Republic of Liberia

Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls & Young Women Project (EPAG)

Exit Poll Report

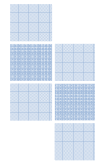December 15, 2010

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Executive Summary

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The goal of the Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG) project in Liberia is to enhance the socio-economic well-being of adolescent girls and young women in urban and peri-urban areas of Greater Monrovia by facilitating their employability through the provision of job skills and business development skills training. The success of EPAG thus hinges, among other factors, on the quality of the training services provided to trainees.

The exit poll was conducted by the SBA/GOPA consortium, which has been commissioned as the Survey Firm for EPAG. It served the purpose of assessing specific aspects of the quality of training to provide EPAG's management with a sound feedback and practical recommendations on how to improve future training. The exit poll has been designed to complement the project's monitoring activities, and obtaining a full picture requires combining the results of the exit poll with the quality monitoring activities.

The exit poll was conducted in September 2010, shortly after the completion of the first round of training under EPAG in August 2010. Qualitative data collection methods and tools were employed. Seventeen Focus Group Discussions and 17 participatory 'Lifeline Diagrams' were carried out. Out of the 1,191 trainees in the first round of the training, 293 (24.6%) took part in the exit poll. Also, 20 trainers representing four service providers and their implementing partners that facilitated the training under contract with EPAG participated in the exit poll.

The exit poll's major findings are:

- Stark differences in the performance, depending on the trainees' educational status was observed by the trainers. These differences were successfully met by various performance enhancing strategies so that a general learning progress could be confirmed.
- The training has enhanced the girls' economic empowerment, indicated by a strong optimism of the trainees regarding their future. Strikingly, a large majority of girls see the EPAG training as a stepping stone and the training promotes identifying and accessing entry points for employment.
- The training has empowered the girls socially with regard to their self-esteem and social competencies, which are seen as an important precondition for succeeding on the job market, as well as for advancing in personal life.
- The pairing/small group approach worked effectively in terms of enhancing the trainees' performance in class and in regard to the creation of social capital outside the classroom as well.
- The mentoring approach is an important factor in motivating the girls, exposing them to real-life business and jobs and providing personal counseling.
- The childcare services enabled learning without distractions from children and removed a major obstacle to the participation of young mothers in the training.
- The allowance was an effective means of countering the opportunity costs of attending the training. Many trainees stated that they used the allowance for covering personal expenditures or invested the funds in business ventures.

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List of Abbreviations

AGI   Adolescent Girls Initiative

ARC   American Refugee Committee

CAP   Children Assistance Program

CEP   Community Empowerment Program

CESP   Community Empowerment and Sustainable Program

EPAG   Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women

FGD   Focus Group Discussion

GOPA   Gesellschaft für Organisation, Planung und Ausbildung

IRC   International Rescue Committee

LEED   Liberia Entrepreneurial and Economic Development

MoGD   Ministry of Gender and Development

NAEAL   National Adult Education Association of Liberia

PICT   Program Implementation and Coordination Team

SBA   Subah-Belleh Associates

1. Introduction

1.1 Background information

The Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG) project is part of the World Bank's global Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI) which is implemented in nine countries: Liberia, Rwanda, Southern Sudan, Afghanistan and Nepal, Jordan, Haiti, Laos and Yemen. 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.

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: 1) job skills training for wage employment, combined with job placement assistance; 2) business development skills training and links to micro-credit for business start-ups; 3) rigorous impact evaluation and high-quality project monitoring; and 4) institutional strengthening and capacity building.

In accordance with the first two components, two types of training services are provided under EPAG: job skills training and business development skills training. In addition to providing job skills and business skills training, the training also includes life skills, including preventing and responding to gender-based violence and HIV&AIDS. Training is conducted by Non-Governmental Organizations, which have been contracted as service providers. For the job skills training, the service providers comprise the Community Empowerment Program (CEP) and Liberia Entrepreneurial and Economic Development (LEED). For the business development skills training, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the American Refugee Committee (ARC) serve as contractors, who each sub-contracted local training organizations. IRC sub-contracted the Children Assistance Program (CAP) and EduCare, while ARC sub-contracted the Community Empowerment and Sustainable Program (CESP) and the National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEAL). Targeting a total of 2,500 girls, EPAG has planned two intakes of girls to undergo one round of training each, the first of which started in March 2010. Round One has 1,191 trainees. Out of all trainees, approximately 65% were undergoing business development skills training and 35% were receiving job skills training. This bias was deliberately factored into the project design to cater for the relatively fewer employment opportunities in the job market in Liberia.

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. There are two different sets of studies constituting a total of five surveys under this assignment. First, the Survey Firm conducted a baseline survey, which will be followed

by a midline and an endline survey, to measure EPAG's impact and answer a range of research questions of relevance for EPAG and AGI. Secondly, the Survey Firm will carry out two exit polls, at the end of each round of training respectively.

1.2 Purpose of the exit poll

Since the success of EPAG hinges, among other factors, on the quality of training, the exit poll serves the purpose of assessing specific aspects of each round of training. The exit poll aims to provide the PICT with sound feedback and practical recommendations based on close observation of the approach, which is of particular importance for both EPAG and potential new projects as well.

The exit poll does not attempt to assess the level and quality of collaboration of EPAG with the various service providers. Rather, its purpose is to facilitate learning on the experiences of the trainees and trainers during the six months of classroom training.

It is important to note that EPAG's third component consists of both the surveys and exit poll conducted by the Survey Firm and of project monitoring conducted by the PICT. Ongoing project monitoring is undertaken by a specially assigned team of monitors who visit the training sessions on a regular basis and observe its implementation. Both elements are understood to describe the process of assessing the quality of training under EPAG, and the exit poll has been designed to complement the monitoring activities. **To obtain a full picture of the training sessions and to cross-check and validate information generated through both exercises, the results of the exit poll will be combined with those of project monitoring**. To accomplish this, EPAG's upcoming mid-term review, which is planned for March 2011, is the ideal context.

While recognizing the context-specific nature of EPAG, it is also intended that the lessons learned from Liberia might be applicable for the broader context of AGI in other countries around the world.

1.3 Structure of the report

This report presents the findings of the first exit poll conducted by the Survey Firm in September 2010, after the conclusion of the first 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.
- **Chapter 3** presents the exit poll's findings, sorted according to various quality dimensions, such as performance of trainees in class, the perceived utility of the training content on the labor market and in the girls' social life, the satisfaction of the trainees with the training, and the effectiveness of different performance enhancing strategies.
- **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 draft data collection instruments.
- **Annex 2** presents the final field instruments that were employed in the exit poll.

Methodology

2. Methodology

2.1 Quality dimensions and criteria

The aspects of the training assessed through the exit poll were streamlined with the aspects measured by project monitoring. Hence, the exit poll only looks at selected points. Questions regarding the administration, attendance rates and teaching methods, among others, were assessed through the project monitoring.

The aspects under scrutiny here can be sorted according to two quality dimensions: the quality of the training *content*, and the quality of the processes of training *delivery*. Under the first dimension fall the following quality criteria:

- performance of the trainees in class, and
- utility of training content.

The second dimension looks specifically at the effectiveness of the 'performance enhancing strategies' used by EPAG:

- pairing/small group strategy,
- mentoring approach,
- childcare services, and
- transport/meal allowance.

In addition, the exit poll also assesses the level of trainee satisfaction. This aspect cuts through the aforementioned two quality dimensions. The girls' satisfaction will on the one hand depend on their feelings regarding the usefulness of the training and thus if the training was a worthwhile investment of their time, as well as on practical issues, such as the quality of the childcare services offered to them.

Lastly, the exit poll seeks to generate suggestions from the trainers and trainees on how to improve training in the second round.

The detailed guiding questions used in the exit poll can be found in the concept paper in **Annex 1**.

In assessing the performance enhancing strategies, the focus will not be on the question if the strategies have been applied properly but whether they have had the desired effect on the trainees(i.e. to enhance their performance).

2.2 Data collection tools

Qualitative data collection methods and corresponding instruments were employed in the field. A qualitative approach was chosen to allow for more depth and probing than a quantitative survey questionnaire would have. When combined with the project monitoring results, a rich picture of the training emerges.

The data generated through the exit poll is based on perceptions. When investigating the utility of the training content on the labor market the girls are asked for example about their degree of optimism that they will be able to find employment. The exit poll seeks to generate operational information that can help shape the second round of training. The effectiveness of EPAG in enhancing the girls' employability will then be statistically analyzed in the midline and endline surveys.

Three data collection tools were applied:

- Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with trainers,
- FGDs with trainees, and
- Participatory and visual tool called the 'Lifeline Diagram' with trainees.

Each method had a different thematic focus: the FGDs with the trainees discussed the performance enhancing strategies, while in the Lifeline Diagrams the girls' aspirations were explored, in order to draw conclusions on the training's utility. However, by using different methods it was possible to triangulate statements.

The Lifeline Diagram sessions also had a pedagogical purpose, taking the girls through a discussion of the dreams and aspirations also served as career orientation.

The draft field instruments were pre-tested in the field, and revised with regard to language and number of suggested probes to ensure higher consistency in implementation. SBA/GOPA conducted training for the field teams that culminated in one day of field work. The final instruments used in the field are attached in **Annex 2**.

