

English and Digital for Girls' Education

End of project report

India

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In partnership with



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1 Executive summary

The Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdowns that followed meant that the English and Digital for Girls' Education (EDGE) programme could not be delivered in its traditional format, with club members engaging in face-to-face peer led learning. The programme completely transitioned to a completely online format. After an initial assessment of the target group, their access to technology and internet and their willingness and motivation to participate in an online EDGE programme, a mobile based EDGE programme was conceptualised. Considering the limited access to phones, poor internet connectivity and the prohibitive cost of data, a bite size approach involving short activities delivered through WhatsApp was designed. EDGE club members would be part of a virtual learning group through WhatsApp where they would receive short activities to improve their English, Digital and Social skills. After a pilot, 23 EDGE WhatsApp clubs started in January 2021. Eight of the 23 clubs ran for the full ten weeks and the remaining groups ran for six weeks.

Each group was run by a Peer Group Leaders (PGL), the PGLs reported having developed confidence in leadership skills and group management skills. Moreover, they themselves reported having learnt new skills from the activities they posted on the group. Similarly, club members who participated in the monitoring and evaluation activities reported having learnt new digital and English skills. They also reported having a better awareness of social problems in the society. Along with learning, they also reported having improved confidence levels in using their phones and other digital platforms such as social media platforms, using English to interact with others and engaging with others on an online platform.

The main challenges in programme implementation included ensuring participation and engagement on the EDGE WhatsApp clubs, managing child safeguarding risks and, in a few cases, PGLs finding it difficult to post activities on time due to their busy schedules.

There were many learnings from the project, key recommendations for future projects of this type were;

- to give PGLs a bigger and more engaging role could help in improving participation on the groups.
- to include virtual face-to-face interaction, possibly through other online platforms along with WhatsApp to improve the efficacy of the programme.

Both the PGLs and the club members confirmed they liked being part of the groups, felt this programme filled a learning gap caused by the pandemic and reported having learnt new skills. This is a positive finding and suggests that the club members seem to have developed confidence in using digital tools for their own learning, they seem ready for a completely online programme. Such a model therefore seems to have a lot of potential considering the pandemic related challenges continue to impact learning. With a few adaptations such as adding a face-to-face 'club' element, this model could be made more effective.

2 Background

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights dictates the collective right to education. However, girls and women in South Asian countries have comparatively less access to education and digital skills than men and boys. The issues result in a gender based digital divide, leading to future skills imbalances and unquestioned life chances for women.

Through partner organisations, the British Council has established networks of non-formal community-based EDGE clubs which are effective in reducing barriers, developing girls' skills, and increasing educational, social and economic opportunity. The programme focuses on enhancing participants' English proficiency, digital skills and awareness of social issues. As a result, they will be better able to make more informed and independent life choices, as is their right, in order to contribute more fully to the family, the economy and society. In addition, EDGE aims to improve the leadership skills of a smaller group of peer leaders drawn from the same communities of adolescent girls. EDGE has so far reached over 17,000 girls across India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh.

2.1 EDGE in India

In India, British Council launched the EDGE programme in 2016 with Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) as one of the partner organisations. DEF's work in connecting 'unreached and underserved communities of India in an effort to bring them out of digital darkness and equip them with access to information' tied directly with the aims of the EDGE programme. During 2016-17 EDGE ran in 21 DEF centres across 12 states and reached over 400 adolescent girls.

In 2019, British Council launched an EDGE pilot project that embedded digital technologies to transform some of the key project activities to online delivery. As part of this pilot, ten DEF Centre Coordinators from Uttar Pradesh and Vizag received four days training to introduce them to the programme and to their role. EDGE clubs were due to start in March 2020.

2.2 Continuation during pandemic

With the nation-wide lockdown and related restrictions for over ten months due to COVID-19, all activities on the project were paused. Even when the relaxation of the lockdown in states in India started to happen based on their infection caseload, social distancing measures continued, especially for educational institutions. This had a direct impact on the delivery of the EDGE programme which has peer learning and face-to-face interaction at its core. Assuming such social distancing measures would continue for the next few months, the programme delivery was reviewed and a new model for implementing the EDGE programme activities was proposed to DEF in June 2020.

It was proposed EDGE club activities be moved online through the formation of EDGE WhatsApp clubs. The aim was to provide the maximum learning opportunities to the girls from marginalised communities despite the restrictions on physical meetings.

2.3 EDGE WhatsApp clubs

A survey was conducted in collaboration with the DEF team to investigate potential participants' interest, willingness, access to devices and internet. Based on the findings from this survey, a plan for a pilot was developed that included low data, short, bite sized activities for improving participants' awareness and confidence in English, digital and social skills.

To ascertain this was feasible and effective, a pilot EDGE WhatsApp club was established. This club ran for over two weeks. A British Council consultant assumed the role of a PGL and facilitated the group activities during the pilot. This also helped gain insights into the scope of the PGLs role in this new format. Activities were posted every day at 11.00 and participants had until 21.00 hrs to respond. Activities consisted of small tasks to complete with some level of interaction. These tasks were adapted from the EDGE Foundation phase content to suit the WhatsApp platform. The PGL gave feedback to participants at the end of every day. A detailed report outlining the key learnings and findings from the pilot was submitted to DEF. See Appendix 1 for the report.

All these learnings and findings were then incorporated in a scale up with eight centres (batch 1) i.e. eight EDGE WhatsApp clubs followed by eight (batch 2) and seven (batch 3). A total of 23 clubs of maximum ten participants each participated in the programme. While the first batch completed ten weeks, the other two completed six weeks.

3 Project activities

For a complete overview and timeline of all project activities see Table 1 in section 3.5.

3.1 Centre Coordinators (CCs)

CCs were responsible for the smooth running of the clubs. CCs were required to provide operational support to PGLs, to help them facilitate club sessions effectively and to act as a connecting link between British Council and the club members. CCs were also participants in the WhatsApp groups.

All the CCs received two rounds of orientation and training on 25 November 2020 and 8 January 2021. This included project orientation, introduction to their roles and responsibilities and child protection policy and action plan.

The CCs orientation for both batches of phase two took place on 22 January, 2020. CCs of batch 1 were also invited for this orientation to share their experiences and insight.

3.2 PGL selection

PGLs were aged 16 to 19 (this increased to 21). They were key people managing the WhatsApp groups by posting daily activities and interacting with the club members. Their role was to motivate and encourage the members, ensure participation and interaction on the groups.

An English, digital and social skills test was conducted over the phone to select PGLs from the shortlist provided by DEF. See Appendix 2 for a copy of the test. Candidates who demonstrated at least an A2 level on the CEFR, confidence in using English and digital skills were selected as PGLs. In some cases, PGL candidates who demonstrated A1 levels were also selected since there were not too many eligible candidates in the shortlist. This was particularly the case with centres from batch 2. On 9 and 10 December 2020, two British Council Consultants conducted PGL interviews and selected 11 PGLs for batch 1.

For phase two, selection interviews started from 25 January 2021. Five British Council Consultants took interviews for three days and selected 15 PGLs. A total of 26 PGLs were selected across 23 centres including a few back up PGLs.

3.3 Orientation and training

To prepare and support PGLs in facilitating the groups, they received two rounds of online training and were part of a WhatsApp club where they experienced the activities and the PGL role themselves before starting their own clubs.

On 22 December 2020, selected PGLs of batch 1 were again interviewed to check their internet and smart phone access. They, then, underwent through an orientation session on 23

December 2020. A mock WhatsApp group was created and run for two weeks with British Council team and 11 PGLs. EDGE Project Coordinator acted as PGL and the PGLs took the role of club members.

EDGE WhatsApp PGLs batch two and three orientation took place for two days to cover all the PGLs, on 5 and 12 February 2021. Batch two and three PGLs were also given a WhatsApp hands-on experience for one week starting from 8 February 2021.

Furthermore, British Council consultants were allocated to each PGL for ongoing support through the 10 weeks.

3.4 Club members

Club members were shortlisted by the CCs following the criteria provided by the British Council. There were approximately 10-12 club members in each group. There were no selection criteria for them except that they should fall in the right age group which was 14-19 years. However, they were randomly interviewed for the baseline and endline activities. All safeguarding measures including obtaining consent from club members' parents wherever required were carried out.

3.4.1 EDGE WhatsApp club logistics

WhatsApp groups were created by the CCs in both the phases. In the first phase, for batch 1, eight clubs were formed and in the second phase, for batches 2 and 3 eight and seven clubs were formed. Members of the clubs were:

- CC
- PGL
- a backup PGL
- 10-12 club members
- a British Council consultant

Most of the interaction was among the PGLs and the club members. The CC managed the logistics. DEF personnel and the British Council Consultant were the silent observers.

Club activities took place five days a week Monday to Friday for the entire duration. For child safeguarding purposes PGLs and the club members were instructed to post their messages between 10.00 am and 16.00. However, in a few cases club members could send their responses until 21.00 hrs as they found it challenging to always respond before 16.00 hrs.

3.4.2 Safeguarding measures

Strict child protection measures were put into practice. These included:

- **informed consent** was obtained from the participants and/or their parents and guardians. This involved DEF distributing hard copy forms for signature and explaining the content to potential participants and their parents. Consent was given by participants who were over 18 and for under 18s, their guardians gave consent.
- both British Council and DEF project teams including Centre Coordinators underwent **Child Protection training and orientation** to improve awareness of child protection issues and challenges especially on a social media platform such as WhatsApp. A clear incident escalation matrix was agreed with the DEF team.
- **British Council consultants** escalated potential child protection issues immediately with the British Council project team and CCs and ensured issues were resolved in a time bound manner. They sent a record of incidents on a weekly basis so that additional measures could be put in place.
- a **bi-lingual approach** was adopted for both the training and the printed forms/documents to ensure all stakeholders understand the importance of issues and are aware of all measures put into practice.
- a **poster** outlining some of the dos and don'ts with a focus on child protection and digital safety was shared with participants on the group. A translation was also provided to mitigate any language related challenges. See figure 1.



