner IRC faced significant pressure from the local communities of Khairpur and Ghotki to enable access to the intervention for boys as well, which led to the revision of the outreach strategy. The selected communities have since been accommodating separate and mixed classes¹⁷ for both girls and boys. As a result, and despite the stated priority of enhancing girls' education, in December 2018 in both districts, 3,134 adolescents were enrolled in the ALP, of which 38.9% were boys. In Khairpur 1,578 adolescents were visiting one of the NFE centres supported by UNICEF, of which 979 were girls (62%). In December 2018, UNICEF and IRC were providing 1,556 adolescents (60% girls) with alternative learning modalities in Ghotki. It is worth noting that in the centres

¹⁷ In the case of mixed centres, girls and boys are taught separately.

providing OOS girls and boys from the same community with the access to alternative learning modalities, classes are arranged in a gender-segregated way.

There was a need for centres for both boys and girls, but we were only allowed to have one. So, based on our mobilisation techniques and our implementing partners, we could convince the engaged communities that girls' education should be prioritised. But equally, boys' education is also important (...) Eventually, the Child Protection office agreed to have additional centres in these villages.

UNICEF Education Officer, Sindh

We had decided that these schools should be only for adolescent girls but once the implementing partners touched down at the community, the community retaliated and said, "we want similar schools for boys as well because we don't want to leave out the boys". They were really upset and thought that we should reconsider the design and develop this opportunity for boys also (...). So, we looked at the opportunity of separate classes for boys and girls, and some mixed as well.

UNICEF Education Officer, Islamabad

Table 13: Number of New Students and New NFE Centres Opened in 2017-2018

	2017	2018
Khairpur		
Total number of NFE centres	30	21
Total number of female students	592 (63.7%)	387 (59.7%)
Total number of male students	338 (36.3%)	261 (40.3%)
Total number of students	930	648
Dropouts	Data not available	Data not available
Ghotki		
Total number of NFE centres	30	19
Total number of female students	567 (59.8%)	368 (60.5%)
Total number of male students	381 (40.2%)	240 (39.5%)
Total number of students	948	608
Dropouts	Data not available	Data not available
Sindh		
Total number of NFE centres	60	40
Total number of female students	1,159 (61.7%)	755 (60.1%)
Total number of male students	719 (38.3%)	501 (39.9%)
Total number of students	1,878	1,256
Dropouts	Data not available	Data not available

Source: Post-data-collection communication with UNICEF project staff, April 2019

In order to improve the learning outcomes of the students throughout the 32 months of this NFE programme, UNICEF supports the SE&LD with the procurement of school supplies. In 2017, Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) were provided to all NFE centres, including 60 Recreational Kits, 60 School in a Box, 60 blackboards, and 60 water coolers. In addition, each student received one textbook and one Learning Kit (UNICEF ROSA 2018b). Moreover, UNICEF contributed to the provision of another round of 6,500 learning kits, 60 School in Box, 60 Recreational Kits, 100 blackboards, 203 cartoons of NFE textbooks and 1,015 Menstrual Hygiene Management kits for new ALP participants during 2017 (UNICEF ROSA 2018b). At the time of the KM report, data on UNICEF provision of school supply for 2018 was not available.

In addition, UNICEF supports the SE&LD with technical and financial support for the training of the NFE learning facilitators. Following a gender sensitive approach, a total of 60 NFE teachers were trained in 2017 in Sindh, of which 61% were women, compared to 40 NFE teachers in 2018, of which 62% were women. This information does not necessarily mean that all girls' centres are facilitated by a female teacher. As observed during the data collection, female students can indeed be taught by male teachers.

Table 14: Number of New NFE Learning Facilitators Trained in 2017 and 2018

	2017	2018
Khairpur		
Total number of female facilitators	19	13
Total number of male facilitators	11	8
Total number of facilitators	30	21
Ghotki		
Total number of female facilitators	18	12
Total number of male facilitators	12	7
Total number of facilitators	30	19
Sindh		
Total number of female facilitators	37 (61%)	25 (62%)
Total number of male facilitators	23	15
Total number of facilitators	60	40

Source: Post-data-collection communication with UNICEF project staff, April 2019

Absenteeism and drop-out affect the most vulnerable adolescent girls and boys. Field data collection revealed that adolescents who were more prone to not attending regularly were the ones involved in child labour activities, such as domestic work for girls or small-scale farming for boys. Parents' undervaluing of their children's education was listed as one of the main causes of irregular attendance by the ALP learning facilitators and the UNICEF education officers. Data on drop-outs from the NFE centres in Sindh were not available for the study. This finding highlights the need for UNICEF and IRC to monitor the specific challenges of the most vulnerable adolescents in order to provide them with suitable services.

B – HOW EFFECTIVE WAS THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME IN DELIVERING ADOLESCENT-ORIENTED SERVICES AND PROVIDING THEM WITH QUALITY EDUCATION?

Children do not enroll in school or drop-out early, for a wide variety of complex and often interlinked reasons. What is clear, however, is that conventional schooling is rarely the best solution for these children. A more flexible approach to education is essential (Campbell et al. 2009, p.vii).

As the ALPs in Sindh are following an accelerated learning approach through the use of a condensed curriculum, the analysis of the data is informed by the principles developed in 2017 by the Accelerated Education Working Group, comprising of UNICEF among other UN agencies and NGOs. The goal of this group was to enhance the effectiveness of Accelerated Learning Programmes (UNHCR 2017). The ten principles, as presented in Table 15, were established in order to design, monitor and evaluate alternative learning initiatives. They should be considered the minimum standards of practice and can be adjusted to the type of education programme (UNHCR 2017). The research team thus contextualised and adapted the principles according to the research questions defined for the KM Study (available in the Appendix).

Table 15: The 10 Principles of Effective Accelerated Learning Education Tailored to the KM Study

Research question 1: How effective was the ALP in taking into account adolescents' needs and delivering adolescent-oriented services?	
Principle 1	The programme is flexible (selection, location, and access, schedule) and for over-age learners
Principle 2	The education learning environment is inclusive, safe and learning-ready
Principle 3	Child-sensitive topics are addressed (life skills)
Research question 2: How effective was the ALP in providing the adolescents with quality education?	
Principle 4	The ALP is aligned with the national education system
Principle 5	The ALP is a legitimate, credible education option that results in learner certification in primary education
Principle 6	Curriculum, materials, and pedagogy are genuinely accelerated
Principle 7	Teachers are recruited, supervised and remunerated
Principle 8	Teachers participate in continuous professional development
Principle 9	The Alternative Learning Centre is effectively managed
Principle 10	The community is engaged and accountable

Source: Author's own based on the AEP principles developed by the Accelerated Working Group (UNHCR 2018)

HOW EFFECTIVE AND APPROPRIATE WAS THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME IN TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ADOLESCENTS' NEEDS AND DELIVERING ADOLESCENT-ORIENTED SERVICES?