All sessions were conducted in Liberian English and led by a two person-enumerator team, consisting of a facilitator and a note taker. Each team had at least one female member, in order to create a conducive and open atmosphere for the girls to express their views. The presence of trainers was explicitly avoided. The data collection took place throughout September 2010, i.e. shortly after the first round of job skills and business development skills training were completed. The field notes of the enumerator teams were validated through a review of audio recordings. The field protocols with more detailed information on the data collection process are attached as part of the concept paper in **Annex 1**.

The enumerator teams took notes of the atmosphere during the sessions and the behavior of the trainers and girls. The teams noted that the trainers were very eager to contribute and that all participated actively in the discussions. Regarding the FGDs with the trainees, the enumerators noted that in the vast majority of cases the sessions were lively and interactive, and the trainees spoke free and openly. In cases where groups proved less engaged, the facilitators conducted ice breakers and energizers to improve participation.

The Lifeline sessions proved to be a novel experience for many girls, and the method was met by some with a degree of reluctance. For others, for example in the Battery Factory location it was noted that the *"discussants were enthusiastic about thinking about their lives in ten years"*.

2.3 Number of Interviews and Group Discussions

Four FGDs with a total of 20 trainers were conducted. The participants for these sessions were selected randomly from a list comprising all trainers. First, the list was divided into two groups, one each for male and female, and 3 participants from each group were randomly selected. The following table provides an overview of the respondents per service provider:

Participants in FGD with trainers per service provider

Service Provider	No. of participants
IRC	6
LEED	5
CEP	5
ARC	4
Total	**20**

A total of 17 FGDs with 167 girls and 17 Lifeline Diagrams with 126 girls were carried out meaning that 24.6% of the 1,191 trainees in Round One of the training were involved in the exit poll. For the FGDs, 10 to 12 participants were selected per group, while for the Lifeline sessions 6 to 8 participants were chosen per group.

The girls were randomly selected. The attendance rosters of trainees and trainers from the service providers were given to the Survey Firm by the EPAG team. These rosters were compiled per service provider, community and skills. In the case where two service providers in a community provide training for the same skill, the rosters of both service providers were compiled into a single list (with the exception of West Point, where ARC and IRC were done separately).

Using each of the listing, a sample interval and a random start were chosen. For example, if CEP's total listing was 120, then 120 was divided by 12, which is equal to 10. To get a random start, a number was randomly selected from 1-10. For example, if the selected number is 5, 5 will be the first number selected. This means, the trainee who is listed as number 5 on the list is the first respondent. Thereafter, the interval 12 will be added continually until the total numbers of participants are selected. This first step served the identification of respondents for the FGDs.

Thereafter, the listings for each service provider were recompiled and renumbered and a new sample interval taken. For example, if the new listing has 108 entries, then 108 is divided by 8, which is equal to 13.5. In the case where there is a decimal in the result, the whole number is taken. To select the random start, a number will be selected randomly from 1 to 13. If the number is 9, 9 becomes the first number for selection. The trainee who is listed as number 9 on the newly compiled list will be the first discussant for the Lifeline sessions. Then the interval 13.5 will be added continually until the total numbers of discussants are selected.

The sessions were evenly distributed across project area locations. The table below shows the distribution of sessions per type of session and location.

Type of session with trainees per location

Location	FGD with trainees	Lifeline Diagram	Total
Kakata	2	2	4
Red Light	2	2	4
West Point	2	2	4
Doe	2	2	4
Bassa	2	2	4
Old Road	2	2	4
Battery Factory	2	2	4
New Kru Town	2	2	4
Bentol	1	1	2
Total	17	17	34

2.4 Data analysis

The FGDs and Lifeline session were recorded as notes by the note takers and the sessions were captured as audio recordings. The enumerator teams then produced detailed transcripts of all sessions. It must be mentioned that the discussions took place in Liberian English and the transcripts were produced in American English, thereby translating the original statements from the discussions.

The transcripts were then scrutinized and duly analyzed using a step-by-step inductive approach:

- First the transcripts were read in an exploratory fashion, identifying recurring themes and clusters. For example, in the analysis of the Lifeline sessions themes included aspirations and visions, optimism, pessimism, going back to school, and saving money for investing in bigger business.
- Secondly, using these themes as codes, a sheet with a table was produced. This sheet then supported a second and third reading of the transcripts. Statements and observations from the transcripts were recorded in the table under a respective cluster/code.
- The filled tables were then examined for patterns and trends in the discussions, as well as for connections between various themes, for example between the pairing/small group approach and the issue of the trainees' social empowerment.
- A first draft section on the findings and conclusions was then produced, which synthesized the patterns and trends. The draft was circulated internally and to EPAG's PICT for comments to crosscheck and validate the underlying assumptions and interpretations.
- With the feedback in mind, the original transcripts, as well as the code table were checked again and the report finalized.

The Survey Firm is committed to constantly improving the quality of its services and enhancing its performance. Learning is viewed as an in-built feature of its operations. Therefore, in the course of conducting the exit poll, the Survey Firm has generated a number of methodological lessons learnt that it will consider when preparing for the exit poll after Round Two of training. This includes, but is not limited to: formulating the questions for the FGDs more precisely; revising the probes for the discussions around the Lifeline diagrams; including FGDs with selected mentors as an additional means of data collection.

3. Findings

3.1 Performance of trainees

In the exit poll, the trainers' views of the trainees' performance in class were explored. Overall, the trainers of all service providers gave a very positive assessment of the trainees' performance. However, the trainers clearly indicated that the performance depended strongly on the education status of the trainees. High school graduates performed best, as opposed to girls with lower educational status, who were reported by trainers to have found it very difficult to keep up with the training.

The trainees' difficulties in comprehending the lessons and not being able to participate effectively in class were felt especially during the first months of the training. The trainers indicated that these difficulties were overcome by applying different strategies, including the pairing/small group strategy that put more educated girls in groups with less educated girls (see **Section 3.3.1**). Here, the mixed skill levels were utilized as an opportunity.

Also, some trainers stated that they were required to adjust the speed of teaching and had to break the lessons down into simpler units. One service provider also allotted extra time out of class to some girls that had difficulties keeping up. As a consequence, the trainers were able to say that all trainees demonstrated learning progress. While the pairing/small group approach used the mixed skill levels for performance enhancement, diversity in skill levels generally poses a didactical challenge for trainers.

Another factor influencing the trainees' performance in class, as expressed by the trainers, was the girls' attitude towards the training, which was referred to by the trainers as the level of 'seriousness', reflected in the motivation, regular attendance and participation in class. The trainers observed that the seriousness improved as the training progressed. Some trainers attributed this to the motivating effects of the performance enhancing strategies, such as the allowance and the mentoring (see **Section 3.3**).

> *"The reason for their outstanding stems from the fact that these girls created passion for the training."* (Trainer)
>
> "From the onset …, some never had much interest but as the months went by some grew interest and the level of participation of the trainees became more encouraging."(Trainer)

3.2 Utility of training content

The assessment of the utility of training in the exit poll is based on the trainees' and the trainers' perceptions. The training's actual outcomes and impact on the girls' employability, social well-being and income situation will be assessed through the baseline, midline and endline surveys.

In the exit poll, the utility of the EPAG training for the girls was considered from two perspectives: on the one hand, its effects on the girls' economic empowerment and their chances on the labor market, and on the other hand, the effects on the girls' social empowerment, for example in terms of their self-esteem.

3.2.1 General satisfaction with training

The trainees were asked about their general satisfaction with the training. The general satisfaction served as a proxy to measure utility, based on the assumption that the satisfaction of the girls will depend to a large extent on the perceived usefulness of the training content for finding employment and growing as persons.

The discussions with the trainees provided clear evidence of an overwhelming satisfaction with the training. The facilitators also observed that the facial expressions on the trainees' faces showed satisfaction when talking about EPAG, and during some discussions the trainees were literally singing praises about EPAG.

When probing about the reasons for the satisfaction, many girls stated that the training had taught them knowledge and skills that they would be able to use on the job market. One girl from Kakata remarked that this was the first opportunity she had ever had at education. Some girls also related their satisfaction to the life skills section of the training.

> *"I am satisfied with the training because the training provided me with new skills and knowledge which will be with me until I die. … I am now somebody with knowledge, value, and skills."*(Girl from Red Light)
>
> *"I am very satisfied because I no longer find myself in video clubs as it used to be and I am now always busy doing something that will better my life."* (Girl from New Kru Town)

3.2.2 Economic empowerment

One trainer pointed out in general terms that in his view before the training the girls *"did not believe in themselves and had lost hope in life"*. One recurring theme in the exit poll was the girls' striking new found optimism regarding their future business and employment opportunities, which they attribute to EPAG. The Lifeline Diagram sessions showed that many girls have high aspirations and visions for their future, which can be seen as a confirmation that EPAG served to motivate the girls to work for a brighter and more productive future. The trainees for example wanted to become nurses, medical doctors, lawyers or diplomats and many wished to become successful business women. The optimism and the high aspirations are illustrated by the following statements:

> *"Oh, I am a 100% sure that this training will help me find a job."*(Girl from New Kru Town)

> *"I am satisfied and confident that I can go as far as the United States of America to work."*
> (Girl from West Point)

A recognizable number of girls did not include the jobs they were trained in on the Lifeline Diagrams. This was the case, for example, in Mandingo Quarters, where girls participating in the Lifeline session were taught hospitality and driving, but none of the girls mentioned owning or working in a hotel or restaurant or transport business as their dream.

