Republic of Liberia

Economic Empowerment of

Adolescent Girls & Young Women

Project (EPAG)

Second Exit Poll Report

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**Abbreviations**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AGI | Adolescent Girls Initiative |
| ARCCAP | American Refugee CommitteeChildren Assistance Programme |
| CEPCESP | Community Empowerment ProgrammeCommunity Empowerment and Sustainable Programme |
| EPAGFGD | Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women ProjectFocus group discussion |
| GBV | Gender-based violence |
| GOPA | Gesellschaft für Organisation, Planung und Ausbildung |
| IRC | International Rescue Committee |
| LEEDMoGDNAEL | Liberia Entrepreneurial and Economic DevelopmentMinistry of Gender and DevelopmentNational Adult Education Association of Liberia |
| NGOPICT | Non-governmental organisationProject Implementation and Coordination Team |
| SBA | Subah-Belleh Associates |
| SP | Service provider |
| SRH | Sexual and reproductive health |
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# Introduction

1.1 Background

The Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women Project (EPAG) is part of the World Bank’s global Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI), which is implemented in eight countries in Africa and Asia, and covers Liberia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Haiti, Jordan, and Laos. EPAG is a joint partnership of the Government of Liberia, the World Bank, the Government of Denmark and the Nike Foundation. The goal of EPAG is to enhance the socio-economic well-being of adolescent girls and young women through facilitating their employability by providing job skills and business development skills training.

In Liberia, EPAG is currently being implemented in nine urban and peri-urban communities in Greater Monrovia and in Kakata in Margibi County. It has four components: i) job skills training for wage employment, combined with job placement assistance; ii) business development skills training and micro-enterprise advisory services; iii) rigorous impact evaluation and high-quality project monitoring (of which the Survey Firm’s contract is a part); and iv) institutional strengthening and capacity building.

Job skills and business development skills training are complemented by education about life skills, covering topics such as gender-based violence (GBV), sexual and reproductive health (SRH), self-esteem, leadership, etc. The trainings are conducted by non-governmental organizations (NGO), which have been contracted as service providers (SP). For the job skills training, the NGOs are: Community Empowerment Programme (CEP) and Liberia Entrepreneurial and Economic Development (LEED). For the business skills training, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and American Refugee Committee (ARC) are contracted, who each sub-contracted local training providers. IRC sub-contracted the Children Assistance Programme (CAP) and EduCare; ARC sub-contracted the Community Empowerment and Sustainable Programme (CESP) and the National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEAL).

Targeting 2,500 girls, the EPAG project has two intakes of girls to undergo one round of training each. The first of which started in March 2010, had 1,191 trainees, ( 65% receiving business development skills training and 35% receiving job skills training). Round Two of the training started in July 2011 with 1,300 trainees (70% in business development skills training and 30% in job skills training).

EPAG is managed by a Project Implementation and Coordination Team (PICT) based in the Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD). For the implementation of the third component (impact evaluation), a consortium consisting of the Liberian firm Subah-Belleh Associates (SBA) and the German company GOPA Consultants was contracted. The SBA/GOPA consortium (herein referred to as the ‘survey firm’) is tasked with carrying out a series of studies that inform EPAG’s project management. First, the survey firm conducts quantitative data collection in form of a baseline, midline and endline survey. This survey data constitutes the basis for the impact evaluation. Secondly, the Survey Firm carries out two exit polls, at the end of each round of training to assess the quality of the training as well as to gather qualitative data on issues lacking in the impact evaluation and EPAG’s other data sources.

1.2 Purpose of the second exit poll

Whereas the first exit poll focused on the quality of the training and the effectiveness of the various performance enhancement strategies, the second exit poll takes a deeper look at the changes in the girls’ social and business/work lives as perceived by trainees themselves, trainers coaches, parents, husbands/boyfriends and community members. It also intends to elicit information on the consequences of these changes for the girls, their relationships and the people surrounding them. The research hypothesis guiding the second exit poll is as follows:

*EPAG has further effects on the girls’ attitudes, behaviour, social and/or business lives which are not fully captured by the quantitative data collection and EPAG’s other data sources.*

For this purpose, a total of 37 focus group discussions (FGD) with trainees, trainers, coaches, parents and husbands/boyfriends of the trainees, and community members were conducted.

|  |
| --- |
| EPAG SECOND EXIT POLL – FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS |
| **Respondents** | Trainees | Trainers | Coaches | Parents | Husbands/ boyfriends | Community members | **TOTALS** |
| **FGD** | 17 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 37 |
| **Number of participants per group** | 10 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 8 | - |
| **Total****participants** | 170 | 24 | 24 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 314 |

The FGDs mixed parents and husbands/boyfriends from Round 1 and Round 2 trainees in order to examine if there exist different views or experiences between the two rounds of the EPAG training.

1.3 Structure of the report

This report presents the findings of the second exit poll conducted by the survey firm in February 2012, after the conclusion of the second round of training. The exit poll report is structured as follows:

* **Chapter 1** contains the introduction, a brief background overview and a description of the exit poll’s purpose.
* **Chapter 2** comprises a description of the methodology employed in conducting the exit poll and the subsequent data analysis.
* **Chapter 3** presents the exit poll’s findings, concerning the quality of the training, ideas for improvement, and observed changes in the trainees‘ social and working life.
* **Chapter 4** comprises conclusions and recommendations derived from the exit poll’s findings.
* **Annex 1** provides the concept paper developed by the survey firm for the exit poll, as well as the field protocol and data collection instruments.
* **Annex 2** presents the fact sheet that was given to the focus group participants in order to inform them about EPAG.

# Methodology

* 1. Selection of participants

The key consideration for selecting the participants for the second exit poll was ensuring an appropriate mix of participants in each category. At each of the 17 training venues, the selection procedure was arranged so that girls represented all class sections, and trade areas, as well as morning and afternoon classes if applicable. Apart from the trainees, specific instructions were given to the service providers to guide the process of generating the various participant lists. For example, only trainers and coaches who attended both rounds were included; parents and boyfriends/husbands were equally selected for both rounds, etc.

Using the Excel random function, 13 trainees were selected from the class roster for each venue. The main limitation of this method is that in almost all cases, the random selection did not always ensure an appropriate mixture. For example, in a venue with two classes in the morning and two afternoon, the random list could have only one representative from a particular trade area. In such case, the next available trainee from the underrepresented class was manually selected to replace with the last trainee for the overrepresented class. The additional three trainees were alternates to substitute any of the first 10 selected girls who were not available for the FGD. In most cases, however, it was not possible to mobilize the envisaged number of ten participants per FGD. In total, 149 trainees participated in 17 FGDs as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **COMMUNITY** | **# FGDs** | **# Participants** |
| Bassa Community | 2 | 18 |
| Bentol | 2 | 17 |
| Battery / Iron Factory | 1 | 8 |
| Doe Community | 2 | 20 |
| Kakata | 3 | 29 |
| New Kru Town | 2 | 22 |
| Old Road | 2 | 16 |
| Red Light | 2 | 20 |
| West Point | 1 | 9 |
| **TOTAL** |  **17** |  **159** |

For the trainers and coaches, only persons who worked in both Rounds One and Two were eligible for selection. The selection process for the trainers ensured that both male and female trainers were selected for each service provider, unlike the coaches who are all females. The lists of trainers were randomly sorted using Excel, controling for sex and training venue. In most cases, the eligible number of coaches were only as enough to be selected. The total number of trainers and coaches were as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **SERVICE PROVIDER** | **# Trainers** | **# Coaches** |
| ARC / CESP / NAEAL | 5 | 8 |
| IRC / Educare / CAP | 6 | 5 |
| LEED | 5 | 5 |
| CEP | 6 | 6 |
| **TOTAL** | **22** | **24** |