The ALP is both a supply- and demand-side response. On the supply side, this alternative education model is being implemented by UNICEF with the support of IRC to counterbalance the limited capacity of the GoP and the MoEPT to provide all children with educational facilities (MoFEPT 2017). On the demand side, the ALPs aim to promote inclusive education and integrate multiple profiles, such as married or pregnant adolescent girls, children involved in child labour or over-aged adolescents, who would otherwise be excluded from the formal schooling system. The programme intends to deliver quality education for free to beneficiaries, in a way that accommodates the local conditions and the needs of the learners and their parents. Consequently, the flexibility of this accelerated education model, not only in the selection of the students but also in the development of the school timetable and the decision on the location of lessons, is crucial in order to reduce the students' vulnerability and provide them with adolescent-oriented services. In addition, the data collection revealed that for the two cases of NFE teachers observed, psycho-social well-being and life skills were integrated into the curriculum as part of a teaching strategy, to raise awareness about ALP students' rights and equally address the needs of male and female students.

Flexibility in the selection of the ALP students. Since the ALP is an adolescent-oriented service that aims to reintegrate OOS adolescents into the formal schooling system, the SE&LD focussed on the enrolment of girls and boys from the age group 9 to 16 years in its NFE policy (SE&LD 2017). This way the former ALP students are still eligible to join the nearest public school after graduation from Grade 5 and can continue their secondary education. According to UNICEF programme staff in Sindh, OOS adolescents aged 10 to 16, preferably in possession of a birth certificate, are eligible to join the intervention in localities where no formal education school exists in the radius of 1 to 1.5 kilometres. A list of 100 implementation villages was first developed in 2017 by the UoM, in consultation with UNICEF, following the baseline survey of the ongoing impact evaluation of the IALP. The allocation of the treatment villages accounted for vulnerability criteria, such as the school enrolment and drop-

out rates as well as the proximity to public schools, in order to encourage the participation of the most marginalised children in the intervention. Since no precise information on the presence of local-level OOS children is generally available in Pakistan (SE&LD 2017), IRC community workers in charge of the enrolment of the latter could not rely on any official list. Instead, based on the interviews conducted with UNICEF staff in Sindh, the SO worked hand-in-hand with the Village Education Committees (VEC), teachers and mothers to reach the most excluded children. However, interviews with two ALP beneficiaries suggested that they were directly or indirectly related to the VEC members or community influencers. This raises questions about the use of objective criteria when selecting ALP students on the ground, and the consequences on the participation of less privileged children. Although this finding needs to be interpreted with caution, given the relatively small sample size, the lack of equitable access to the ALP was also raised by two ALP learning facilitators, as well as one student, who observed the continued presence of OOS children in their communities. Furthermore, the District Officer of the SE&LD requested UNICEF and the SO to adopt a more inclusive approach and involve more minorities within the ALP. As RSPN seemed to be aware of this often and repeatedly raised challenge, they suggested a greater synergy between the varied UNICEF Child Protection and Education interventions, and to that end, the introduction of consultation mechanisms between the NGOs implementing the adolescent groups and the ALPs. This way RSPN could refer to IRC when they identified vulnerable OOS children eligible to participate in the education programme. This solution is however not a panacea, since the ALP and the adolescent groups only overlap in 15 to 20% of cases, according to RSPN.

I heard from my grandfather about the alternative learning centre, he is also a key community influencer.

Syeda, female ALP student, 15, Sindh

The ALP is running in a good way and the out-of-school children are now getting an education. I think that initiatives like this centre should be continued. But more enrolment should be done, as there are still out of school children in the village.

Ehsan, male NFE teacher, 23, Sindh

I asked the people in the centre: “do you have any children from minority groups or indigenous people. There were none of those in the seven centres I had visited (...)”. It shouldn’t only be only the people from villages near to cities [who enrol in the ALPs], but also people from the heart of rural areas. Where there is an issue of child labour.

District officer, SE&LD, Sindh

We need to enrol more out-of-school children so they can learn with us.

Hashim, male ALP student, 15, Sindh

In addition, the ALPs are following a gender-inclusive approach by allowing OOS boys to attend the classes (making up around 40% of the NFE centres). This strategy indicates the interest of UNICEF to not only promote girls’ education but to also adapt to the local circumstances, and therefore create an environment that meets the specific needs and challenges of OOS boys.

Flexibility in school timetabling. The Sindh NFE policy leaves it up to the programme implementers to adapt the ALP daily schedule to the needs of the students and the community (SE&LD 2017). In general, the ALP learning facilitators that met for the KM Study reported being guided by the SO on the number of lesson hours. Classes are usually held in the afternoon from 2 to 6 pm, six days a week, in order to allow students from vulnerable families to reconcile their work and household duties with their school obligations. This model is subject to change according to the needs of the community, in particular during harvesting periods. This context-sensitive approach seems to

ensure that the needs of the adolescent girls and boys involved in other daily activities are considered and thus tackles the issues of absenteeism and drop-outs. Finally, this flexibility promotes cooperation and acceptance of the parents and community, which is crucial for the success of this community-based programme.

Parents of some older ALP students were not ready to send them to formal school due to their engagement in labour activities, such as pastoral activities. However, with the ALP operating in the afternoon, there is no issue of timing. The major challenge [in attaining formal education] for the children of this age is their engagement in labour activities to support their families.

Ehsan, male NFE teacher, 23, Sindh

The formal school times are from 8 am to 1 pm or 8 am to 2 pm, but for these centres, they apply flexible school hours. They adapt to the activities of every village. During the cotton harvest, for example, the timetables depend on the morning shift, evening shift, and so on.

UNICEF Education Officer, Islamabad

I used to go early to the field and look after our livestock before going to the Alternative Learning Centre in the afternoon. (...). It is different from formal school because ALP school time is [in] the evening, which gives us time to do the household chores in the morning.

Hashim, male ALP student, 15, Sindh

I usually do the household chores in the morning, such as washing clothes, cleaning the house, and study at the Alternative Learning Centre in the afternoon.

Syeda, female ALP student, 15, Sindh

Despite the flexible programme modalities, maintaining regular attendance remains a challenge. The ALP learning facilitators, along with Ghotki's District Officer of the SE&LD, observed extensive absenteeism due to some students' participation in labour activities. As a result, the NFE teachers that were interviewed reported having tried to raise the families' awareness on child protection issues as well as the value of education for boys and girls. However, key informants and the NFE teachers suggested that providing financial incentives to the students may potentially be a more effective option to motivate the families to relinquish a source of income. These findings point to the continued need to address the quality of parents' support when it comes to providing their children with an enabling learning environment.

