Report: Digital Empowerment Foundation

EDGE Foundation Phase

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Contents

Acknowledgements 2

Abbreviations 3

1. Introduction 4

2. Recommendations for Consolidation Phase 5

3. Overview of Foundation Phase: model, materials and activities 6

    3.1. Foundation Phase delivery model 6

    3.2. Foundation Phase materials 8

    3.3. Foundation Phase activities 8

4. Number of EDGE beneficiaries 11

5. Report on activities 12

    5.1. Pre-course training 12

    5.2. Baseline 15

    5.3. Pre-refresher observations 22

    5.4. Refresher training 26

    5.5. Academic learning 29

    5.6. Midline study 30

    5.7. Post-Foundation Phase survey 34

    5.8. Digital poster competition 37

6. Conclusion 38

Appendix 1: Details of training participants 39

Appendix 2: EDGE speaking assessment rating scales 40

Appendix 3: CEFR descriptors for informal speaking assessment 41

Appendix 4: EDGE digital skills rating scales 42

Appendix 5: Details of Foundation Phase learner numbers 43

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Cover photo: *EDGE club session, Shamshabad*

Note: *The photographs in this report are for the purpose of this report alone.*

Abbreviations

CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CIRC	Community Information Resource Centre
DEF	Digital Empowerment Foundation
EDGE	English and Digital for Girls' Education
EES	English in Education Systems
FG	Focus Group
PGL	Peer Group Leader
TC	Training Consultant

1. Introduction

The English and Digital for Girls' Education (EDGE) programme aims to improve the life prospects of adolescent girls in socio-economically marginalised communities in Bangladesh, India and Nepal where access to education and after-school learning is limited. The programme focuses on enhancing participants' English proficiency, digital skills and awareness of social issues in peer-led clubs. As a result, they will be better able to make more informed and independent life choices, as is their right, in order to contribute more fully to the family, the economy and society.

Using bespoke materials, we train Peer Group Leaders (PGLs) to facilitate after-school clubs for adolescent girls within their communities. In contexts where girls often speak only when called on to do so, peer-led clubs offer them a space that ensures voluntary participation and freedom of expression while also enabling them to undertake learning at their own pace in an autonomous environment. Due to the fact that the clubs are led by peers, the girls are able to express themselves freely uninhibited by the power distance between teacher and students. . In addition, facilitating club activities builds the leadership skills of the cadre of peer leaders.

The purpose of this report is to provide a narrative of the activities and significant events in the Foundation Phase (September 2016 – April 2017), the first of the three-phase programme, in 21 DEF centres across 12 states / union territories[1] with 444 adolescent girls participating. This report also makes recommendations for the subsequent phases of the programme.

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[1] Rajasthan, Delhi, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Telangana, Maharashtra, Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh

2. Recommendations for Consolidation Phase

The following six recommendations have been incorporated into the planning for the next phase of the EDGE programme. They are included here as a separate section so as to document learning and identify the subsequent differences between the Foundation Phase and later phases. Lessons learnt are embedded within the following narrative and have been summarised here for ease of reference.

Recommendation 1

Engage with the community through advocacy programmes and events in order to build trust and establish rapport with parents who might otherwise be hesitant to send their daughters to EDGE clubs.

Recommendation 2

Continue to develop the skills of Coordinators and PGLs to lead and manage EDGE clubs through initial, refresher and on-going training and support throughout the lifetime of the project. Consider a combination of delivery mechanisms including face-to-face, self-access and digital (e.g. applications and games).

Recommendation 3

To ensure a robust delivery model, high quality standards, and maintain standardisation in key areas including the number of PGLs and participants per club, minimum professional requirements for Coordinators, and basic infrastructure (e.g. participant: laptop ratio).

Recommendation 4

To ensure efficient and rapid turnaround with reporting and monitoring and evaluation, continue to use online surveys to gather information from Coordinators and PGLs.

Recommendation 5

Install online safety mechanisms on all laptops and desktops at CIRCs and provide more training to Coordinators and EDGE facilitators / PGLs in this area.

Recommendation 6

Ensure the timings of subsequent phases do not coincide with participants' examinations as this adversely impacts attendance.

3. Overview of Foundation Phase: model, materials and activities

3.1. Foundation Phase delivery model

The EDGE programme is delivered in after-school clubs. Club members may meet twice a week, or more frequently, for a session that lasts between one and three hours. Depending on partner requirements and existing set-up, there may also be coordinators supporting PGLs as mentors or coaches, which is the case in EDGE India.

Each centre is equipped with the necessary digital infrastructure (e.g. laptops / desktops) which enable the learning and practice of IT skills. Each club is provided with a resource pack which includes a notebook for every member, four set of flashcards per centre, a PGL handbook for PGLs and Coordinators / Facilitators, further content for the programme delivery on USB sticks and a set of reading materials from British Council's LearnEnglish resource website.

While the model for EDGE is that of peer-led clubs, no PGLs were initially selected for reasons of logistics and capacity. However, PGLs were later selected once the clubs had been established and it was clearer what skills and knowledge existed within the pool of girls attending. For the initial month or two before PGLs were selected and trained, DEF Coordinators managed the facilitation of club sessions. They received initial training and were provided with comprehensive guidelines (described below) to select PGLs. In addition to facilitating EDGE clubs and selecting PGLs, Coordinators are also responsible for community advocacy and garnering support from parents to send their daughters to EDGE clubs, ensuring regular attendance and managing all the other administrative and academic functions and activities (e.g. managing other DEF partnership projects).

In future phases of the project, EDGE clubs are to be led by PGLs ensuring that the model:

- is **sustainable and scalable**: as there are potential peer leaders in every community, it is possible to replicate the model in new areas. As we work with local partners to identify, train and support these PGLs, sustainability is increased as the model becomes embedded in the local context.
- has **positive impact**: peer leaders are role models for those in the clubs and in their communities. The development of positive female role models has an impact on the programme's aim to develop the girls' ability to make their own choices in life.

PGLs are role models, mentors, messengers and facilitators of change and their role is crucial to the success of the clubs. To ensure that each PGL has the skills, abilities and qualities to fulfil this role a rigorous selection method was used. This is outlined below.

Box 1: Criteria for the selection of EDGE Peer Group Leaders (PGLs)

Part 1: Age, education, attendance and English level

- Between 16 to 19 years old
- At least 10th Standard or school leaving equivalent
- Attends EDGE clubs regularly
- Good level of English when compared to other EDGE clubs members
- From a marginalised community

Part 2: Participation as a PGL

- Parental consent to be a PGL
- From a marginalised community
- Willing to attend club sessions regularly
- Willing to travel (e.g. for training) if/when required

Part 3: Fulfilling the PGL role (this was assessed using a task)

- Has leadership skills
- Is confident
- Is able to work in a team
- Takes initiative
- Is willing to learn new things
- Is self-aware and reflective

3.2. Foundation Phase materials

The materials for the Foundation Phase comprise 30 topics covering a range of English, digital and social skills which include:

- Basic English language input (A1 level of CEFR scale including vocabulary, pronunciation and functional exponents, with an emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills through games and flashcard-based activities)[2]
- Basic digital skills (handling and managing hardware, introduction to MS Office applications: Word, Excel, Paint and PowerPoint)
- Introductory work on 21st-century skills (Communication and collaboration, Critical thinking and problem solving, Creativity and imagination, Citizenship, Digital literacy, Student leadership and personal development).
- Introductory work on social skills (using UNICEF Meena content as core input).

All the content is accessed via PowerPoint presentations except for the games and flashcard activities, the instructions for which are included in a handbook given to all Coordinators and PGLs. As such, face-to-face training provided to Coordinators and PGLs focuses on enabling the effective facilitation of the content in EDGE clubs and use of the content in EDGE club sessions.

