English and Digital for Girls' Education (EDGE) India

Pilot project report: Digital Empowerment Foundation

January – March 2016

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Contents

Acknowledgements

Cover photo: *EDGE club session, Kapashera*

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
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ILA	International Language Assessment
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
TC	Training Consultant

1. Executive summary

This report summarises project activities, key findings and the resulting recommendations of the English and Digital for Girls' Education (EDGE) India pilot project from January to March 2016 in five of Digital Empowerment Foundation's (DEF) Community Information Resource Centres (CIRCs) in Delhi and Alwar.

The pilot project was implemented to establish a proof of concept of the EDGE programme. The pilot enabled the identification of necessary adaptations to project structure and materials in order to suitably contextualise and increase ensuing project reach and impact. Overall, the pilot project achieved its aims and proves to be a valuable starting point for a long-term partnership between the British Council and DEF. With a strong presence across rural India catering to the needs of marginalised communities, CIRCs are appropriate locations for EDGE clubs.

In January 2016 comprehensive assessments of 93 participants were conducted before the implementation of a 40-hour course. Post-course assessments were conducted in March with 100 participants. Attendance sheets maintained throughout the course revealed participant numbers increased significantly albeit sporadically with several participants joining midway. However, this increase is not reflected in post-course data for three main reasons. Firstly, the course schedule coincided with school examinations causing irregular attendance. Secondly, due to implementation at short notice we were unable to run a rigorous engagement campaign with parents and community leaders. Participants therefore joined only after hearing about club activities from their friends. Thirdly, one batch in the Bahadurpur centre was discontinued almost immediately. Overcoming such challenges has enabled us envisage potential risks in the next phase and proactively plan to mitigate them.

Despite the relatively short duration of the pilot, there have been a number of significant successes including:

- Development of a sustainable safe space for adolescent girls to meet and interact with their peers, therefore contributing to the prevention of social isolation. In the rural communities where CIRCs operate, the prevailing cultural trend is for adolescent boys to be given more freedom and privileges. Girls, on the other hand, face greater restrictions for movement and social interaction. By providing adolescent girls safe spaces they were able *to have an outlet to freely express*

themselves and in so doing not only recognize their individuality, but also find their voice.[1]

- Leadership development of a small number of participants and in so doing establishing the basis for creating a cadre of Peer Group Leaders (PGLs) who will facilitate learning in EDGE clubs.

- Improvement of English and digital skills especially in the areas of confidence and vocabulary through interactive activities as shown in Picture 2 below. Post-course assessments showed a marked improvement in most centres. These are discussed in detail in section 6.

- The creation of an advocacy film documenting the context and relevance of EDGE clubs. This film is now available on the British Council website.[2] It is anticipated that the film will function to increase awareness about the issues addressed by the project and to leverage funding to increase scale and impact.

All this was possible due to excellent on-the-ground logistics, technology and administrative support through DEF colleagues, for example the WhatsApp group as shown in Picture 1 below. This is valuable and appreciated; particularly by the coordinators as the EDGE clubs are located in rural areas.

Picture 2: Flashcard activity, Mungaska
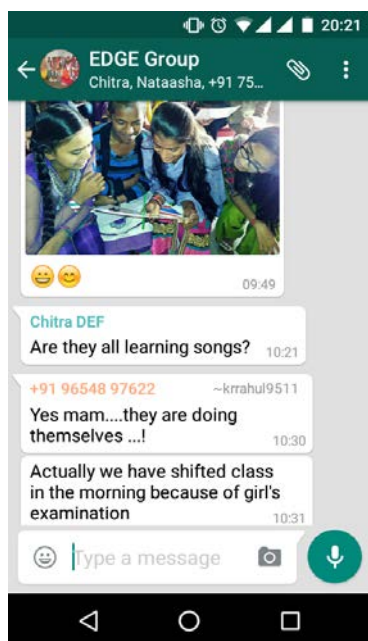
Picture 1: WhatsApp group for coordinators

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[1] www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/GE-2009-PW_Leadership.pdf
[2] www.britishcouncil.in/english-and-digital-girls-education-india

2. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been incorporated in the planning addressed for the next phase of the project. They are included here as a separate section so as to document learning and identify key differences between the pilot project and subsequent phases. The recommendations and lessons learnt from the project have been highlighted throughout the report are listed together here for ease of reference.