This might be explained with another striking finding from the Lifeline sessions: a very large number of girls see the EPAG training as a stepping stone, either on their way back to school or on their way up the career ladder. Many girls showed in their diagrams that they want to work or start a business in order to save for school fees and then successively pursue further education or subsequent career steps. The following explanations of Lifeline Diagrams by trainees exemplify this:

> *"My dream and aspiration within ten years is to become a big business woman. I will achieve this goal by going to school for two years to add to the business skills I got from the EPAG training. In another two years I will start a small business to help me pay my school fees and transportation fare. [In] another two years, I will start a loan business. The savings I will get from the loan business will be used to go out of the country to buy goods to sell. This I will do for another two years to accomplish my dreams."* (Girl from Bassa Community)
>
> *"I want to become a nurse in ten years time. I will start off from the training I received at EPAG as a professional house keeper and will find a job that will enable me to go to school in two years time. After that I will then improve in my house keeping and will then work towards attending a nursing school. The money I received from work will help me to save and then [I] will get married and in four years time will get pregnant and obtain my degree."* (Girl from New Kru Town)

Hence, regardless of the group they were placed in, the trainees will try and pragmatically apply what was learned on the labor market. The training therefore serves to promote identifying and accessing entry points for employment and self-employment. It is important to note that this is in line with the strategy of EPAG, which is not geared towards placing the trainees on long-term career tracks, but rather providing entry points to the labor market.

The Lifeline sessions showed that, while the girls have high aspirations and are optimistic, they are still realistic that professional and personal success does not come quickly and that determination and hard work is required to reach ones goals. This view might also be seen as a result of the EPAG training.

3.2.3 Social empowerment

In the FGDs, the trainers dwelled heavily on the training's social aspects. This relates to the girls' levels of self-esteem and their social competencies, as an important factor for their employability.

The trainers observed an initial shyness in class, which gave way to an improved self-confidence as the training progressed. It was emphasized that as a result the girls' self-esteem was built, as the statements in the box below show. One of the FGD facilitators observed in Gotomo Town:

"[The importance of public speaking] was buttressed by nearly all the discussants, some of them were very shy before, but this training has made them confident to speak whenever they are called upon."

> *"Some of the girls were a little shy, but after three months they took over the program and pulled out their hearts and expressed enthusiasm in the program."* (Trainer)
>
> *"I have now gotten the spirit of boldness."* (Girl from New Kru Town)
>
> *"At first, I did not know that I had any value. I only did what others told me to, but this program has opened my eyes and made me to know that as a human being and a young woman I have value. I am now aware of whom I am."* (Girl from Red Light)
>
> *"You can tell anyone that I am now a professional."* (Girl from Doe Community)
>
> *"What a man can do, a woman can also do."* (Girl from Gotomo)
>
> *"[My favorite part of the training] is painting, because it is strange to see young women painting in Liberia."* (Girl from New Kru Town)

The trainers also emphasized the importance of the right attitude and social competencies for the chances on the labor market (*"professionalism is the key"*). In the observation of the trainers, the girls at the beginning had a *"sluggish attitude"* and *"poor manner of approach"*. However, there was consensus among the trainers and trainees that the training had transformed the girls. The trainers cited an improved dress-code as an indicator for this change.

> *"At the initial stage of the training, some of the trainees' attitude towards their colleagues and even towards the training itself was completely unfriendly."* (Trainer)
>
> *"[Their] manner of approach was bad, and their dress code was indecent, but the training has helped in transforming these girls."* (Trainer)
>
> *"I learned how to be a professional woman in the home and the community. I was a jealous woman but [the] EPAG training taught me to be mild in my emotions and also to be humble."* (Girl from New Kru Town)

With regard to their social competencies, many trainees expressed the view that the training has helped them improve, and the life skills topics proved to be very popular among the trainees. Many girls cited one or more of the life skills-related topics as the most important ones in the training. It is important to note that the social competencies strengthened through the training were valued by the trainees both in regard to enhancing their employability, as well as to making them stronger in their personal relationships.

> *"We also learned life skills. This has helped us know how to talk to people."* (Girl from Doe Community)

> *"I used to braid hair and just eat the money without thinking about the future, but now I consider saving as being important for the fact that saving helps me to have some money when things become tough."* (Girl from Red Light)
>
> *"At first I would only do what my boyfriend tells me to do without asking any questions or knowing the reason why, but now I have an input in everything that goes on in our home, even down to the money business."* (Girl from Red Light)
>
> *"No sex for help and no help for sex. No one can fool us on any of these."* (Girl from Doe Community)

3.3 Effectiveness of performance enhancing strategies

3.3.1 Pairing/small group approach

One performance enhancing strategy of EPAG is the pairing/small group approach, which entails the trainees working in groups inside and outside the classroom. The approach seeks to improve the girls' performance in class, as well as promote the creation of social capital, such as friendships, mutual trust and support networks among the girls. The groups were formed through joint efforts by the girls and the trainers, who ensured that the members of the pairs/small groups were of similar age-ranges, lived nearby one another and represented mixed skill levels. Each pair/small group consisted of three or four girls. The groups are intended to remain an entity beyond the classroom training and continue through the mentoring and support phase of the project.

The vast majority of trainees expressed an appreciation of the pairing/small group approach.

In terms of enhancing the trainees' performance in class, the discussions showed that the girls in the pairs/small groups helped each other and that the stronger ones frequently helped the slower learners, as is illustrated by the citations below this paragraph. This observation was confirmed in the FGDs with the trainers, who strongly supported using the high performers to help weaker trainees. As was pointed out by one trainer, without the pairing/small group approach it would have been difficult for some girls to keep pace with the sessions. Hence, there was a clear opinion among respondents supporting mixed skill levels, as envisaged in the pairing/small group strategy paper.

> *"It helped us because we were mixed with smart people and the smart ones helped the slow learners to pick up."* (Girl from Bassa Community)
>
> *"There were girls that could not write and felt ashamed to take part … these girls were assisted by the others who could write … and urge them to come to school regularly. With this persuasion and encouragement we were able to overcome this challenge."* (Girl from Mandingo Quarters)

While the mixed skill levels were clearly supported by the girls, it seemed that in a few groups the age ranges were larger because in some classes close age matching was not feasible. Also, a few

younger girls cited cases where older girls made them go and purchase items for them. The age range should be kept to a minimum to allow for a more positive group dynamic.

In respect to building social capital among the trainees, the exit poll confirms that the pairing/small group strategy plays an important role. As one trainer remarked, *"now they look like sisters"*. In the FGDs with the trainees, it emerged clearly that the girls felt the pairs/small groups created unity and friendship and demonstrated to them the value of teamwork. It also came out that some girls had initial difficulties in keeping their tempers in check, relating to each other and accepting the ground rules of team work, which sometimes resulted in mockery of peers in class. These personal difficulties were overcome with the help of the pairing/small group approach:

> *"I have learned to sit and communicate with others peacefully."* (Girl from Gotomo)
>
> *"A major challenge was that we were all from different backgrounds … therefore at the beginning when we came together in a group, we did not understand one another very well … we ran into problems with our friends. As time went by we were able to work together."* (Girl from Gotomo)

The social capital created through the pairing/small group approach was illustrated by various examples of girls helping each other either with class or in case of sickness or domestic problems:

> *"If any member was absent we would call to know why that person was not in school."* (Girl from Bassa Community)
>
> *"If I miss school, my friends in my group will give me the notes for the day and explain to me whatever they did in class that day."* (Girl from Bassa Community)
>
> *"[When my pregnancy began to show, I felt ashamed … and stayed at home refusing to attend classes.] It was due the constant visitation and encouragement from my peers that I was able to continue and complete the training."* (Girl from Red Light)
>
> *"When my business was going down, I needed some money, my pairing/small group credited me the needed funds to keep my business going."* (Girl from Red Light)

3.3.2 Mentoring approach

EPAG works with an approach that entails providing the trainees with a mentor to support the girls throughout the project. Generally, the majority of girls provided a positive feedback of their experiences with the mentoring approach. In Gotomo, the facilitators of the FGDs observed that *"there were smiles on the [girls'] faces when they spoke about the encouragement and help their mentors offered during the training"*.

The exit poll showed that the mentoring approach is a success factor in various respects:

- In the discussions, the girls underlined the important role that the mentors played in motivating them and ensuring regular and continuous attendance of classes. One girl referred to her mentor positively as a 'watch dog'.

- Further, the mentors' role in supporting the girls' professional development was confirmed. This sometimes went beyond supporting business networking, as some mentors even provided start-up capital for trainees' businesses.

- The exit poll also confirmed the function of the mentors in regard to promoting the girls' personal development and acting as counselors. Some girls referred to their mentors as 'mother' or 'parent', which was underscored by the trainers.