3.3. Foundation Phase activities

The core activities that were carried out during the Foundation Phase, between September 2016 and April 2017, are given in Table 1 on the following page. As far as possible, these activities have been listed chronologically except in the case of the training of the second cohort of Coordinators (24–25 October). Most centres began the Foundation Phase in November with Jauhar Academy being the last to begin in January. The course ended in March in most centres but delays (e.g. participants' examinations and holidays) led to the project's extension until April. The last centre to have completed this phase of activity is Guna on 17 April 2017.[3]

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[2] See Appendix 2

[3] At the time of writing this report, information on course completion has not been received from the Malakhera centre

Table 1: *EDGE Foundation Phase activities*

Activity	Monitoring and evaluation tools	Dates and locations	Number of respondents
Pre-course training (Cohort 1)	• Feedback forms • Pre- and post-training self-assessment	22-24 Sep: Chanderi	16 – Coordinators[4]
Pre-course training (Cohort 2)		24-25 Oct: Delhi	6 – Coordinators
Baseline	• English test • Digital test • Self-efficacy survey • FG with parents	13-14 Oct: Alwar 16 -17 Oct: West Bengal 26 Oct: Ranchi 16-17 Dec: Delhi	7 – Centres visited 116 – Participants 6 – Coordinators 25 – Parents
Foundation Phase begins – December 2016[5]			
Check-in telephone calls	Check-up on: • Course progress • Success and challenges so far • PGL selection progress	10 Jan	12 – Coordinators
Pre-refresher club observation	• Interview with Coordinators • EDGE session observations • Interview with PGLs • FG with participants	24 Jan: Mungaska 24 Jan: Malkhera 25 Jan: Mohali 3 Feb: Wanaparthy	4 – Sessions 4 – Coordinators 9 – PGLs[6] 81 – Participants
Refresher training	• Feedback forms	23-24 Feb: Delhi	13 – PGLs 13 – Coordinators
Midline study	• Interview with Coordinators • Interview with PGLs • FG with participants	23 Mar: Wanaparthy 27–29 Mar: Mungaska, Malkhera, Kapshera, Ranchi	5 – Coordinators 16 – PGLs 52 – Participants
Post-course survey	• Online survey	March–April 2017	14 – Coordinators

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[4] The term 'Coordinators' refers to the role played by the respondents. In some cases their job title varies (e.g. Social worker, Network Engineer, Project Associate, etc.) Details can be found in Appendix 1.

[5] Details in Appendix 3

[6] Wanaparthy, has 6 PGLs and 42 participants but the Coordinator, Madhu Krishna (M) facilitated the session.

Activity	Monitoring and evaluation tools	Dates and locations	Number of respondents
Academic learning	• Results of progress checks	March–April 2017	16 – Centres[7]
Digital poster competition	• PowerPoint presentations on a chosen social issue	March	14 – entries from 12 centres
Foundation Phase ends – April 2017			

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[7] 17 centres were contacted but one centre – Nuh – submitted a blank sheet.

4. Number of EDGE beneficiaries

Shown in Table 2 are projected, as stated in the agreement with the British Council and Digital Empowerment Foundation, versus actual numbers that formed the EDGE Foundation Phase. The most noticeable difference is in the number of participants, which is just 49 per cent of the projected number. Even with 17 centres, the number of club participants should have been at least 475 (25 per club). Reasons for this shortfall are reported in section 5.7. which deals with reports from Coordinators via an online survey.

Table 2: *Comparison of numbers: projected and actual*

Areas	Projected numbers (in agreement)	Actual numbers (received from centres)
EDGE Clubs	23	17
Club participants (@ 25 per club)	575	287
Coordinators (@ 1 per centre)	23	17
Coordinators trained	23	22
PGLs (@ 2 per centre)	46	33

Figure 1: *EDGE session - Shamshabad*

Figure 2: *Speaking assessment - Ranchi*

5. Report on activities

5.1. Pre-course training

This was held in two cohorts, as shown in Table 1, for three days (Cohort 1) and two days (Cohort 2), as specified by Digital Empowerment Foundation. Training material was developed for the regional project and intended for PGLs as described in the project model. However, in India, PGLs were selected once the Foundation Phase was underway. As a result, pre-course training was delivered to Coordinators. The purpose of the pre-course training was for the participants to:[8]

- describe and clarify their role in managing the club, for example, describing the need for EDGE, the typical EDGE learners, and the main components of an EDGE session
- use learner-centred methodology to support club members effectively to achieve their learning goals, including giving clear instructions, checking meaning, encouraging speaking in English and facilitating flashcards and games
- develop their leadership skills in club administration and facilitating sessions using the club handbook
- learn and practise instructional and facilitative English language skills
- understand issues relating to child protection by discussing children's rights and threats to their safety and brainstorming ways to make their EDGE centres safe spaces for adolescent girls
- agree health and safety reporting systems and processes.

To help reinforce their learning the participants had opportunities to practise and deliver simulated peer-reviewed practice sessions. As a result of the input and feeling supported throughout the training their confidence levels increased as the two statements below highlight:

> *She made us practise everything which cleared my doubts regarding how this club will run.*
>
> *हां, […] क्योंकि हँसी मज़ाक और वार्तालाप से पढ़ाया गया*
>
> *Yes, [my confidence increased] because we were taught through fun, laughter and dialogue*

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[8] Training materials were created for the region (India, Bangladesh and Nepal) and include references to PGLs as part of the training. This was not the case in India as we did not have PGLs at this stage and training was given to Coordinators instead

The graph below presents feedback from both cohorts of this initial training. It shows that a large majority found the course both useful and relevant. The two statements that received less positive remarks from three or four individuals were regarding the duration of the course, and the course content being new to them. This could be due to the fact the two cohorts received three and two days of training respectively which they felt was not enough time as the training material had been written for five days and was condensed for the two cohorts. Regarding the content, it is likely that the participants have already received training on managing a centre (with respect to administration etc.) due to their profile as Coordinators rather than PGLs.

