

ENGLISH AND DIGITAL FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION (EDGE)

# FAQs

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# WHAT IS EDGE?

The English and Digital for Girls' Education (EDGE) programme aims to improve the life prospects of adolescent girls in socio-economically marginalised communities in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. The programme focusses on enhancing participants' English proficiency, digital skills and awareness of social issues. As a result, they will be better able to make more informed and independent life choices, as is their right, in order to contribute more fully to the family, the economy and society. In addition, EDGE aims to improve the leadership skills of a smaller group of peer leaders drawn from the same communities of adolescent girls.

These goals will be achieved by six interlinked strands of activity:

- Providing adolescent girls with opportunities and resources to develop their English proficiency, digital skills and awareness of social issues in peer-led after-school clubs.
- Developing a cadre of Peer Group Leaders (PGLs), and building their leadership skills and confidence to facilitate English and digital training in these clubs.
- Developing the capacity of a cohort of trainers to train and support the peer leaders.
- Developing age and level-appropriate materials for the development of the target skills, and suitable materials for the training and support of the peer leaders and their trainers.
- Building trust within the communities to change and develop the perception of the value of girls in the community.
- Monitoring and evaluating all stages of the project, including independent baseline and endline studies.

# WHY EDGE?

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights dictates the collective right to education. However, girls and women in South Asian countries have comparatively less access to education and digital skills than boys and men. This issue results in a gender-based digital divide, leading to future skills imbalance and unequal life chances for women<sup>1</sup>.

The EDGE programme aims to establish a network of non-formal, community-based clubs for girls. These clubs will be effective in reducing barriers, developing the girls' skills and increasing educational, social and economic opportunity.

**Educational opportunity:** The education system in many areas of Bangladesh, India and Nepal is not sufficiently resourced or equipped. English language teaching and learning, along with other subjects, remains largely teacher-centred and focussed on written examination results as a measure of success. Learners largely participate in a passive role, limited to memorising facts and reciting them back to their teachers.

## **Employment opportunities:**

The development of digital skills and English language can have a positive impact on poverty reduction, by creating access to education and job opportunities. The ICT sector is well established in India and the governments of Bangladesh and Nepal have recognised ICT as one of the primary growth sectors.

**Early marriage:** The majority of girls from Bangladesh, India and Nepal are married before they reach the legal adulthood age, and despite many initiatives, gender parity in education has not yet been achieved. School dropout rates are strongly related to child marriage, a pervasive practice despite existing legislation.

**Access to ICT:** Public ICT facilities are often male-dominated and limited in numbers. Owing to domestic responsibilities, parental restrictions, and safety concerns, women often cannot visit such facilities. This project aims to address the challenges of improving education and employment opportunity, increasing access to ICT and contributing to the reduction of early marriage.

<sup>1</sup> [www.un.org](http://www.un.org), 2015

# WHAT IS THE THEORY OF CHANGE?

## **The goal of the EDGE programme is:**

Adolescent girls from marginalised communities can make more informed and independent life choices, as is their right, in order to contribute more fully to the family, the economy and society.

## **Put simply, the EDGE programme developers believe that:**

- **IF** adolescent girls improve their language and digital skills and awareness of their choices and rights;
- **THEN** they can use their knowledge, language and digital skills to access information and opportunities;
- **WHICH** will enable them to make more informed and independent life choices, as is their right, in order to contribute more fully to the family, the economy and society;
- **WHICH IS LIKELY**, as their contributions become more visible and acknowledged by communities over time, to help enhance girls' status and support the development of more equitable social structures within project contexts.

# WHO ARE THE BENEFICIARIES?

## Direct beneficiaries

Peer Group Leaders (PGLs), aged 16 to 19, are identified through a selection procedure before the start of a course. These PGLs receive face-to-face training delivered by British Council trainers in English, digital, and 21st-century and social skills. With the acquired skills established through project participation, the PGLs will have a greater awareness of their choices and rights. They will be mentored throughout the course of the project by the British Council and this will help them to achieve self-confidence and leadership skills.