The following statements illustrate the positive feedback on the mentoring approach:

"My mentor is a source of inspiration for me; when I am faced with problems, she joins me with prayers and also advises me on doing things that will brighten my future." (Girl from Red Light)

"I was not keeping record on the small business that I have, but when my mentor visited my business area, and found out that I was not keeping records, she taught me the importance of record keeping, and she now inspects my records on a weekly basis." (Girl from Red Light)

"My mentor was very caring. When there were family problems, she always intervened." (Girl from Doe community)

"From the beginning, I never used to take it from anybody. I used to talk to people the way I felt. But after I started meeting with my mentor, I became to change." (Girl from West Point)

"She [the mentor] encouraged us not to depend on men or our beauty, which in the long run will fail us, so we should take the training seriously." (Girl from Mandingo Quarters)

Despite the primarily positive feedback on the mentoring approach, it is important to note that there were also girls that expressed disappointment. This section of the trainees virtually unanimously cited the lack of time by their mentors and the resulting little contact as the main reason for their view. It cannot be safely assumed through the exit poll's findings whether all mentors held the minimum sessions fixed in the mentoring agreement or not, but some girls indicated that they met their mentors only once or twice. It can be asserted, however, that the girls who voiced disappointment would like to benefit more from their mentors and would like to spend more time with them. This can be thus be interpreted as a positive confirmation of the mentoring concept, which might need strengthening in Round Two.

3.3.3 Childcare services

The FGDs provided an overwhelmingly positive feedback by the trainees on the childcare services. The main reason cited for the high level of appreciation was that it enabled the trainees to concentrate on the lessons without distraction. This view was also shared by girls who did not have children themselves, but appreciated that they could learn in an environment free from distractions from crying babies.

The FGDs confirmed that the childcare services also served as a strategy to reduce the risk of irregular attendance of classes and of dropping out of the training altogether. Girls with children would have had no other means of childcare, and it can be assumed that for many trainees the childcare service was a precondition for completing the training.

Furthermore, apart from a few isolated cases, the trainees expressed the view that the quality of care was high. In one case, it was reported that the caretakers even went as far as teaching the girls about childcare in the recreation time.

> *"[The] childcare service helped those who had children and those who did not have … Unlike when there was no childcare services, most of them were not regular in school; if they were in school they had to bring along their children which was causing problem for everyone in the class because these children would cause noise or cry in class."* (Girl from Old Road location)
>
> *"I was happy because my friends were learning."* (Girl from Battery Factory)
>
> *"Yes, it was a good idea, because I was worried who was going to take care of mine while in school."* (Girl from Doe Community)
>
> "[The service] *made it difficult to have any excuse for missing class"*. (Girl from Red Light)
>
> *"The service was a good thing, because it [helped] mothers to have their children close to them whenever they needed to be breast fed."* (Girl from Bentol)
>
> *"The care givers used to bathe, change diapers and also wash the soil of the babies. Having such care for the babies encouraged the mothers to relax and focus on the training.*" (Girl from Gotomo)
>
> *"The care givers made it their business to ensure that the babies were brought to the center clean by their mothers. The care givers also took time to educate the mothers on childcare during recreation time."* (Girl from Mandingo Quarters)

3.3.4 Transport/meal allowance

EPAG provided the trainees with an allowance to assist in transporting them to and from the training venue and catering for the purchase of meals. The allowance was established in the spirit of countering the opportunity costs borne by the girls when attending class *vis-à-vis* carrying out income generating activities. The payment was labeled transport/meal allowance, and its use was not further specified.

The FGDs with the trainees provided evidence of a very high degree of appreciation for the allowance system on the side of the trainees.

While for many the allowance served the purpose of covering the costs of transport to and from the training venue, many others confirmed that they used the allowance to start a business or cover personal expenditures, such as household items, health care for family members or pay back loans. One girl explained that the allowance helped her to get credit from her friends, with the assurance that she would pay back when they would get their allowance. Hence, the exit poll's findings confirm that the allowance was an effective means of countering the opportunity costs of attending the training. It can be asserted that without the allowance many girls would have missed classes or even dropped out in order to carry out activities more profitable to them in short-term monetary terms, as shown by the statements below:

> *"It was very good. If it wasn't for it, many of us wouldn't be able to attend."* (Girl from New Kru Town)
>
> *"I wasn't doing anything at all and so the transportation helped me to see after so many things."* (Girl from Battery Factory)
>
> *"I live near the training centre so I used my 'lil-thing' for something else."* (Girl from New Kru Town)
>
> *"The transportation was good because it helped some of us to start [a] business."* (Girl from West Point)
>
> *"I used some of my transportation to send my son to hospital."* (Girl from West Point)

However, there seemed to be some degree of confusion among the trainees about the purpose of the payments. It was unclear to many trainees that the allowance was intended to be used for transport and meals, and secondly that the money could be used at their own discretion.

Also, in the FGDs, many operational issues emerged surrounding the allowance that caused heated debates among the trainees. These issues were forwarded to EPAG PICT in a separate communication, as they were outside the exit poll's scope. It should be stressed, however, that when the handling of allowances is marked by irregularities such as misunderstanding regarding the purpose of allowance, unstable payment schedule, etc. it will inevitably lead to dissatisfaction and mistrust among the trainees. This can consequently lead to a decrease in motivation.

3.4 Other findings

The curricula and training materials were developed by each service provider on the basis of curriculum development guidelines provided by EPAG. Some trainers expressed dissatisfaction with the way the material development was handled, noting most importantly that the manual needs to be available on time, at least one week before the training is due to start. One trainer remarked that he is a trainer and not a 'manual planner', and that they were left with no choice but to produce the manual themselves. Several times it was suggested that EPAG develop the curriculum and condense materials into one manual and provide it to the service providers.

Furthermore, statements from both trainers and trainees point to the need to adapt the manual to the Liberian context and use Liberian English. The latter point is especially important in view of the low educational status of the majority of trainees. Consequently, the use of visual aids was rated as very helpful by numerous trainees and the stronger use of visuals was proposed as an improvement for the second round of training.

The findings from the exit poll indicate that there is a preference among trainees and trainers alike for practice-orientation in the classroom. On the side of the trainees there was a recurring complaint about the practical aspects of the training that were either felt to be not prominent enough in the training, while they were regarded as the most important and most appreciated part of training. This was underlined by the trainers, who emphasized the importance of practical aspects especially for the trainees with low educational status. Both trainers and trainees suggested that more real-life exposure to the business world and the industries they were introduced to in the job skills training and field trips be added and sufficient materials provided for practicing the skills learnt in class.

Here, it needs to be mentioned that EPAG is designed in phases. After the classroom training, the girls from the job skills group will be placed in internships and jobs and the girls from the business development skills group will be connected to micro-credit institutions and given coaching support for business start-up. The practical aspects will therefore be the focus of the next phase. Also, exposure to the business world is also provided through the mentors.

It was mentioned several times that the girls' spouses and boyfriends should be involved more strongly, in order for them to support the girls in their ventures.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

The findings of the exit poll point to the following conclusions and recommendations for the second round of EPAG training.

Performance of trainees in class

The exit poll found a positive assessment of the trainees' performance in class by the trainers. This should be validated through cross-checking the monitoring data and the results of any tests the trainers may have conducted during the training.

However, stark differences in performance depending on the one hand on the educational status were observed. This was met with different strategies, including the pairing/small group approach and by the trainers adjusting the sessions. While the mixed skill levels present the opportunity to use the more educated trainees as tutors in the pairs/small groups, this also poses a didactical challenge for the trainers.

On the other hand, the difference in performance was also attributed, to a lack of 'seriousness' among some of the trainees. However, respondents noted that, as training progressed, virtually all the trainees became more committed to the task, and more convinced that it would have an important impact on their lives. The girls' motivation and commitment were strengthened by means of the different performance enhancing strategies, including the allowance and mentoring (see further below).

Recommendation:
It is recommended that the mixed skill levels be maintained. It is further recommended that the curricula and training manuals of the service providers should be made flexible enough to cater for the different skill levels and educational backgrounds and contain instructions and advice for the trainers how to handle mixed skill levels in class.

Utility of training content

Based on the trainees' perception, the exit poll found the training to be highly relevant. The trainees' expressed an overwhelming general satisfaction with the training, which can be related to its perceived usefulness.

Also, it can be concluded that the training has enhanced the girls' economic empowerment. The exit poll demonstrated a strong optimism on the side of the trainees, which is underlined by the high aspirations and visions that many girls have for their professional future. Importantly, a very large number of girls viewed EPAG training as a stepping stone, either on their way back to school or on their way up the career ladder. The training promotes identifying and accessing entry points for wage employment and self-employment.

The findings of the exit poll confirm that the training has empowered the girls socially with regard to their self-esteem and social competencies. This can be attributed to various aspects in the way the training was designed, particularly the sessions on life skills, as well as the pairing/small group and the mentoring approach that both stimulated the practicing of social competencies in real life. These strategies do not only serve the purpose of enhancing the girls' performance in and out of class, but play a major role in empowering them socially.

<u>Performance enhancing strategies</u>
The four performance enhancing strategies implemented by EPAG – the pairing/small group approach, mentoring, childcare services and transport/meal allowance – have all proven to be very effective with regards to various aspects, as will be elaborated in the next paragraphs.

The exit poll showed that the pairing/small group approach worked in terms of enhancing the trainees' performance in class. Especially the more educated ones helped the less educated trainees. Also, the members of the pairs/small groups motivated one another to attend classes. In regard to the creation of social capital, it can be concluded that the approach supported the establishment of unity and friendship among the girls and demonstrated to them the value of teamwork. The girls helped each other in case of sickness or domestic problems. The pairs/small groups also served as a forum for practicing social competencies.

In respect to the mentoring, it can be concluded that it is an important factor in motivating the girls, exposing them to real-life business and jobs, and providing personal counseling.