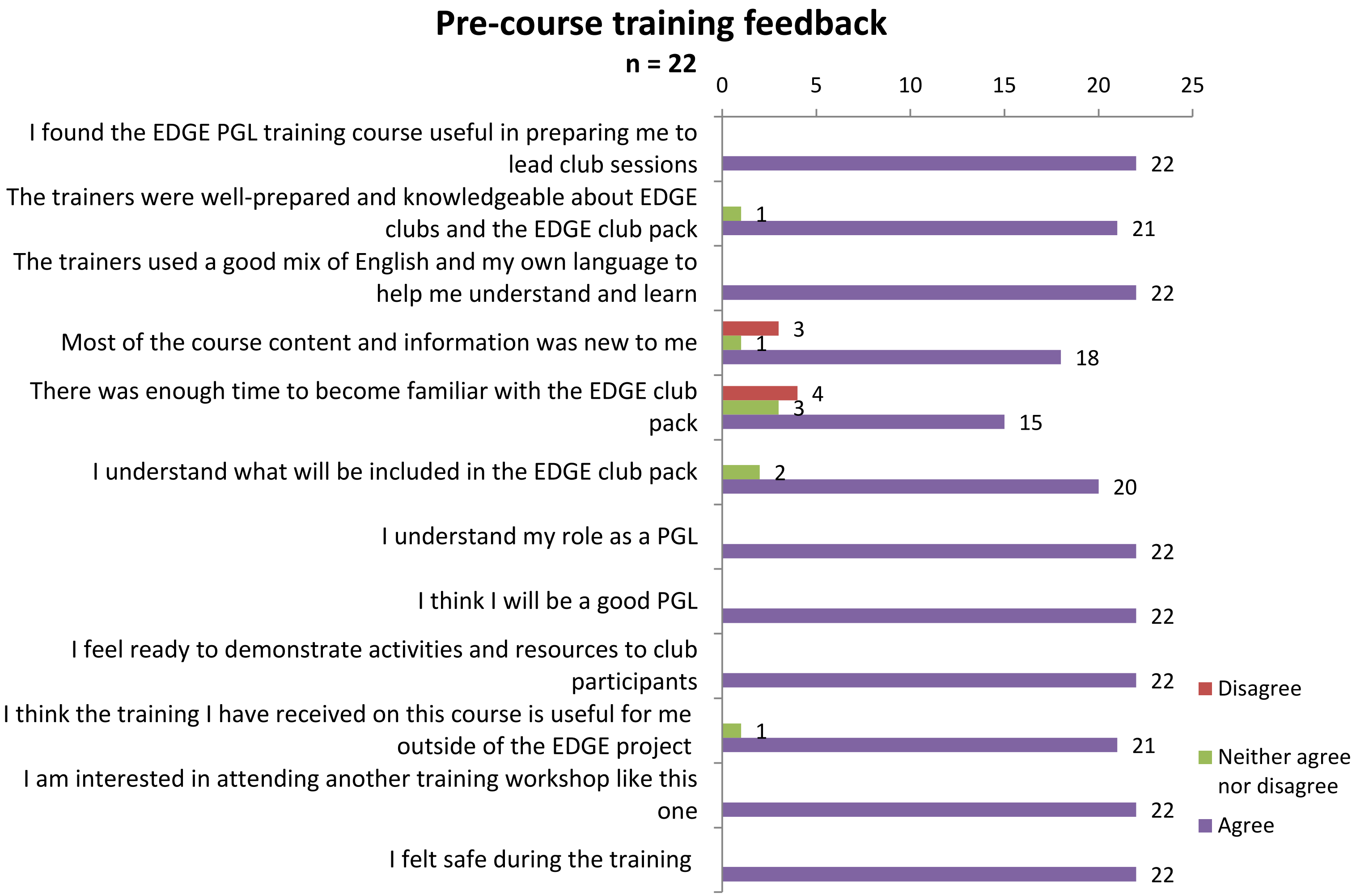

***Figure 3:** Pre-course training feedback*

5.2. Baseline

The baseline study was conducted in October and December 2016 in the seven centres shown in Table 3 below.[9] The EDGE programme has been since discontinued from Kilkari and Khushi Rainbow Homes but we have retained the data because there were no differences in the responses of the girls from there and the other five centres. A total of 116 learners, 11 parents and seven coordinators were surveyed.

The bespoke tools used in the baseline were first piloted and then used for the regional EDGE project in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. The activities were conducted by standardised British Council Training Consultants (TCs), supported by CIRC Coordinators/relevant DEF staff.

***Table 3:** Baseline visits*

Centre name	Learners	Parents	Coordinators
1. Mungaska	11	3	1
2. Malkhera	11	1	1
3. Ranchi	33	0	1
4. Mankara	13	6	1
5. Mallickpur	14	1	1
6. Kilkari Rainbow Home[10]	20	N/A	1
7. Khushi Rainbow Home	14	N/A	1

5.2.1. Learners

There were three activities with the learners:

Activity 1: Self-efficacy survey

This questionnaire consisted of four parts: Part 1: Information about you, Part 2: English skills, Part 3: Digital skills, Part 4: Social (including social skills and awareness of social issues).

Part 1: Information about you

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[9] Pune was also visited but not all the activities could be completed and numbers were extremely low (6 participants). Not even one participant completed all the activities.

[10] Both Kilkari and Kushi are orphanages. EDGE was subsequently discontinued.

In this section, participants completed a table with details of their age, marital status, employment, and education history.

Of the 115 girls surveyed, the average age is 15.3 years and none are currently employed.[11] The figures below describe additional demographics:

- 94 per cent are not married
- 93 per cent are currently in school and 4 per cent attend college
- 56 per cent attend or have attended government (or similar such as NIOS[12]) schools or colleges.

The profile of the respondents at baseline aligns with aims and objectives of the EDGE programme.

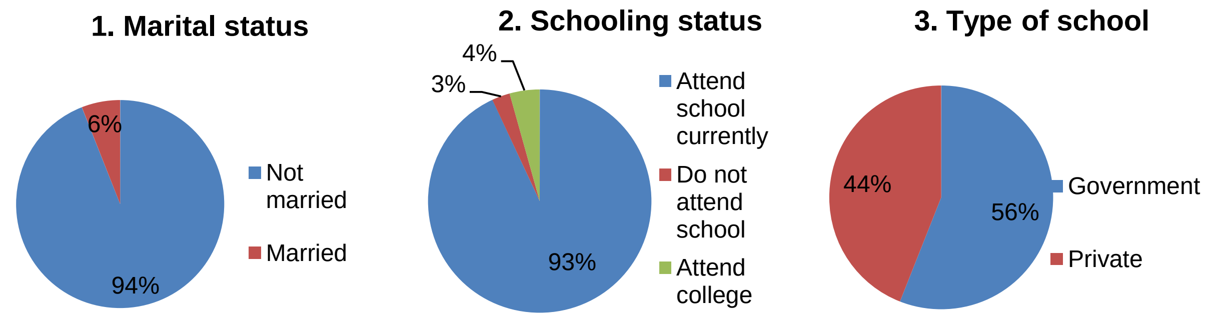

Figure 4: Baseline demographics

Parts 2, 3 and 4: Self-efficacy and self-reported confidence

The self-efficacy survey consisted of three parts and participants rated themselves on how confident they felt using English, their digital and social skills as well as their awareness of social issues on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 = not confident at all and 10 = extremely confident) on a variety of '*I can …*' statements, such as *I can give a short description of my home and where I live, in English; I can use a simple formula to calculate a total sum in an Excel file; I can work effectively in a team; I can explain the importance of treating boys and girls the same.*

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[11] One girl in Malkhera attended the English and Digital tests, but did not complete the self-efficacy survey.

[12] National Institute of Open Schooling

Before beginning, participants were reassured that the survey was not a test. They were asked to sit away from each other and answer all components based on their own individual assessment. The tool was written in English but Coordinators and Training Consultants translated difficult words and phrases to aid their understanding.

Table 4 below shows the overall mean scores of 115 respondents regarding their levels of confidence in English, digital and social skills and awareness of social issues. Overall, the respondents have rated themselves lowest on digital skills (mean score of 5/10, averaged across the districts) and highest on awareness of social issues (8/10), which includes bullying, gender equality, health and hygiene and the importance of education. These mean scores do hide some variation in scores, however, with some centres rating themselves considerably lower: Mankara in English skills, Malkhera in digital skills, Mungaska in social skills and two centres, Mungaska and Malkhera averaging 6/10 on social issues. In contrast, three centres: Mankara, Ratneswarpur and Khushi Rainbow Home gave themselves an average rating of 9 /10 in awareness of social issues. The mean scores of three of the centres showed lower confidence in English language skills than in digital.

Table 4: *Mean scores of self-reported questionnaires*

Actual Scores	Confidence in			
	English	Digital	Social Skills	Social Issues
Mungaska	5	5	4	6
Malkhera	5	3	5	6
Ranchi	8	5	8	8
Mankara	4	5	8	9
Ratneswarpur	6	7	8	9
Kilkari Rainbow Home	6	6	8	8
Khushi Rainbow Home	7	7	8	9
Overall Avg. Total	**41**	**37**	**51**	**55**
Overall Averages	**6**	**5**	**7**	**8**

Activity 2: English test

As with the other tools, this test was designed specifically for the EDGE programme, trialled, revised, and intended to be implemented as a baseline and endline assessment of the girls' spoken English ability. It is designed to rate candidates against the CEFR[13] levels A0, Pre A1, A1, A2 or above (see Appendix 2). Each test was recorded and lasted between six to eight minutes, comprising three main parts.

1. Candidates are shown a picture of some objects and are asked simple questions with a graded level of difficulty.
2. Candidates make questions from prompts.
3. Candidates describe a picture.

The average level of the 115 candidates tested across the DEF centres places them at **Pre-A1** (Levels 1 and 2 in the figure below) as they were able to answer Part 1 with some confidence but not accurately. There was also considerable hesitation and / or use of L1 (mother tongue). Just over 50 per cent of the tested participants scored at levels of Pre-A1 or below, with only 21 per cent scoring at A1+ or above. None of the participants scored above A2. It was noted that most candidates (even those with higher scores) could not form questions accurately. For example to form the question for the answer: *I go to school by bus*, several candidates simply read out the question word and answered: **How … I go to school by bus.* Details of the rating scales are given in Appendix 2.