## Indirect beneficiaries

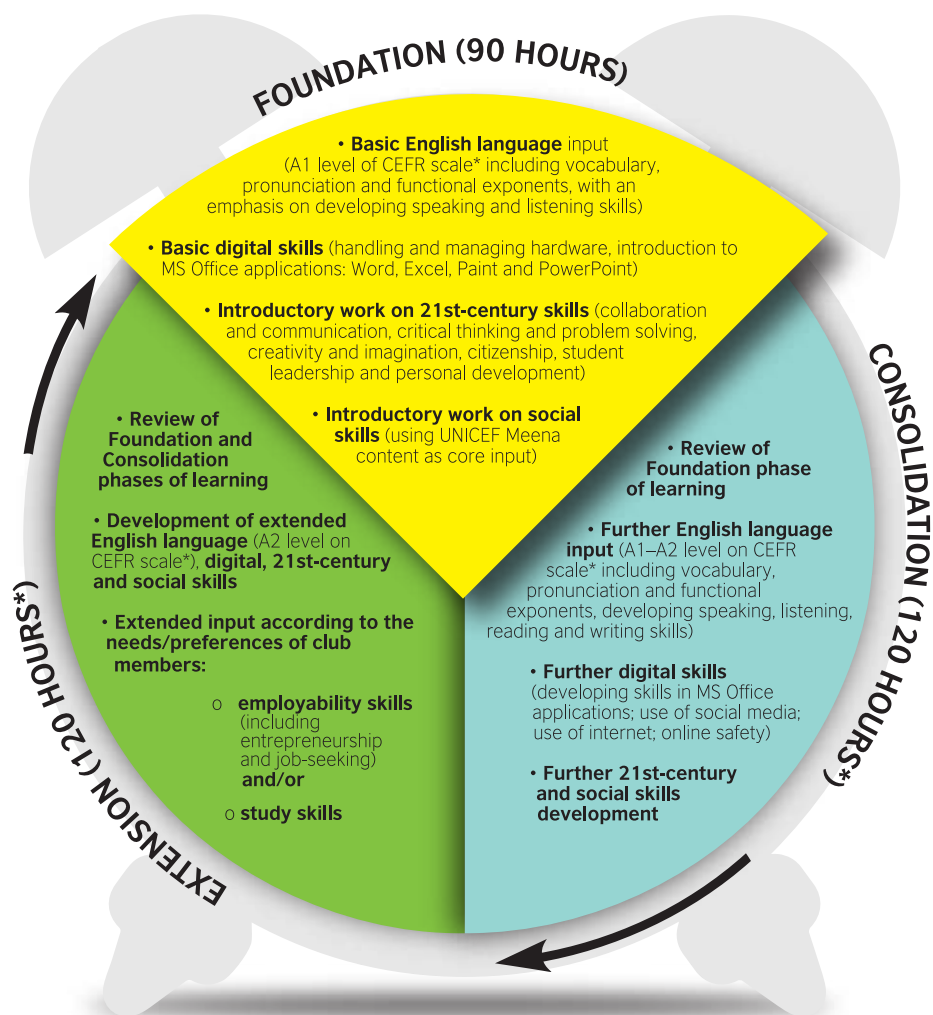
There are four indirect beneficiary groups in this programme:

- **Girls:** adolescent girls of ages 13–19 will be taught in English, digital, and 21st-century and social skills by British Council-trained PGLs. Their participation will lead to a greater awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses in English, digital and 21st-century and social skills and the importance of these in their lives.

- **Parents and community members:** there will be a greater understanding of the need for English, digital, and 21st-century and social skills and the impact of these on girls' future lives and opportunities. As part of the project, they will attend briefing sessions, demonstration club sessions and dissemination events.
- **Community leaders:** leaders will be made aware of the need for safe-learning environments for girls and furthermore will advocate for such spaces. Just like parents and community members, they will also attend sessions and events where these girls will demonstrate their learning.
- **Boys:** club participants will be encouraged to share learning and resources with their siblings, including their brothers, and boys are also invited to sessions and events to watch these girls demonstrate their English language and digital skills, which they have learned.

# HOW IS THE SYLLABUS STRUCTURED?

The EDGE programme focusses on four strands: English, digital skills, and 21st-century and social skills. The programme is available in three phases.



\*Note: approximation.

## **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) levels\***

### **CEFR: A2**

- Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment).
- Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.
- Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

### **CEFR: A1**

- Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.
- Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has.
- Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

For girls who have a higher level of English and digital competency, it may be more appropriate for them to begin attending clubs using the Consolidation or Extension phases of content. Baseline tests prior to club initiation will establish levels and ensure suitability of content on an individual level.

### **Prerequisites for maximum impact**

For impact to be achieved through the EDGE programme, there are several factors that need to be in place.

- Child safeguarding standards and procedures will be established and enforced by trained staff.
- Girls from the target audience will receive parental and community support to attend the clubs.
- Venues will be safe spaces with adequate equipment, facilities and storage for the clubs to take place, according to our venue checklist (to be shared separately).
- Health and safety standards and procedures will be in place and enforced by trained staff. Regular access to the clubs will be possible for British Council project team members in order to conduct monitoring and evaluation activities.
- IT equipment supplied by project partners will be maintained and serviced regularly.
- A communication mechanism will be agreed upon with partners to support Peer Group Leaders (PGLs), and coordinators during each phase of the programme.

\*Source: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf), page 24



# WHAT IS THE DELIVERY MODEL?

EDGE courses are delivered in after-school clubs. Club members may meet twice a week, or more frequently, for a session that lasts between one and three hours. In each club there are two Peer Group Leaders (PGLs). These PGLs are drawn from the same group as the club members. There may also be coordinators supporting PGLs as mentors or coaches.

PGLs receive training from British Council trainers on how to manage the clubs and how to set up and facilitate the learning materials and activities. Club activities are interactive and focus mainly on developing English communication and digital skills. They include songs with actions, language games, practice of dialogues in pairs and groups, stories, video clips, and tasks involving the creation of documents and presentations using electronic devices.