The selection process for the parents and community members ensured that both male and female participants were selected from the lists submitted from the service provider(s) working in selected communities. Each service provider submitted a list of 10 parents, and 10 community members. The lists were randomly sorted using Excel, controling for sex and various community groups represented in order to identify 4 participants from each service providers, making up 8 participants, with 2 alternates, for each FGD. The actual number of participants for the parents and community member FGD were as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **COMMUNITY** | **# Parents** | **# Community members** |
| Bassa Community | - | - |
| Bentol | 8 | 6 |
| Battery / Iron Factory | - | - |
| Doe Community | - | - |
| Kakata | 8 | 6 |
| New Kru Town | 8 | 8 |
| Old Road | - | 5 |
| Red Light | 7 | - |
| West Point | - | - |
| **TOTAL** | **31** | **25** |

The selection process for the husbands/boyfriends ensured inclusion of both spousal categories from the lists submitted by the service provider(s) working in selected communities. Each service provider compiled a list of 10 spouses. The lists were randomly sorted using Excel, controling for sex and spousal status in order to identify 4 participants from each service providers, making up 8 participants, with 2 alternates, for each FGD. The actual number of participants for the husband/boyfriend FGDs were as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **COMMUNITY** | **# Husbands/ boyfriends** |
| Bassa Community | - |
| Bentol | - |
| Battery / Iron Factory | - |
| Doe Community | 7 |
| Kakata | 7 |
| New Kru Town | - |
| Old Road | 7 |
| Red Light | 4 |
| West Point | - |
| **TOTAL** | **25** |

2.2 FGD implementation

The FGD guidelines were tested in the field. Twenty persons from SBA when into training. Thereafter five teams were formed to field test the FGD discussion guide among EPAG girls who were not part of the actual discussants for the field work. During the training the following changes were made to the FGD guide.

* Trainee FGD, section 1, question i) was broken down into two questions.
* Trainee FGD, section 2, question i) was changed to: *“What are some of the things that give you problems or a hard time?”*
* The probe question “*Are more family members now coming to you for money?”* in the trainee FGD, section 3, question i) was converted into a core question.
* Coaches FGD, question iii) was changed to: *“What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach?”*
* Finally, parents/guardians FGD, question i) was reformulated in order to be less suggestive.

During the field test it was realized that the girls were hesitant to answer questions in section 3 (especially question v) of the trainee FGD guidelines. Of the five teams that were used for the field testing only one team succeeded in starting a discussion on this question. As a consequence, the moderator was instructed to take themselves or the girls in the EPAG film as example. The girls were asked to speak about the experiences of their friends and classmates without mentioning their names.

Despite these efforts. some questions remained difficult to understand and answer for the trainees. This refers particularly to reflective questions regarding their personal experience (areas and control). Girls were reluctant to talk about their relationships and preferred to answer questions about themselves rather than talking about their classmates.

The FGDs were facilitated by one moderator and two note takers. For the trainee FGDs all facilitators were female. A sample of FGDs were attended by the SBA/GOPA team to monitor the facilitation. They interfered in the discussion whenever further probing was deemed necessary and provided feedback to the moderator after the discussion.

The discussion was audio taped and in addition the note takers documented all statements as well as observations on the general atmosphere and any non-verbal communication expressed by the participants. Based on the tape recording and their notes the note takers produced verbatim transcriptions. All transcriptions were proofread and a subsample was counterchecked against the audio recording.

One problem during the implementation of the FGDs was the mobilization of participants. The moderators called all invited persons several times prior to the start of the FGD but despite these efforts many invited participants did arrive late or did not come at all. Many discussants stated that they were busy with work or could not leave their market unattended. As shown in the tables in section 2.1 the actual number of participants was lower than intended. This problem was particularly pronounced for the community member and husband/boyfriend FGDs. Two FGDs were postponed due to an insufficient number of participants. However, attendance was still very low at the second date so that these discussion took place with only five and four participants, respectively. Moreover, substantial waiting times for missing participants tired the other attendees which negatively affected the general atmosphere during the discussion.

The facilitators and note takers observed a general tendency towards agreement in all FGDs. Participants usually confirmed and reinforced the statements of their peers and rarely raised opposing views. This limited the variety of information obtained from the FGDs.

2.3 Data analysis

The FGDs were examined separately by respondent groups. The information obtained from the FGDs was analysed according to the following main steps[[1]](#footnote-2):

1. Familiarisation
2. Identification of a thematic framework
3. Indexing
4. Charting
5. Mapping and interpretation

First, the transcribed interviews and FGD notes were read several times in order to become familiar with the data. The aim was to immerse in the details and obtain an understanding of the discussion as a whole before analysing separate parts of the FGD. During this process major topics and patterns started to emerge. In a next step, thematic lines, ideas and concepts emerging from the transcripts were identified. Statements expressing similar ideas were grouped into categories. The development of categories was guided by the questions presented in the FGD guidelines. The processes of indexing (highlighting relevant statements and sorting out quotes) and charting (rearranging and grouping statements under thematic lines) helped to reduce the amount of data by comparing and contrasting information and summarising similar statements. The final step, mapping and interpretation, established relationships between the different ideas and concepts expressed during the FGDs. Interpretation was guided by the following criteria:

* Words: analysis of the actual words used and their meaning
* Context: the wording of the moderator’s question as well as comments made by other participants will determine the context within which statements are made (e.g. preference toward agreement within the group, etc.).
* Internal consistency: any changes in opinion or position by the participants
* Frequency of statements: How often was an idea expressed or the same statement made?
* Intensity of comments: the depth of feeling in which comments are expressed
* Specificity of statements: Do comments refer to personal experience or hypothetical situations?
* Extensiveness of statements: the number of participants who express a certain idea or opinion
* Big picture: larger trends or concepts that emerge from an accumulation of statements and reappear in the various FGDs

The exit poll report synthesizes the findings from analysis. Data are compared between Round 1 and Round 2 participants as well as between the different communities to check for potential differences in the views and ideas of FGD participants.

# 3. Findings

* 1. Challenges of young women and adolescent girls in Liberia

When the trainees were asked in which areas in life there are catching a hard time they named a number of challenges, ranging from personal problems and financial constraints to difficulties in their relationships.

Personal problems

Many girls have to take care of their own as their parents died or have left them. This does not only pose a financial challenge for the girls but they also lack parental love, advise and care. Some of these girls now live with their relatives. In most situations this is problematic as the owners of the home want to exercise control over the trainee’s daily activities, their income and possessions.

Furthermore many girls have children but often their father has left and/or does not support his family. In some cases, the girls receive financial aid or child care from their parents or relatives whereas other girls stated that their family stopped helping them when they got pregnant. Consequently, several girls struggle to raise their children. Without support from family or friends, most girls have a hard time to pay for food, transportation, rent or tuition. The majority of girls in the FGDs mentioned that they would like to return to school but do not have the means to cover the school fees for themselves and/or their children.

Some girls also face health problems. First, they often do not have the means to cover medical costs and buy drugs. Secondly, they cannot do hard work and therefore have very limited opportunities to earn money. One girl from West Point noted that she has trouble finding drinking water in the community.

Business problems

In terms of business opportunities, the main obstacle for girls is insufficient resources to start a business, purchase supplies or invest in the business premises. Some girls also mentioned that their business is not making enough money to support their family. As many girls are illiterate and do not have any qualification they have difficulties in finding employment.

Relationship problems

As a consequence of limited financial resources and the burden to provide for themselves, their children and often additional family members girls rely on their boyfriends or other men for financial support.