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[13] Common European Framework of Reference for languages

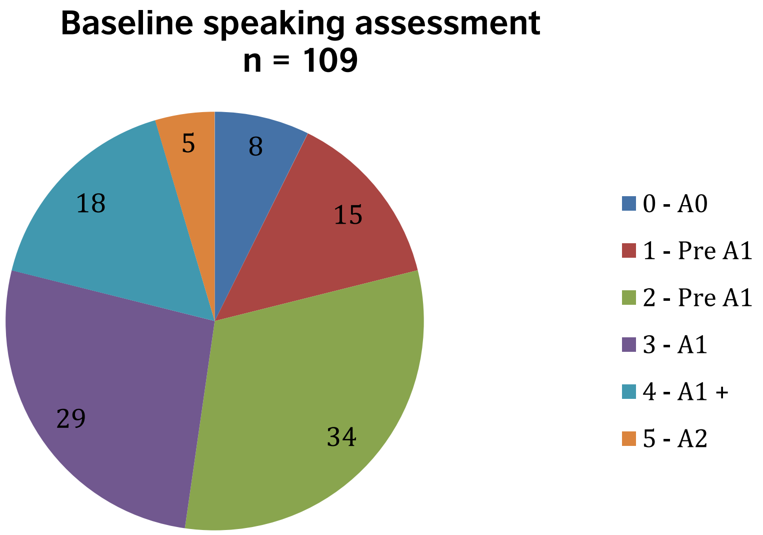

Figure 5: Baseline speaking assessment

Activity 3: Digital test

Again designed specifically for the EDGE programme, this tool has been trialled in Bangladesh, Nepal and India, revised, and will be used as the baseline and endline assessment of digital literacy skills. It comprises five parts and places candidates on a five point rating scale ranging from Non-user (0) to Expert (5). Details of the rating scales can be found in Appendix 3.

1. Candidates turn on a laptop.
2. Candidates create a document and write some sentences about themselves in English and then save it with their name as the file name.
3. Examiner gives data and candidates fill out the information into a spreadsheet (Excel).
4. Candidates make an MS PowerPoint presentation about themselves with some Clip Art images to illustrate the text; they present the information in English.
5. Candidates search the internet for the population of London / the name and country of the first female prime minister in the world.

The average level of the 116 candidates tested placed them at **Novice**: very hesitant; needs prompts (e.g. use of MS application title) to be able to attempt the tasks. It was evident that most candidates struggled with using formulae in MS Excel and inserting Clip Art images in MS PowerPoint, but were relatively at ease searching the internet.

When compared to the results on the self-efficacy surveys, we noted that respondents assessed themselves higher than their scores on the practical tests. There could be several reasons for this:

- **Lack of familiarity with the task type**: several respondents said they hadn't answered a self-reported questionnaire like this before
- **Cultural factors**: as self-identity is closely tied to the notion of the fear of loss of face, respondents may have over-reported their abilities
- **Limited time to complete all the tasks**: therefore answering in a hurry without spending enough time thinking about them
- **Influence from other candidates**:: despite being reassured that it wasn't a test, it was noted that respondents confirmed answers with each other and therefore wrote similar numbers for the different areas
- **Self-awareness**: it could be that the respondents were truly unaware of their own skill, having never had to assess themselves before.

5.2.2. Parents

The FGs with parents were the most difficult to organise as many parents were working and found it difficult to come to the centre at the time when the TC was visiting. Of a desired 70 parents (10 per centre, not including the Rainbow Homes as they are orphanages), we were able to meet only 11 parents – most of whom were mothers. We intend to explore ways in overcoming challenges in arranging these FGs for later stages of the monitoring and evaluation process.

Nonetheless, those we did meet were extremely supportive of their girls attending EDGE, as one TC noted:

> *....this was an opportunity that they could never dream of, being from the weaker sections of society. They said they would be willing to take on more housework themselves but spare the girls time off to attend and learn in the sessions.*

In the Mankara centre, the largest FG of parents, they hoped that improvement in their daughters' digital skills would enable them to be self-employed and find work in data-input centres.

5.2.3. Coordinators

In our interactions with seven Coordinators (five female and two male) we found they shared a similar education profile: out of the group of seven, six had graduated from university. All but two Coordinators (Rainbow Homes) had been trained by the British Council. This discrepancy arose because the Rainbow Homes centres were started after the second cohort of training was completed. Most had the projected number of at least 25 learners registered for the EDGE Foundation Phase even though the course had not started as the material had not yet arrived. Despite this initial setback a TC reported:

> *The most striking feature observed amongst all those interviewed was that they are a motivated and engaged set of facilitators, working hard to create more awareness about the EDGE clubs amongst the villages, Panchayats and Block Samitis for increased numbers and better absorption of the programme. Their belief in being 'agents of change' in the lives of these girls from disadvantaged backgrounds speaks volumes of their commitment. They have been able to create interest and build trust in the parents with respect to the programme.*

5.3. Pre-refresher observations

In preparation for the mid-course refresher training, we undertook a comprehensive feedback process to ascertain the needs and challenges that may have arisen since the beginning of the Foundation Phase.

Stage 1: Soon after the pre-course training, a WhatsApp group was set up to support Coordinators through the Foundation Phase. With 33 members, this mechanism had captured some useful data such as photographs of EDGE sessions, some of which have been shared in this report, but we felt that Coordinators needed to be asked individually about how the course was going as they had not shared any challenges they were facing, nor had they asked any questions about the content of the Foundation Phase. We asked five questions as below:

- *Are you on the WhatsApp group? If yes, have you shared photographs and information about the EDGE course on it? If you haven't shared, why not? If you're not on the group, why not?*
- *Which topic are you currently on in your club(s)?*
- *Which topics have the participants enjoyed so far?*
- *What challenges are you facing and what further support do you need to overcome these challenges?*
- *Have you selected PGLs yet?*

Of the 21 Coordinators called on 10 January, 12 responded. The majority had had to deal with teething problems such as poor attendance due to impending examinations and clashes with the girls' tuition class timings. To overcome this, one Coordinator changed the venue and participant group, while two were exploring the option of holding sessions at venues other than CIRCs. Nevertheless, they had all managed to start the course but were on different topics (e.g. Asthua – Topic 3; Mallikpur – Topic 22).

Overall, despite these challenges, the Coordinators had started the process of PGL selection with the exception of a couple of centres who could not due to poor attendance. However, sessions were still being conducted by Coordinators at this stage.

Stage 2: Visits to centres to observe an EDGE club session, interview Coordinators and PGLs and conduct FGs with participants (24 Jan – 3 Feb 2017).

Four centres were visited (Mohali, Mungska, Malkhera and Wanaparthy) and a total of 81 participants were met. Wanaparthy had 42 participants and six PGLs. While we were expecting to observe a session delivered by one of the PGLs, the session was conducted by the Coordinator, Madhu.

1. EDGE session observations

Observed sessions lasted between 40-60 minutes and it was noted that not all the components of the EDGE Foundation Phase materials were used. Most surprisingly, none of the sessions included the **English skills** component of the Foundation Phase

***Table 5:** Pre-refresher observations*

Date	Centre location	TC	PGL	Coordinator	Session length	Number of participants	Activities
24 Jan	Malakhera Alwar	Tarveen Walia	Sangeeta Kumari	Chandrakala Meena	60 min	16 13(FG)	Flashcard Digital Club notebook
24 Jan	Mungaska Alwar	Tarveen Walia	Komal Kaur	Shahnaaz Khan	40 min	11 11(FG)	Flashcard Game Club notebook
25 Jan	Mohali Chandigarh	Harisimran Sandhu	Seema Saroj	Tanuja Sharma	60 min	12 12(FG)	Flashcard Game Social
3 Feb	Wanaparth yMehboob Nagar	Adity Chamuah	N/A	Madhu Krishna	60 min	42 12(FG)	Social Club notebook

Observations were assessed in three areas:

1. **Learning environment** including rapport, peer-learning and set-up and the participants' use of English/L1.
2. **PGL facilitation skills** including encouraging participation and inclusion, leadership skills and the PGL's own use of English/L1.
3. **EDGE Coordinator involvement i**ncluding mentoring, support and management of EDGE.

TCs made notes as the session progressed and then completed a summative assessment at the end. Shown in Table 6 below is the assessment of all four centres. This shows that all centres either met or exceeded standards in rapport, the PGL encouraging participation and inclusion and the EDGE Coordinators' roles of mentoring and support. Areas that need development are in the appropriate use of English / L1 (members and PGLs) and with enabling PGLs to facilitate more EDGE sessions independently, leading to greater opportunities for skill development.