## Club resource packs

For each phase of input, clubs will receive:

- a club handbook (for use by PGLs and/or club coordinators), sets of A4 and A3 flashcards, PowerPoint slide decks with embedded film and audio, and tasks for development of digital and social skills (via USB sticks)
- club notebooks (one per club member), English language graded reading material, progress maps for tracking completed activities, and posters for display

- two laptops with MS Office applications\*, two phablets\*, log books (attendance/health, and safety/child protection).

In addition, PGLs and trainers will receive workbooks and trainers' notes (trainers only).

\*Procurement of hardware will be discussed and agreed with project partners. Where possible, we will use existing infrastructure. Required specifications for technology are provided separately.

## Assessing the impact

The girls' progress in English, digital skills, and 21st-century and social skills, particularly language, may be slow and will vary according to individual capability and application. Nevertheless, we expect them to be able to demonstrate learning during and after each phase of the programme.

Progress against intended outcomes will be measured using assessments, and followed by midline and endline studies. These will use tools including language proficiency assessment, self-assessment of confidence levels, focus groups and interviews with all stakeholder groups, observations of club meetings and training events (for PGLs), and reporting log sheets.

The tools used have been piloted and validated by a team from the University of Leeds, UK along with the British Council's global assessment team.

# HOW IS TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATED?

The EDGE club programme uses an innovative approach to integrate English language and social skills development with the use of technology. Club members will develop their digital skills through interaction with laptops and common software (including MS Office), working in groups to complete mini-projects and real-life tasks, guided by the Peer Group Leaders (PGLs), and the club resources. They will therefore develop skills in the four strands (English/digital/21st-century/social) concurrently.

Content relating to digital skills development is primarily delivered through a set of PowerPoint slide decks,

guiding the participants through the different activities using screenshots and screencast videos. Laptop/netbook and software familiarisation and practice is begun in the Foundation phase of the programme.

Digital literacy skills relating to internet usage (including social media and online safety) are introduced in the Consolidation and Extension phases of the programme. As above, these will be integrated into the core content, with participants doing phablet and netbook/laptop-based tasks related to the language and social skills input.

# WHAT ARE THE TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS?

The EDGE programme is designed to run within a club setting which has the following available technologies:

## **Netbooks/laptops (x2/group of 12 club members)**

- Built-in or external webcam
- High definition audio w/internal speakers and/or external speakers for each laptop
- 14" display
- 4GB memory space
- MS Office Application (2010)
  - including MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint and MS Paint
- Internet browser (e.g. Chrome/Internet Explorer)

- McAfee Antivirus or equivalent
- Tray load DVD +/- RW
- Card reader (SD/SDHC/SDXC)
- Connector interface:
  - USB/HDMI/Headphone/mic combo/LAN
- Flash player

## **Headphones (one per club member)**

## **Phablets (x2/group of 12 club members)**

- Android OS 4.4 Kitkat (minimum)
- Micro SD card reader (up to 32 GB)
- Front-facing camera, supporting video
- Wi-Fi hotspot supported
- 3G-enabled

# HOW IS THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTED ?

It is expected that partnership agreements and implementation will follow a similar pathway as given below.

- Establishment of partnership model (for example, British Council, delivery partner, funding agency)
- Scoping study looking at specific local needs and potential delivery models
- Assessment of existing or required venues and equipment
- Child safeguarding checks and implementation
- Agree roles and responsibilities with partners
- Establish project governance and reporting structures
- Formal signing of partnership agreement
- Procurement of materials and equipment (as required)
- Selection and training of trainers
- Baseline study
- Selection and training of Peer Group Leaders (PGLs)
- Support for PGLs
- Club activities: Foundation Phase
- Evaluative study 1
- Club activities: Consolidation Phase
- Evaluative study 2
- Club activities: Extension Phase
- Evaluative study 3
- Endline evaluation

Continuous monitoring,  
evaluation and research

- Refresher training  
for PGLs  
- Community events

# HOW IS SUSTAINABILITY ACHIEVED?

Through the EDGE programme, we aim to directly contribute to the overall goal of improving the life prospects of adolescent girls in socio-economically marginalised communities in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. This is an ongoing process which requires sustained focus by all of the stakeholder groups involved in the EDGE programme, within and beyond the life time of the British Council-led intervention. To facilitate this we anticipate:

- community members and parents will be involved in the project to increase buy-in and encourage management of clubs at the community level in future
- an alumni network of peer leaders will be created to take on implementation roles within their communities
- training for Peer Group Leaders (PGLs), can be delivered by implementing

partners, utilising the group of alumni PGLs who can continue training in future

- local expertise can be developed to include materials renewal, monitoring and evaluation, and research.

In addition, we aim to work with our partners to consider further options for longer term sustainability, including the potential to:

- mainstream the EDGE programme into government school systems or initiatives with similar goals
- establish EDGE as a flagship programme for country-based trusts and foundations
- link to existing employment initiatives which require the skills developed within the EDGE programme.

## CONTACT US

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