Although the ALPs explicitly aim to mitigate the risk of school drop-out by offering an adolescent-friendly flexible service to the youth population, one learning facilitator still observed cases of adolescents leaving the programme. According to the data collected, the systemic challenge of migration remains the predominant obstacle to adolescent girls' and boys' pursuit of education.

I record the students' attendance daily. There are usually 27 to 28 out of 32 registered students who attend the ALP class. If the students remain continuously absent, I go to their parents and if they are still not coming to school, I alert the Village Education Committee members. There are two children who dropped out because they migrated to another city.

(...)

There are challenges to maintain the regular attendance of the students, as they are engaged in household work and income generating activities for their families. There should be scholarships or other incentives for attraction to parents, as children of this age are generating incomes and so parents are not fully interested in the education of adolescents. If some incentive or scholarship would be offered, then parents would be motivated to send their children to school.

Ehsan, male NFE teacher, 23, Sindh

There are about 30 students in each centre. The attendance rate is almost 50%. I told them [the facilitators] that this should be increased, so they said that it's cotton harvest time. And they do it in two groups for those who are busy with work.

District Officer, SE&LD, Sindh

[When children are repeatedly missing], I talk to their families and tell them to send their children.

Awamil, male NFE teacher, 33, Sindh

Flexibility in holding classes in non-traditional learning spaces. The National Education Policy guidelines require the provision of locally available resources by the community (MoFEPT 2017). According to programme documents and interviews with UNICEF education officers, the classes of the ALPs can take place in non-conventional settings (such as the facilitator's home or the Islamic school) as well as in government schools after regular class time, as observed during the data collection in Khairpur. There are advantages and disadvantages associated with each setting. The latter gives the ALP students a proper educational infrastructure, even if one respondent reported not using the classrooms but sitting outside on mats. On the other hand, while the former offers the advantage of being able to choose a location convenient for all participants, in the case of private homes, the setting can be modestly equipped, which sometimes implies the absence of toilet facilities. This lack of access to water and separate toilet facilities for boys and girls might affect the gender responsiveness of the programme, as it was reported to be a problem for girls.

Yet, based on the interviews collected in both implementation districts, having the ALP in a central location can contribute to improving students' attendance, since the teacher can quickly fetch the missing students before the class starts. Furthermore, it overcomes the barriers linked to social safety, and consequently to parents' reluctance to send their children, in particular girls, to school, because of the formal school's geographic location outside of the village.

The place is made from mud. There is only one classroom with a temporary bathroom. Yes, it is a problem [for girls].

Awamil, male NFE teacher, 33, Sindh

What I like about the ALP is that the school timetable allows me to do other things and it is close to my home.

Syeda, female ALP student, 15, Sindh

Embedding Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) into the NFBE framework is part of the SE&LD strategy, and aims not only to help students in fragile contexts to make improved life choices and deal with the challenges of everyday life, but also to promote change in social norms and community dynamics (SE&LD 2017). In addition, LSBE provides the opportunity for marginalised young people to be trained and receive personal support on the means to safeguard their survival. While UNICEF programme staff in Sindh described a playful programme composed of recreational activities such as sports, art competitions, summer camps and visits to local historic places, they also reported using celebrations like International Children's Day and International Literacy Day to raise the students' and community's awareness on the importance of children's rights protection. During those events, ALP students perform in dramas and skits as well as sing songs.

The two NFE teachers interviewed recounted their experience of discussing topics such as child marriage and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), through cleanliness and handwashing awareness sessions, to all female and male beneficiaries. UNICEF programme officers indeed insisted on the importance of addressing reproductive health, hygiene, and menstruations issue as part of the

life skills component. In 2017, Health and Hygiene kits were handed out to 1,899 students (including 1,174 girls) (UNICEF ROSA 2018b). However, the research team observed that one girls' centre had a male facilitator, raising questions about the appropriateness of a mixed-gender setting to discuss very sensitive gender-related issues. In addition, the topic of equal access to education was specifically addressed in the girls' class while traffic safety was listed as one of the main life skills topics discussed in the boys' group.

A: We tell them [our students] about hygiene and the advantages of education. This is part of the syllabus.

Q: What about child marriage?

A: I tell them that only girls above 18 can get married (...). In the village, a 16-17-year-old girl is looking for proposals. So, I tell them "you can get married when you turn 18".

Awamil, male NFE teacher, 33, Sindh

I used to raise their awareness about traffic issues, like avoiding driving fast, using a helmet, etc. Also, sometimes I discuss child marriage with my students to avoid child marriage cases (...). There was one boy studying in the ninth class, his parents arranged his marriage. I tried to convince them not to do so as his age was not appropriate for marriage.

Ehsan, male NFE teacher, 23, Sindh

HOW EFFECTIVE WERE THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING CENTERS IN PROVIDING ADOLESCENTS WITH QUALITY EDUCATION?

The goal of Accelerated Education Programmes is to provide learners with equivalent, certified competencies for basic education using effective teaching and learning approaches that match their level of cognitive maturity (UNHCR 2017).

Compressed curriculum: The ALP offers the opportunity to UNICEF to pilot the curriculum developed by the Directorate of Curriculum, Assessment, and Research (DCAR) as part of the NFE policy (SE&LD 2017). NFE curricula, according to the 2009 National Education Policy, need to be objective driven and facilitate the transition of the students into the labour market via vocational training, linkages with industries and schools or internships (Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan 2009). The accelerated NFE curriculum is condensed as it covers the entire cycle of primary school in 32 months – around half that of the normal duration. It consists of three separate packages, all of them having direct equivalence with the formal system (UNICEF ROSA 2018b). While the ALP students have eight months to complete Package A (Grade 1 and 2) and Package B (Grade 3 and 4) respectively, the allocated duration for Package C (Grade 5 and 6) is 14 months (SE&LD 2017). At the time of the data collection, the UNICEF-supported NFE centres had still not delivered the Package C to the students, nor trained the ALP learning facilitators on the latter. Based on the research team's observations in Khairpur and Ghotki, classes were made up of up to 32 adolescents, often ranging in age from 10 to 16. Subjects covered include Mathematics, Urdu/Sindhi, General Knowledge, English, and Islamiyat.

A critical characteristic of accelerated learning education is longer sessions of instruction, to facilitate a deeper and more effective acquirement of knowledge and skills (UNHCR 2017). In the NFE centres visited during the data collection, the ALP learning facilitators and students reported dedicating the whole year to their teaching and learning, four hours a day, six days a week, with no vacation time. In their suggestion to improve the current ALP module, one of the ALP learning facilitators interviewed expressed the need to extend the number of teaching hours per day to be able to complete the programme in the allocated eight months. Another teacher indicated the necessity to

incorporate skills training in the NFE curriculum. The latter is in fact already included within the developed Package C, which had still not been rolled out at the time of the data collection in October 2018.