Figure 1: Posters outlining guidelines for digital safety

3.4.3 Implementation

Batch 1 started from 11 January 2021 and continued for ten weeks whereas batches 2 and 3 started from 14 February 2021 completed the programme in six weeks.

Weekly learning cycle

PGLs posted the activity cards every day at 10.00. Club members responded to the activities as agreed between 10.00 to 16.00 hrs. PGLs used to give appropriate feedback, sometimes doing error-correction. They also shared the answers around 15.00 hrs. Club members were encouraged to clear their doubts by asking questions in the group which were readily addressed by the PGLs.

Each week started with an outline of the learning objectives for the week, along with Monday's activity card. On Fridays, end of week review cards were posted that covered the learning from the entire week. All the activities were exponential in nature. See Figure 2 for a representation of the weekly learning cycle.

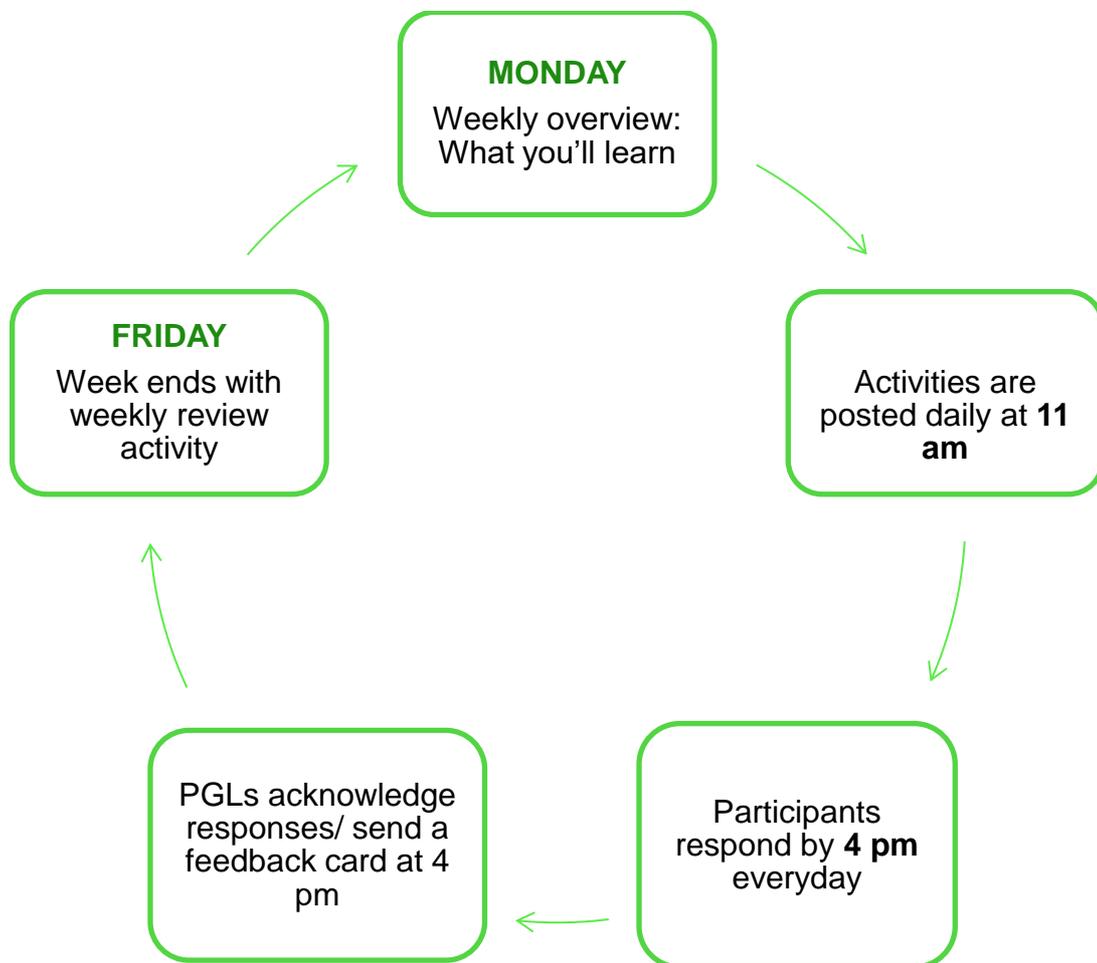


Figure 2: Weekly learning cycle

Ongoing monitoring

DEF Team and British Council Consultants carefully observed the groups for any potential child safeguarding issues. If any issue occurred, it was addressed by the British Council Child Safeguarding Focal Point and DEF team.

British Council consultants also observed the groups for the active participation levels of the club members. Any lack of participation, momentum or challenge was reported immediately. They were in constant touch with the CCs and collaborated to propose solutions.

To ensure challenges were communicated in a timely manner and addressed the following mechanism were implemented:

- weekly catch-up calls between British Council Consultants and the PGLs to discuss the highlights and the challenges of the week
- weekly reports from the Consultants who were observing the EDGE WhatsApp clubs.

Content

This was the same as the pilot, i.e. the course content was divided into three types:

1. **Basic English language activities** - Moving from complete beginner to A1 level of CEFR scale* including vocabulary, pronunciation and functional exponents, with an emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills.
2. **Basic digital skills-based activities** – Using a smartphone, using emojis, recording and posting voices messages, using Google search engine, accessing websites and watching videos to give answers, using Microsoft Forms.
3. **Social skills-based activities** - Girls had the opportunity to discuss key issues through UNICEF content covering topics such as personal sanitation, bullying, money management, importance of education for girls, cyber safety and gender equality.

Sample of these types of activities are given in Appendix 3.

3.5 Overview of activities and timelines

Date	Activity	Who
19 November 2020	EDGE WhatsApp scale-up planning	British Council and DEF teams
25 November 2020	EDGE WhatsApp scale-up CC orientation phase 1	British Council and DEF teams
9-10 December 2020	EDGE WhatsApp PGL selection interview for batch 1	Two British Council Consultants and potential PGL candidates from ten centres
22 December 2020	EDGE PGLs WhatsApp group experience - two weeks for batch 1	British Council team, 11 PGLs from ten centres
22 December 2020	Interview calls with the PGLs to check their internet and smartphone access	British Council team, 11 PGLs and their CCs from ten centres
23 December 2020	EDGE PGLs Batch 1 orientation – phase 1 Conducted in two time slots	British Council team and PGLs from batch 1 and their CCs
29 and 31 December 2020	Remaining PGLs batch 1 orientation -phase 1	Remaining PGLs who could not attend the above training and their CCs.
8 January 2021	EDGE WhatsApp PGL batch 1 orientation phase 2 and CC orientation	British Council team, EDGE PGLs from batch 1, CCs and a few members from DEF core team
11 January 2021	EDGE WhatsApp groups for batch 1 are started	British Council team CCs, PGLs and club members from eight centres of batch 1
20 January 2021	EDGE WhatsApp batch 1 baseline activity card shared with the Club members	PGLs and British Council consultants from nine centres
20 January 2021	EDGE WhatsApp batch 1 baseline interview calls begin	British Council team and randomly selected club members from Chotuppal and Dhullhapur centres
21 January 2021	Remaining EDGE WhatsApp PGL batch 1 Orientation, phase 2 and CC Orientation	British Council team, remaining EDGE PGLs from batch 1, CCs and a few members from DEF core team
22 January 2021	CC orientation for batch 2 and batch 3	British Council team, DEF core team and CCs from batch 1, 2 and 3

25 January 2021	EDGE WhatsApp PGL selection interview for batch 2 and 3 begins	British Council consultants potential PGLs from 14 centres
3 February 2021	EDGE WhatsApp batch 1 baseline interview calls for the remaining six centres begin	British Council consultants randomly selected club members from the six centres
5 February 2021	EDGE WhatsApp PGLs batch 2 and 3 orientation phase 1	British Council team PGLs from nine Centres and their CCs
8 February 2021	EDGE WhatsApp PGLs batch 2 and 3 WhatsApp group experience - one week	British Council team, PGLs from 15 centres
12 February 2021	EDGE WhatsApp PGLs batch 2 and 3 orientation phase 2	British Council team, PGLs from 15 centres and a few CCs
22 February 2021	EDGE WhatsApp batch 1, 2 and 3 CCs meeting to discuss challenges and successes so far	British Council team, DEF core team and CCs from batches 1,2 and 3
25 February 2021	EDGE WhatsApp batch 2 and 3 baseline interview calls begin	British Council team and randomly selected club members - 15 centres
27 February 2021	EDGE WhatsApp batch 2 and 3 baseline activity card shared with the Club members	PGLs and British Council consultants- 15 centres
12 - 14 March 2021	EDGE WhatsApp batch 1 endline interview calls	British Council team and club members who were selected in baseline for batch 1
16 March 2021	EDGE catch up call to discuss the progress of the programme	British Council team and DEF team
18 - 20 March 2021	EDGE WhatsApp batch 2 and 3 endline interview calls	British Council team and club members who were selected in baseline for batch 2 and 3
16 - 19 March 2021	EDGE PGL interviews	British Council team, 23 PGLs

Table 1: *Project activity overview and timeline*

4 Monitoring and evaluation activities

Delivering the EDGE programme through an online platform such as WhatsApp was an innovative solution. As well as assessing its effectiveness in terms achieving the programme objectives, it was also important to assess its feasibility. Therefore, while activities were conducted to assess attainment of learning outcomes and objectives, the monitoring and evaluation approach adopted was a more realistic, exploratory approach to ascertain its feasibility as well. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic all monitoring and evaluation activities had to be conducted online or via telephone.

4.1 PGLs

Two key activities were conducted to monitor PGL's progress, to provide timely support and to find out what they had gained from participation in the EDGE programme:

a. British Council consultants conducted weekly support meetings with PGLs over the telephone and submitted weekly reports:

British Council consultants conducted calls with PGLs every week to discuss the group activities during the week, challenges and find solutions. They also maintained a weekly record of information about their groups. This report included information such as progress in PGLs group management skills, challenges they faced and any child safeguarding incidents.

b. End of project survey interviews:

The end of project survey interviews for the PGLs were conducted to find out about:

- their understanding about the EDGE programme and their key learning
- ease of using technology and the effectiveness of learning through WhatsApp groups
- enhancement in their confidence level, awareness of social issues and leadership and group management skills
- if they received adequate support

See Appendix 4 for a sample end of project survey interview questionnaire.