***Table 6:** pre-refresher observation rating*

Category	Criteria	Malakhera	Mungaska	Wanaparthy	Mohali
Learning environment	Rapport	Meets standard	Meets standard	Meets standard	Exceeds standard
	Peer-learning and set up	Partially meets standard	Meets standard	Partially meets standard	Meets standard
	Use of English/ L1 (members)	Does not meet standard	Partially meets standard	Partially meets standard	Meets standard
PGL Facilitation skills	Encouraging participation and inclusion	Meets standard	Meets standard	N/A[14]	Partially meets standard
	Leadership skills	Partially meets standard	Meets standard	N/A	Partially meets standard
	Use of English / L1 (PGL)	Partially meets standard	Meets standard	N/A	Partially meets standard
EDGE Coordinator	Mentoring and support	Exceeds standard	Meets standard	Meets standard	Exceeds standard
	Management of EDGE	Exceeds standard	Meets standard	Partially meets standard	Exceeds standard

Overall, TCs reported very positive results this was effectively summarised by one TC:

> *PGL conducted the session mainly on her own in L1. She may have lacked English language skills, but her quiet confidence and self-belief in being able to deliver the lesson were evident. She was ably supported by the Coordinator, who only stepped in on a couple of occasions, when she saw that the PGL required her help.*

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[14] The DEF Coordinator delivered the session and PGLs were not observed facilitating activities

2. Coordinator interview

Four Coordinators were interviewed (three female one male, aged from 18-41 years). Their educational qualifications ranged from a Master's in Law to pursuing an undergraduate degree. Two were trained directly by the British Council while two were trained by DEF staff. As was the case earlier in January, the clubs were all at different places in the Foundation Phase syllabus (e.g. Mungaska – Topic 17; Malkhera – Batch B – Topic 5).

When asked to describe their role, Coordinators said that apart from intervening in EDGE sessions and even facilitating when required, they had to motivate participants to attend regularly. They enjoyed their role because they could see the participants and PGLs learning, and they were learning from the process too. Most were supported by parents and other DEF staff (in some centres the centre Coordinator and the EDGE facilitator are two separate roles).

With regard to the materials, Coordinators did not find anything challenging. In fact, they said that this kind of course is extremely useful even beyond adolescent girls – i.e. for adults.

3. PGL interview

Nine PGLs aged between 13-21 years were interviewed, one PGL (18 years) is married and all are currently studying. On average there are between 1-6 PGLs per centre. In Wanaparthy, each of the PGLs is assigned a group of six learners and manages the activities in a session for that group. The PGLs, who are all supported by Coordinators, are able to describe their role as helpers within the EDGE clubs and enjoy the responsibility it brings. They particularly like being part of EDGE because they are improving their own English as well.

At the time of these visits, PGLs had been selected by Coordinators using PGL selection criteria although they have not been trained by the British Council. Coordinators had been guiding them into the role. When asked about the EDGE club members' response to the materials, they unanimously agreed that the course was well-received. Among popular activities were social issues (featuring the UNICEF Meena videos), flashcards and games. Digital skills required more time and practice and the English skills were sometimes difficult to facilitate, as one TC observed:

> *The PGL displays a good grasp of her role, and hands-on f2f [face-to-face] training will help her learn how to conduct the session in a more streamlined manner.*

The PGLs' suggestions about getting more training on how to facilitate an EDGE session were taken on board for the ensuing refresher training (section 5.4) where they participated in a demonstration session that clarified their doubts about the facilitation of tricky areas in the digital and English skills content.

4. Focus group with participants

We interacted with 48 participants in four FGs lasting about 30 minutes each. All interactions were in Hindi. As with PGLs, ages ranged from 13-21 years, most were in school with only three having dropped out of school in the Mohali centre. Most EDGE sessions were being held following the Option 1[15] plan of one hour, six days a week.

When asked about the observed session, participants could clearly state what they had learnt and felt they needed more practice with the English and digital skills. In general, they all reported enjoying the Foundation Phase materials and were able to describe a typical EDGE session. They were able to list what they had learnt (e.g. preparing PowerPoint presentations with special effects, creating Word and Excel documents, phrases like, 'Here you go').

The only challenge was that due to upcoming annual examinations they hadn't been able to attend regularly. When asked what else they would like to learn, they said that the course duration should be longer and wanted more input on English (with videos and grammar).

5.4. Refresher training

This was held on 24 and 25 February in New Delhi with 13 PGLs and 13 Coordinators. The focus of this block of training was to revise and review the content and training from the pre-course, to assimilate the PGLs into the project and to address any issues that may have come up over the initial phase of implementation. It also aimed to address some of the issues observed/reported in the pre-refresher observation visits. The objectives of this refresher training were to help the PGLs and Coordinators:

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[15] This refers to: Option 1: one hour per session and Option 2: Two hours per session

- use **learner-centred methodologies** for supporting the club members effectively to achieve their learning goals: such as asking/eliciting information rather than telling, monitoring learning and facilitation skills
- further develop their **leadership skills** such as planning an EDGE session, describing a successful session and a safe centre and making their own initial development plans
- learn and practise **instructional and facilitative English language skills** such as basic instructions used for asking for help, checking answers and managing the session.

Simulated practice sessions gave participants opportunities to demonstrate what they had learnt. Not only did they participate as learners, but they also had to give and receive feedback from peers.

Post-training feedback reported in the Figure 6 shows that the majority of participants agreed with statements that the course was useful, relevant and appropriate. The areas that need to be addressed for the next phase include increasing the time for training (perhaps by supporting through web-based follow-up sessions) as three participants (one PGL and two Coordinators) reported that there was not enough time for them to become familiar with the materials. It is encouraging to note that six participants were familiar with the content of the training course as the main focus was revision and consolidation. With regard to the knowing the contents of the club pack, our data reveals that of the eight respondents who were not confident in this area were PGLs. This leaves three Coordinators who are still not familiar with the contents of the EDGE club pack and may need further support.