They [the SO, IRC] told us to teach for eight months and the students will take exams after that. Sundays are off and there is no vacation. The school stays open for six days.

Awamil, male NFE teacher, 33, Sindh

According to my experience, there should be one additional school hour every day in order to complete the syllabus in the allocated eight months.

Ehsan, male NFE teacher, 23, Sindh

The condensed NFE curriculum is usually accompanied by the use of accelerated learning techniques intended to provide the students with an adapted pedagogy, enabling them to learn more effectively and at a faster pace (Baxter and Bethke 2009). In order to tackle the challenges linked to teaching the same syllabus to students from different ages, levels, and backgrounds, the NFE teachers are supposed to run an initial assessment and arrange learning groups based on the students' levels. According to the UNICEF Education staff, this method should optimise the students' learning outcomes. However, it was not clear to the research team in observations if this arrangement was being implemented.

The ALP learning facilitators reported teaching in line with the TLM provided by UNICEF and developed by the SE&LD within the Sindh NFE policy. Both teachers mentioned visual learning, group work, and learning competitions as being the most effective teaching methods to improve the learning outcomes of the students. On this aspect, one of them nevertheless expressed reservations about the lack of compliance of the NFE curriculum with the formal school syllabus and the potential challenges linked to the students' transition into the mainstream education system. Another limitation was the use of a language appropriate to all students.

Q: What do you do in your class to enable child-centred learning?

A: I ask the children to do the work themselves, give them activities in groups so they learn teamwork. I also organise competitions: whoever completes the work first gets a prize. It impresses the students.

(...)

[In the ALP curriculum] there are pictures on every page. This makes it easy for the children to learn through visualisation.

Awamil, male NFE teacher, 33, Sindh

The formal school syllabus does not contain any pictures, but the ALP syllabus is based on visual learning (...). This NFE curriculum should cover secondary education. The ALP accelerated curriculum is more based on pictorial learning so NFE students will face issues to catch up in formal schools.

Ehsan, 23, male NFE teacher, Sindh

There are some kids who do not understand Urdu and Sindhi well. There is a language barrier. Some children speak Pashto. But I have still covered. They have learned to write their names, they can recognise things, but they say that we need time. But that will become better.

Awamil, 33, male NFE teacher, Sindh

Selection and Training of ALP learning facilitators. According to the national policy documents, as well as the Sindh NFE policy, NFE teachers are selected by the implementing partners with the support of the community and engaged as part-time teachers (SE&LD 2017, MoFEPT 2017). The position is opened to graduates of at least intermediary school (Grade 12) but in order to tackle the challenges related to the lack of female teachers, younger students awarded with a Secondary School

Certificate (SSC) are also eligible as long as they continue their education until Grade 12. It is worth noting that the selection of NFE teachers has not been entirely institutionalised and is still subject to Private-Public-Partnerships, which hinders the standardisation of the process (SE&LD 2017). This also prevents ALP learning facilitators from all receiving an official status, and as a result a well-defined career structure and salary. UNICEF programme officers reported that the selection process of ALP learning facilitators is very informal, restricted to a basic test to check the literacy level of the candidates. The Sindh NFE policy, however, calls for an institutionalisation of the formal assessment of teachers (SE&LD 2017). In light of this, and according to the interviews conducted with key informants, the Sindh Teachers Education Development Authority has recently approved the creation of a management system for NFE teachers under the name of *NFE Facilitators Management Framework Sindh*, which will be responsible for the regularisation of the teachers' selection.

Both teachers interviewed already had extensive experience teaching in private schools and had a Master's in zoology and a Bachelor's in mathematics respectively. One had attended a school teacher training and explained that the high salary (8,000 PKR) and the motivation to serve his community played a key role in his decision to take part in the intervention.

It is challenging to find good teachers. This is why we have this strategy of hiring men and women and providing them with incentives, such as the mobility allowance, the food allowance or anything, just to keep them motivated for the time they will spend in the centres.

UNICEF education officer, Islamabad

We must think about the sustainability of the NFE modality and engage the tutors for not only five to six months or a year. We know that we need to provide them with more incentives to make the programme more attractive and boost their performance.

District Officer, SE&LD, Sindh

Before taking up their posts, the selected applicants received training from government MTs on the NFE textbooks for five days. Both of the NFE teachers interviewed were satisfied with the training and reported an extensive programme that encouraged participants to adopt learner-friendly and participatory teaching approaches (such as group work) in their teaching. However, its short duration, the insufficient time allocated to each subject (especially to mathematics and English) as well as the absence of follow-up sessions, were identified as areas for improvement. Moreover, the Package C of the NFE curriculum was not covered as part of the training.

These teachers were trained on the NFE textbooks. In Sindh, we have an approved NFE curriculum, textbooks, and training material. So those NFE textbooks were provided, the teachers were trained by government master trainers on the package A and B during a 5-day training.

UNICEF Education Officer, Sindh

The education system is quite vast. We have only learned a few things [during the training of ALP facilitators]. If there were more days, it would have been better (...). They should allocate at least two to three days per topic and increase the number of days, also focus more on subjects like science.

Awamil, male NFE teacher, 33, Sindh

I have attended a five-day training. The training and the trainer were good. There is no refresher training. The duration should be increased and also, we should be provided with a refresher training.

Ehsan, male NFE teacher, 23, Sindh

While the provision of the NFE classroom remains in the hands of the community, UNICEF supports the SE&LD with the procurement of school supplies, including the TLMs developed by the Sindh authorities. In case of material shortage, the NFE teachers can report their needs to UNICEF by

informing IRC. Both ALP learning facilitators confirmed having received blackboards, chalks, flipcharts, sports equipment, paper, floor mats, and water coolers and were satisfied with the quality of the materials provided. In addition, new hygiene products are delivered to the centres every four months. However, one teacher reported a lack of textbooks, while the other explained that he had to pay for his own supplies in the case of specific needs that do not fall under the aforementioned list. Finally, although the Sindh NFE policy promotes the use of innovative Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the education delivery, no such equipment was available in the classrooms (SE&LD 2017).

Videos would definitely [improve education delivery]. We should show videos to children.

Awamil, male NFE teacher, 33, Sindh

Each student has their own book and we have them in sufficient quantity. Markers, pens, pencils, notebooks, and chalks are provided by UNICEF in enough quantity. Additional soap and other hygiene items are provided by UNICEF on a quarterly basis.

Ehsan, male NFE teacher, 23, Sindh

There are hard copies of resource books, handbooks, flipchart paper, flipcharts, books, stationery, etc. There are very limited opportunities for digital communication, in fact, there is none.