4.1.1 Findings

All findings are drawn out from all activities outlined in section 4.1 above. Quotes are approximate translations of what PGLs reported in their own languages or sometimes using both English and their own languages during interviews.

Access to phones

Learning for PGLs

Awareness about the programme and preference for WhatsApp

Confidence in posting messages and managing groups

- **Access to phones**

20 out of 21 PGLs owned their phones and weren't sharing these with other family members. Almost all of them reported they did not find it difficult to use the phone and that they had adequate time to post activities. One PGL said:

Communication was easy using our phone and could learn more things in less time using digital media.

During the ten weeks a few PGLs reported difficulties in managing their college timing and posting activity cards at the right time e.g., EDGE WhatsApp clubs from Kollegal and Bharatpur. To support these PGLs, they were provided with activity cards well in advance so that they can post at a suitable time.

- **Awareness of the programme and preference for WhatsApp**

Nearly all PGLs demonstrated awareness about the EDGE programme; its aim being improving young girls' lives by imparting them English and digital skills. All PGLs reported they felt good being part of the programme. Some of them said:

When I became the PGL I felt very good. It has taught me so many things. I have learnt how to handle my friends, and how to engage learners. I now have leadership qualities too.

I really like being the PGL of both the groups. I feel grateful to the British Council that they felt I could handle two centres.

All PGLs agreed WhatsApp was a good way of learning. PGLs specifically stressed the convenience, ease and possibility of responding to activities in one's own time as key benefits. This could indicate that the ten-week programme potentially filled a learning gap for club members and PGLs. This also helps ascertain the feasibility of such a programme, if participants have a positive inclination towards such an approach, it is more likely to be successful. The suggestion that learning was easy because of the flexibility of responding in one's own time also seems to have helped especially during a pandemic when personal concerns for health and safety gained prominence.

Using WhatsApp is better than meeting and learning as girls can see the activities on their own, in their own time. They are also learning how to type and share things on WhatsApp which is very helpful for future.

- **Learning for PGLs**

20 out of 21 PGLs reported they themselves learnt from the activities they posted. The learning included skills such as language and group management skills. PGLs also reported their confidence in managing such platforms and posting messages on them grew gradually. One PGL said:

...new words to motivate others...also learnt some new English words, most importantly I learnt when making others look at their mistakes, never to be harsh as that can demotivate them, so I learnt how to ask others to correct their answers while motivating them.

While this is a positive outcome, one learning is to include more practice and exposure to group management/online platform management skills. This is slowly emerging to be an important skill in the larger digital literacy framework. For example, one framework acknowledges *participating in digital networks for learning and research* as one of the seven elements or capabilities. For more information, see

<https://www.jisc.ac.uk/full-guide/developing-digital-literacies>

Additionally, *using professional online networks and communities* is one of the 'additional skills for work as identified by the Essential digital skills framework. For more information, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/essential-digital-skills-framework/essential-digital-skills-framework>

20 out of the 21 PGLs interviewed stated that they would apply things they learnt from the EDGE Programme with other people. Most of them highlighted specific learning points such as using emojis in their chats, awareness regarding online safety and ability to identify the social issues around them.

Thanks to this programme now I know about online safety, I am more careful sharing posts and photos, I also learnt about Child Protection. I did not understand and use English before, but now I know...

I have felt myself become more confident in using English words in my day-to day speech and now I know how to share my views with others, and how to make corrections.

- **Confidence in posting messages and managing groups**

Almost all PGLs reported a gradual increase in their confidence in posting and managing the groups and acknowledged the British Council's Consultant's role in providing intensive ongoing support. Another key learning from the consultant reports was to establish a direct contact between the PGL and the club members, this would not only have helped PGLs perform their roles more fully but also could have helped improve participation on the groups as a result of establishing a rapport between the two.

- **When asked for a few tips to improve the programme in the future, PGLs suggested the following:**

- a. Adding some face-to-face interaction for PGLs with club members and amongst club members to help provide speaking practice
- b. PGLs could be allowed to contact the club members so they can ask them if they are facing any problems in sharing their answers
- c. Members could be allowed to use the DEF centres to complete the activities if they don't have access to phones and data.

4.2 Club members

To investigate the project's impact on club members and to ensure challenges are addressed in an ongoing manner, the following monitoring and evaluation activities were conducted in two phases for batches 1 and batches 2 and 3 respectively. These activities were:

- a. baseline and endline tests (English, digital and social skills)
- b. end of project survey interviews
- c. baseline and endline activity cards
- d. end of project poll

Out of the three batches, only batch 1 completed the ten full weeks of participation, the other two batches completed six weeks. This happened for two reasons; they were slotted to start in a staggering manner after batch 1 and there was a considerable delay in starting the core activities for the remaining two batches to prevent activities clashing/coinciding with members' schoolwork/exams. Therefore, the following findings reflect analysis of data from batch 1 who completed the full ten weeks. However, wherever relevant, important observations from the participants of the remaining two batches are also presented. While the main findings are drawn from batch 1 data, these are likely to be relevant and applicable to the other two batches as well.

a. Baseline and endline test

For batch 1, at the baseline, almost all club members were called. However, only 26 members were successfully reached. Similarly, at the endline, out of 24 club members who were called only 14 could be contacted. Reasons for a low success rate include members not available, numbers not being reachable and, in some cases, phone not being available to members. All these members were randomly selected from the eight groups of Batch 1. They all participated in the English test and digital and social skills questionnaire over the phone with some use of WhatsApp. The same questionnaire was used both at the baseline and at the endline. The aim of this test was to:

- ascertain English language levels of the club members
 - gauge confidence and awareness levels of a range of digital and social skills
- See Appendix 5 for the sample test.

b. End of project survey interviews

An end of project survey was conducted with a group of randomly selected club members. 20 club members from across eight EDGE WhatsApp clubs were successfully contacted.

This survey was conducted in the form of an interview over the phone. The main aims of this survey were to:

- find out club members' awareness about EDGE programme
- gauge members' confidence, their comfort with the technology and awareness of any social skills developed during the programme
- check PGLs involvement and support for the club members
- check if the members were aware about Child Protection Policy.

See Appendix 6 for the survey.

c. Baseline and endline activity cards

Activity cards were used as a form of assessment of what club members learnt from the programme. This activity cards consisted of a range of tasks that were part of the programme content. A card was sent out in the first week and in the last week.

See Appendix 7 for the card.

d. End of project online survey

To give an opportunity to all club members to send in their feedback and observations, an open online survey was created. An activity to prepare club members to respond to online questionnaires/surveys was also conducted.

See link for the poll: <https://bit.ly/3oaON07>

4.2.1 Findings

All findings are drawn out from all activities outlined in section 4.1. Quotes are approximate translations of what club members reported in their own languages or sometimes using both English and their own languages during interviews.

Access to phones and awareness of the programme

Improvement in confidence levels while using English

Preference towards and confidence in using social media

Overall learning

Confidence in English and digital skills and improved awareness of social skills

a. Access to phones and awareness of EDGE programme

Data from the end of the project survey interview suggests nine out of the 20 members owned their phones, and the rest were sharing family member's phones. Only eight out of 20 club members said it was easy or convenient for them to use the phone. They cited challenges such as the phone being a shared phone, phones not allowed in college/school. 16 out of 20 club members from batch 1 demonstrated awareness about the EDGE programme. Most of them reported learning new things primarily related to the English language and using mobile phones.

b. Improvement in English confidence levels

English levels showed some improvement at lower levels. However, it's very difficult to attribute this change to the programme. It is likely that club members demonstrated greater amount of confidence at the endline in responding to questions which could potentially explain the improvement. For example, at the baseline, while there were eight club members at the A0 level, there were none at the endline. Similarly, at the baseline while there were six at the Pre-A1 level, only one club member was at this level at the endline. It is also likely that the ten-week intervention may have helped club members improve extremely low levels such as A0 and pre-A1 more than at higher levels. Cambridge English Language Assessment's estimates for the number of guided learning hours learners typically take to improve on CEFR levels suggest learners take shorter durations at lower levels than at higher levels. However, given the limitations around sample size and absence of any other data, this observation needs further investigation and research.

One club member said:

Yes. First of all, my English has improved. I also learnt how to use some features of WhatsApp like voice recording.

c. Preference towards and confidence in using social media platforms

For the question *How confident are you in using social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook etc.?* at the baseline, 15 out of 26 i.e. 58 per cent and at the endline, nine out of 14 i.e. 67 per cent gave themselves a score of 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5 (1= least confident, 5= most confident), see Figure 1. Although the improvement doesn't seem substantial, considering the short duration of the programme and the 'restricted' or limited nature of activities and engagement, this seems to be a positive indication. Club members reported similar improvement when asked about their confidence in using computers or laptops. This could indicate an improvement in the overall sense of confidence in using digital tools/platforms. Findings from the end of project survey confirm this.

The end of project survey indicated nearly all of them experienced nervousness and anxiety when posting for the first time. However, over ten weeks, they grew confident and felt happy posting their responses. Almost all agreed WhatsApp was a good way of learning. They reported having easy access to learning, and they could respond to the activities in their own time. They also highlighted this project particularly helped them learn how to respond on the WhatsApp groups and how to remain connected with other club members from their centres. However, most of them highlighted that they faced difficulty understanding the instructions in some activities pertaining to digital skills. The encouragement and assistance provided by their PGLs helped them with this.