Recommendation 1

Conduct a rigorous exercise to identify and select Peer Group Leaders (PGLs) from within the participant group who will facilitate EDGE club activities. This will ensure that capacity is being built for sustainability and long-term development of both the participants and EDGE clubs.

Action: A comprehensive regional PGL selection plan is being designed by colleagues in Bangladesh. This will be shared with DEF for implementation.

Recommendation 2

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.

Action: Community events such as ICT fairs are included in the next phase. It is anticipated that DEF will conduct the fairs with support from British Council.

Recommendation 3

Provide adequate devices within the clubs so as to meet a ratio of 1:6 computers to participants. In addition, the provision of headphones will ensure that listening exercises can be properly completed.

Action: The feasibility of this will be discussed prior to the next phase of the project.

Recommendation 4

Give access to a greater variety of self-access print and digital materials for participants for the development of their reading skills in particular and familiarity with English in general.

Action: We have identified a range of readers and the feasibility of this will be discussed prior to the next phase of the project. Self-access digital materials will be provided via applications.

Recommendation 5

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.

Action: this is included in the implementation and project plan for the next phase.

Recommendation 6

In order to have legitimacy in the area of empowering adolescent girls, ensure that all coordinators are women who will be mentors and role models for the girls. *Mentoring can play an important role in developing confidence, improving academic ability and avoiding unhealthy situations.*[3] In addition, this would allow parents to feel more comfortable sending their girls to the EDGE clubs and work towards ensuring their regular attendance.

Action: DEF to explore feasibility of appointing female coordinators.

Recommendation 7

Ensure that all venues are safe spaces which *help girls have an outlet in which to share ideas and learn from each other*.[4] At Chandoli, an additional batch was started at a learner's home for the same reason. This is not an ideal solution. Key criteria for safe spaces are accessibility, physical protection, well-defined rules for visitors and the presence of caring adults.

Action: The EDGE project team has designed a venue checklist to be followed and overseen by both parties.

Recommendation 8

Strengthen the area of Child Protection. This includes more stringent procedures in the areas of reporting and dealing with issues of disclosure, implementing a strict Code of Conduct and installing safety measures on all devices at CIRCs.

Action: Points to be implemented as outlined in the Child Protection consultant's report.

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[3] CARE. Women's Empowerment Global Research Framework. New York: 2006
[4] www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/GE-2009-PW_Leadership.pdf

3. Purpose of the pilot project

In December 2015 the British Council approached DEF to discuss the possibility of conducting a small-scale project in CIRCs to enable the planning and implementation of the British Council's regional EDGE programme, in India thus extending its reach beyond Bangladesh and Nepal.

The aim of the pilot project was to:

- establish a proof of concept which is that after-school,[5] non-formal, peer-led, community-based clubs are appropriate vehicles for empowering adolescent girls from marginalised communities
- use the LearnEnglish for Schools offline package to develop English and digital skills in a self-access learning environment
- support the aforementioned resources with the use of interactive flashcards and games to develop speaking skills (mediated by coordinators) and to build confidence in using English for communication
- test and trial new materials as they were being developed
- conduct regular monitoring and Child Protection activities to meet agreed standards
- gather information to guide the design of future phases and identify necessary adaptations to strengthen and improve project structure, delivery and materials.

The majority of aims were achieved particularly those in the areas of training, course delivery, and Child Protection consultation. Key areas that remain to be strengthened are: the selection and training of PGLs, the trial of new materials and action points from the Child Protection consultation. The reason for these aims being partially unmet is the tight timelines of the project, the course schedule coinciding with school examinations and unavoidable delays in the development of new materials. We have incorporated all these in the next phase of EDGE.

A significant output of the pilot project was the production of a short advocacy film[6] which will be used to raise awareness about the programme on a global scale and with funding and other implementation partners.

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[5] While some of the participants may have dropped out of school prior to joining the club, and centres may be open throughout the day, we would like to make this distinction as the EDGE programme is not intended to replace school.
[6] www.britishcouncil.in/english-and-digital-girls-education-india

4. Project activities

Given below is a summary of activities leading up to and during the pilot project. In addition, the project team kept in close contact via email and text messages to ensure activities on the ground ran smoothly.