UNICEF education officer, Islamabad

According to UNICEF field officers and the programme documents, the overall management of the NFE centre lies in the hands of the VEC. VECs are responsible for the administrative management of the NFE centre and for supporting the teachers with their daily activities, such as preventing drop-outs and absenteeism. This programme modality is in line with the Sindh NFE policy, which recommends the creation of community-based oversight committees to promote community ownership and acceptance (SE&LD 2017). In 2017, 60 mixed VECs were established in each community with an NFE centre, totalling 900 members, of which 30% were women. The members were provided with training on their roles and responsibilities, and on the development and implementation of school improvement plans (UNICEF ROSA 2018b).

In addition, the interviewed NFE teachers reported valuing the regular monitoring visits provided by IRC to follow up on the programme development. IRC monitors activities and outputs such as the teacher's performance, the centre infrastructure and logistics, the need of school supplies or the students' attendance through monitoring visits to classes and the utilisation of attendance sheets. Moreover, both respondents appreciated being able to rely on IRC's support to mobilise the community and specially to convince parents to send their children to school.

We have village education committees. It has a similar role than [that of] the school management committees. Parents are engaged in VECs and the role of the VEC is also to monitor NFE teachers, to help them in their daily activities and resolve issues. For example, a learner is not coming, so the VEC follows up with learners and their parents. So, the VECs role is very critical and important, and they are playing a major role in the success of this programme.

UNICEF Education Officer, Sindh

Q: So, you told me that you report to the Support Organisation if girls don't come to school. On what other issues do you seek help from them?

A: There are some girls whose mothers ask them to work. I can talk to men, but in those cases, I report this to the SO.

Awamil, male NFE teacher, 33, Sindh

They are supportive when I need a meeting with the community. So, they help me arranging the meeting and also provide items like books, markers, sheets, or other material required from the office, so I inform them, and they provide materials. Even they meet with the community and government school management for cooperation and support.

Ehsan, male NFE teacher, 23, Sindh

Transition into the mainstream education system. The Pakistani government encourages a system of equivalence, to facilitate the NFE students' entry into secondary public schools (MoE, GoP 2009). Similarly, the Sindh NFE strategy declares it necessary to set up a *process to mainstream out of school education after development and demonstration of relevant competencies formalised through equivalency and certification structures* and centralising the service provision (SE&LD 2017, p.8). Following the completion of Package C, NFE students who pass an exam can be admitted into the formal education system or any vocational training. Key informants at the district level nevertheless highlighted the absence of NFE certificates, which affects the transition process and the sustainability of the programme. Aware of this challenge, the district officer from the SE&LD indicated that his department is collaborating with the DCAR to develop standards for NFBE and issue official certificates recognised by the authorities to allow an easier transition into the mainstream school system.

Another limitation raised by key informants was that the UNICEF-supported NFE centres had still not delivered Package C in October 2018, which poses questions as to whether there will be enough time to deliver this 14-month curriculum part before the end of the implementation phase in 2019. In the case of a considerable delay in its implementation, financing the missing package with UNICEF own resources has been identified by one Education Officer as a possibility to tackle this challenge of timing. Despite the efforts stated by UNICEF staff, the uncertainty surrounding the implementation and financing modalities of Package C questions the feasibility of implementing the package within the intended timeline and after the end of IKEA II. In the event where this should not be the case, this might affect the sustainability of the programme. As a matter of fact, if the NFE students don't complete the entire NFE curriculum, they won't be able to transit into the mainstream system by the end of the programme. In addition, Package C is supposed to focus on the delivery of technical and vocational skills and would serve to improve the students' employability.

In addition, it seems that some contextual issues that the NFE centres are addressing (e.g. school too far away, lack of girls' school, parents not allowing their daughters to leave the village, involvement in labour activities) re-emerge once the primary education of the students is completed. Furthermore, UNICEF education officers shared their concerns regarding the risk of girls being married off by their families once their primary education is completed. The options of expanding the existing centre in order to give the children the opportunity to pursue their secondary education within the communities, as well as of developing the students' technical skills (especially through the roll-out of the Package C), were being explored by UNICEF at the time of the data collection. The first strategy is indeed backed by the national NFE policies, which advocate for the expansion and extension of NFBE programmes to secondary education level (MoFEPT 2017, MoE, GoP 2009). However, these aspects are subject to negotiation between UNICEF and the SE&LD, which suffers from a resource shortfall. According to interviews conducted with the officers from the SE&LD, the government does not have any capacity to take over the NFE centres once the IALP comes to an end. The exit strategy of the ALP therefore remains unclear.

These programmes cannot run without government support. The district government is very heavily engaged, and I think we should really look for supporting the government's capacity to create

opportunities for these children. Basically, they [the graduated ALP students] are just post-primary school students. [If] they are not integrated into 6th grade, they don't get any technical education. (...)

I don't think it [the Package C] has been implemented. But we were trying to make efforts on our own, outside the scope of the project. This project may end, but we can see how we can transition these children to that package. This was an internal education discussion, that we will use our own resources to see how we can really take these children to go through the package C.

UNICEF Education officer, Islamabad

In many locations, there are no schools and if there are schools, they are for boys. So, the mainstreaming of girls remains a challenge, but we are making efforts to make sure that package C is completed by all learners. If, after completion of package C, there is still no middle school in their locality, we will provide technical support to develop the NFE programme for lower secondary education. We will start a consultation with the government in 2019. So hopefully, by 2020 we will have some model for non-formal lower secondary education which we can pilot within IKEA II.

UNICEF Education officer, Sindh

SUMMARY OF DOMAIN 3 – PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR ADOLESCENTS IN HARD-TO-REACH AREAS

Although the ALP was originally designed to address the needs of OOS girls, the programme was opened up to boys during its implementation and therefore attempts to counterbalance the limited capacity of the MoEPT to provide female and male adolescents with quality education. The ALP students and the learning facilitators interviewed emphasised the flexibility of this alternative schooling model, not only in the selection of the students but also in the development of the school timetable, the decision on the location of lessons and the use of learner-centred teaching and learning methods. However, absenteeism and drop-outs due to child labour, child marriage and migration remained a challenge, which points to the continued need to raise the community's awareness on the benefits of education and to address the quality of the parents' involvement in their children's education.