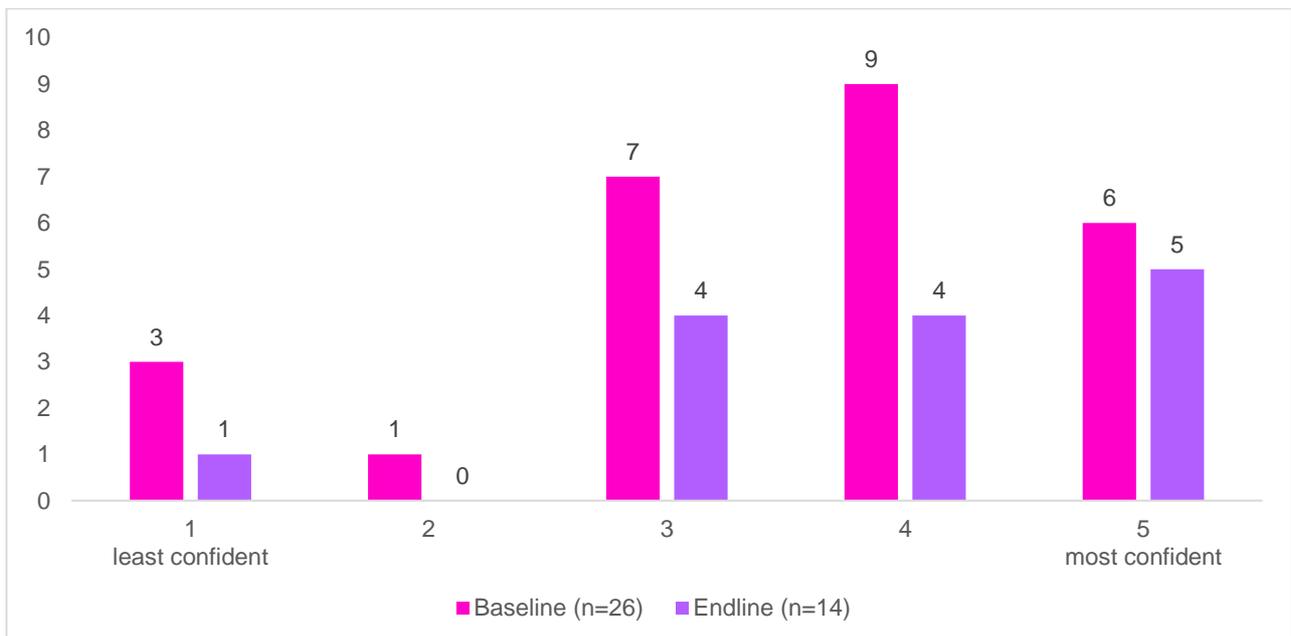


Figure 1: *How confident are you in using social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook etc.?*

d. Confidence in posting views/answers on WhatsApp group

When asked *How confident do you feel about posting your answers and/or views on a WhatsApp group/club such as the EDGE club?* 13 out of 26 i.e. 50 per cent club members said they were either confident or very confident. This increased to 13 out of 14 club members i.e. 93 per cent at endline. See Figure 2.

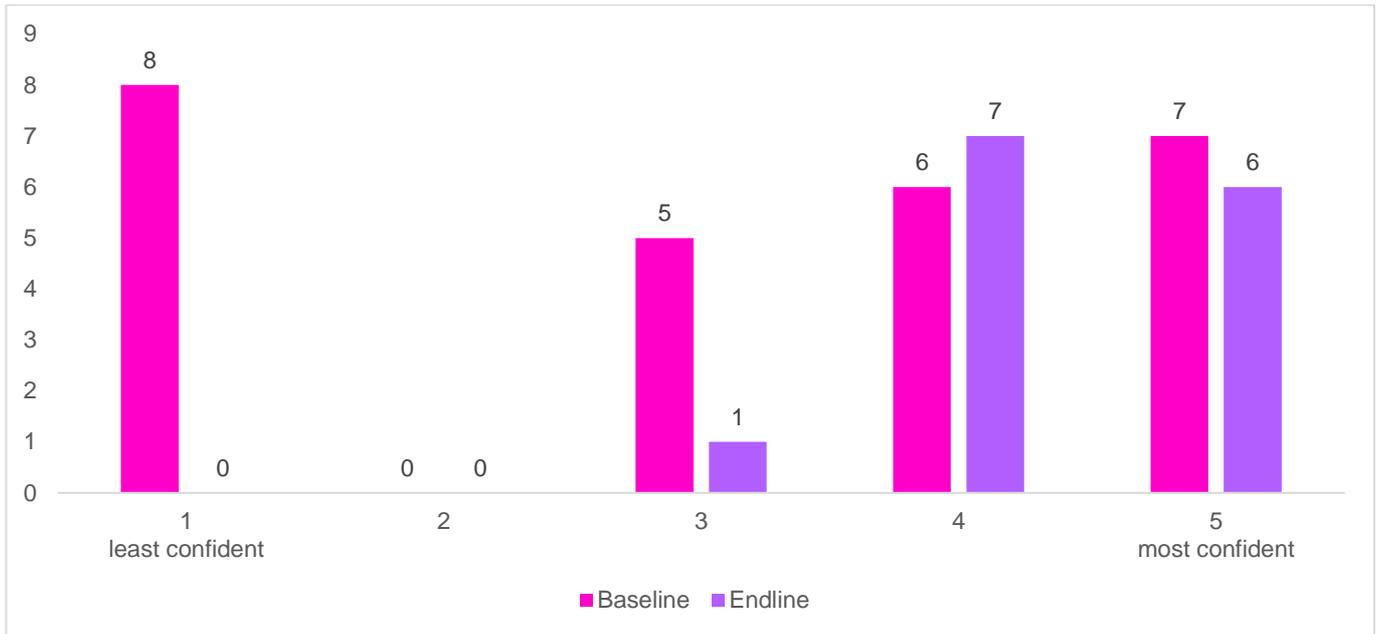


Figure 2: *How confident do you feel about posting your answers and/or views on a WhatsApp group/club such as the EDGE club?*

This seems to indicate club members have likely developed greater confidence in posting their answers or views on WhatsApp. However, considering the limitations of the sample size, this can be viewed only as a trend.

e. Learning

All the club members **said they liked the activities that are shared and posted** on the WhatsApp group. This was reported both during the end of project survey interviews and the end of project online survey from all the three batches. They felt that through these activities they learnt new English skills. A few members also highlighted that the activities and videos on social skills were interesting and effective in creating awareness. However, a few of them said they found the activities too easy and simple. Most of them highlighted that they sometimes faced difficulty understanding the instructions in some activities pertaining to digital skills however with support from their PGL; they were able to understand what is to be done in those digital skills activities.

Most club members shared that **they learnt how to use Google Search and Google Map, use Emojis in their chats, record voice messages. Quite a few also highlighted that they felt that the English skills-based activities were beneficial in improving their awareness and usage of English in their day-to-day lives.** Through the end of project online survey, club members from all the three batches said they learnt the following:

About how to speak and how to use words correctly...

I learned good English

About social media safety

I improve my English Grammar

Equality of boys and girls

Audio recording

Making new friends in the group and learned how to record the voice message

Meena ki kahaniya

This is also reinforced by the number of responses we received when club members were asked to submit their responses to a few weekly review questions for all three types of activities using a google form, for batch 1, there were over 32 responses out of approximately 80 participants and for batches 2 and 3 over 93 responses out of approximately 160 participants. This activity was conducted a week before the last week of the programme so it does seem to demonstrate the confidence participants may have gained over the course of the programme.

17 out of the 20 club members interviewed stated that they would apply things they learnt from the EDGE Programme with other people. Most of them highlighted that they shared their learnings from the project with their family members and friends or with their college and school classmates. A few of them said:

I am happy to tell you that when a teacher asks a question I can answer confidently. I also use English with my friends.

It helped me learn about the special dishes in the different states of the country. I learnt how to use Google search.

There was a question -google map to know the timing , so this was the best activity , pictures and videos also are all good . On map we searched new things...

The number of participants who attempted the baseline and endline activity cards was mostly the same (in batch 1 out of eight clubs approximately six members responded and this was similar to the endline with a few clubs where participation went to zero i.e. in a few clubs, by the endline, interaction had reduced considerably or stopped. This could indicate that the extent of participation at the beginning and end of the project was same. The quality of responses didn't seem very different at the baseline and endline. Given the small sample size, it is difficult to draw out a conclusion about improvement in the learning of these participants from this trend . This said, there is one very important observation that requires

some discussion. As mentioned earlier, club members were randomly called to participate in an end of project survey. These participants did not necessarily participate actively on their groups or responded to the baseline and endline activity cards.

Cub members reported on learning new skills, improved awareness of social issues and confidence in using English. This suggests that while lack of engagement was a consistent problem on the groups, members who may have been largely 'inactive' may also have learnt from the programme. Active participation may not be the only factor leading to learning. While this needs further investigation within the scope of the EDGE programme, wider research has studied such behaviours on online learning communities or groups.

Participants or members of a virtual group who do not engage in the community are often referred to as 'lurkers'. Bokzkurt et al. (2020) in the highlights to their article (online) have the following pointers to an understanding how people define as 'lurkers' might engage with the online world:

- lurkers are invisible, silent learners on the peripherals of the networks
- transactional distance can be in multiple forms
- lurkers prefer vicarious interaction
- combination of internal and external factors can lead learners to lurk

This does not mean that 'inactive' participants are not an important part of the community and that they don't learn. It is likely that they engage with activities on the group in their own ways and they may not be willing to openly participate.

f. Confidence in English and digital skills and improved awareness of social skills

From batch 1, 9 and from batches 2 and 3, 35 club members responded to the end of project online survey. As can be seen from Figure 3, 41 out of 44 club members who responded agreed or strongly agreed to feeling more confident about doing different things in English on their phones and 36 out of 44 agreed or strongly agreed to feeling more confident about using new features of their phones. While this is a small number of respondents, similar findings have emerged from the end of project survey interview as well.