I was not getting any support. The person who was supporting me, death called her. Since then I started supporting myself, to the point that it even forced me to go live with my friend because no family members or relatives could even come to say: “Since the other person died I’ll take your responsibility.” So myself I said: “Since I am seeing no way through, what's the essence?” I was forced to go look for man to get experience outside there. [Trainee in Iron Factory]

Especially in unsteady relationships, financial aid is only offered in exchange for sex and men interfere in the girls’ personal decisions, e.g. by forbidding them to use birth control and tying financial support to the obedient behavior of their girlfriends. Some girls also have become a victim of domestic violence.

Focus of the EPAG training

Looking at these challenges, the EPAG project offers support in the most pressing areas. It provides girls with the opportunity to earn money despite their low qualification and little demand on the labor market. Many girls are single mothers and face numerous personal problems. Therefore EPAG provides child care services during the training and provides counseling through trainers and coaches. The life skills component aims at increasing the girls’ self-esteem in order to reduce the girls’ dependency on men and increase their power and position within the household. While this section of the focus group discussions indicates that the EPAG training was well targeted and made use of adequate means, the next chapters will analyze if it also produced the desired effects in terms of economic and social empowerment.

* 1. Assessment of EPAG training

3.2.1 Classroom training

New knowledge learned in the EPAG training

When asked about the most important new knowledge learned in the EPAG classroom training the trainees mentioned different business/job skills, life skills and literacy. Among the business trainees, managing their own business and keeping records were mentioned most frequently. The girls also appreciated to learn how to save and manage money. With the opening of a bank account for each trainee EPAG provided an **incentive** for them to save money. As a community member from Old Road explained:

All of the trainees from here have an account opened for them. They know how to save money. They can tell their friend that by this time I will have this amount in my account and I will make my business. It is now like a competition among them. Some of them I interacted with told me that it is a big help for them because at first, everyone was fighting to get a pair of slippers and jeans. Now they are saying it is good to make business.

Learning how to manage a business was also named by several job skill trainees. They found the additional business development skill training useful as it may help them to start a business in case they will not find a job. As one girl in Kakata put it:

With the skills I got I am sure that if I apply for work in my area of training I will get the job but if I do not find a job I can try to start my own business with the business training I got.

The classroom training also taught the girls how to talk to and act in front of other people. This was mentioned in the context of business when talking and attracting customers as well as concerning the personal interaction with children, husbands or boyfriends, friends and community members. Another important aspect of the life skill training was personal hygiene. Many girls noted that they are now able to take better care of themselves and their homes. They can manage their time and money and know about family planning. The trainees also learnt to talk in front of other people and to be more self-confident. The training induced **spillover effects** in the sense that many girls started to teach their friends and family in life skills. The trainees are confident that the acquired knowledge about life skills will also help them to succeed in business.

In the community where you live, if people find out that you are time conscious and serious, if anyone in that community than has a job, you will be the first to be contacted. [Trainee in Kakata]

During the FGDs, parents, husbands/boyfriends and community members presented evidence that the girls have not only learnt new skills but also apply this knowledge in their daily lives. Many trainees are now more successful in operating their business, manage their time and money and show a different attitude towards their family and friends (see chapter 3.3 for more details).

Positive features of the EPAG training

Across all FGD groups the training was assessed positively as conveying useful knowledge and skills for the professional and personal development of young and adolescent girls. Community members acknowledged that EPAG provided to girls the opportunity to continue studying despite being pregnant or having children. These girls have to drop out of the public school system and would not have a chance of further education otherwise.

Deficiencies of the EPAG training

One common critique was that after the completion of the training the girls did not find a job or were not able to start their own business due to lack of funds.

Most of the girls in the first round in the community, when you ask them: "Have the people found job for you?" They will say: "We're still here." [Husband in Red Light]

In other cases, trainees were placed in jobs but according to their husbands the employment was not decent. Some trainers and community members complained that a number of girls did not take the training seriously. However, coaches and trainers worked together in continuously encouraging the girls to participate in the training.

Although the EPAG training never intended to provide full education in literacy and numeracy it will be difficult for the job skills graduates to find employment without being able to read and write. The basic literacy component EPAG introduced for the second round of training might not be sufficient to prepare the girls for future employment. This reflects a **dilemma in the selection of EPAG participants**. The project can either target the girls most in need (who are typically illiterate) or those who have a basic level of education but are most often also in a better economic situation. The latter has been the target group during the two rounds of training that have taken place so far. In case of expanding the project outside of Monrovia, a strategy has to be developed on how to provide the trainees with adequate skills for the labor market despite high illiteracy rates.

I did not go far in school. With the training I got in hospitality. I will be taking order from customers so I need to know how to write. Even though literacy program was included in the program it was included very late. [Trainee in Kakata]

Important training components as seen by the trainers

The trainers emphasized the importance of the literacy component of the training. As many girls did not know how to read, write or calculate it was difficult for them to follow some of the training content. Consequently, practical exercises, role plays and field trips were an integral part of the training. The trainers highlighted the positive effects of giving responsibility to the trainees, working in groups and introducing role models on the personal development of the girls.

Some of the girls are shy and assigning them external tasks was important since it helped them to get acquainted with the outside world and gave them courage.

Training kind of introduced the girls to doing work as a group. Standing in front of their peers and presenting on behalf of the group really helped most of the girls build their self-confidence.

The idea of role models was important as the girls could identify people they wished to be like and use that as a motivation, especially people in their own community.

3.2.2 Mentoring/coaching approach

The mentoring and coaching approach in the eyes of the coaches

Coaching was regarded as the more effective approach by almost all coaches. Only one coach stated that girls related to mentors and coaches in the same way and therefore she would be unable to choose one approach over the other.

From the various descriptions of the mentoring experiences expressed during the FGDs it becomes obvious that mentors had different understandings of their tasks and required time inputs. Some mentors talked about meeting their mentees three of four times a week whereas others met the girls once a week or even less frequently. A number of mentors described how much time it took to find the girls for the mentoring sessions. Others explained that if the girls did not come to a scheduled meeting they would consider it free time. In contrast, the tasks and requirements of the coaching approach appear to be clearer and understood uniformly.

Advantages of the coaching approach as described by coaches

The main advantage of the coaching approach was that coaches spend more time with the girls and thus girls trusted more in coaches than they did in mentors. Coaches participated in the classroom training together with the trainees whereas mentors organized one-to-one and group meetings to advise girls on their personal and professional development. The daily interaction between coaches and trainees created confidence and girls shared their problems and thoughts more easily. Girls were also more open for advice from their coaches.

Mentors were not close to the girls since they spent shorter time with the girls. You can’t spend one hour with someone and know their problems. Girls didn’t want to relate their problems with mentors since they were not close to mentors. But for the coaching, we go there everyday, we meet them, we interact with them, we eat, we joke, we laugh. So once they have a problem and you the coach as a mother, you open yourself to them, then they will open up to you.

Mentors often had difficulties arranging meetings with the girls. They did not come to the scheduled sessions and did not answer their phone so that mentors had to visit their homes and wait for the girls. In contrast, coaches and trainees met daily in the training and therefore it was much easier for the coaches to speak to the girls.

Coaches enjoyed participating in the training and learning new knowledge and skills. As they were familiar with the training content they could also help the girls in understanding and reviewing the lessons more easily. Furthermore, they assisted the trainers in controlling the class and taking over during their absence.

Disadvantages of coaching as described by coaches

Coaching required a high input of time as coaches were participating in class every day. Coaches were responsible for a whole class whereas one mentor only supported about 7 trainees. Coaches further complained that the stipend did not cover their expenses and that they were not insured during their work.

The mentoring and coaching approach in the eyes of the trainers

Three out of four focus group discussions with trainers named coaching as the more effective approach. During one discussion trainers heavily disapproved of the coaching approach as they felt that coaches were only there to supervise the training. The following statement by one trainer demonstrates the misconception some trainers have about the coaching approach.