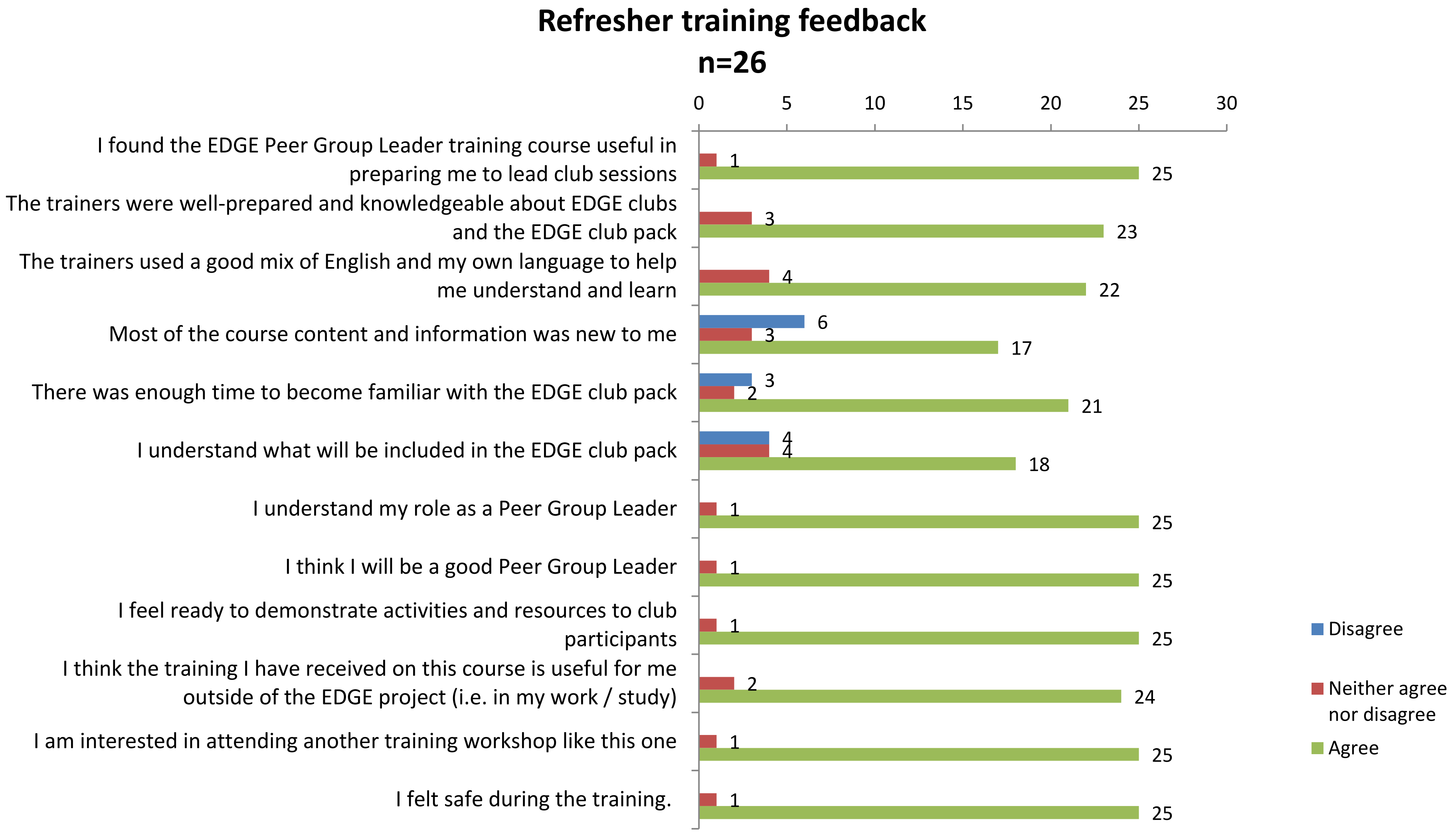

***Figure 6:** refresher training feedback*

5.5. Academic learning

The Foundation Phase was divided into 30 topics and at the end of every five units, learners were given a progress check. The purpose of this check was to enable the learners to assess their own learning and keep a track of their own progress. For analysis purpose, we asked Coordinators to send in progress checks results. We found, out that scores ranged from 7 to 18 out of a maximum of 18 marks. A total of sixteen centres reported this information and Progress check 1 shows the highest number of learners (303) and Progress check 6 the lowest (255).[16]

Mehboob Nagar
DEF

Figure 7: *EDGE session - Wanaparthy*

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[16] As mentioned earlier, 17 centres reported information, but the sheet received from Nuh was blank

5.6. Midline study

5.6.1. Focus group discussion using a projective technique

With academic learning captured through progress checks (5.5) we wanted to see how the participants were responding to social issues addressed in the Foundation Phase. Using the work of Ritchie (2014) as a guide, we designed a set of five visuals displaying both positive and negative areas of gender roles as shown below.

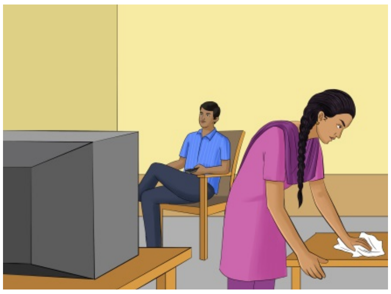

Figure 8: *Gender stereotypes*

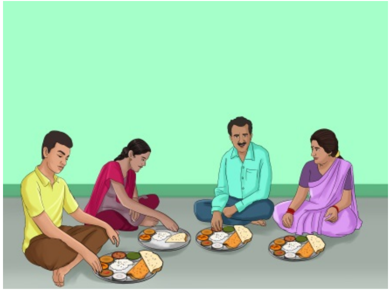

Figure 9: *Selective nutrition*

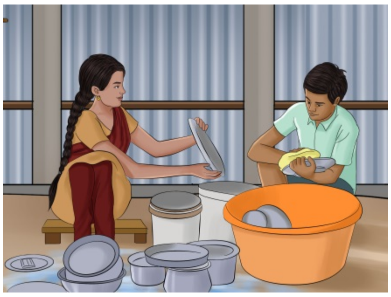

Figure 10: *Positive gender roles*

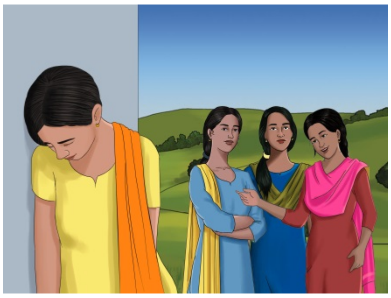

Figure 11: *Bullying*

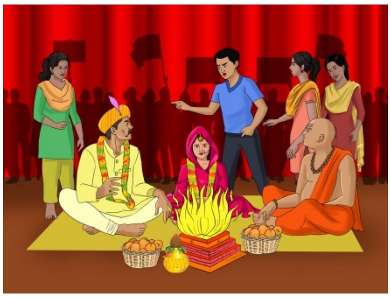

Figure 12: *Child marriage*

Focus groups were conducted in March (see section 3.3 for details) in the five centres listed below with a total of 52 participants with about ten to twelve participants (club members and PGLs) in each group. TCs displayed all the visuals and asked participants to rank them in order of how often they have personally encountered that situation. They were given uninterrupted time to discuss and do this. The three highest ranking images were selected for further discussion. Participants were asked a series of questions to determine reasons for their choice, share their own experiences and predict what they would do if they were faced with a similar situation. After some initial hesitation, participants selected and discussed the visuals and placed them in the order shown in Table 7:

Table 7: *ranking of visuals (n=52)*

Centre	#1	# 2	#3
Malkhera	Gender stereotypes	Child marriage	Selective nutrition
Kapashera	Child marriage	Selective nutrition	Bullying
Mungaska	Child marriage	Selective nutrition	Positive gender roles
Ranchi	Bullying	Selective nutrition	Gender stereotypes
Wanaparthy	Gender stereotypes	Child marriage	Positive gender roles

In their reports, TCs shared how at first participants were unsure and uncomfortable about discussing these social issues. As one TC noted:

> *I mentioned I was bullied in school which made the girls relax a little. This resulted in a lot more hands being raised and responses being readily shared through the picture on bullying. Thereon, I recognised the importance of starting the session off with asking about their progress on EDGE and talking about a shared experience….*

In analysing the responses to the question: *What would you do?*, we found some diversity of opinion. Some participants almost seemed resigned to the reality that household chores are 'a girl's job', others referred to it as a form of 'social discrimination'. Despite these differences, there were some unanimous agreements: that child marriage is wrong and against the law, and that both boys and girls deserve the same nutrition. In fact, for the latter, many quoted the Meena video: *Dividing the mango*.

One TC reports of the child marriage visual:

> *… this evoked the strongest reaction amongst them: angry at the injustice of it all. They say they knew why child marriage is wrong, but after attending the course, they can explain the ill-effects of child marriage on the girl, family and society.*

The results of this focus group show that while the club members have strong sense of awareness of social issues that affect them, they need more skills on how to critically reflect on these issues without incurring the wrath of parents and community leaders for questioning patriarchal norms. EDGE clubs, therefore, need to continue to be *safe spaces where relationships and the enabling environment are set up to support girls and* *manage expectations for the change that they can make in their world.* [17] Over the next two phases we encourage participation from those in the wider community who are trying to change patriarchal norms and work with them to foster change in their world.

5.6.2. Coordinator interview

Five centres were visited and five Coordinators (three female, two male) were interviewed. It was noted that there was a greater sense of awareness in comparison to the pre-refresher training visits about their roles. One Coordinator describes their role as:

> *overseeing PGLs, helping them facilitate EDGE sessions, advocacy amongst villagers to send their girls for sessions, convincing them of their girls' safety and security, keeping participants motivated.*

All the Coordinators enjoy their role despite the difficult circumstances they face: one centre has 40 participants in one batch. Another club has no classroom: EDGE sessions are conducted in an empty plot of land near the DEF centre. Madhu Krishna, the youngest Coordinator at 18 years old, had this to say:

> *I feel happy that I am helping women to advance themselves as it helps them with their futures – they get more confidence in English and digital skills.*

When asked about materials, they requested more English language input material (such as video and audio) in addition to a wider range of digital skills development.