Recommendation:
It is recommended to look into the time spent together by mentor and mentees and to explore whether the time together should be increased.

The exit poll provided an overwhelmingly positive feedback by the trainees on the childcare services, because it enabled learning without distractions from children. Also, for trainees with children the childcare service removed a major obstacle to their participation in the training.

The exit poll's findings confirm that the allowance was an effective means of countering the opportunity costs of attending the training *vis-à-vis* engaging in other activities that would be more beneficial in monetary terms in the short-term. Many trainees used the allowance for covering personal expenditures or invested the funds in business ventures. While this is a way of using the allowance that is intended by EPAG, the use of the funds was not clear to all trainees.

Recommendation:
It is recommended to have a clearer communication about the allowance system and its intended use. In this line, it could also be useful to change the label of the payment.

Other findings
The exit poll also brought out issues around the teaching methods and materials. Trainers and trainees expressed the wish for more practice-orientation in the training, and more suitable teaching materials, including the increased use of Liberian English and more prominence of visual aids.

Recommendation:
It is recommended to examine the curricula and manuals of the service providers, in order to validate if there is a need for improving the quality of teaching methods and materials.
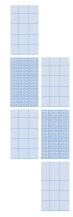
Annex 1: Exit Poll Concept Paper

1. Introduction

This Concept Paper is an important deliverable for the Subah-Belleh Associates (SBA) and GOPA consortium, referred to in the following as the 'Survey Firm'. It is the first step to designing and implementing the exit poll for the 'Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG) Project in Liberia.

The success of EPAG hinges, among other things, on the quality of training provided to adolescent girls and young women. This Concept Paper therefore first sets out to outline a conceptual framework for the exit poll, which constitutes one pillar of assessing the quality of training under EPAG. From this framework, then the methodology for the exit poll is derived. The Concept Paper draws on EPAG documents, as well as a literature review.[1]

The Concept Paper is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1 contains a brief background section and a description of its purpose.

- In Chapter 2, goes on to clarify the exit poll's conceptual framework, including its two quality dimensions and respective quality criteria for the training under EPAG.

- Chapter 3 outlines the methodology to be applied in conducting the exit poll: Pillar 1 is a description of quantitative data collection during the quality monitoring of the training services conducted by the EPAG team; Pillar 2 is the description of qualitative data collection methods and field instruments to be applied by the Survey Firm when conducting the exit poll.

- Annex 1 provides an overview of the conceptual framework 'at a glance'.

- Annex 2 contains a Field Protocol, explaining the process of implementing the exit poll, including an overview of the distribution of sessions across the project communities.

- Annex 3 then provides the field instruments, including instructions for the field officers and the actual tools and guiding questions to be applied during field work.

1.1 Background

EPAG is part of the World Bank's global Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI), which is implemented in five countries in Africa and Asia, and covers Liberia, Rwanda, Southern Sudan, Afghanistan and Nepal. The goal of EPAG is to enhance the socio-economic well-being of adolescent girls and young women through improving them job skills and business development skills for employment opportunities. EPAG has four components: 1) job skills training for wage employment, combined with job placement assistance; 2) business development skills training and links to micro-credit for

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[1] See for example: Council of Europe (2007): Quality standards in education and training activities of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe, Brussels, May 2007; Fennes, H. and H. Otten (2008): Quality in non-formal education and training in the field of European youth work, September 2008.

business start-up; 3) rigorous impact evaluation and high-quality project monitoring (of which the Survey Firm's contract is a part); and 4) institutional strengthening and capacity building.

Two types of trainings are provided under EPAG for adolescent girls, job skills training and business development skills training. It is important to note that next to providing job skills and business skills respectively, the trainings will also include life skills, such as gender-based violence (GBV), Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), parenting, leadership, etc.

The trainings are conducted by NGOs, which have already been contracted as Service Providers (SP). For the job skills training, the NGOs are: Community Empowerment Programme (CEP); 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 planned two intakes of girls to undergo one round of training each, the first of which started in March 2010. Round One has about 1,200 trainees. Out of all trainees, approximately 65% is undergoing business development skills training and 35% is receiving job skills training. This bias was deliberately factored into the project design to cater for the relatively fewer employment opportunities in the labour market in Liberia.

1.2 Purpose
The EPAG project is managed by a Project Implementation and Coordination Team (PICT) based in the MoGD. It is the task of the Survey Firm to carry out a series of studies that inform EPAG's project management. There are two different sets of studies constituting a total of five surveys under this assignment. First, the survey firm has conducted a baseline survey – to be followed by a midline and an endline survey to measure EPAG's impact and answer a range of research questions of relevance for the overall AGI. Secondly, the Survey Firm will carry out two exit poll surveys.

The purpose of the exit poll is to assess specific aspects of the quality of training provision in each round of training, in order to provide EPAG's management with practical recommendations for improving the quality of training.

2. Conceptual framework
The exit poll does not attempt to assess the level and quality of collaboration of EPAG with the various SP; rather it purposes to facilitate learning on specific aspects of the quality of training provided to adolescent girls in Liberia. It is hoped that lessons learned could be applied in the broader context of AGI in other countries, in which the initiative is being implemented. To achieve this purpose, a number of questions come to bear:

1. Were the training contents relevant and useful to the socio-economic contexts of the trainees?
2. Did the SP deliver the training services that were expected of them in the manner that was expected?
3. Did the key strategies employed by the SP help to enhance trainee's performance?
4. Were the trainees satisfied with the training?
5. Did any trainee feel at any time threatened or harassed by the SP or other program staff?

These questions are not absolute. In fact, they do beg a host of subsidiary questions. For example in 4: What does satisfaction mean? Which components were not satisfactory? Why not? These subsidiary questions should help shape the data collection instruments.

2.1 Quality dimensions
The exit poll will focus on two dimensions of training quality that are used to structure quality criteria:

- Dimension 1: Quality of training content: This dimension refers to the relevance and usefulness of the Technical [hard] Skills, Professional [soft] Skills, and Life Skills that the transferred to the trainees, in regard to their performance during training and their comprehension, and the utility of content. The dimension specifically assesses whether trainees are satisfied with the training, including any initial feelings of empowerment.

- Dimension 2: Quality of processes of delivery of training content: This dimension refers to the way, by which the trainings are delivered (e.g. administration, attendance, teaching methods, learning processes), as well as the kinds of strategies used to enhance trainees' performance. The exit poll mainly focuses on the latter (childcare, mentoring, pairing, etc), assessing how they have influenced trainees' performance in the training.

2.2 Quality criteria

Under the two quality dimensions, the exit poll will assess the following quality criteria:

- Dimension 1: Quality of training content
  - o 1.1: Performance of participants in class
  - o 1.2: Level of comprehension of training content
  - o 1.3: Perceived utility of teaching content on labour market
  - o 1.4: Perceived utility of teaching content on social life/empowerment
  - o 1.5: Satisfaction of participants with training

- Dimension 2: Quality of processes of delivery of content
  - o 2.1: 'Pairing/small group approach' applied effectively
  - o 2.2: Mentoring applied effectively
  - o 2.3: Childcare services provided effectively
  - o 2.4: Payment of transport and meal allowance provided effectively

In assessing the performance enhancing strategies, the focus will not be on the question if the strategies have been applied, but whether they have had the desired effect on the trainees, i.e. to enhance their performance.

3. Methodology

3.1 Methodological pillars

As noted earlier, it is important to streamline the monitoring activities of the EPAG quality monitors and the efforts of the Survey Firm, so as to create synergies and avoid duplication.

Therefore, the following understanding of the set-up of the overall training quality assessment is defined: the high-quality monitoring, and the exit poll – both elements are understood to describe the overall process of assessing the quality of training under EPAG.

The training quality assessment thus consists of two methodological pillars:

- Pillar 1: Quality monitoring throughout the training;

- Pillar 2: Exit poll at the end of the each round of training.

The first pillar of quality monitoring is carried out under the responsibility of the EPAG management and is explained in the project's Quality Monitoring Guidelines. The guidelines stipulate that EPAG deploy a team of quality monitors to conduct regular spot checks at the various training venues and record their observations using a checklist. Also, the quality monitors conduct interviews with randomly selected students and they take photographs at each visit to document the training.

The second pillar of the training quality assessment is the exit poll, which falls under the responsibility of the Survey Firm and is guided by a Field Protocol (see Annex 2).

However, there is a need for the findings from both initiatives to be consolidated into a single document that evaluates the overall quality of the training services provided in EPAG. Therefore, the findings of both the monitoring exercises and the exit poll will form part of the terms of reference for the MTR.