The coaches are there to monitor the classroom. As a trainer, I can handle my class, I’m the manager for that class, so if anybody is disturbing, I can stop that person from disturbing. I should be able to do all of those things in the class. I don’t need coach there to manage my class. We as trainers, we are professional people and we go to provide knowledge. The reason why the coaches are in class is to discourage male trainers from molesting the girls.

Interestingly, this idea was only introduced in one FGD where it was picked up and discussed by several participants. This reflects the general tendency towards agreement observed within all FGDs. Participants tended to reinforce statements of their peers and seldom presented opposing views.

Advantages of the coaching approach as described by trainers

The trainers observed stronger interaction and a closer relationship between trainees and coaches than during the mentoring. One trainer described the difference between the two approaches as follows:

The level of interaction between mentors and trainers was not well and also because mentors were not in the class, they barely understood the training content, making it difficult for them to actually go out and mentor the girls. Everything was different when mentors were converted to coaches. The experience was such that at my center all the trainees were calling the coaches ‘mother‘ which brought forth a different kind of relationship as if the girls were interacting with their own mothers. The interaction was thus more intensive and the girls confided more in coaches, telling them what they don’t even tell the trainers.

Trainers also described the coaches as being more interested in the girls and showing a higher degree of ownership for the EPAG project than they did as mentors. Whereas the participants of one focus group perceived the presence of the trainers in class as interference and disturbance, the other trainers appreciated the additional support in solving disputes and problems. Mentors and coaches encouraged the girls to attend the training and checked upon them if they did not come to class.

Disadvantages of the coaching approach as described by the trainers

The close relationship between coaches and trainees also brought about some disadvantages. Trainers observed that some coaches favored individual trainees which caused conflicts between the trainees. Trainers also stated that the coaches had some degree of power over the trainees as they kept the attendance record and could write a particular trainee‘s name in the record book even though that trainee was absent for the day or refuse to put a girl’s name down to punish her for misbehavior in class.

Advantages of the mentoring approach

Mentors assisted smaller groups and could therefore devote more time to each trainee. As they visited the girls in their homes and work places mentors provided a link between the classroom training and the community. The mentors showed the girls how they can apply their new knowledge and skills in business, advised them on personal issues and even talked to their friends and family.

The mentor actually used to serve as a motivational force. They used to go to these girls houses and even talk to their boyfriends to remain calm. Where the trainer can’t reach, they will reach there. They used to go beyond their bounds, to do extra.

* 1. Recommendations for improvement

The ideas expressed for improving the EPAG project in the future were very similar across the different participant groups. Many recommendations reflect insufficient knowledge about the EPAG project as they proposed services already offered. Across all groups, respondents suggested to continue with a third round of training and to extend the training to other (rural) communities. This implies a **high degree of satisfaction** with the EPAG project.

Prior to the start of the classroom training

Participants across all groups recommended to include boys in the training as they caused most trouble in the communities. One husband noted that although boys and girls should be included in the training, they should study in separate facilities. Trainers, coaches and parents also suggested to raise the age limit for EPAG participants so that women until the age of 37 can participate in the training as well.

Trainers and coaches criticized the long time lag between the recruitment and the start of the training. First, this made it difficult to mobilize the girls as many were now engaged in other activities, moved away or lost interest in the project. Secondly, the girls felt that community leaders lied to them about the project or did not persistently follow-up.

They [staff from the Ministry of Gender and Development] came and told us to put the girls names down which we did. We put the girls together and give them the information and some sweet advice and they were happy. But up till now we have not heard from them. So the girls are saying the leadership was just lying to them and we are not walking after anything. [Community member in Old Road]

Across all groups, participants noted that some trainees showed low motivation during the training and only took part in the EPAG project to receive the daily stipend. Discussants presented different ideas to face this challenge, e.g. tying the payment of the stipends to full attendance of the girls in the training or by changing the recruitment process. Husbands/boyfriends and many community members favored a purposive selection of trainees with the involvement of community members. Following this approach, community leaders would identify the girls eager to learn and most in need and recommend them to the EPAG team. Even though this procedure does not seem applicable for various reasons it is still advised to **stronger incorporate community leaders in the project cycle** as they often expressed to feel left out and to not have been sufficiently informed about the project. Community leaders could, for instance, play a stronger role in raising awareness and informing about the EPAG project. Trainers and coaches explained that there existed some misconceptions about the EPAG training among the girls and community members stated that many girls in their community have not yet heard about the EPAG project. Yet, one community member in Old Road described how she was accused by their neighbors for influencing the recruitment process.

People believed that we give names to EPAG which of course it was not done that way. They have accused us of giving names. When they see us - I am also a coach - talking to the girls about their behavior, they can say: "You see what we can be talking about these community members, they are calling them to the office to give their names“. But EPAG told us the process will be like a ballot process. Even my own children were not chosen in the process but the people still don’t understand. They feel that the community members were a part of the selection process.

If the EPAG project will be continued great effort has to be invested to **inform the public and dispel rumors** about the selection process, the objectives of the project and the services offered.

Training content and implementation

The most common recommendation was to add other skills such as tailoring, baking, tie dying, soap making, hair dressing, mechanics, carpentry and plumbing to the training. This idea was brought forward by job and business skill trainees as well as all other groups. Trainers, coaches husbands/boyfriends and parents proposed to allow more time for counseling sessions during the training.

Some trainees further suggested to extend the time period for classroom training and internship. This was also supported by some trainers and coaches who believed that the additional time could be used to strengthen the literacy of trainees. The curriculum should be easy to understand and relating to practice as much as possible to also allow illiterate students to follow the training.

Trainers proposed to have regular refresher workshops and organize joint preparatory workshops for trainers and coaches of the EPAG project. Coaches also commented that workshops and a guidebook would help them in their work. Both groups whished for a higher appreciation of their work, e.g. through the distribution of certificates for trainers or joint recreation trips after each round of training. The increase of stipends or salary for trainees, trainers and coaches was another common request.

Continued support after the training

Trainers further presented the idea to create a common space where all EPAG girls could meet and share their experiences and challenges in business as well as private life. Moreover graduates could encourage and advise round 1 trainees. This would create a **supporting system** for EPAG girls outside the classroom and beyond the project period. Coaches could assist in the set-up and regular organization of such ‘girls clubs’.

Many girls, coaches and parents complained that graduates did not find a job or had no funds to start a business. EPAG places job skill graduates in internships but their struggle to find jobs indicates that these opportunities did not result in long-term employment. Therefore they proposed that EPAG should assist them in finding employment and/or distribute loans or starting capital to be able to establish a business. However, other girls expressed during the FGDs that they were able to save part of their transportation stipend in order to invest in their business. Some girls, trainers and husbands suggested that EPAG should not pay out the full daily stipend but rather save part of the stipend and distribute the rest as a lump sum after graduation. One husband of a round one trainee explained that the girls only receive a group certificate at graduation. For job applications it would be helpful to obtain individual certificates.

* 1. Effects of EPAG training on girls

Spending time

The EPAG project provided the girls with a daily routine. They spent their time participating in the training and managing their business and had fewer opportunities to hang out in video clubs or dating different men. Even after the training, girls were kept busy by attending their businesses.

As for the ones who have gone through the training, you can no longer see them walking about in the community. They have plans for their lives, some of them are now sitting home making their businesses and this can please their boyfriends or husbands. [Community member in Kakata]

Parents, husbands/boyfriends and community members all noted that this brought positive change not only to the girls but to the whole community. First, there are less gossiping and conflicts in the community.

Before EPAG came […] there were numerous problems in the community with the young girls. They used to fight the whole day. It was not really easy but with the few girls that have entered the program, now the community is very quiet because some of the girls who used to be involved in the fighting joined the program. Now they are so busy we can hardly hear complaints. [Community member in Old Road]

Secondly, girls spend less time with different men and according to some community members prostitution has reduced in the project areas.