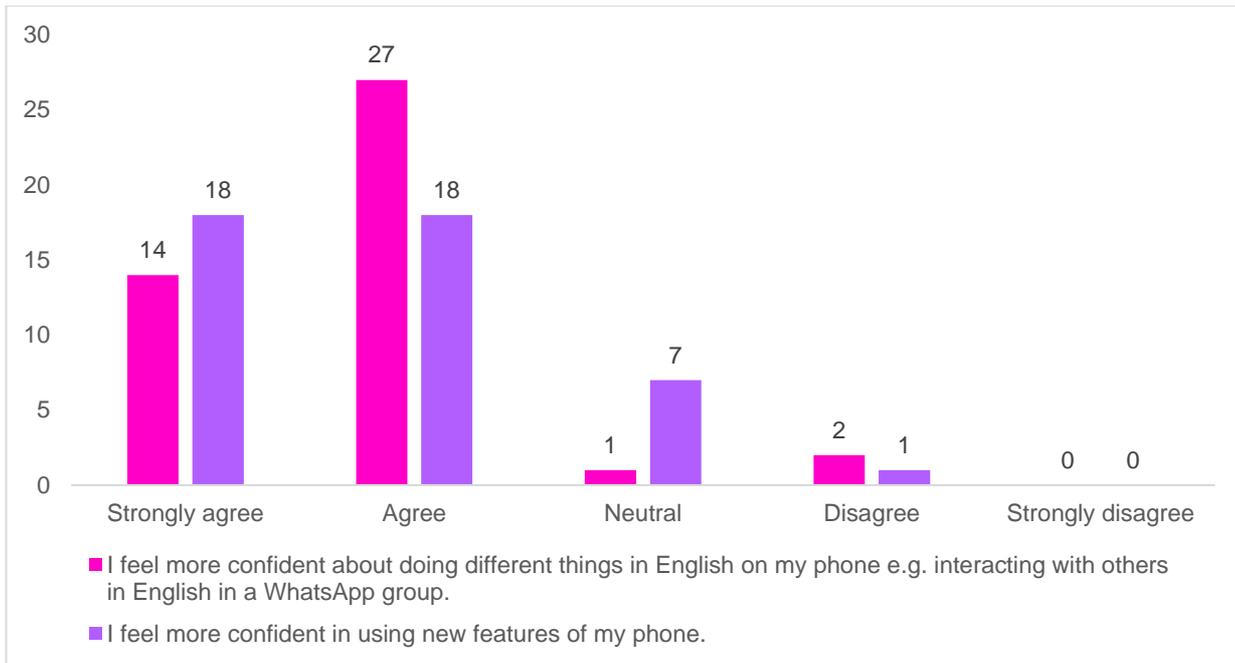


Figure 3: End of project survey poll n= 44 (batch 1 n=9, batches 2 and 3 n=35)

These findings for all three batches seem quite positive. With information and learning being so readily available on the internet now, this trend is likely suggesting that club members may have gained some confidence and developed some basic skills to engage in online learning through their phones to begin with.

All said they liked the Meena videos as part of the activities on social skills and some of them reported liking specific activities such as the one on gender equality and importance of girls' education. One club member said:

It was liked about the society that I got in lot of information by joining this group by staying home in our society in lock down.

- **When asked for challenges and tips to improve the programme in the future, club members suggested the following:**
 - a. 12 out of the 20 club members shared that they would like to improve upon their English-speaking skills and grammar in the future. A few also shared that they would be happy to continue learning whatever they are learning presently.
 - b. The nature of the activities did not allow for much online interaction amongst the club members. However, on being asked, 14 out of the 20 club members reported that having been a part of the EDGE WhatsApp groups allowed them to make new friends

4.3 Feedback from the community

Parents of the club members also reported how their daughters benefitted from participating in the programme. Here are a few comments from them.

We are observing many changes in my daughter due to learning in EDGE program. Now came to know how to be safe in online by the social activities. EDGE program gave very good basic knowledge to my daughter in very short period. I have another daughter; I am willing to join her in these EDGE program if the program starts again.

*Mother of a club member from
Telangana*



Club members with certificates



Club members with certificates

British Council's programme was quite good where my daughter learnt a lot while being at home. Most importantly it was free of cost and she received a certificate too. Just one suggestion is occasionally an offline class will be good.

*Father of a club member
from Ghazipur*

My daughter joined in EDGE program. She participated in all activities. She learned many things from this EDGE club. Now she is able to communicate with all in online. She came to know how to search information in Google. We also very happy that this program was improved my daughter's knowledge. My neighbour's daughter is also wanted to join this EDGE program if it starts again Thank you for EDGE program.

Father of a club member from Telangana



Club members with certificates

5 Successes, challenges, learnings

EDGE scale-up with the innovative approach had successes and some challenges with few learnings:

Successes

- This innovative approach is feasible and has a lot of potential. Feedback from PGLs and club members confirms this. However, with incorporation of some face-to-face club time possibly through other online mediums would make the learning more effective and enjoyable.
- PGLs reported developing the required leadership skills. They further reported having themselves learnt from this programme.
- Club members reported having learnt new skills, gaining more confidence in answering the questions and using their phones to learn English. They were willing to continue with such a programme.
- Both PGLs and club members felt this programme helped fill the learning gap that arose due to lockdowns. This is possibly one of the most important achievements of the programme.
- All safeguarding measures were useful in ensuring there was no major Child Safeguarding issue.

Challenges

- Many of the PGL candidates seemed to have very busy days at college and seemed to find it difficult to manage their time. This also impacted their participation in the orientation and training programmes. As a result, the orientation and training online sessions were conducted multiple times to suit PGL availability.
- In a few cases, new members were being added to the group E.g., Vizag. This was a potential child safeguarding risk. To manage this, British Council asked DEF to send a list of participants so that a record of participant identity can be maintained.
- While child safeguarding training was provided to all key stakeholders in the case of a few clubs, club members were found posting some forwards, pictures etc. Such challenges are inevitable on platforms such as WhatsApp. More awareness training for participants is likely to reduce such incidents.
- Low participation on groups. Apart from the fact that some of the participants simply may not have chosen to overtly participate, other reasons for this may include a clash with exam timings, access to phones etc. Club members were motivated to participate by PGLs and CCs. In certain cases, members were asked to complete the activities they missed whenever they could.
- Four M&E activities for the club members that took place towards the end of the programme had their own set of challenges and the biggest one was unavailability of the club members for the endline tests and end of project interviews.

Overall learnings

- A WhatsApp based intervention seems useful for participants such as the EDGE club members. However, while a duration of ten weeks helped participants get started, gain confidence and learn a few specific things, a longer and more intense engagement is likely to enable deep learning.
- If data limitations are mitigated and communication channels opened up between the different club members and PGLs, it will allow for more diverse and engaging activities that could enable more effective learning and also help in sustaining momentum and interest from participants.
- Such an engagement via WhatsApp or any other messaging platform could work more effectively if used alongside or as an extension of a face-to-face intervention. This could help by extending learning beyond face to face club meetings, help build a rapport between club members and also help add a strong digital dimension by embedding a messaging platform. This could potentially be more effective and will enable participants to achieve outcomes better.
- A communication channel between PGLs and club members could be allowed with phone and data card provisions. This is likely to improve club members participation.

6 Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic pushed the whole world into working in unconventional ways, transitioning to online platforms over a short period of time. The EDGE programme was not an exception. Delivering the EDGE programme through the WhatsApp platform was a considerable leap for its dependence on face-to-face interaction as key for learning. While keeping learning at the centre, considering data limitations and ensuring the WhatsApp platform is fully leveraged, the EDGE WhatsApp clubs do have a few strong successes. Bringing these successes into play and building on the learnings, the EDGE programme shows potential for being implemented using a completely digital model.

English and Digital for Girls' Education

EDGE WhatsApp pilot report

2 November 2020

Background

British Council and Digital Empowerment foundation began a pilot of a new English and Digital for Girls' Education (EDGE) programme in early 2019. The pilot project began in 2019 with the training of 10 DEF centre coordinators from Uttar Pradesh and Vizag. EDGE clubs were due to start in March 2020.

With the nation-wide lockdown due to COVID-19 all activities on the project had to be paused.

Continuity plan

While the lockdown has been relaxed in many states in India, social distancing measures continue to be put in place especially for educational institutions. This has had a direct impact on the EDGE programme where peer learning and interaction is at the core. Assuming such social distancing measures would continue for the next few months, the programme delivery was reviewed and a new model for implementing the EDGE programme activities was proposed to DEF in June 2020. It was proposed that the EDGE club activities be moved online through the development of EDGE WhatsApp clubs.

EDGE WhatsApp club: pilot

To overcome the challenges arising from prohibition on physical meetings, the concept of an EDGE WhatsApp club was proposed. The aim was to provide learning opportunities to girls from marginalised communities.

A survey was conducted in collaboration with the DEF team to investigate potential participants' interest, willingness, access to devices and internet. Based on the findings from this survey, a plan for a pilot was developed that included low data, short, bite sized activities for improving participants' awareness and confidence in English, digital and social skills. To affirm this was feasible and effective, a small test WhatsApp club was established.

This WhatsApp club ran for over three weeks beginning 7 October with club members located in Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh. The club had eight participants from the ages ranging from 17 to 18 years. British Council team presented some interim observations from this test phase to the DEF team on 19 October 2020.

This report outlines what we have learned from this test club including observations, findings, recommendations and next steps.

Preparation

Child protection

Strict child protection measures were put into practice.

- **Informed consent** was obtained from the participants and/or their parents and guardians. This involved DEF distributing hard copy forms for signature and explaining the content to potential participants and their parents. Consent was given by participants who were over 18 and for under 18s, their parents gave consent.
- Both British Council and DEF project teams including Centre Coordinators underwent **Child Protection training** to improve awareness of child protection issues and challenges especially on a social media platform such as WhatsApp. A clear incident escalation matrix was agreed with the DEF team.
- A **bi-lingual approach** was adopted for both the training and the printed forms/documents to ensure all stakeholders understand the importance of issues and are aware of all measures put into practice.
- A **poster** outlining some of the dos and don'ts with a focus on child protection and digital safety was shared with participants on the group. A translation was also provided to mitigate any language relate challenges. See figure 1.