The alignment of the UNICEF-supported ALP with the Sindh NFE policy played a major role in the legitimisation and credibility of this education option. However, some limitations in the sustainability of the programme were flagged by key informants and teachers, which presents a risk for the several ALP student cohorts of not being able to transit to the secondary mainstream system and more broadly to continue their secondary education.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

THE ADOLESCENT GROUP AND THE LIFE SKILLS TRAINING BASED ON THE ADOLESCENT EMPOWERMENT TOOLKIT

- The training on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit and the Trickle-Down sessions had not started in Punjab at the time of the data collection in October 2018.
- Adolescent champions and adolescent group members were approached to participate in the intervention by MTs and adolescent champions, respectively. In Sindh, while the adolescent groups were supposed to engage hard-to-reach adolescents, among whom were OOS children (70% of the members), the selection of the group members seemed to lack a clear set out eligibility criteria. This may have led to selection bias and presents the risk that only above-average motivated and outspoken adolescents were given the opportunity to participate in the Life Skills sessions, while excluding others who could benefit more from the training.
- In Sindh, literacy was an eligibility criterion to be trained and become adolescent champions. Punjab instead focussed on participation level and activism to select the adolescents into the LST, which potentially would give the opportunity to illiterate adolescents to become role models.
- Only one adolescent out of the 12 interviewed in Sindh reported having received the whole training package of 16 modules in October 2018. At that time, only eight sessions had been delivered to the remaining 11 respondents.
- Despite the above-mentioned adaptation, some limitations were observed in the implementation of the LST. Although the adolescent champions described using interactive teaching methods, the adolescent group members interviewed reported a more classical training setting involving lecturing sessions and writing tasks. This raises the issue of the accessibility of the training content for uneducated adolescents, which was also addressed by one of the adolescent champions interviewed. Drawing and games were also mentioned by respondents.
- In general, adolescents expressed satisfaction with the content covered by the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit and the LST, with the session on *Identity and Self Esteem* and the energiser *One lie, two truths* ranking as the two most appreciated activities.
- In Sindh, the Trickle-Down sessions with the adolescent groups started in September 2018 and their regularity varied from community to community. Adolescent champions held monthly or weekly meetings. The regular attendance and participation of the adolescent group members was not flagged as a concern by UNICEF, IRC and the adolescent champions. Nevertheless, little information was available on the monitoring framework in place to ensure the regular participation of each adolescent.
- The adoption of the cascade approach to deliver the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit created an adolescent-friendly environment conducive to the exchange of knowledge and experience between the MTs, the adolescent champions, the adolescent group members and finally the peer groups. At the two first training levels, the NGO trainers and the adolescent champions mentioned being equipped with a toolset enabling them to use sensitive learner-centred teaching methods when delivering the training.
- At the time of the data collection, only one adolescent group member interviewed had created his own peer group. The data collected suggest that the peer sessions were rather held informally and with a varying number of participants. It remains therefore unclear whether each peer group member does receive all training modules given the absence of an effective

follow-up framework. This raises questions about the effectiveness and sustainability of this cascade approach to reach out to a greater number of adolescents. In addition, the lack of training material similar to the toolkit provided to the adolescent champions was listed as one of the main challenges encountered by the trained group members when planning to cascade their knowledge to non-group members.

- Overall, the adolescent champions reported feeling at ease when cascading their knowledge to the adolescent group members. They described a safe environment encouraging self-reflection, exploration and mutual respect and highlighted their positive influence on their peers and acting as role models. Some sessions of the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit were nevertheless difficult to deliver to their peers, especially when addressing the family chapter. In addition, the challenge of mentoring illiterate adolescents was raised.
- The opinions of the adolescent respondents on the advantages of peer learning over mainstream education differed. While one group of adolescents expressed their enthusiasm for the alternative content and format of the training sessions, others placed more trust in the quality of school teaching.
- Most of the adolescent respondents reported feeling more at ease in separate learning settings. This was particularly supported by the adolescent girls who enjoyed participating in an intervention dedicated to their education. However, both sides advocated in favour of an equal access to the adolescent groups for girls and boys from the same community.
- In Sindh, the adolescent group members receive the training in locations of their choice. As a result, the young respondents reported feeling safe on their way to and during the training sessions, mainly because of the central location of the meeting place and the fact of not having to leave the village for the female members. In Punjab on the other hand, some adolescents met by the research team shared their concerns on the location of the communal place where their first meeting was held as it was very far away from their homes.
- Because of the gender norms in place restricting the mobility of women at the local level, the participation of some female adolescent champions in the training on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit remains a challenge.
- The LST based on the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit contributed to confirming positive attitudes and increasing knowledge among adolescents who took part in the LST and became champions (or leaders), as well as those who were peer-trained during the adolescent group sessions. The adolescents reported an increase in knowledge not only concerning their rights, but also their identity and perceived abilities. The comparison between Sindh, where the intervention was rolled out for several months and Punjab, where the intervention was stopped and resumed around the time of the data collection period, allowed us to capture the possible trends that signal positive change. It indicated that exposure to the adolescent group could bring about more specific knowledge about child rights and confirm positive attitudes about them, for example the disapproval of child marriage. Both boys and girls, who were exposed to the adolescent groups appeared to have benefitted from the activities to increase their knowledge. Nonetheless, traditional gender roles were still strongly espoused by adolescent boys and girls, especially related to household chores being women's tasks.
- Compared to the beginning of the programme, the respondents revealed being better equipped to identify their strengths and assess the quality of their relationship with their community members. Positive testimonies illustrated the improved confidence felt by adolescents of both sexes.
- The LST delivered either by MTs to the adolescent champions or via the peer-to-peer approach motivated the adolescents to reflect about themselves and to express their opinion.

Adolescents particularly noticed the positive changes they perceived in talking with their parents, in particular their mothers and siblings. Several noted discussing child protection and child rights issues within their family and among peers.

- Due to the relatively short time-exposure to the programme, especially in Punjab where activities had only just resumed at the time of the field data collection, there was little evidence of actions in favour of adolescents or against harmful practices, notable child marriage, reported by adolescents. Only few interviewed adolescents had mobilised to denounce such practices, irrespective of the programme implementation period.
- A newly developed module on SRH was integrated in 2018 to the training curriculum and is only delivered to married adolescent girls and boys in the presence of their parents. This selective strategy might be not fully consistent with UNICEF objective to support the right to information for all adolescents in order to help them make improved life decisions.
- In Sindh, the work through existing structures, VOs, was considered by UNICEF and RSPN Officers as one of the project's strengths to foster the acceptability from the community. It contributed to the positive involvement of the community.

THE TRAINING FOR KEY COMMUNITY INFLUENCERS

- The training provided to the KCIs included gender-responsive content and sensitised the KCIs on the challenges faced by adolescents, especially girls, in their communities. A growing number of KCIs were trained to create an enabling environment for the adolescents. This resulted in an overall increase in awareness among the KCIs regarding certain gender-related social norms and practices, most importantly child marriage. The training was conducted in a period of three days but did not include refresher training.
- The KCIs who took part in the training included their learnings in their day-to-day communication with other community members. Whereas male KCIs were able to reach out to a wider audience, female KCIs' outreach was mostly limited to household members and relatives.
- In order to increase the number of indirect beneficiaries of the intervention, the KCIs were tasked with organising roll-out sessions and community mobilisation events. During these gatherings, topics such as children's rights as well as the psycho-social needs and well-being of adolescents were covered.
- Overall, the community's response to the KCIs' engagement seems to be positive. Several community members shared that they were aware of their lack of knowledge on child protection issues and therefore actively endorsed the KCIs' awareness-raising activities. However, it was reported that messages denouncing unequal treatment of girls and boys were met with resistance from time to time, especially among the male population.
- Some changes in the knowledge and attitudes of KCI training participants could be observed. Nonetheless, only little evidence existed that the training had led to concrete actions against harmful social norms and practices other than the conduction of awareness-raising activities.