The time dedicated to training and business also reduced the girls’ availability for housework and other chores. Some husbands/boyfriends complained that since their wives/girlfriends have attended the training they do not prepare food on time and neglect their household duties. In few households, this led to a reallocation of tasks, softening traditional gender roles:

EPAG program have made me to learn how to cook. My girlfriend had to leave the food to go to school, so I had to cook the food for the home. [Husband in Kakata]

Due to the training and business arrangements several girls also see their partner less frequently. Husbands/boyfriends expressed that they had less control over the daily activities of their wives/girlfriends and that they perceived EPAG as a thread to their relationship. They often reacted with jealousy and tried to deter their girlfriends/wives from attending the training.

Interaction with family, friends and the community

As already presented in chapter 3.1, the EPAG training taught the girls important life skills which changed their behavior towards their family, friends and the community. They developed into responsible individuals who show respect for their peers and the elderly and help to take care of their parents, children and the community. Some husbands/boyfriends explained how their relationship improved as the girls learnt to speak more calmly. The trainees accept advise from their parents and started counseling their friends on business and life skills, acting as **multipliers** of the training.

Sometimes when I am sitting in my community I can call my friends and the teenagers in the community and begin to talk to them. I can talk about the effect of the sicknesses like the STIs. I can tell them that as a teenager coming up and you are looking attractive, you have to protect yourself before you get pregnant, because if you do, you will not go to school. If the person you get pregnant for does not have hand, then all the burden will be on your parents. I also made them to understand that as women they are important in the society, that they should take their education seriously and not to be passing around, looking for money. [Trainee in Old Road]

A the girls realize that the knowledge and skills gained during the training help them to succeed in life they become more interested in learning. Many girls expressed their wish to go back to school or university. This confirms the findings of the first exit poll that trainees mainly see EPAG as a **stepping stone** on their way back to school or up the career ladder. The success of the EPAG trainees and the apparent changes in their behavior also motivate other girls to engage in education and/or business. Hence, the training produces important **spillover effects** within the communities.

Income as a trigger of social change

Many girls have started or improved their business so that they are now able to provide for themselves and contribute to the household income. They no longer spend their earnings all at once but learned to save and manage money. This economic strength has triggered a number of other changes, from the girls’ self-perception, relations with friends, family and the community to the trainee’s position in the household.

On a personal level, the trainees realized that with the knowledge and skills gained during the training they can do business and provide for themselves. This has made them more independent and self-confident.

Before I came to the training I did not have any control over my life. I could not make any decision, my boyfriend was always making decision for me but after the training I have build self confidence in myself. I can make my own decision for my future. [Trainee in Kakata]

Before, these girls were depending on their men to feed their homes but EPAG has made them to help the community and their homes. [Community member in Bentol]

Another time I was working and I called her. While she and I were talking, she told me: “The people are here, I am talking to the people.” So I said: “Talk to me before you talk to the people because they are not more important than I.” She said: “No, I have to talk to the people. When I am through, I will call you and talk to you.” So I said: "Ok." [Husband in Old Road]

I have five children on this program who are not willing to sell for me. They are making their own business. They have learned about dress code, how to dress in the community. They always say: “EPAG has opened our bank account, we want to sell and put small profit in our account. We don’t want to be selling and giving you all the profit […].” [Parent in Bentol]

They depend less on their husbands/boyfriends or family and are confident to take decisions on their own. Thus, the focus group discussions present evidence that at least in some cases girls were not only **economically** but also **socially empowered**. Several partners appreciated this change, stating that the financial contributions of their girlfriends/wives in the household resulted in more mutual respect. However, there were also a number of husbands/boyfriends and community members who regarded this as a negative impact of the EPAG project.

I witnessed another one with his fiancée who said the girl has started coming to the EPAG program and making business and earning her own money that is why she no longer listens to him. It is EPAG that is getting her to be frisky because she is handling her own money. Maybe his girlfriend was just sitting and everything had to come from him but since the girl came to the training it has been a challenge to him, change has taking place, the girl no longer looks up to him to cook or do other things. [Community member in Bentol]

This and other statements show that actions to enhance the social position of women have to be complemented by **sensitization measures** which also include partners, family and community members.

The girls’ economic power and self-confidence also resulted in changes in the decision making behavior of the household. In some cases, the girls and their husbands/boyfriends now take decisions together. They are planning and pooling their incomes in order to realize joint projects. Many husbands/boyfriends explained how they are saving to buy land and build a home together with their wife/girlfriend.

 Right now my partner and I can sit and decide on what we will use for a month in the home and what we decide to save. [Husband in Bentol]

In other occasions, men expressed how they are still taking the decisions in the household and for their girlfriends/wives. Some husbands/boyfriends decided for what kind of job/business skill training their girlfriends/wives signed up in the EPAG project and how their career should continue after the training.

Communication with friends and family

Many trainees stated that their communication with family and friends improved through the EPAG training. One reason for this is that girls have learned how to interact with other people. They know how to state their opinion and how to react in moments of disagreement. Therefore they now have fewer arguments, in particular with their husbands/boyfriends. Another important factor is the grown respect of friends and family for the girls. Parents and boyfriends/husbands take their daughters more seriously because they have acquired skills and are able to sustain themselves.

I have better communication with my brother because before, when our mother is talking about her business and I tried to talk, he would say: “Have you done business before?” But since I entered EPAG program when he hears me talk about business he can enjoy it and even this time he shares ideas with me on the line of business. [Trainee in New Kru Town]

Dependency on men

Many trainees are engaged in multiple sexual relationships for financial support. They have several boyfriends or *godpas* to cover their expenses. That is they rely on one man for food, on another one for transportation money and on a third to pay their school fees, etc. Since the EPAG training started some girls were able to reduce their number of boyfriends. From the transportation stipend and their business revenues the trainees could afford to buy some things on their own and therefore depend less on men for financial aid.

I get control over my school because when I started first, I never knew I could pay my own school fees because all through I have been living with people just for school fees business. I used to bear things I was not supposed to bear. But right now I can handle my school fees. School is about to open and I am saving money to go back to school. [Trainee in Old Road]

Moreover the life skills training taught the girls that older men only take advantage of them and do not support them without demanding services in return. This made a number of girls to end their relationship with *godpas*. From the various statements in the FGDs it seems that girls maintain multiple relationships with men out of economic necessity and that improvements in their financial situation can help to reduce their dependency on men. Yet, several girls also confirmed that they or their classmates still have numerous relationships.

Trainee’s control over money

The majority of girls participating in the FGDs stated that they spend parts of their income to support their families. On the one hand, girls expressed their happiness to be able to provide for their family as this strengthened their position and standing in the family. Family members not only come for money but also for advice and are thus recognizing the girls’ ability to successfully manage a business. On the other hand, the trainees feel an increasing financial burden on them as they become responsible for sponsoring their siblings in school or parents are depending on their financial contribution.

At the same time a number of girls also noted that since the training they have more control not only about their own expenditures but also about lending money to others. They stopped giving credit to friends and relatives that in the past did not pay back and do not take out any money of their business resources.

Before the training my relatives will come from the interior for me to help them. I will pass around looking for money for them. But right now from what I learned about management I decided to stop it. I found out that people from my village only love to get it from you but they don’t have time if anything happens to you, so right now family people can’t come to me now. [Trainee in Kakata]

Not everything has changed

The FGDs give plenty of examples for positive changes due to the EPAG training. Many girls seem to be more economically and socially empowered than before the project. Yet, these experiences are individual anecdotes and cannot be generalized for all girls. In several occasions, girls also stated that they are still depending on men for financial support or are struggling with their shyness and lack of self-confidence. For instance, there was a trainee participating in one FGD who very keenly followed the discussion but did not dare to take part as she stammers when talking. This shows that EPAG only provides a first impulse and further support and counseling are necessary to improve the economic and social position of young women in Liberia.