Figure 1: Posters outlining guidelines for digital safety

Centre coordinator briefings and support

To ensure Centre coordinators understand this new approach and become aware of their role in this test phase, **two rounds of orientation sessions** were conducted on 15 and 30 September 2020. These orientation sessions covered following aspects:

- overview of the EDGE programme
- what is the EDGE WhatsApp club?
- overview of activities
- roles and responsibilities (what will the Centre Coordinators and Peer Group Leaders (PGL) do? what will be British Council's and DEF's role?)

In addition, the centre coordinators who would participate in the pilot were invited to be part of a **'mock' EDGE WhatsApp group**. Centre Coordinators were part of this group for four days (1 to 4 October 2020) and were expected to put on 'participant hats' to experience the group activities as they would unfold for the test group later. This ensured, through their own first-hand experience, a strong awareness of the purpose of the group, how activities would play out, how are participants expected to respond and what the PGL role looks like. They also became aware of their own role in the process.

These two crucial activities; orientation sessions and Centre Coordinators' participation in the mock group ensured they were ready and more confident for the test phase to begin.

What happened on the WhatsApp group?

British Council consultant assumed the role of a PGL and facilitated the group activities during for this test club. However, when the EDGE WhatsApp clubs are scaled up, a PGL will be selected and trained to perform this role. The British Council consultant began the group activities by posting an introductory video that described the EDGE project, outlined the purpose of the WhatsApp group and explained what participants can expect. A discussion around group guidelines (see Figure 2) to highlight some dos and don'ts was also conducted and a poster outlining these was posted on the group to ensure group activities are within agreed guidelines and rules.

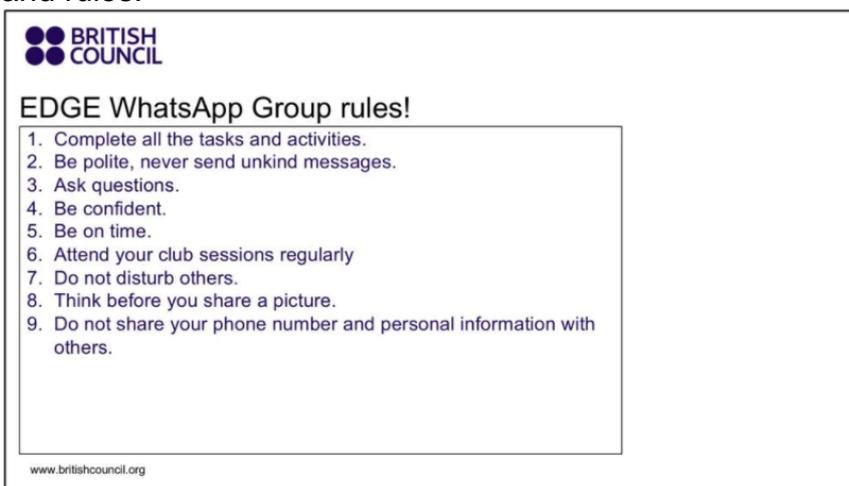


Figure 2: WhatsApp club guidelines

Activities were posted every day at 11 am and participants had time until 9 pm to respond to these. Every day would close with some feedback from the consultant.

Activities consisted of small tasks to complete with some level of interaction. These tasks were adapted from the EDGE Foundation phase content to suit the WhatsApp platform. Posts included texts, images and recorded audio or links to videos on YouTube. *See samples in Appendix 1.*

At the beginning of the week, an outline and overview of the learning outcomes for the week were posted to guide participants through their learning journey. At the end of every week a review of all learnings and activities was posted to close the learning loop.

Observations on participation

Over the three weeks, the British Council team closely observed how participants respond to the activities, to what extent they seem comfortable, what they seem to respond to more/less and when they don't respond at all. Some of the key observations are outlined below.

What worked well

- Most participants responded well to the activities posted. They responded within timelines and regularly for most activities.
- They also responded to some follow up activities and raising queries in some cases.
- Participants seemed to be comfortable with the platform.
- Centre Coordinators played a very crucial role and were effective in encouraging the participants.
- Participants were more comfortable with their first language (Hindi), but they were making a lot of effort to use English. (See Figure 3 for an example of interaction)

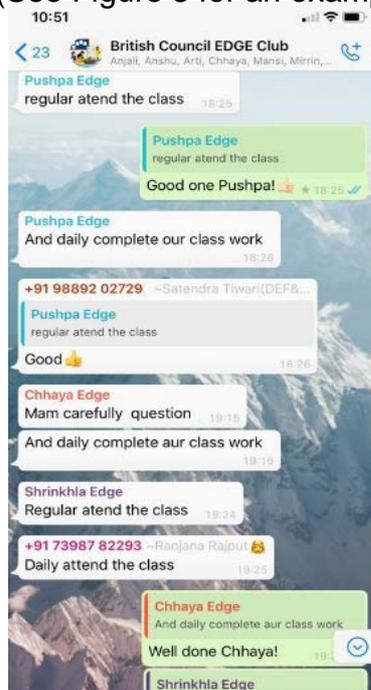


Figure 3: Example of interaction on the group

Challenges

- Responding only in English seemed to be a challenge, we therefore adopted a bi-lingual approach initially. Their response in English is likely to improve with more learning and confidence.
- With the existing willingness to use data, outcomes linked to reading/writing to some extent listening could be addressed but in order to engage in more spoken practice, more data will need to be factored in which allows them to record conversations and share them on the group for instance. In the test club, many participants did share such recorded messages.
- It would be more effective to focus on mobile literacy in the absence of access to computers and laptops.
- There was initially a confusion around real identities. Profile names didn't always match the participant names.
- Profiles of students would help post activities at the right time to avoid a clash with their online classes.



Figure 4: Example of challenges around participant identities

To further investigate and ascertain these observations, we conducted one to one telephone interviews with the club participants. These were conducted on 26 and 27 October 2020 with all eight club members. These interviews were conducted by the British Council consultant and the Centre Coordinator Mr. Satendra was part of these interview calls. Club members were asked a set of questions to understand participants' behaviour on the group, their perceptions, things they liked and things they found difficult or challenging (see appendix 2

for questions). The interviews were conducted in Hindi. Although most of the questions outlined were asked consistently to all participants, they are only indicative of themes covered during the interviews.

Participants' responses to the questions have been summarised into the following theme. Some key findings from the survey are:

Comfort and preference for the WhatsApp platform: All participants confirmed they are comfortable with the WhatsApp platform and they like being part of the group. Seven out of eight participants said they owned the phone devices. They also showed willingness to encourage other potential participants to this or similar other WhatsApp clubs.

Activities

All participants who took part in the activities confirmed they liked the activities and enjoyed doing them. They didn't seem to find it difficult to complete these activities. They also confirmed they had enough time for completion of these activities.

Participants particularly liked activities related to English and digital skills such as *introducing oneself, naming colours and naming digital objects*. They found activities related to social skills that deal with concepts such as *bullying* challenging to follow. Participants suggested the quality of images posted for these social skills activities be improved. This feedback is incorporated into the activities that will be used for the scale up.

Two participants also felt the activities were too simple for them. Participants are likely to find activities simple possibly because they don't necessarily belong to the target age group or educational background. It was found that all participants belonged to the age range of 17-18 years and were pursuing a graduate course at the time of the interview. This profile of the participants is more suitable for the role of a PGL rather than club members.

Participants were open to downloading images, audio or video files. Data wasn't quoted as one of the challenges as was previously anticipated.

Recommendation 1:

DEF could ensure the participants on WhatsApp clubs for the scale up fit the profile of EDGE participants. They ideally should belong to the age range of 13-17 years and PGLs to be in the age range of 18-20 years.

Learning from the activities

Although most participants agreed they learnt something from the activities they participated in, all of them couldn't always identify specific learnings. It can be difficult for participants to reflect and identify specific learnings in a short period of time. So, this is likely to improve as their participation evolves. However, as a learning, we will introduce some activities that encourage reflection on their own progress and learning to help participants develop autonomous learning skills and to be able to talk about their progress.

Some participants felt they could apply their learning in their real life. For instance, one participant said, and it roughly translates as:

I have been sharing my new learnings... like I have taught my two brothers at home; taught them how to use emojis and how to talk about their favourite colour etc...

This is a positive observation and seems to confirm that these activities have a strong potential to help participants take their learning beyond the WhatsApp club into the real world.

Recommendation 2:

To further support the participants, British Council can provide printed copies of the Foundation phase workbook for club participants. These could be delivered to the participants with DEF team's support on ground.

PGL role

All participants were satisfied with the way the British Council consultant facilitated club activities. They agreed they were comfortable posting their responses on the group when the consultant asked. They also highlighted the encouragement they derived from the consultant's feedback, motivation and acknowledgement of their responses. Participants seemed quite happy to speak to her and it seems this connect over the interview helped build rapport with the participants.

British Council consultant assuming the PGL role helped get insights into what preparation and training PGLs will need. This highlighted the importance of the PGL role and the need to provide adequate orientation and support to potential PGLs. PGLs will need to be supported in building positive rapport with their participants. One way this could be established is through one-to one follow up through phone calls at specific intervals or whenever required.

For instance, PGLs could make one initial call to orient each participant to the WhatsApp club, introduce themselves and set expectations. This could be followed by another call mid-course to check on each of the participants progress and challenges and end with a final call to close all activities at the end of the intervention. PGLs may have to make additional calls to follow-up with participants who aren't responding to activities or to those who openly communicate academic challenges in the group. The latter can be done by centre coordinators as well.

Recommendation 3:

To support PGLs to make these calls, sustainable means need to be explored. For example, providing an honorarium, a phone allowance or a 'talking plan' top up to PGLs to cover for any emerging costs could be considered.

Next steps

It is recommended that the scale up takes place in a staggered manner. For this purpose, the DEF and British Council teams could work together on the following action points

- DEF to identify up to ten centres, club participants and PGL candidates
- British Council to conduct final PGL selection interviews
- DEF to continue implementing the agreed Child Protection processes with new club participants, their parents/guardians and PGLs.

Following are some possible timelines:

Activity	Tentative timeline
Selection of locations and PGLs	by 6 November
Orientation of PGLs	by 13 November
Setting up EDGE WhatsApp clubs for ten centres	by 20 November
EDGE WhatsApp clubs to begin	By 27 November

British Council and DEF teams could meet online to discuss these timelines further.