3.2 Data collection methods

In order to assess the aforementioned quality dimensions and criteria, the exit poll will make use of various data collection methods and corresponding field instruments (see Annex 4):

- Qualitative Trainer Survey, conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with trainers and other representatives of the SP;

- Qualitative Trainee Survey, using participatory tools (Lifeline Diagram) and FGD with selected participants (using a rather "flexible" and open approach)

Annex 1: Overview of conceptual framework

Quality criteria	Methods	Field Instruments
Dimension 1: Quality of training content		
1.1 Performance of participants in class	• Qualitative Trainer Survey	• FGD with Trainers
1.2 Level of comprehension of training content	• Qualitative Trainer Survey	• FGD with Trainers
1.3 Perceived utility of teaching content on labour market	• Qualitative Trainer Survey • Qualitative Trainee Survey	• FGD with Trainers • Lifeline Diagram
1.4 Perceived utility of teaching content on social life/empowerment	• Qualitative Trainer Survey • Qualitative Trainee Survey	• FGD with Trainers • Lifeline Diagram
1.5 Satisfaction of participants with training	• Qualitative Trainee Survey	• FGD with Trainees
Dimension 2: Quality of processes of delivery of training content		
2.1 'Pairing approach' applied effectively	• Qualitative Trainee Survey	• FGD with Trainees
2.2 Mentoring applied effectively	• Qualitative Trainee Survey	• FGD with Trainees
2.3 Childcare services provided effectively	• Qualitative Trainee Survey	• FGD with Trainees
2.4 Payment of transport and meal allowance provided effectively	• Qualitative Trainee Survey	• FGD with Trainees

Annex 2: Field Protocol

A. Qualitative Trainer Survey

Research questions:
- The Qualitative Survey of Trainers and SP investigates four quality criteria from the quality of training content dimension: the performance of participants in class; their level of comprehension of the training content; the utility of the teaching content on the performance of the trainees on labour market, as perceived by the trainers; and the utility of the teaching content on the trainees social life and especially their feelings of empowerment, as perceived by the trainers.

- Also, the Survey shall elicit recommendations for improvement by the SP.

Data collection methods:
- The Survey will be qualitative, and the data collection methods applied is FGD with selected trainers and representatives of the various SP.

Sample size and composition:
- The Survey will cover all SP contracted by EPAG that have delivered in Round One (CEP and LEED for job skills training, IRC:CAP, EduCare, and ARC:CESP and NAEAL for business skills training). For each SP one FGD will be conducted, i.e. in total the Survey will consist of 6 FGD.

- From each SP, between 4 and 6 trainers/representatives should participate in the FGD, which makes the number of trainers and representatives covered by the Survey total up to 24 to 36 persons.

- It is important that in the FGD participants stem from the same hierarchical level in their organisations, i.e. a trainer should not be in the same group with his/her supervisor or line manager.

- It is important that only persons that have physically been acting as trainers participate in the FGD, because the questions to be discussed refer to experiences made in class and in the interaction with the trainees.

- SBA/GOPA will invite suitable candidates to attend the FGD by randomly choosing trainers from a list provided by EPAG.

Timing:
- The FGD should take place not later than two weeks after Round One of the training is completed, so as to not distort the classroom impressions. However, the trainers only have contractual obligations until 31st August 2010, and the FGDs should therefore take place before the expiry of the contracts.

Venue:
- The FGD should be held in a place that is comfortable for all participants and free of distractions.

Facilitators:
- The sessions will be conducted using Liberian English.

- The SBA/GOPA team of facilitators will consist of two persons for each FGD; one will act as facilitator, while the other is the minute taker.

- Each facilitator team will have at least one female member.

- The EPAG quality monitors will be included in the facilitator teams.

- SBA/GOPA will organise an induction training for the facilitators to get acquainted with the data collection methods and corresponding tools.

B. Qualitative Trainee Survey

Research questions:
- The Qualitative Trainee Survey investigates several quality criteria: the utility of the teaching content on the labour market, as perceived by the trainees; the utility of the teaching content on the trainees' social life, especially with regard to empowerment; the effectiveness of the various performance enhancing strategies applied by EPAG ('pairing approach', mentoring, childcare services, transport and meal allowance); and the satisfaction of trainees with the training.

- Also, the Survey seeks to elicit recommendations from the trainees on how to improve the training in Round Two.

Data collection methods:
- The Survey will be qualitative, and will make use of two data collection methods: one participatory tool for visualising personal aspirations of young people (Lifeline Diagram) and FGD.

- The *Lifeline Diagram* will look at the perceived utility of the training content from the trainees' perspectives.

- The *FGD* will focus the inquiry on the application of the performance enhancing strategies.

Sample size and composition:
- The Survey will cover selected trainees of Round One from all nine training sites from both types of training (job skills, business skills) from morning and afternoon sessions. It is important to note that at all training sites - apart from West Point and Bentol where only business skills were trained - both job skills and business skills were trained.

- The Survey will include the following number of Lifeline Diagram sessions and FGD across the training locations:

Community	No. of Sites	No. of Skill training	No. of Business Development training	No. of FGD	No. Lifeline	Total Session
Bassa community	2	1	1	2	2	4
Battery Factory	2	1	1	2	2	4
Bentol	1	0	1	1	1	2
Doe Community	2	1	1	2	2	4
Kakata	3	1	2	2	2	4
New Kru Town	2	1	1	2	2	4
Oldroad	2	1	1	2	2	4
Redlight	3	2	1	2	2	4
West Point	2	0	2	1	1	2
Total	**19**	**8**	**11**	**16**	**16**	**32**

- A maximum of six to eight girls should participate in the Lifeline Sessions, making a total of 96 to 128 girls participating.

- A maximum of ten to twelve girls should participate in the FGD, making a total of 160 to 196 girls.

- In total, this means that a total of between 256 (minimum) to 324 (maximum) trainees will be covered by the Qualitative Trainee Survey. Against a total of 1,273 trainees, this makes between a proportion of between 20% and 25% of all trainees.

- In selecting the participants, it is important to ensure that they belong to the same age bracket in order to avoid hierarchies in the group based on age, i.e. girls aged 15 to 18 should not be mixed with girls 18 and above.

- Also, no trainee should attend more than one session of either kind.

- SBA/GOPA will invite suitable candidates to attend the Lifeline Sessions or the FGD; SBA/GOPA will randomly select the participants from each site.

Timing:
- The *Lifeline Diagram* and *FGD* should both take place during the last days of trainings in Round One, in order to ensure the availability of the trainees.

Venue:
- Both the *Lifeline Diagram* and *FGD* sessions should be held in a place that is comfortable for all participants and free of distractions; as the training venues should fulfill these standards, the classrooms may be used for the sessions.

- It is important to ensure that the trainers and mentors are not present to allow the participants speak freely about their experiences.

Facilitators:
- The sessions will be conducted in Liberian English.

- The SBA/GOPA team of facilitators will consist of two persons for each FGD and Lifeline Diagram; one will act as facilitator, while the other is the minute taker.

- Each facilitator team will have at least one female member.

- The EPAG quality monitors will be included in the facilitator teams.

- SBA/GOPA will organise an induction training for the facilitators to get acquainted with the data collection methods and corresponding tools.

Annex 3: Field Instruments

A. Qualitative Trainer Survey

A.1 Instructions for Field Officers

Role of facilitators:
- The SBA/GOPA team of facilitators will consist of two persons for each FGD; one will act as facilitator, while the other is the minute taker.

- It is important that the facilitator stimulates discussion among the participants, which is only initiated and steered by the facilitator through posing guiding questions to the group and probing ("I am not sure I understand correctly, please clarify…", "Can you please give an example…"). The discussion process should be rather open. It is not a group interview.

- The minute taker will record everything that was said, although without recording the names of who said what.

- The discussion will be recorded by written minutes and by recording an audio file. After the session, the facilitator will check the notes of the minute taker against the recording to ensure everything that was said is adequately covered in the notes.

Process:
- As the participants arrive, a 'warming up phase' of up to ten minutes is allowed for chatting, building rapport and feeling comfortable.

- The facilitators will start by welcoming the participants and introducing themselves. Then the participants are also invited to introduce themselves.

- The facilitators will then go on explaining the rationale and process of the FGD. The participants can ask questions for clarification.

- After all questions are covered, the facilitator kicks off the discussion with his/her first question. The discussion will be facilitated on the basis of guiding questions in the guideline below. The questions should not be used in a specific order. Rather, the discussion should have a natural flow. The guiding questions help the facilitator to ensure that all the relevant aspects that have to be discussed are covered.

- After a maximum of two hours the facilitator politely closes the discussion and thanks the participants for their contributions.

A.2 Guiding questions for 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 Minutes:	
No. of Audio File:	
Location:	
Name of Service Provider:	
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 under EPAG so that the trainings can be improved. For this, of course, the trainers and service providers 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. Do you have any questions? If no, may we proceed?"*

Performance of trainees

- Use the following questions to steer the discussion:

    3.1 In your view, how was the overall performance of the trainees in class?

    - *3.1.1   How active were the trainees?*

    - *3.1.2   How inquisitive were the trainees?*

    - *3.1.3   How well did the trainees understand the content of the training?*

    - *3.1.4   In how far did the trainees discuss the training content in and after class?*

    - *3.1.5   What are the reasons for the good/poor performance?*

    3.2 Would you say the performance was rather at the same level across the whole class or was it very different between the girls?