3.5 Challenges after the EPAG training

The trainers were asked what major problems the girls are likely to face after the EPAG training. They fear many threats to successful business management and see the girls’ opportunities being hampered by peer and family pressure.

As many girls are still relatively new to business they will struggle to compete and develop their business successfully. A number of girls do not have sufficient starting capital and according to the trainers, only have small chances to access loans via microfinance institutions. Trainers also stated that due to their young age, some girls might lack endurance and assertiveness to overcome challenges in business development. If their business collapses they might neither have the financial means nor the mental strength to start out new. If their friends do not engage in business or jobs, it may be difficult for the graduates to go their own way. For illiterate girls it will be particularly challenging to do business or find a job since most business activities require at least a basic level of literacy and numeracy. Several trainers stated that the girls are still fearful and do not have sufficient self confidence to become successful in business. These concerns expressed by the trainers highlight again the importance of continuous assistance and a functioning supporting system after the end of the EPAG training in order to transition the girls to the labor market and accompany their professional and personal development.

Trainers also see the girls’ professional development compromised by their personal relationships. Many girls are still living with their parents or other relatives and their guardians might not give them the necessary time and/or freedom to engage in business. Husbands/boyfriends may limit the employment options for girls as out of jealousy they might prevent the girls from working in hotels, etc. In order to succeed with the plans and goals, girls must have the power to take decisions regarding family planning. Last but not least, trainees will face considerable demands for financial support from their family and friends. This will also pose a problem for the business development if girls are not in a position to protect the necessary resources for investment from family claims.

# 4. Summary of findings and recommendations

The second exit poll provided a valuable opportunity to examine further effects on the girls’ attitudes, behaviour, social and business lives which are not fully captured by the quantitative data collection and EPAG’s other data sources. It proved particularly useful to invite the girls’ parents, husbands/boyfriends and community members to the discussions as they contributed valuable insights on the actual changes of EPAG girls.

Summary of findings

The discussion on challenges in the girls’ lives has shown that the training tackles the main problems with adequate means. Among the important training components are the literacy component as well as life skills training and continuous counselling and support through the coaches. Coaching was evaluated as the more effective approach by almost all trainer and coaches, except in one FGD. Its main advantage was that coaches participated with the trainees in the daily classroom training and were therefore able to establish close contacts to the trainees. Girls confided more in them and hence, coaches were in a better position than mentors to help the girls with their personal and business problems.

Overall, the FGDs have provided anecdotal evidence for many positive changes among the EPAG girls. Trainees used their time to engage in economic activities instead of hanging around in video clubs or going out with different men. They also learned how to interact with their family, friends and community members. This has reduced conflicts within households as well as in the community at large. The economic improvements through the EPAG stipend and business revenues provoked social changes at the individual level (girls are more independent and self-confident), in their relationships to others and their position in the household (decision-making power). Girls tend to rely less on multiple sexual relationships and *godpas* for financial support. Despite these positive signs several girls participating in the FGDs did not show any change in their attitude or behavior. There were no detectable differences in statements and opinions between family members from Round 1 and Round 2 trainees or across communities.

Recommendations

From the discussions, it became clear that continuous assistance and a functioning supporting system are necessary in order to sustain the positive effects of the EPAG project and accompany the girls in their future personal and professional development. In order to further strengthen the position of women in the Liberian society it is further recommended to introduce sensitization measures which include community members, most notably men. In the case of expanding the EPAG training to other communities outside Monrovia one challenge will be to adjust the training to illiterate participants while maintaining its relevance for the labor market.

# Annex 1: Field instruments

**FGD with trainees**

**Key data:**

* Please fill the spaces in the box below before starting the discussion.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date:  |  |
| Start Time: |  |
| Finish Time: |  |
| Name of Facilitator:  |  |
| Name of Minute Taker:  |  |
| No. of Booklets: |  |
| No. of Audio File: |  |
| Location: |  |
| Name of Service Provider: |  |
| Category (Job skills/Business skills): |  |
| No. of participants: |  |

**Introduction:**

* As the participants arrive, allow a ‘warming up phase’ of up to ten minutes for chatting, building rapport and feeling comfortable.
* Welcome the participants and introduce yourselves as the facilitator team: *“Good day. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and this is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We are working with SBA, which is conducting surveys for the EPAG project under the Ministry of Gender and Development.”*
* Request the participants to also quickly introduce themselves with name and position in their organisation.
* Then explain the rationale and process of the FGD: “*Our task is to analyse the trainings and effects of the EPAG project so that the project can be improved in the future. For this, of course, you are relevant persons and your knowledge and experiences are very important for us. We are happy that you have volunteered to meet with us today to discuss the training and how it can be improved. There are no right or wrong answers we are just interested in your opinion about the EPAG project. This is not a test – it is an opportunity for us to learn from you about the EPAG project. This information is very important to us and we invite everybody to take part in the discussion. With your permission we would like to audio tape this discussion and take notes. We will not write down your names and it will not be revealed who said what. Moreover, we would like to emphasize that what is said in this discussion should stay right here. We hope that no one will go out there and start talking about what was said in the discussion. Is this okay with you? Do you have any questions? If not, may we proceed?”*
* Introduce the ground rules for FGDs: *“In order to have a good conversation it is important that we follow a few ground rules. We therefore kindly ask you*
* *to let each person finish their sentence before starting to speak,*
* *to not start individual conversations – your comments are very valuable to us so please share them with the whole group,*
* *to respect each other’s opinions even though you might have a different point of you,*
* *to turn off your cell phone during the discussion.”*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Core Questions** | **Probe Questions** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| 1. **Level of satisfaction and ideas for improvement**
 | i) What is the most important new knowledge you learned in the EPAG classroom training?ii) How satisfied are you with the training so far?iii) What are your ideas for improving the EPAG project in the future? | *Life skills, technical skills, or any other thing (self-confidence, gender based violence prevention, etc.)**Do you think the skills you have learned will help you in getting a job/starting a business?* |
| 1. **Personal experience**
 | 1. What are places you are catching a hard time with life?
2. Compared to before you started EPAG, are there areas of your life in which you feel you now have more control? Why?
3. Are there areas of your life in which you feel you now have less control? Why?
 | * *Finding food for your family?*
* *Earning money?*
* *Health problems?*
* *Husband/boyfriend or parent*

*relationships*?* *Earning money and making decisions about your future?*
* *Family planning?*
* *Health?*
 |
| 1. **Relation-ships**
 | 1. As a result of being in the EPAG training, do you have more or less support from your family?
2. Do you have better or worse communication with your parents, husband/boyfriend now as compared to before? Why?
3. Do your classmates rely more or less on or boyfriends for financial/material support now as compared to before? Why?
4. Do your classmates engage more or less in multiple sexual relationships for financial/material support now as compared to before? Why?
5. Do your classmates rely more or less on godpas for financial/material support now as compared to before? Why?
6. Has the EPAG project created more domestic violence problems in your life? In whatways?
7. Has the EPAG project created less domestic violence problems in your life? In whatways?
 | *Are more family members now coming to you for money? If so, how are you dealing with this?**Are family members giving you more support now as compared to before? Why?* |

**Closing**

* When no new comments/ideas come up and after a maximum of two hours start closing the discussion by summarising the main points and clarifying open questions from your and/or the participants side. Thank the participants for their contributions. Then fill the following boxes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Comments on atmosphere *(For example, was it amicable and constructive? Was it tense?)* |  |
| Comments on process *(For example, did every participant contribute to the discussion? Was it hard to get the discussion going or was it easy?)* |  |