THE COMMUNITY-BASED MEDIA CAMPAIGN

- The IGDs held in Sindh allowed adolescents to engage with older generations in a public setting and talk more openly about their views and concerns. Moreover, they constituted a platform for adolescent champions and KCIs to share their learnings from the programme with the wider community. According to study participants' testimonies, however, the active involvement of young people and female community members in the discussions was not always assured.

- At the time of the KM field mission, the community-based media campaign had only gained traction in Sindh, with (almost) no activities reported in interviews and MIS data for Punjab.
- Other than the IGDs, the community-based media campaign included street theatre performances, local event news coverage through text messages and the distribution of IEC materials. Topics covered were children's rights, child and adolescent health, access to education, adolescents' consultation and participation in decision-making, as well as parenting practices. During street theatre events, special emphasis was put on the harmful effects of child marriage, which was the focal topic for 2018.
- Staff and programme beneficiaries alike described street theatre as an effective way to promote children's rights and adolescent psycho-social well-being. In contrast to posters and stickers that rely on writing, staged performances have the potential to reach a greater diversity of people, since they are accessible to the illiterate population as well.
- Both male and female respondents stated that they trusted the information disseminated as part of the community-based media campaign. Participation in the activities increased the community members' awareness of and knowledge on child protection issues. Considering the study participants' short-time exposure to the intervention at the time of the KM mission, there was no conclusive evidence for the programme's impact on attitudes and behaviour as well as the sustainability of these changes.

THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME

- UNICEF selected Sindh as the implementation province to collaborate with the SE&LD on the NFE policy and scale up the ALP throughout the province. By the end of 2018, 100 UNICEF-supported NFE centres had been opened with a total of 3,134 students enrolled in Khairpur and Ghotki.
- The intervention was originally designed for OOS girls exclusively. However, in response to local requests from communities, UNICEF revised its outreach strategy and enabled access for boys as well. As a result, in both implementation districts, 39% of the enrolled adolescents were boys.
- Field data collection revealed that adolescents who were more prone to not attending regularly were the ones involved in child labour activities. Furthermore, parents' undervaluing of their children's education was found to be one of the main causes of irregular attendance. This finding points to the continued need to address the quality of parents' support when it comes to providing their children with an enabling learning environment.
- Data on drop-outs from the NFE centres in Sindh were not available for the study, which highlights the need for UNICEF and IRC to monitor the specific challenges faced by the most vulnerable adolescents in order to provide them with suitable services.
- UNICEF supports the SE&LD with technical and financial support for the training of male and female NFE teachers as well as with the provision of TLM and Health and Hygiene kits. In 2018, a total of 100 ALP learning facilitators had been trained within IKEA II, of whom 62% were women. Overall, the NFE facilitators interviewed within the KM Study were satisfied with the quality of the materials provided by UNICEF. However, no ICTs were being used in class.
- Visual learning, group work and learning competitions were identified by the NFE teachers as being the most effective TLM. Nevertheless a few expressed reservations towards the lack of compliance of the NFE curriculum with the formal school syllabus and its consequences on the ALP students' integration into the formal school system.

- As the ALP is a community-based intervention, all ALC students interviewed were approached via multiple community-based channels. According to the data collected, VEC members, community influencers, teachers and mothers are the focal points for registering OOS children. Overall, there was little evidence that transparent selection criteria had been used. The students met by the research team reported knowing OOS adolescents in their communities who were not enrolled in the ALCs, raising questions about the reach of the intervention and the effectiveness of the enrolment of all vulnerable adolescents. However, due to the ongoing RCT on the IALP programme, adolescents from some villages might have been prevented from accessing the ALP, as compliance with the sample design, that is the assignment to treatment and control groups, had to be ensured.
- The flexibility of the ALP was described as playing a crucial role in the provision of adolescent-oriented services, not only in the selection of the students but also in the development of the school timetable, the decision on the location of lessons and the use of learner-centred teaching and learning methods. However, unlike in public schools, holding the class in private homes sometimes implies the absence of toilet facilities and might affect the gender responsiveness of the programme.
- Although the flexibility of the ALP was reported by the adult and young respondents as enabling the adolescents to reconcile their work or household duties with school, absenteeism and drop-outs due to child labour, child marriage or migrations remained a challenge.
- The accelerated NFE curriculum covers the entire cycle of primary school and consists of three separate packages (A, B, C), all of them having direct equivalence with the formal school system. At the time of the data collection, the UNICEF-supported NFE centres had still not delivered Package C, which poses questions as to whether there will be enough time to deliver this 14-month curriculum part before the end of the implementation phase in 2019 and might affect the sustainability of the programme. .
- The NFE curriculum includes child-sensitive topics, such as WASH and child marriage, which raises questions about the appropriateness of allocating teachers from another gender group in girls' or boys' class to discuss these gender-related issues that might be very sensitive.
- The NFE teachers interviewed received training from government MTs on the NFE textbooks for five days. Although they reported being satisfied with the training content, its short duration, the insufficient time allocated to each subject as well as the absence of follow-up sessions, were identified as areas for improvement. Moreover, at the time of the data collection, the teachers had not been trained on the Package C of the NFE curriculum.
- NFE students need to pass an exam to be admitted into the formal education system or any vocational training. The absence of NFE certificates within the IALP was highlighted by key informants, as it affects the transition process and the sustainability of the programme. Aware of this challenge, the district officer from the SE&LD indicated that his department is collaborating with the DCAR to develop standards for NFBE and to issue official certificates recognised by the authorities.
- Finally, it seems that some contextual issues addressed by the NFE centres (e.g. school too far away, lack of girls' school, parents not allowing their daughters to leave the village, involvement in labour activities, child marriage) re-emerged once the primary education of the students was completed. The options of expanding the existing centre in order to give the children the opportunity to pursue their secondary education within the communities, as well as of developing the students' technical skills (especially through the roll-out of Package C), were being explored by UNICEF at the time of the data collection.

LESSONS LEARNED

This section presents the lessons learned from the conclusions presented above, as well as based on additional inputs from the various research participants, captured during the data collection, and the researchers' own reflections.