Appendix 1



EDGE club: Activity 1

Look at these objects. What do you see?

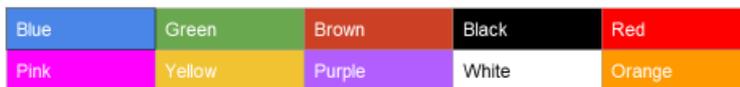


Type your answers in this group chat before 9 pm today. For example: Laptop
www.britishcouncil.org



EDGE club: Activity 4. Part 1.

- Look at the box below. Can you tell us the name of these colours in Hindi?
- You can always take the help of your friends in this group to answer.



Type your answers in the group chat before 9 pm today.

www.britishcouncil.org

8

EDGE WhatsApp interview questions

Total: +/- 15 mins

Introductory (2 mins)

1. What is your name?
2. Are you currently studying in a school/college? If yes:
 - Which grade are you in?
 - Does your school/college have online classes?
3. Is this your phone? If not:
 - whose is it?
 - Is it difficult to get time to use it?
4. What is EDGE?
5. How do you feel being part of this group?
 - What did you like about being part of the group?
 - Was there anything you didn't like so much?
6. What do you think about using WhatsApp for this type of activity?
7. How much do you spend on data each week?
 - Do you ever run out of data?
 - Any other problems with the data?

Learning and experience (5 mins)

1. Do you like/ enjoy the activities posted on WhatsApp? If yes:
 - what do you like about them?
 - What do you not like about them?
2. What did you learn in this group? Did the WhatsApp activities help you learn anything (new)?
3. What would you like to learn more about?
4. Do you have enough time to complete these activities?
5. Did you have any difficulty understanding the instructions for the activities?
6. How did you feel the first time you posted on the group?
 - Did this change?
7. Do you feel that you can use/apply what you have practiced in the club with other people?

PGL support (3 mins)

1. Do you think you have enough information and support from the PGL?
2. Are there any areas in which the PGL can give you more help?
3. Did you feel comfortable asking the PGL to clear your doubts?
4. Any other comments or feedback?

Digital literacy (3 mins)

1. Do you know how to record your voice/click picture?
2. Did you have any problems viewing the images and videos?
3. Did you understand where you had to click to watch the video? If not, why not?
4. Did you face any difficulty in understanding the activity because the image was not clear?

General feedback (2 mins)

1. Overall, would you want any of your friends to become a part of this club?
2. Did you feel that the EDGE WhatsApp group helped you meet new friends?
3. Can you give us 2 ideas/tips that will help us make this club better?
4. Did you have any difficulty in understanding the Child Protection Policy? Have you faced any challenge?

Appendix 2

English and digital test for PGL selection

Before the interview

Do you know why you are being interviewed?

Why do you want to be a PGL? (2 MINS) They can answer in their local language too.

Examiner script - Part 1a (about 1 min)

Material needed: Visual 1

Note: Back up questions, if needed, are in brackets.

Hello. Good morning! / afternoon! My name is..... What's your name? Candidate replies

Examiner shows the candidate Visual 1 (a picture of a red laptop, a blue mobile and 4 coloured pens) and says: *'Here is a picture of some objects!'*

Examiner's script	Back up questions, if needed
1. <i>Is there a mobile phone? Can you see a mobile phone?</i> The examiner may say, 'Good!'	What colour is it?
2. <i>There are some pens in the picture. Is there a black pen?</i>	
3. <i>How many pens are there?</i>	<i>Are there three pens?</i>
4. <i>What colour is the pen next to the black?</i>	

Part 1b (about 1 min 30 secs)

The examiner asks the following questions.

Examiner's questions	Back up questions, if needed
1. <i>How old are you?</i>	<i>Are you 14?</i>
2. <i>Do you have brothers and sisters?</i>	
3. <i>What is your friend's name?</i>	

4. <i>How old is she (he)?</i>	<i>Is she/he 16?</i>
5. <i>What do you have for breakfast?</i>	<i>Do you have (paratha) for breakfast?</i>
6. <i>Where do you live?</i>	<i>Do you live in (Delhi)?</i>
7. <i>What do you like doing in your free time?</i>	
8. <i>What job do you want to do?</i>	<i>Do you want to be a teacher?</i>

Part 2 (about 2 mins)

Material needed: Visual 2

The examiner shows the candidate Visual 2 and points at the speech bubbles to elicit questions. The examiner should reply with Nusrat's answers. The examiner says: *'Look at this picture. One person is you. And another girl is Nusrat. Ask her some questions.'*

Ask this question! The candidate should say, *'What's your name?'* Examiner says, *Nusrat.'*

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>Ask this question!</i> | The examiner says, <i>'I'm 15 years old'</i> |
| 2. <i>Ask this question!</i> | The examiner says, <i>'I have two brothers and a sister.'</i> |
| 3. <i>Ask this question!</i> | The examiner says, <i>'Her name is Ayesha'</i> |
| 4. <i>Ask this question!</i> | The examiner says, <i>'My favourite food is gulab jamun.'</i> |
| 5. <i>Ask this question!</i> | The examiner says, <i>'I get up at 6 in the morning.'</i> |
| 6. <i>Ask this question!</i> | The examiner says, <i>'I walk to school.'</i> |
| 7. <i>Now ask another question!</i> | The candidate asks any question. The examiner replies |

Part 3a (about 2 mins)

Material needed: Visual 3 or Visual 4 or Visual 5

The examiner chooses one of three pictures (Visual 3, 4 or 5) and asks the candidate to talk about it in response to prompts. Examiner points at different parts of the picture.

Examiner's questions	Back up questions, if needed
Examiner says, <i>' look at picture 3.'</i>	
1. <i>How many people are there?</i>	
2. <i>Where is it?</i>	<i>What place is this?</i>
3. <i>What is the person in the red shirt doing?</i>	
4. <i>Who is he/she?</i>	
5. <i>What is he/she wearing?</i>	<i>Is she wearing a shirt?</i>
6. <i>How is he (she) feeling?</i>	<i>Is she angry?</i>

7. Why?	
8. Tell me about the other people!	
9. Is there a bird in the room? What colour is it?	
10. What is happening?	
11. What did it / he/ she do?	
12. What is going to happen?	

Part 3b (maximum 2 mins)

Material needed: Visual 3 or Visual 4 or Visual 5

The examiner chooses another one of the three pictures (Visual 3, 4 or 5) and asks the candidate to talk about it more freely. Examiner says, 'Now tell me about this picture! The examiner should give the candidate thinking time, but if the candidate is silent after about 10 secs then he /she can prompt: "Tell me what you can see in the picture". After 2 mins the examiner says, 'That is the end of the test! Thank you. Goodbye! Examiner should now stop the recording and save the sound file. **N.B. The examiner may terminate the test before 2 mins if the candidate struggles.**

DIGITAL SKILLS

Now tell the candidate you will ask some questions related to their digital skills.

1. How confident are you in using the computer/laptop phone?

1= Least confident 5= very confident

1	2	3	4	5
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2. What do you use the computer for?

3. How confident are you in using social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook etc.?

1= Least confident 5= very confident

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4. How confident are you in using Zoom or Teams for an online meeting?

1= Least confident 5= very confident

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5. How confident are you in using google search to find information?

1= Least confident 5= very confident

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

6. How confident are you in using your phone?

1= Least confident 5= very confident

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

7. What do you use your phone the most for?
8. How confident are you in using the internet?
1= Least confident 5= very confident

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

9. What do you use WhatsApp for? What do you do on WhatsApp?
10. Do you use apps and websites to learn English? If yes, Which apps/websites do you use? YES/NO

SOCIAL SKILLS

Now tell the candidate you will ask some questions related to their social and leadership skills.

Say whether you agree or disagree.

1. I know what to say when I meet new people. A/D
2. I am comfortable sharing my views with others.
3. How confident do you feel about posting your answers and/or views on a WhatsApp group/club such as the EDGE club?
1= Least confident 5= very confident

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4. How much do you know about social issues and problems around you?
1= no awareness 5= a lot of awareness

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5. How has the EDGE programme helped you know about social issues?

Appendix 3

Sample activities



Social Skills Activity 3

EDGE WhatsApp club



Do you know how to be safe when using the internet?
Watch a video on cyber safety from Discovery Education UK.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMSHtE42mml>

After watching the video, complete the fill-ups on the main points from the video.

1. Keep _____ information safe.
2. People online are _____.
3. Ask before you _____.
4. Be _____.
5. Ask an _____.

Type your answers in the group chat before 9 pm today.

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Digital skills Activity 11

EDGE WhatsApp club



Look at the dialogue below. Then listen to the audio recording of the dialogues.



a Could I have some milk, please?



b Sure. Here you go.



c Could I have some tea, please?



d Sorry, I haven't got any.



e Would you like some water?



f Yes, please.

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English skills Activity 20

Think about one thing you like ✓ and one thing you dislike X about your favourite festival. Use the options in the table to make sentences.



	Like <u>पसंद</u>		Dislike <u>नापसंद</u>
My favourite festival is _____	I like _____	but	I don't like _____
	I prefer _____		I dislike _____
	I love _____		I don't prefer _____

E.g. **My favourite festival is Holi. I love** to play with colours during Holi, **but I don't like** wasting water !

Type your answers in the group chat before 7 pm today.

Appendix 4

Total +/- 15 mins

Introductory (2 mins)

1. What is your name?
2. Are you currently studying in a school/college? If yes:
 - Which grade are you in?
 - Does your school/college have online classes?
3. Is this your phone? If not:
 - whose is it?
 - Is it difficult to get time to use it?
4. What is EDGE? Can you tell me about the EDGE programme?
5. How do you feel being a PGL of this group?
 - What did you like about being part of the group?
 - Was there anything you didn't like so much?
6. What do you think about using WhatsApp for this type of activity?