5.6.3. PGL interviews

The first time we interacted with PGLs after they had started their role was in January. They were then trained by the British Council in February 2017. These interviews were conducted in March with 16 PGLs in the five centres visited. The purpose of the interview was to ascertain whether they now had better clarity of their roles, access to support, and to find out how their overall experience as peer leaders was. One TC observed this and reported:

> *… a world of difference observed in Komal, from Jan-end, when I saw her delivering the PGL led session … in this session , she spoke confidently, participated completely, sharing her viewpoints …*

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[17] The Power to Lead: A Leadership Model for Adolescent Girls; 2009: www.care.org

Initially the PGLs had found their role difficult but they were more at ease now. They sought help from Coordinators when needed and sometimes even referred to Google for the translation of difficult words. The challenges they face concerned the ICT infrastructure (e.g. computer:participant ratio). They were also able to advise on content for the Consolidation Phase, where they said that participants needed more practise with digital skills such as MS Excel and PowerPoint. This is in alignment with the plans for the EDGE materials where the skills learnt in the Foundation Phase will be further developed in subsequent phases.

Figure 13: *EDGE club session*

DIGITAL SAFETY

Figure 14: *EDGE club session*

5.7. Post-Foundation Phase survey

To gather post-course information, we created an online survey which was answered by 14 Coordinators, as reported below. The purpose of the survey was to enable the Coordinators to provide feedback on the content and implementation of the Foundation Phase and to gather their feedback for the Consolidation Phase.

- Number of responses: 14: 8 male, 6 female
- Age range: 19-53 years
- Location of centre: rented space – 12 in a school premises and two in a college
- Number of staff: 1-8 (Mohali)
- 11 of the 14 centres always have internet, electricity, drinking water, toilets, are cleaned by housekeeping staff and are safe.
- An average of 3 desktops and 5 laptops per centre – total of 35 desktops and 78 laptops, 27 desktops and 76 laptops are in working condition
- Participants have smartphones with internet access: Yes – 50% No - 50% (although in some cases it was common 'family' phone)
- In all 14 centres: Word and PowerPoint work well on centre computers, and in all but one centre Excel and Paint work well. However, in four centres Net Nanny / online safety mechanism is not installed
- All centres have all three EDGE posters on display
- Timings of EDGE sessions vary as shown below:
  - 30-60 minutes: 2 centres
  - 61-90 minutes: 4 centres
  - 91-120 minutes: 4 centres
  - more than 120 minutes: 4 centres
- In order to find out how the community was responded and engaging with the EDGE programme, we asked Coordinators to select which (from a list of stakeholders) visited the centre. 11 centres reported visits from parents, 7 from siblings (including brothers), 5 from teachers, 3 from community leaders.
- When asked what the visitors do in EDGE sessions, 11 of 14 Coordinators said that they observe sessions and 6 said that they ask questions about EDGE after the sessions are over. This shows us that parents are engaged and interested in the programme. Since they are a valuable stakeholder and ensure that girls

attend (or prevent them from attending) this data reveals that we need to engage more with this group to ensure the positive connection remains.

- Main reason for poor attendance: examinations: 13 of the 14 centres
- In relation to the EDGE Foundation Phase materials, the most common issue is the sound or image not working on the computers/laptops
- Implementation of Consolidation Phase: April – June or July to September

As shown in Figure 15, most of Coordinators agreed with all the positive statements in their self-assessment of the Foundation Phase. However, six disagreed that EDGE had resulted in an improvement of their own digital skills. This is perhaps due to the fact that the Foundation Phase is pitched at a very basic level. Overall, it can be seen that Coordinators need more support and more input for their own skill development in the subsequent phases of the programme.

One Coordinator said:

> *The EDGE course were [sic] excellent. More part of the games along the different social issues should be implemented through the videos.*

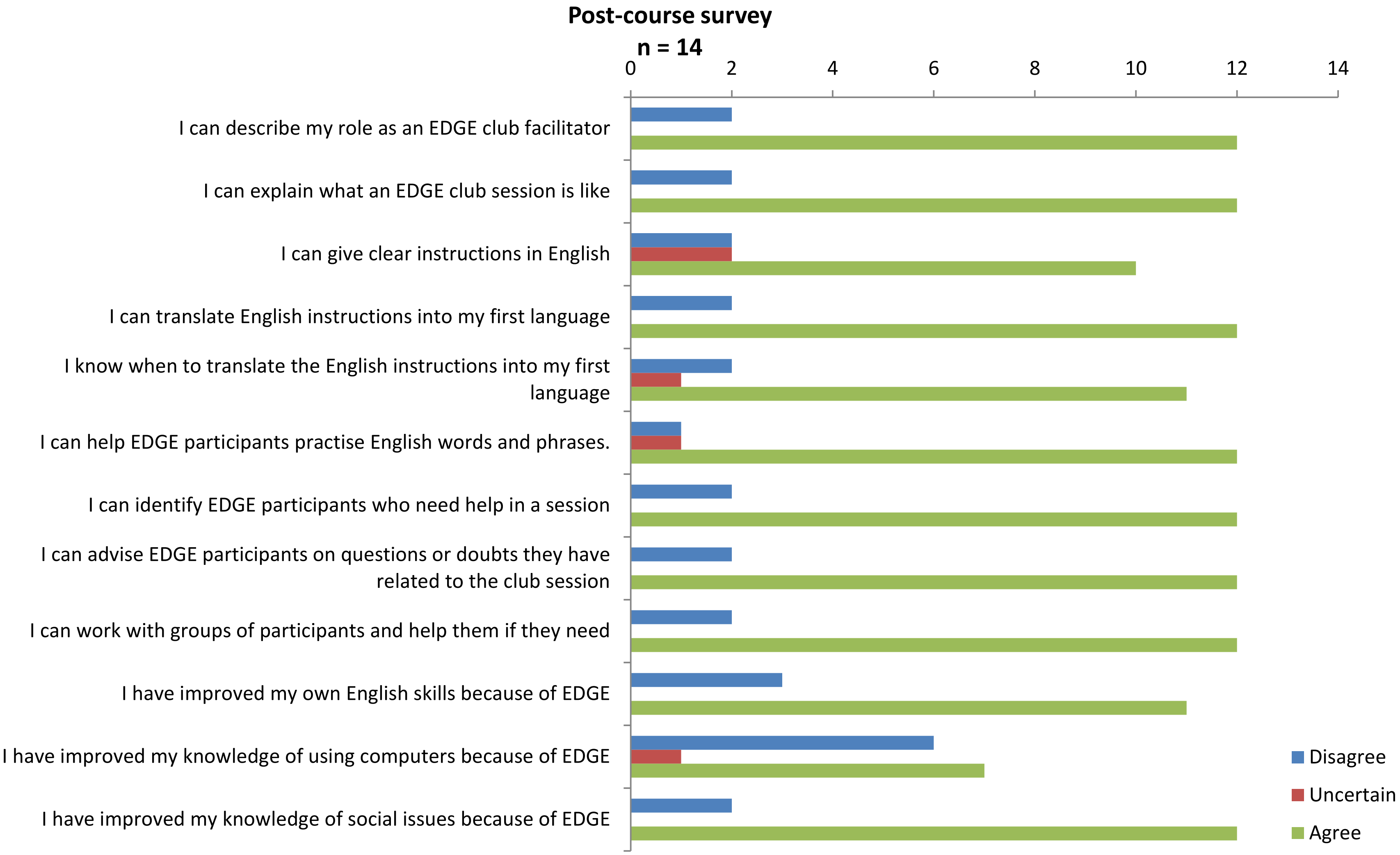

Figure15: *post-course survey responses*

5.8. Digital poster competition

For the girls to put their learning into further practice, we ran a digital poster competition in March 2017 with all the EDGE clubs. Participants were asked to select a social issue from a list provided, covering those from the Foundation Phase materials. They were then asked to create a PowerPoint presentation describing the issue, its relevance and what they could (as an EDGE centre) do about it.

Evaluation criteria were included in the competition announcement and included requirements such as teamwork, the addressing of why this social issue was relevant to their club and what they could do about it.

We received a total of 14 entries (with two centres submitting two posters) and the most popular themes were the value of education and personal health and hygiene. The entries not only displayed their knowledge of the social issues but also the digital skills they had learnt in the centres.