    - *3.2.1   In the course of the training, were there any outstanding trainees?*

    - *3.2.2   What was the reason for them to stand out?*

    3.3 Was there any other issue that you observed during the training with regard to the trainees' performance?

Utility of training content

- Use the following questions to steer the discussion:

    4.1 In your view, how useful is the content of the training for the prospects of the trainees on the labour market?

    - *4.1.1   Which parts of the training do you think are of particular importance?*

    - *4.1.2   Which difficulties do you think will the trainees encounter after the training?*

    - *4.1.3   Do you think any important aspect was missing from the training to improve its utility for the labour market?*

    4.2 In your view, how useful is the content of the training for the social life of the trainees?

    - *4.2.1   In how far do you think the trainees are now more confident to make choices concerning their lives?*

    - *4.2.2   In how far to you think that the trainees are now in a better position to voice their opinions in the family/in their peer group/towards men/at school/at the work/marketplace?*

    - *4.2.3   Which parts of the training do you think are of particular importance for the empowerment of the trainees?*

    - *4.2.4   Which difficulties do you think will the trainees encounter after the training in this respect?*

    - *4.2.5   Do you think any important aspect was missing from the training to improve its utility for the girls' social lives?*

Ideas for improvement

- Use the following questions to steer the discussion:

    5.1 In your view, what could be done to improve the trainings under EPAG in Round Two? You can provide any idea!

6. Closing

- After a maximum of two hours, politely close the discussion and 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?)*	

B. Qualitative Trainee Survey

B.1 Instructions for Field Officers for Lifeline Diagram

Role of facilitators:
- For the *Lifeline Diagram*, the SBA/GOPA team will consist of two persons; one will act as facilitator, while the other is the minute taker/observer.

- The facilitator should not interfere in the actual process of developing and drawing the diagram. It is only after the trainees indicate that their diagram is ready that a discussion should ensue.

- The discussion should then be based on the guiding questions in the tool. It is important that the facilitator stimulates a discussion among the participants, which is only initiated and steered by the facilitator through posing guiding questions to the group and probing ("I am not sure I understand correctly, please clarify…", "Can you please give an example…"). It is not a group interview.

- The minute taker will record everything that was said, although without recording the names of who said what.

- The discussion will be recorded by written minutes and by recording an audio file. After the session, the facilitator will check the notes of the minute taker against the recording to ensure everything that was said is adequately covered in the notes.

Process:
- As the participants arrive, a 'warming up phase' of up to ten minutes is allowed for chatting, building rapport and feeling comfortable.

- The facilitators will start by welcoming the participants and introducing themselves. Then the participants are also invited to introduce themselves. The facilitators will then go on explaining the rationale and process of the Lifeline Diagram. The participants can ask questions for clarification.

- The *Lifeline Diagram* session each starts with an explanation of the diagram by the facilitator. The group of trainees are then either requested to draw a diagram depicting the lifelines of each trainee with a stick in the dust (if the session is in the open) or with markers on a flipchart poster (if the session takes place in the classroom). Every trainee should take part in this exercise. This method allows views to be represented of less vocal and also of illiterate participants. It is important that the facilitator does not intervene in the process of developing the diagrams, but only assists when the method is not comprehended properly. The development of the diagram should take up to twenty minutes.

- Thereafter, the facilitator asks two to three volunteers among the trainees to explain to the group their lifelines, as they are presented in the diagram. This process should take no more than ten minutes.

- Then the facilitator initiates a discussion on what skills are required to realise the envisaged lifelines and if and how the EPAG training will help in doing so. The last step should take between twenty and thirty minutes.

- After a maximum of two hours, the facilitator politely closes the discussion and thanks the participants for their contributions.

- When closing the session on the *Lifeline Diagram*, the facilitator can offer the participants to take some time and copy their individual lifeline on a piece of paper to carry home as a reminder of their aspirations. The facilitators should therefore carry sufficient paper and pens to the session.

B.2 Lifeline Diagram Tool

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 Minutes:	
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 giving their names.

- Then explain the rationale of the Lifeline Sessions: "*Our task is to analyse the trainings under EPAG so that the trainings 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. Do you have any questions? If no, may we proceed?"*

Development of picture

- Then explain to the participants the process of the Lifeline method: "*Today we want to do the discussion in a more creative and fun way. We want to look at your dreams and aspirations for your future. For this we will draw our so-called 'lifelines'. All of us together will draw a picture that shows our individual lives and most important events in the future. The picture will look something like this* (show and explain picture below)*:*
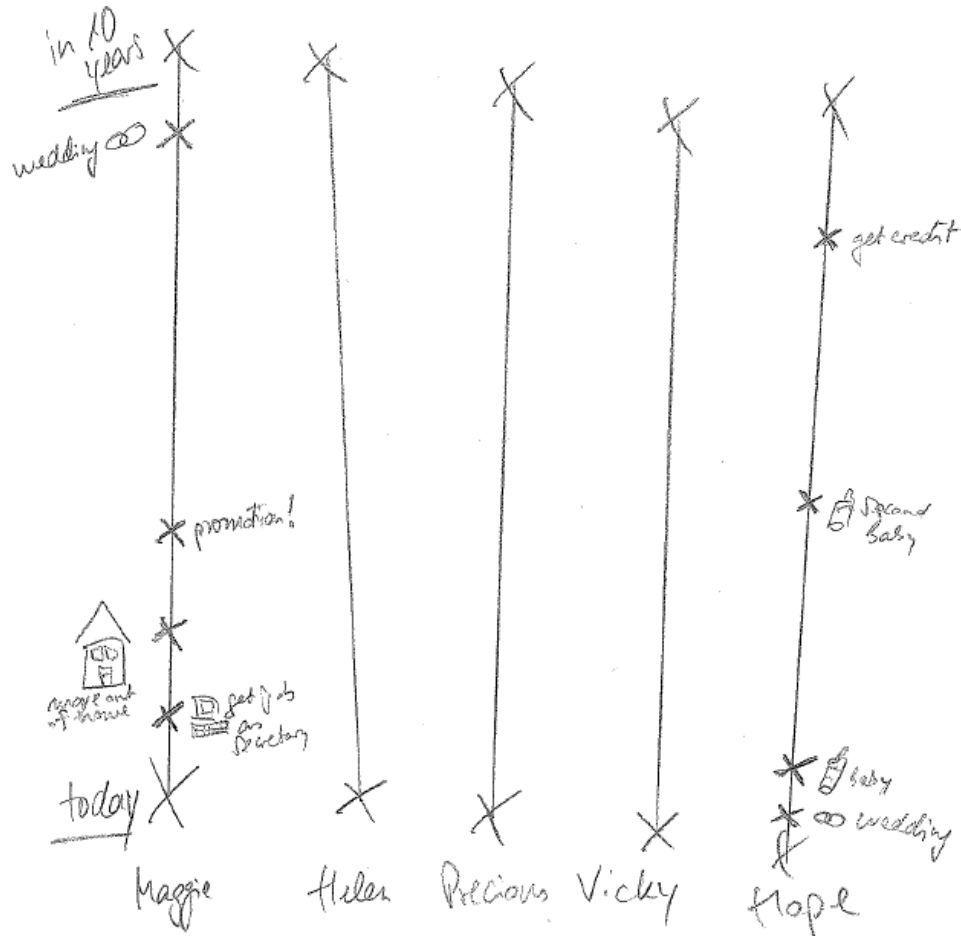
- "*We want all of you to draw on this poster with markers one line for yourself. Then, at the bottom of the line make an X to indicate where you are now in your life. Then put another X at the top of the line to indicate yourself in ten years. Now take some time to think about your dreams. What are the most important events that you see coming in the next ten years? What are the steps you will take to fulfill your dreams! For each event or step make another X and draw symbol next to it so you remember the event. You are now free to draw your lifelines* (this should take between not more than twenty minutes)."

Discussion

- Ask up to three volunteers to explain to the group their lifelines. The other participants can ask questions.

- Then initiate a discussion using the following questions:

  o *Do you see similarities between your lifelines?*

  o *Do you see differences between your lifelines?*

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- o *Which professional skills do you need to realise your dreams?*

- o *Which life/social skills do you need to realise your dreams?*

- o *Is there anything else that you need to realise your dreams?*

- o *In how far do you think will the EPAG training help you in realising your dreams?*

Closing

- After a maximum of two hours, politely close the discussion and thank the participants for their contributions.

- Offer the participants sheets of paper and pens for them to copy their individual lifelines from the poster onto smaller sheets for them to carry home.

- 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?)*	

B.3 Instructions for Field Officers for FGD with Trainees

Role of facilitators:
- For the *FGD*, the SBA/GOPA team will consist of two persons; one will act as facilitator, while the other is the minute taker/observer.

- It is important that the facilitator stimulates a discussion among the participants, which is only initiated and steered by the facilitator through posing guiding questions to the group and probing ("I am not sure I understand correctly, please clarify…", "Can you please give an example…"). It is not a group interview.

- The minute taker will record everything that was said, although without recording the names of who said what.

- The discussion will be recorded by written minutes and by recording an audio file. After the session, the facilitator will check the notes of the minute taker against the recording to ensure everything that was said is adequately covered in the notes.

Process:
- As the participants arrive, a 'warming up phase' of up to ten minutes is allowed for chatting, building rapport and feeling comfortable.

- The facilitators will start by welcoming the participants and introducing themselves. Then the participants are also invited to introduce themselves. The facilitators will then go on explaining the rationale and process of the FGD. The participants can ask questions for clarification.

- The discussion will be facilitated on the basis of guiding questions. The questions should not be used in a specific order. Rather, the discussion should have a natural flow. The guiding questions help the facilitator to ensure that all relevant aspects that have to be discussed are covered.

- After a maximum of two hours, the facilitator politely closes the discussion and thanks the participants for their contributions.

B.4 Guiding questions for FGD with Trainees

<u>Key data:</u>

- 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 Minutes:	
No. of Audio File:	
Location:	
Name of Service Provider:	
Category (Job skills/Business skills):	
No. of participants:	

<u>Introduction:</u>

- 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 giving their names.