Learning and experience (5 mins)

1. Did you like/ enjoy the activities posted on WhatsApp? If yes:
 - What did you like about them?
 - What did you not like about them?
2. Did the WhatsApp activities help you learn anything (new)? If yes, tell us more.
3. If we were to continue, what more would like to learn through such a group?
4. Did you have enough time to post/share these activities on your groups?
5. Did you have any difficulty understanding the instructions for the activities?
6. How did you feel the first time you posted on the group?
 - Did this change as weeks went by?
7. Do you feel that you can use/apply what you have practised/learnt in the club with other people?

Support (3 mins)

1. Did you attend the orientation and training online?
2. Did it help you play the role of a PGL better?
3. Who was your contact from the British Council?
4. Do you think you had enough information and support from British Council consultants?
5. Did you need more help from the consultant? If yes, in what way?
6. Did you feel comfortable asking the consultant to clear your doubts?
7. Did you have enough support from your DEF Centre Coordinator?
8. Any other comments or feedback?

Digital literacy (3 mins)

1. Do you feel confident about posting messages on a group?
2. Do you know how to record your voice/click picture?

- 
3. Did you have any problems viewing the images and videos?
 4. How confident do you feel using google search?
 5. Did you use any app or website during the programme?
 6. What else did you learn about using your phone? Any new features, apps?

General feedback (2 mins)

1. What did you learn from being a PGL on this group?
2. Can you give us two ideas/tips that will help to make this club better?
3. Did you have any difficulty in understanding the Child Protection Policy? Have you faced any challenge?

Any other comments?

Appendix 5

English and digital baseline and endline test for club members

Before you begin the test

Do you know why you are being interviewed?

Why do you want to be part of the EDGE WhatsApp club? (2 MINS) They can answer in their local language too.

Examiner script - Part 1a (about 1 min)

Material needed: Visual 1

Note: Back up questions, if needed, are in brackets.

Hello. Good morning! / afternoon! My name is..... What's your name? Candidate replies

Examiner shows the candidate Visual 1 (a picture of a red laptop, a blue mobile and 4 coloured pens) and says: *'Here is a picture of some objects!'*

Examiner's script	Back up questions, if needed
5. <i>Is there a mobile phone? Can you see a mobile phone?</i> The examiner may say, 'Good!'	What colour is it?
6. <i>There are some pens in the picture. Is there a black pen?</i>	
7. <i>How many pens are there?</i>	<i>Are there three pens?</i>
8. <i>What colour is the pen next to the black?</i>	

Part 1b (about 1 min 30 secs)

The examiner asks the following questions.

Examiner's questions	Back up questions, if needed
9. <i>How old are you?</i>	<i>Are you 14?</i>
10. <i>Do you have brothers and sisters?</i>	
11. <i>What is your friend's name?</i>	
12. <i>How old is she (he)?</i>	<i>Is she/he 16?</i>

13. <i>What do you have for breakfast?</i>	<i>Do you have (paratha) for breakfast?</i>
14. <i>Where do you live?</i>	<i>Do you live in (Delhi)?</i>
15. <i>What do you like doing in your free time?</i>	
16. <i>What job do you want to do?</i>	<i>Do you want to be a teacher?</i>

Part 2 (about 2 mins)

Material needed: Visual 2

The examiner shows the candidate Visual 2 and points at the speech bubbles to elicit questions. The examiner should reply with Nusrat's answers. The examiner says: *'Look at this picture. One person is you. And another girl is Nusrat. Ask her some questions.'*

Ask this question! The candidate should say, *'What's your name?'* Examiner says, *Nusrat.'*

8. *Ask this question!*

The examiner says, *'I'm 15 years old'*

9. *Ask this question!*

The examiner says, *'I have two brothers and a sister.'*

10. *Ask this question!*

The examiner says, *'Her name is Ayesha'*

11. *Ask this question!*

The examiner says, *'My favourite food is gulab jamun.'*

12. *Ask this question!*

The examiner says, *'I get up at 6 in the morning.'*

13. *Ask this question!*

The examiner says, *'I walk to school.'*

14. *Now ask another question!*

The candidate asks any question. The examiner replies

Part 3a (about 2 mins)

Material needed: Visual 3 or Visual 4 or Visual 5

The examiner chooses one of three pictures (Visual 3, 4 or 5) and asks the candidate to talk about it in response to prompts. Examiner points at different parts of the picture.

Examiner's questions	Back up questions, if needed
Examiner says, <i>' look at picture 3.'</i> 13. <i>How many people are there?</i>	
14. <i>Where is it?</i>	<i>What place is this?</i>
15. <i>What is the person in the red shirt doing?</i>	
16. <i>Who is he/she?</i>	
17. <i>What is he/she wearing?</i>	<i>Is she wearing a shirt?</i>
18. <i>How is he (she) feeling?</i>	<i>Is she angry?</i>
19. <i>Why?</i>	

20. Tell me about the other people!	
21. Is there a bird in the room? What colour is it?	
22. What is happening?	
23. What did it / he/ she do?	
24. What is going to happen?	

Part 3b (maximum 2 mins)

Material needed: Visual 3 or Visual 4 or Visual 5

The examiner chooses another one of the three pictures (Visual 3, 4 or 5) and asks the candidate to talk about it more freely. Examiner says, 'Now tell me about this picture! The examiner should give the candidate thinking time, but if the candidate is silent after about 10 secs then he /she can prompt: "Tell me what you can see in the picture". After 2 mins the examiner says, 'That is the end of the test! Thank you. Goodbye! Examiner should now stop the recording and save the sound file. **N.B. The examiner may terminate the test before 2 mins if the candidate struggles.**

You will receive a rating scale separately to arrive at a CEFR level for your candidates.

DIGITAL SKILLS

Now tell the candidate you will ask some questions related to their digital skills.

11. How confident are you in using the computer/laptop phone?

1= Least confident 5= very confident

1	2	3	4	5
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12. What do you use the computer for?

13. How confident are you in using social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook etc.?

1= Least confident 5= very confident

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

14. How confident are you in using google search to find information?

1= Least confident 5= very confident

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

15. How confident are you in using your phone?

1= Least confident 5= very confident

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

16. What do you use your phone the most for?

17. How confident are you in using the internet?

1= Least confident 5= very confident

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

18. What do you use WhatsApp for? What do you do on WhatsApp?

19. Do you use apps and websites to learn English? If yes, Which apps/websites do you use? YES/NO

SOCIAL SKILLS

Now tell the candidate you will ask some questions related to their social and leadership skills.

Say whether you agree or disagree.

6. I know what to say when I meet new people. A/D

7. I am comfortable sharing my views with others.

8. How confident do you feel about posting your answers and/or views on a WhatsApp group/club such as the EDGE club?

1= Least confident 5= very confident

1	2	3	4	5
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9. How much do you know about social issues and problems around you?

1= no awareness 5= a lot of awareness

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

10. How has the EDGE programme helped you know about social issues?

Appendix 6

End of project survey for club members

Total +/- 15 mins

Introductory (2 mins)

1. What is your name?

2. Are you currently studying in a school/college? If yes:

- Which grade are you in?
- Does your school/college have online classes?

3. Is this your phone? If not:

- whose is it?
- Is it difficult to get time to use it?

4. What is EDGE? Can you tell me about the EDGE programme?

5. How do you feel being part of this group?

- What did you like about being part of the group?
- Was there anything you didn't like so much?

6. What do you think about using WhatsApp for this type of activity?

Learning and experience (5 mins)

1. Did you like/ enjoy the activities posted on WhatsApp? If yes:

- What did you like about them?
- What did you not like about them?

2. Did the WhatsApp activities help you learn anything (new)? If yes, tell us more.

3. If we were to continue, what more would like to learn through this group?

-
4. Did you have enough time to complete these activities?
 5. Did you have any difficulty understanding the instructions for the activities?
 6. How did you feel the first time you posted on the group?
 - Did this change as weeks went by?
 7. Do you feel that you can use/apply what you have practised in the club with other people?

PGL support (3 mins)

1. Who was your PGL? Can you tell me her name?
2. Do you think you had enough information and support from the PGL?
3. Did you need more help from the PGL? If yes, in what way?
4. Did you feel comfortable asking the PGL to clear your doubts?
5. Any other comments or feedback?

Digital literacy (3 mins)

1. Do you know how to record your voice/click picture?
2. Did you have any problems viewing the images and videos?
3. How confident do you feel using google search?
4. Did you use any app or website during the programme?
5. What else did you learn about using your phone? Any new features, apps?

General feedback (2 mins)

1. Did you feel that the EDGE WhatsApp group helped you meet new friends?
2. Did the EDGE WhatsApp club help you learn something with your new friends?
3. Can you give us two ideas/tips that will help to make this club better?
4. Did you have any difficulty in understanding the Child Protection Policy? Have you faced any challenge?

Any other comments?

Appendix 7

Baseline and endline activity cards



EDGE WhatsApp club

Baseline activities: answer at least **three** questions

1. Tell us what you like and what you don't like **using full sentences**. (write about your favourite colour, favourite subject, favourite food, favourite game etc.)
2. What are these 😊 🤔 😞 called?
3. Leena is 😞 and 😊. How is she feeling?
4. Bullying someone means:
 - a. speaking politely to someone
 - b. helping someone
 - c. hurting or scaring someone
5. *Google search helps us find location on our phones.* True/False
6. *Girls and boys have equal rights to education.* True/False
7. To stay safe online, be _____ to others, not _____ strangers and not _____ on unknown websites.

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EDGE WhatsApp club

Endline activity answer minimum 3 questions.

1. **Introduce yourself using full sentences.** (Write about your name, age, favourite colour, favourite subject, favourite food etc).
2. **What are these 😊 😡 🙋 called?**
3. **Leena is feeling 😞 and 😞. How is she feeling?**
4. **Bullying someone means:**
 - a. Speaking politely to someone.
 - b. Helping someone.
 - c. Hurting or scaring someone.
5. **Google Search helps us find location on our phones.** True/False
6. **Girls and boys have equal rights to education.** True/False
7. **To stay safe online, be _____ to others, not _____ strangers, and not _____ on unknown websites.**

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