Based on the content, mapped to the evaluation criteria, research by the participants and suggestive measures to manage the social issues, the British Council EDGE team selected the following three clubs as winners:

Table 8: *digital poster competition prizes*

Prize	Club	Theme and comments
Gold	Guna	Safety first: Very well done. Clear, succinct and to the point.
Silver	Ranchi	The value of education: Nicely done. Videos (although in fluent Hindi) clearly outlined the importance of education including examples from life (Sri Sri Ravi Shankar) They've even made real posters!
Bronze	Halduchaur	Child labour: Excellent - focussed, clear, inclusion of videos and connected to the community.

The winning clubs will receive a collection of reading resources (carefully selected ones that focus on girls' rights and issues as well as inspiring stories from across the globe) and the participants will receive a certificate.

6. Conclusion

While the Foundation Phase of the EDGE programme had several teething problems at the start, it has gathered momentum in three months between December and February and was able to successfully conclude in April 2017 with 17 centres and 287 participants.

The most positive aspects include the selection and development of a cadre of 17 peer leaders who, in the short span of time, made rapid progress in confidence levels and facilitation skills. Coordinators must be appreciated and congratulated for their efforts and mentoring their protégés with such dedication.

Lessons learnt include the need for more consistency with numbers, implementation, and tracking. The latter could be achieved by implementing an online Management Information System (MIS) to track and respond to changes and challenges at the centre level more efficiently and effectively.

Finally, the progress that the girls have made in their English, digital and social skills should be strengthened and developed further and the subsequent two phases will build on this learning as outlined in section 2 – Recommendations for the Consolidation Phase – earlier in this report.

Appendix 1: Details of training participants

Pre-course training (cohort 1): 22-24 Sep 2016 - Chanderi			
1	Gautam Prasad: Coordinator	9	Dhanraj Dabi: Coordinator
2	Shyam Kumar Sharma: Coordinator	10	Sufi Reja: Centre Facilitator
3	Rahul Kumar: Project Associate	11	Ramesh: Trainer
4	Subhendu Biswas: Coordinator	12	Soma Sarkar: Centre Coordinator
5	Rahul Tirpude: Coordinator	13	Tanuja Sharma: Trainer
6	A K Khamar Rahman: Coordinator	14	Kiran Kumari: Computer Training
7	Anwar Tariq Khan: Coordinator	15	Tulsi Kaira: Trainer
8	Madhu Krishna: Trainer	16	Yusuf Khan: Regional Manager
Pre-course training (Cohort 2): Oct 2016 – New Delhi			
1	Nagar Khan: CIRC Trainer	4	Mohd. Arul: Social Worker
2	Gulshan Naz: Documentation and teaching	5	Utkarsh Singh Rajawat: Sr Project executive
3	Shaheen Khan: Teaching in NGO	6	Fauziya Nasim: Network Engineer
Refresher training: 23 & 24 Feb 2017 - New Delhi			
1	Gautam Prasad: Coordinator	14	Jyoti Kaur: PGL
2	Tanuja Sharma: Coordinator	15	Sanjeeda Bano: PGL
3	Subhendu Biswas: Coordinator	16	Kavitha: PGL
4	Chandrakala Meena: Coordinator	17	Sahanaj Kalu: PGL
5	Sufi Reja: Coordinator	18	Rinka Roy Chaudhary: PGL
6	Tulsi Kaira: Coordinator	19	Seema: PGL
7	Utkarsh Singh Rajawat: Coordinator	20	Moumita Mondel: PGL
8	Fauziya Nasim: Coordinator	21	Sangeeta Kumari: PGL
9	Anwar Tariq Khan: Coordinator	22	Sagun Verma: PGL
10	Soma Sarkar: Coordinator	23	Iram: PGL
11	Shyam Kumar Sharma: Coordinator	24	Rabiya Shah: PGL
12	Nagma Khan: Coordinator	25	Shalini Namdev: PGL
13	Rahul Kumar: Project Associate	26	Sonam Ojha: PGL

Appendix 2: EDGE speaking assessment rating scales

Level	Rating	Description
A0	0	Cannot produce anything beyond one word answers, which are unlikely to be correct
Pre A1	1	Can answer Part 1a. Relies on pointing rather than speaking in initial questions. One word responses throughout. Barely forms questions. A great deal of hesitation
Pre A1	2	Answers Part 1a with some confidence but not accurately. E.g. '*This laptop*'. Cannot often understand or form questions. Hesitation and/or use of L1. Answers questions with some attempt at set phrases
A1	3	Forms the initial questions in part 2 with confidence but struggles in less familiar questions. (e.g. *What do you have for breakfast*) Answers questions with set phrases. Errors are still present. E.g*. This is dog. Dog is running*'. And hesitation present.
A1+	4	Forms all questions in part 2 with more accuracy, though not all are accurate. Evidence of wider range of vocab and descriptive phrases when attempting part 3. Attempts part 3b and has some phrases for it. Occasionally needs support.
A2	5	Completes parts 1 and 2 successfully and accurately. Can describe the pictures in part 3 with some structuring of discourse. No support needed. Reasonable range of language produced accurately in the present including some attempts at expanding (e.g. *She is happy because*) but cannot refer to the past or future

Appendix 3: CEFR descriptors for informal speaking assessment[18]

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

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[18] Source: www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf:page 24

Appendix 4: EDGE digital skills rating scales

Rating	Description
0	**Non-user** Does not attempt task and /or cannot understand instruction in mother tongue.
1	**Novice** Very hesitant but can complete parts of the task. Needs prompts (for example use of MS application title) to be able to attempt task.
2	**Beginner** Can complete task with some hesitation. May need prompts (for example use of MS application title) to be able to complete task.
3	**Competent** Completes task with little or no support from the examiner. Task is not completed accurately.
4	**Proficient** Completes task well without hesitation. Does not need additional support from the examiner for Tasks 1 – 5. May need to clarify what MS applications to use for task 6.
5	**Expert** Completes task successfully and accurately. Tasks are completed without hesitation. For final task (6), can work out what is needed to complete the task without support from the examiner

Appendix 5: Details of Foundation Phase learner numbers

No.	State	Centre name	No. of learners registered	No. of learners completed[19]	Course start date	Course end date	Course option[20]	Number of batches
1	Rajasthan	Mungaska	16	16	15 November 2016	8 March 2017	1	3
2		Malakhera	36	21	02 December 2016	N/A	1	2
3		Nichlagarh	10	25	Information not received	16 February 2017	2	2
4	Delhi	Kapashera	19	12	22 November 2016	16 March 2017	2	2
5		Okhla	60	EDGE discontinued in this centre				
6		Kashmiri Gate	60	EDGE discontinued in this centre				
7	Jharkhand	Jauhar Academy	25	24	08 January 2017	25 March 2017	2	1
8	Bihar	Asthua	13	13	29 December 2016	21 March 2017	1	1
9	Uttarakhand	Halduchaur - Haldwani	20	16	15 November 2016	15 February 2017	1	3
10	Uttar Pradesh	Shamshabad	11	11	07 November 2016	06 February 2017	1	1
11		Barabanki	13	25	19 November 2016	27 January 2017	2	2
12	West Bengal	Mankara	19	21	14 December 2016	31 March 2017	1	1
13		Mallickpur	24	24	01 December 2016	7 February 2017	2	2
14		Hariharpara	21	24	19 December 2016	6 March, 2017	2	1
15	Telangana	Anjaiah Nagar	EDGE not run in this centre					
16		Mehboob Nagar	48	28	21 November 2016	30 March 2017	1	4
17	Maharashtra	Rahul Nagar	EDGE not run in this centre					
18	Haryana	Nuh	17	EDGE discontinued in this centre				
19	Punjab	Chandigarh	16	13	08 December 2016	21 February 2017	1	1
20	Madhya Pradesh	Guna	8	6	26 November 2016	17 April 2017	1	1
21		Guna	8	8	27 November 2016	08 April 2017	1	1
			444	**287**				

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[19] This refers to the learners that have registered during the course including any dropouts after registration

[20] This refers to: Option 1: one hour per session and Option 2: two hours per session