**FGD with trainers**

**Key data:**

* Please fill the spaces in the box below before starting the discussion.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date:  |  |
| Start Time: |  |
| Finish Time: |  |
| Name of Facilitator:  |  |
| Name of Minute Taker:  |  |
| No. of Booklets: |  |
| No. of Audio File: |  |
| Location: |  |
| Name of Service Provider: |  |
| Category (Job skills/Business skills): |  |
| No. of participants: |  |

**Introduction:**

* As the participants arrive, allow a ‘warming up phase’ of up to ten minutes for chatting, building rapport and feeling comfortable.
* Welcome the participants and introduce yourselves as the facilitator team: *“Good day. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and this is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We are working with SBA, which is conducting surveys for the EPAG project under the Ministry of Gender and Development.”*
* Request the participants to also quickly introduce themselves with name and position in their organisation.
* Then explain the rationale and process of the FGD: “*Our task is to analyse the trainings and effects of the EPAG project so that the project can be improved in the future. For this, of course, you are relevant persons and your knowledge and experiences are very important for us. We are happy that you have volunteered to meet with us today to discuss the training and how it can be improved. There are no right or wrong answers we are just interested in your opinion about the EPAG project. This is not a test – it is an opportunity for us to learn from you about the EPAG project. This information is very important to us and we invite everybody to take part in the discussion. With your permission we would like to audio tape this discussion and take notes. We will not write down your names and it will not be revealed who said what. Moreover, we would like to emphasize that what is said in this discussion should stay right here. We hope that no one will go out there and start talking about what was said in the discussion. Is this okay with you? Do you have any questions? If not, may we proceed?”*
* Introduce the ground rules for FGDs: *“In order to have a good conversation it is important that we follow a few ground rules. We therefore kindly ask you*
* *to let each person finish their sentence before starting to speak,*
* *to not start individual conversations – your comments are very valuable to us so please share them with the whole group,*
* *to respect each other’s opinions even though you might have a different point of you,*
* *to turn off your cell phone during the discussion.”*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Core Questions** | **Probe Questions** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| 1. **Training content**
 | 1. Which parts of the EPAG classroom training do you think are of particular importance? Why?
2. What difficulties do you think the trainees will encounter after the EPAG project – in their businesses, jobs, and personal lives? Why?
3. What are your ideas for improving the EPAG project in the future?
 |  |
| 1. **Mentoring/coaching**
 | 1. In your experience with EPAG’s mentoring and coaching approaches, which of these is more effective? Why?
2. How would you compare the experiences of the Round1 and Round2 girls with their mentors and coaches?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages for each approach?
4. How can the more effective approach be improved in the future?
 |  |
| 1. **Personal experience**
 | 1. Compared to other projects you have worked on, how would you describe your experience training for the EPAG project?
 | *Are the results the same or different? In what ways?* *Is your passion for the work the same or different? In what ways?* |

**Closing**

* When no new comments/ideas come up and after a maximum of two hours start closing the discussion by summarising the main points and clarifying open questions from your and/or the participants side. Thank the participants for their contributions. Then fill the following boxes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Comments on atmosphere *(For example, was it amicable and constructive? Was it tense?)* |  |
| Comments on process *(For example, did every participant contribute to the discussion? Was it hard to get the discussion going or was it easy?)* |  |

**FGD with coaches**

**Key data:**

* Please fill the spaces in the box below before starting the discussion.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date:  |  |
| Start Time: |  |
| Finish Time: |  |
| Name of Facilitator:  |  |
| Name of Minute Taker:  |  |
| No. of Booklet (s): |  |
| No. of Audio File: |  |
| Name of Service Provider: |  |
| Category (Job skills/Business skills): |  |
| No. of participants: |  |

**Introduction:**

* As the participants arrive, allow a ‘warming up phase’ of up to ten minutes for chatting, building rapport and feeling comfortable.
* Welcome the participants and introduce yourselves as the facilitator team: *“Good day. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and this is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We are working with SBA, which is conducting surveys for the EPAG project under the Ministry of Gender and Development.”*
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* Then explain the rationale and process of the FGD: “*Our task is to analyse the trainings and effects of the EPAG project so that the project can be improved in the future. For this, of course, you are relevant persons and your knowledge and experiences are very important for us. We are happy that you have volunteered to meet with us today to discuss the training and how it can be improved. There are no right or wrong answers we are just interested in your opinion about the EPAG project. This is not a test – it is an opportunity for us to learn from you about the EPAG project. This information is very important to us and we invite everybody to take part in the discussion. With your permission we would like to audio tape this discussion and take notes. We will not write down your names and it will not be revealed who said what. Moreover, we would like to emphasize that what is said in this discussion should stay right here. We hope that no one will go out there and start talking about what was said in the discussion. Is this okay with you? Do you have any questions? If not, may we proceed?”*
* Introduce the ground rules for FGDs: *“In order to have a good conversation it is important that we follow a few ground rules. We therefore kindly ask you*
* *to let each person finish their sentence before starting to speak,*
* *to not start individual conversations – your comments are very valuable to us so please share them with the whole group,*
* *to respect each other’s opinions even though you might have a different point of you,*
* *to turn off your cell phone during the discussion.”*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Cateogory** | **Core Questions** | **Probe Questions** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| 1. **Mentoring/coaching**
 | 1. In your experience with EPAG’s mentoring and coaching approaches, which of these is more effective? Why?
2. Did the trainees relate to you differently in either of these roles? How? Why?
3. What are the advantage and disadvantage for each approach?
4. How can the more effective approach be improved in the future?
 | What are the good sides and bad sides for each approach? |
| 1. **Personal experience**
 | 1. What are your ideas for improving the EPAG project in the future?
 |  |

**Closing**

* When no new comments/ideas come up and after a maximum of two hours start closing the discussion by summarising the main points and clarifying open questions from your and/or the participants side. Thank the participants for their contributions. Then fill the following boxes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Comments on atmosphere *(For example, was it amicable and constructive? Was it tense?)* |  |
| Comments on process *(For example, did every participant contribute to the discussion? Was it hard to get the discussion going or was it easy?)* |  |

**FGD with parents/guardians**

**Key data:**

* Please fill the spaces in the box below before starting the discussion.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date:  |  |
| Start Time: |  |
| Finish Time: |  |
| Name of Facilitator:  |  |
| Name of Minute Taker:  |  |
| No. of Booklets: |  |
| No. of Audio File: |  |
| Location: |  |
| No. of participants: |  |
| No. of Round 1 parents/guardians: |  |
| No. of Round 2 parents/guardians: |  |

**Introduction:**

* As the participants arrive, allow a ‘warming up phase’ of up to ten minutes for chatting, building rapport and feeling comfortable.
* Welcome the participants and introduce yourselves as the facilitator team: *“Good day. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and this is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We are working with SBA, which is conducting surveys for the EPAG project under the Ministry of Gender and Development.”*
* Request the participants to also quickly introduce themselves with name and position in their organisation.
* Then explain the rationale and process of the FGD: “*Our task is to analyse the trainings and effects of the EPAG project so that the project can be improved in the future. For this, of course, you are relevant persons and your knowledge and experiences are very important for us. We are happy that you have volunteered to meet with us today to discuss the training and how it can be improved. There are no right or wrong answers we are just interested in your opinion about the EPAG project. This is not a test – it is an opportunity for us to learn from you about the EPAG project. This information is very important to us and we invite everybody to take part in the discussion. With your permission we would like to audio tape this discussion and take notes. We will not write down your names and it will not be revealed who said what. Moreover, we would like to emphasize that what is said in this discussion should stay right here. We hope that no one will go out there and start talking about what was said in the discussion. Is this okay with you? Do you have any questions? If not, may we proceed?”*
* Introduce the ground rules for FGDs: *“In order to have a good conversation it is important that we follow a few ground rules. We therefore kindly ask you*
* *to let each person finish their sentence before starting to speak,*
* *to not start individual conversations – your comments are very valuable to us so please share them with the whole group,*
* *to respect each other’s opinions even though you might have a different point of you,*
* *to turn off your cell phone during the discussion.”*