- Then explain the rationale and process of the FGD: "*Our task is to analyse the trainings under EPAG so that the trainings 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. Do you have any questions? If no, may we proceed?*"

Performance enhancing strategies

- Use the following questions to steer the discussion:

    4.1 Did you like the pairing approach? Please explain why or why not!

        4.1.1 In how far do you think it has helped you in the training?

        4.1.2 What do you think, how would you have done in the training without your partner?

    4.2 Did you like the mentoring that you were given? Please explain why or why not!

        4.2.1 In how far do you think it has helped you in the training?

        4.2.2 What do you think, how would you have done without the mentoring?

    4.3 Were the childcare services provided to you a good idea? Please explain why or why not!

        4.3.1 In how far do you think it has helped you in the training?

        4.3.2 What do you think would have happened without the childcare service?

    4.4 Were the transport and meal allowances a good idea? Please explain why or why not!

        4.4.1 In how far do you think it has helped you in the training?

        4.4.2 What do you think would have happened without the allowances?

Level of satisfaction and ideas for improvement

- Use the following questions to steer the discussion:

    5.1 What were the most important new skills that you learned?

    5.2 What was the most important new knowledge that you learned?

    5.3 Generally, how satisfied are you with the training?

    5.4 In your view, will the training help you in getting a job/starting a business?

    5.5 What was your favourite part of EPAG

    5.6 What was the least favourite part of EPAG?

    5.7 In your view, what could be done to improve the trainings under EPAG in Round Two? You can provide any idea!

Closing

- After a maximum of two hours, politely close the discussion and 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?)*	

Field Instrument: FGD with Trainers

Welcome
Welcome the participants and introduce yourselves as the facilitator team. *Good Morning/Hello. My name is _____, and this is my colleague _____. We are working with Subah-Belleh Associates, who is conducting surveys for the EPAG project under the Ministry of Gender and Development.* *Our job is to understand the EPAG trainings so that they can be improved in the future. To do this, your experiences as a trainer are very important. Thank you for volunteering to talk to us about how the training can be improved. Everything you say will remain confidential. Please also keep what you hear from other participants private as well.* *Do you have any questions about today's discussion? If not, let's proceed. Also, if you have any questions about the next project phase, please ask your service provider.* *Before we start, let's make some Ground Rules. Also, do you mind if we use a camera and recorder during this interview? It is only so that we can remember what we talked about later.* *I would like to start by asking you to briefly introduce yourself.*

Performance of trainees	**Related probes**
1. *In your view, how was the overall performance of the trainees in class?*	• Overall performance can be measured by how active or interested the trainees were? • Or how was the general attitude of the trainees towards the course? • Or how well the trainees understood the content?
2. *Would you say the performance was at the same level across the whole class or was it very different between the girls? If different, why and how?*	
3. *In the course of the training, were there any outstanding trainees? What were the reasons for them to stand out?*	
4. *What are others issue that you observed during the training with regard to the trainees' performance?*	

Utility of training content	
5. *In your view, how useful is the content of the training for the prospects of the trainees in getting jobs or starting-up their own business?*	• Which parts of the training do you think are of particular importance?
	• Are there any difficulties that you think the trainees will encounter after the training? If yes, what are some of these difficulties?
	• Do you think any important components were missing from the training that would improve the trainees' ability to find a job or start their own business? If yes, what are the components?
6. *In your opinion, how useful is the content of the training in regards to the trainees' social life?*	• Do you think the trainees are now more confident to make decisions about their life? Or are they in a better position to voice their opinions in the family/peer group at school/work/marketplace? Please explain.
7. *What parts of the training do you think are most important for the empowerment of the trainees?*	• Do you think any important components were missing from the training that would improve the trainees' social life? If yes, what are the components?
8. *In your view how did the pairing/small groups help the trainees?*	
9. *In your view how did the mentoring help the trainees?*	
Ideas for improvement	
10. *In your view, what could be done to improve the EPAG training for Round Two? Any ideas or comments are welcomed.*	

Closing
At the end of the discussion, politely thank the participants for their contributions.
I would like to thank you again for taking the time to talk to us today. Your feedback will definitely help to improve the programming for future EPAG participants.

Field Instrument: FGD with Trainees

Performance enhancing strategies	**Related probes**
11. Did you like the pairing/small group approach? Please explain why or why not.	• What were some of the good things that happened in your pair/small groups?
	• What were some of the challenges you experienced in your pair/small group?
12. Do you think the pairing/small groups helped you in the training?	
13. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the pairing/small groups approach?	
14. Have you and your pair/small group planned to do anything together over the next six months?	
15. Did you like the mentoring that you were given? Please explain why or why not.	• How did the mentoring help you during the training?
16. How are you and your mentor working together now?	
17. How do you and your mentor intend working together over the next six months?	
18. Were the childcare services provided to you a good idea? Please explain why or why not.	• How did the childcare services help you during the training?
19. Were the transport and meal allowances a good idea? Please explain why or why not.	• How did the transport and meal allowances help you during the training?
Level of satisfaction and ideas for improvement	
20. What were the most important new skills that you learned?	

21. What was the most important new knowledge that you learned? *22. Generally, how satisfied are you with the training so far?* *23. In your view, will the training help you in getting a job/starting a business? How?* *24. What was your favourite part of EPAG training so far?* *25. What was the least favourite part of EPAG training so far?* *26. In your view, what could be done to improve the trainings under EPAG in Round Two? You can provide any idea.*	

Closing

At the end of the discussion, politely thank the participants for their contributions.

I would like to thank you again for taking the time to talk to us today. Your feedback will definitely help to improve the programming for future EPAG participants.

Field Instrument: Lifeline Diagram with Trainees

Welcome

Welcome the participants and introduce yourselves as the facilitator team.

Good Morning/Hello. My name is _____, and this is my colleague _____. We are working with Subah-Belleh Associates, who is conducting surveys for the EPAG project under the Ministry of Gender and Development.

Our job is to understand the EPAG trainings so that they can be improved in the future. To do this, your experiences as a trainee are very important. Thank you for volunteering to talk to us about how the training can be improved. Everything you say will remain confidential. Please also keep what you hear from other participants private as well.

Do you have any questions about today's activity? If not, let's proceed. Also, if you have any questions about the next project phase, please ask your service provider.

Before we start, let's make some Ground Rules. Also, do you mind if I use a camera and recorder during this interview? It is only so that I can remember what we talked about later.

I would like to start by asking you to briefly introduce yourself.

Development of picture

After the introduction, please explain to the participants the process of the Lifeline method.

We *are going to discuss your dreams and aspirations for the future in a creative and fun way. To do this, we are asking you to draw your "lifelines". All together we will draw a picture that shows our individual lives and the most important events we will experience in the future. Here is what an example lifeline looks like (*show and explain picture below)*. Everyone's lifeline will look different. Please think about what is important to YOU.*
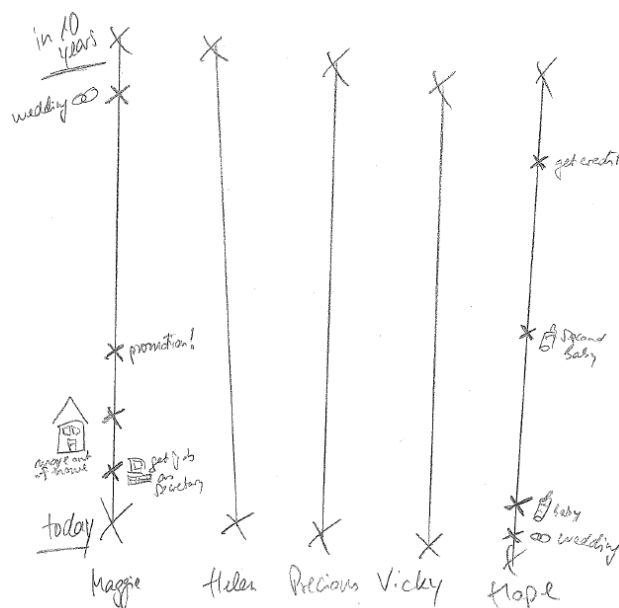
We want all of you to draw on the poster a line that represents your life. Then, at the bottom of the line make an X to indicate where you are now in your life. Then put another X at the top of the line to indicate yourself in ten years.

Now, please take some time to think about your dreams and goals. What are the most important events that you see coming in the next ten years? What are the steps you will take to fulfill your dreams? For each event or step make another X and draw a symbol next to it so you remember the event. You are now free to draw your lifelines.

This exercise should take no longer than 20 minutes. After each participant has completed drawing their lifeline, the note taker will transfer each of the girl's lifelines onto a poster sheet.

Discussion

Ask up to three volunteers to explain to the group their lifelines. The other participants can ask questions. Then have a discussion using the following questions:

1.   *Do you see similarities between your lifelines?*

2.   *Do you see differences between your lifelines?*

3.   *Which professional skills do you need to realise your dreams?*

4.   *Which life/social skills do you need to realise your dreams?*

5.   *Is there anything else that you need to realise your dreams?*

6.   *In how far do you think will the EPAG training help you in realising your dreams?*

Closing

After a maximum of two hours, politely close the discussion and thank the participants for their contributions. The participants are allowed to copy their lifelines and take home their copy.

I would like to thank you again for taking the time to talk to us today. Your feedback will definitely help to improve the programming for future EPAG participants. Please feel free to copy your lifeline from the poster to take home with you.