THE ADOLESCENT GROUP AND THE LIFE SKILLS TRAINING BASED ON THE ADOLESCENT EMPOWERMENT TOOLKIT

- Third-party monitoring is recommended to follow and address programme implementation in an independent way. To ensure the completion of all training modules by all adolescent group members and their dissemination among the community peers, training certificates could be introduced in order to better monitor the outreach of the intervention. This option could also be supported by the development of attendance forms for every adolescent meeting as well as the introduction of monitoring sheets, where each of the trained adolescent would indicate the names of the non-group members she or he has been mentoring each month and on which module exactly.
- Adolescent champions were mostly directly chosen by social workers based on their educational background and their engagement skills. As the peer education model showed very successful outcomes in terms of empowerment and participation, proceeding with elections and opening the position to illiterate children would encourage more introverted and vulnerable adolescents to play a key role in their communities. In addition, this would also allow a more transparent selection process.
- More attention should be paid to the recruitment of the adolescent group members in order to ensure equal access to the intervention and the enrolment of 70% of OOS adolescent girls and boys. This could be partly achieved through stronger synergies between UNICEF Child Protection (adolescent groups) and Education (ALP) interventions and the introduction of consultation mechanisms between RSPN and IRC to identify the most vulnerable students. Involving the adolescents themselves via a more adolescent inclusive design could also help to reach to their peers in the most need.
- Further outreach of the intervention could be increased by varying the levels of the delivery. Delivering the training at school or ALP-level could increase and systematise the reach among adolescents who attend school. This implies an increased coordination between the two spans of the programme, between Child Protection and Education, and the selected implementing partners. It is recommended, whenever possible, that UNICEF works with the same partner of the adolescent groups and ALPs in the same areas to avoid overlaps and promote cost-efficiency.
- At the local level, motivational mechanisms to support adolescents to enroll and attend the group sessions could be included. Most importantly, the incentivisation of the adolescent peer-leaders, the champions, could be integrated to ensure the trickle-down of the knowledge to community peers.
- As the reduction of early pregnancy and child marriage cases is one of the key objectives of the IALP, the research team recommends that sexual health issues should be addressed, whenever possible, by extending the module on SRH to all adolescent members (and not only to married children). An option would be for a Master trainer from the same gender group, well known by the community and with the parents' permission, to deliver the training in small groups in order for the other adolescents to be also aware of the implications of child

marriage and make conscious decisions about their future. Adolescents could participate anonymously by putting their questions in a box.

- The strong demand for vocational training and education facilities, in particular for girls, which will require further effort and investments from governmental partners, donors and implementers, was not met with the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit and adolescent groups. Next steps could involve more linkage between child protection, vocational training and secondary education.
- Time is an important factor to keep in mind. The short exposure time in Punjab of less than a year, due to the interruption of the programme, will be a major impediment in achieving impact, considering the end of the IALP (IKEA II) programme in the first quarter of 2019. To allow behavioural change, the implementation period could be extended. Targeting the communities already part of IKEA I was perceived as a good practice by the national officers.
- It is recommended to draw more links between the adolescent groups, the adolescent champions and the KCIs to create a common understanding, with more frequent platforms, following the objective of the IGDs.
- Although the activities conducted at the adolescent group have indirectly contributed to an increase in parents' knowledge on their children's needs, a stronger involvement of parents, key community influencers and community members in the programme is recommended through more frequent joint meetings, tasks, activities and joint sessions. The effectiveness of the adolescent group Trickle-Down sessions and Action Plan outcomes (improved adolescents' well-being, participation, and self-empowerment) can only be improved if the environment of the adolescents (the family, the community) is supportive. To achieve this, the further engagement of parents, in particular fathers, with parental training and information sessions to parents should be sought after in order to ensure an effective and sustainable change of social and gender norms and practices.

THE TRAINING FOR KEY COMMUNITY INFLUENCERS

- The KCI trainings should be followed up with refresher workshops that deepen KCI's knowledge on child protection issues and allow for additional skill development. This would particularly benefit those KCIs that reported feeling less confident about addressing the wider community, noticeably females. Providing extra capacity-building coaching to the most active KCIs to qualify them as local trainers could increase the KCI trainings' reach to even more community leaders.
- Given that most KCIs did not report following any particular strategy when reaching out to other community members, additional training to KCIs on mobilisation skills, that is how to organise their own community gatherings and to effectively communicate their messages could be explored.
- It appeared that the high rate of illiteracy among women in rural areas of Pakistan constituted a barrier to recruiting an equal amount of male and female KCIs for the programme. It is therefore recommended to examine further options to adapt the training contents to illiterate participants' needs.
- Given that KCI training dropouts could provide valuable information about the reasons why they discontinued their participation in the programme and are likely to display the greatest potential for change, the research team recommends intensifying efforts to follow-up on programme dropouts.

THE COMMUNITY-BASED MEDIA CAMPAIGN

- Given the IGDs' importance as a platform for generation-spanning community engagement, the research team suggests increasing the frequency of the gatherings. Moreover, the parents and community members identified as the most active during the IGDs could be offered further training and mobilised as agents of change to aid adolescent champions and KCIs in disseminating information about child protection issues.
- To institutionalise adolescents' role in the chairing of the discussions, the IGDs could be used by adolescent champions to introduce their activities and seek support for their action plans among parents and community members.
- According to study participants' testimonies, an expansion of the street theatre intervention should be considered. To this end, new storylines revolving around adolescent development and psycho-social well-being could be developed, possibly in direct consultation with programme beneficiaries, and the number of performances per year should be increased.
- Further, it is recommended to adapt IEC materials to make them easier to understand for people from underprivileged educational backgrounds, for example, by working with visual imagery rather than text.
- Efforts to utilise other media channels such as radio or television to spread awareness-raising messages should be continued. For instance, it might be a possibility to record street theatre performances and broadcast or make them available as videos or podcasts for later review.

THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME

- Strengthening the M&E system and especially monitoring drop-out rates could help to develop mechanisms for preventing drop-out, for instance, through further adaptation of the ALP to the students' needs. This could be encouraged through the inclusion of the output III of IKEA II (quality of service provision through ALP) into the MIS online portal to be able to follow up on and map potential dropouts. Overall, more synergies between UNICEF Education and Child Protection interventions within IKEA II are recommended in order to better achieve their objectives.
- A comprehensive community sensitisation on the benefits of the ALP for education, via community meetings with the presence of IRC, the VEC the NFE teachers, and KCIs could increase the credibility of the programme in the minds of parents, and therefore help prevent absenteeism and drop-outs. Furthermore, the provision of incentives (via stipends for instance) should be considered to motivate families to relinquish a source of income.
- In order to facilitate the ALP students' integration into the secondary school system, ALP should partner with vocational training centres and public schools, as well as provide the students with certificates. Promoting cooperation across both education streams is key to ensure the sustainability of the NFE.
- As child-sensitive issues are addressed within the NFE curriculum, the research team recommends to provide girls' and boys' classes with a teacher from the same gender group or to make sure that teachers of the opposite sex are supported by an assistant from the same gender group to take over the sessions, in order to create a safe environment for their students and address those sensitive issues holistically.