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Core Questions** | **Probe Questions** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| 1. **Personal experience**
 | 1. Have you observed any changes EPAG has brought about in your daughter’s life?
2. Has your family experienced any improvements as a result of your daughter being a part of the EPAG project? If so, please explain.
3. Has your family faced any challenges because of the EPAG project? If so, please explain.
4. Would you want other girls in your family to join the EPAG project? Why or why not?
5. What are your ideas for improving the EPAG project in the future?
 | *Attitude, behavior, income, communication skills, plans for the future, etc.?**Are there areas where your daughter has improved because of the EPAG project? If so, please explain.**How has your family tried to overcome this?**How would you recommend the challenges be avoided in the future?* |

**Closing**

* When no new comments/ideas come up and after a maximum of two hours start closing the discussion by summarising the main points and clarifying open questions from your and/or the participants side. Thank the participants for their contributions. Then fill the following boxes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Comments on atmosphere *(For example, was it amicable and constructive? Was it tense?)* |  |
| Comments on process *(For example, did every participant contribute to the discussion? Was it hard to get the discussion going or was it easy?)* |  |

**FGD with husbands/boyfriends**

**Key data:**

* Please fill the spaces in the box below before starting the discussion.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date:  |  |
| Start Time: |  |
| Finish Time: |  |
| Name of Facilitator:  |  |
| Name of Minute Taker:  |  |
| No. of Booklets: |  |
| No. of Audio File: |  |
| Location: |  |
| No. of participants: |  |
| No. of Round 1 husbands/boyfriends: |  |
| No. of Round 2 husbands/boyfriends: |  |

**Introduction:**

* As the participants arrive, allow a ‘warming up phase’ of up to ten minutes for chatting, building rapport and feeling comfortable.
* Welcome the participants and introduce yourselves as the facilitator team: *“Good day. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and this is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We are working with SBA, which is conducting surveys for the EPAG project under the Ministry of Gender and Development.”*
* Request the participants to also quickly introduce themselves with name and position in their organisation.
* Then explain the rationale and process of the FGD: “*Our task is to analyse the trainings and effects of the EPAG project so that the project can be improved in the future. For this, of course, you are relevant persons and your knowledge and experiences are very important for us. We are happy that you have volunteered to meet with us today to discuss the training and how it can be improved. There are no right or wrong answers we are just interested in your opinion about the EPAG project. This is not a test – it is an opportunity for us to learn from you about the EPAG project. This information is very important to us and we invite everybody to take part in the discussion. With your permission we would like to audio tape this discussion and take notes. We will not write down your names and it will not be revealed who said what. Moreover, we would like to emphasize that what is said in this discussion should stay right here. We hope that no one will go out there and start talking about what was said in the discussion. Is this okay with you? Do you have any questions? If not, may we proceed?”*
* Introduce the ground rules for FGDs: *“In order to have a good conversation it is important that we follow a few ground rules. We therefore kindly ask you*
* *to let each person finish their sentence before starting to speak,*
* *to not start individual conversations – your comments are very valuable to us so please share them with the whole group,*
* *to respect each other’s opinions even though you might have a different point of you,*
* *to turn off your cell phone during the discussion.”*

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Core Questions** | **Probe Questions** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| 1. **Personal experience**
 | i) Have you observed any changes EPAG has brought about in your wife or girlfriend’s life?ii) Has your relationship experienced any improvements as a result of your wife/girlfriend being a part of the EPAG project? If so, please explain.iii) Has your relationship faced any challenges because of the EPAG project? If so, please explain.iv) Would you want other girls in your family to join the EPAG project? Why or why not?v) What are your ideas for improving the EPAG project in the future? | *Attitude, behavior, income, communication skills, plans for the future, etc.?**Are there areas where your wife/girlfriend has improved because of the EPAG project? If so, please explain.**How have you two tried to overcome this?**How would you recommend the challenges be avoided in the future?* |

**Closing**

* When no new comments/ideas come up and after a maximum of two hours start closing the discussion by summarising the main points and clarifying open questions from your and/or the participants side. Thank the participants for their contributions. Then fill the following boxes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Comments on atmosphere *(For example, was it amicable and constructive? Was it tense?)* |  |
| Comments on process *(For example, did every participant contribute to the discussion? Was it hard to get the discussion going or was it easy?* |  |

**FGD with community members**

**Key data:**

* Please fill the spaces in the box below before starting the discussion.

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| Date:  |  |
| Start Time: |  |
| Finish Time: |  |
| Name of Facilitator:  |  |
| Name of Minute Taker:  |  |
| No. of Booklet (s): |  |
| No. of Audio File: |  |
| Location: |  |
| No. of participants: |  |

**Introduction:**

* As the participants arrive, allow a ‘warming up phase’ of up to ten minutes for chatting, building rapport and feeling comfortable.
* Welcome the participants and introduce yourselves as the facilitator team: *“Good day. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and this is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We are working with SBA, which is conducting surveys for the EPAG project under the Ministry of Gender and Development.”*
* Request the participants to also quickly introduce themselves with name and position in their organisation.
* Then explain the rationale and process of the FGD: “*Our task is to analyse the trainings and effects of the EPAG project so that the project can be improved in the future. For this, of course, you are relevant persons and your knowledge and experiences are very important for us. We are happy that you have volunteered to meet with us today to discuss the training and how it can be improved. There are no right or wrong answers we are just interested in your opinion about the EPAG project. This is not a test – it is an opportunity for us to learn from you about the EPAG project. This information is very important to us and we invite everybody to take part in the discussion. With your permission we would like to audio tape this discussion and take notes. We will not write down your names and it will not be revealed who said what. Moreover, we would like to emphasize that what is said in this discussion should stay right here. We hope that no one will go out there and start talking about what was said in the discussion. Is this okay with you? Do you have any questions? If not, may we proceed?”*
* Introduce the ground rules for FGDs: *“In order to have a good conversation it is important that we follow a few ground rules. We therefore kindly ask you*
* *to let each person finish their sentence before starting to speak,*
* *to not start individual conversations – your comments are very valuable to us so please share them with the whole group,*
* *to respect each other’s opinions even though you might have a different point of you,*
* *to turn off your cell phone during the discussion.”*

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| **Category** | **Core Questions** | **Probe Questions** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| 1. **Personal experience**
 | i) Have you observed any changes EPAG has brought about in your community? In what ways?ii) Has your community experienced any improvements a result of the EPAG project? If so, please explain.iii) Has the community faced any challenges because of the EPAG project? If so, please explain. iv) Would you want other girls from your community to join the EPAG project? Why or why not?v) What are your ideas for improving the EPAG project in the future? | *For example, changes among the EPAG trainees in their attitude, behavior, income, communication skills, plans for the future, etc.?**How has your community tried to overcome this?**How would you recommend the challenges be avoided in the future?* |

**Closing**

* When no new comments/ideas come up and after a maximum of two hours start closing the discussion by summarising the main points and clarifying open questions from your and/or the participants side. Thank the participants for their contributions. Then fill the following boxes:

|  |  |
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| Comments on atmosphere *(For example, was it amicable and constructive? Was it tense?)* |  |
| Comments on process *(For example, did every participant contribute to the discussion? Was it hard to get the discussion going or was it easy?)* |  |

1. Rabiee. F. (2004): “Focus-group interview and data analysis“, *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 63, p. 657 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)