Dates	Activity	Location
9 December 2015	Scoping visit including venue reconnaissance and parent and learner focus discussions	CIRC Chandoli
12 January 2016	Pilot project agreement signed	New Delhi
14 – 15 January	Training of coordinators	DEF Head Office, Kalu Sarai, New Delhi
19 January	Creation of WhatsApp group for on-going support for coordinators	-----
21 – 22 January	Child Protection consultation and workshop for DEF and British Council staff	CIRC, Chandoli British Council Office, New Delhi
19 – 20 January	Pre-course assessments	New Delhi: Kapashera and Wazirabad Alwar: Chandoli, Bahadurpur, Mungaska
25 January	Installation of LearnEnglish for Schools content on CIRC devices Beginning of pilot course	New Delhi: Kapashera and Wazirabad Alwar: Chandoli, Bahadurpur, Mungaska
17 – 18 February	Filming of advocacy video	New Delhi: Kapashera
17 – 20 March	Post-course assessments	New Delhi: Kapashera and Wazirabad Alwar: Chandoli and Mungaska
6 – 8 May	Distribution of course completion certificates	New Delhi: Kapashera and Wazirabad Alwar: Chandoli and Mungaska

Table 1: EDGE pilot project activity schedule

5. Pilot course details

5.1. Set-up and initial training

The pilot project developed the capacity of existing coordinators and trainers at the five identified CIRCs. They received two days of face-to-face initial training by the British Council on delivering the EDGE programme. Details are in Appendix A. Through the course, project team members from DEF and the British Council kept in touch with coordinators through WhatsApp which ensured continuous support.

The components of the 40-hour programme included activities on the LearnEnglish for Schools package, an accompanying workbook, a set of 20 flashcards and games and the *New Headway Beginner Workbook* (for self-access learning).

Due to the non-formal, flexible nature of the EDGE project, we wanted to ensure that the course schedule and batch timings were decided democratically by coordinators and club participants while not compromising on quality and rigour. Depending on the availability of participants at each centre, they could select a suitable option and timings so that coordinators could organise batches accordingly.

To that end, we designed two timetable options for delivery of the 40-hour programme:

- Option 1 – 20 sessions of 2 hours each, three days a week
- Option 2 – 40 sessions of 1 hour each, six days a week

A typical EDGE club would begin with a flashcard activity followed by the completion of pre-specified activities from the LearnEnglish for Schools package and end with a game. While this format was flexible, by the end of March coordinators were expected to complete all 20 flashcards and games and the 178 activities from the LearnEnglish for Schools package that were selected to form this pilot course.

5.2. Overview of learning assessments

As shown in Appendix B, a diverse range of instruments were used to measure different aspects of the pilot project. These included focus group discussions, session observations (post-course only) and interviews. Taken together, they provide a comprehensive picture with both qualitative and quantitative data. The assessments aimed to:

- track the progress of the participants during the pilot project
- measure the impact of the pilot programme on participants' English language and digital skills

- assess the capacity of the coordinators to fulfil the responsibilities of their role in EDGE clubs
- review the format and structure of the future materials based on feedback from relevant stakeholders
- identify a potential roadmap for the implementation of the next phase.

Shown in Table 1 below are the details of the administered assessments. It must be noted that participants were assessed before the course at five centres, and on completion at four. This is because one batch, in Bahadurpur, Alwar, was discontinued due to poor attendance.

Name of instrument	Number of respondents	
	Alwar	Delhi
Learner interview (pre-course only)	52	41
LearnEnglish for Schools written test	Pre-course – 52 Post-course – 47	Pre-course – 41 Post-course – 36
Computer familiarity and attitudes survey	Pre-course – 52 Post-course – 47	Pre-course – 41 Post-course – 36
Learner Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	Pre-course – 1 FGD (7 participants) 2 FGDs (8 and 15 participants)	Post-course only - 2 FGDs (12 and 13 participants)
Session observation and coordinator interview (post-course only)	2	2

Table 2: Learning assessments

5.3. Administration of learning assessments

All assessments were administered by trained and standardised Training Consultants and/or the EDGE Project Coordinator. In all cases, they were accompanied by representatives from Digital Empowerment Foundation.

The team visited EDGE clubs in CIRCs where they administered written tests and computer familiarity surveys, conducted oral assessments and focus group discussions and interviews with participants and coordinators. Oral assessments were conducted with pairs of girls in order to allow them to support each other during the interview. The detailed schedule of visits is shown in Appendix D.

5.4. Limitations of learning assessments and administration

While every care was taken to conduct thorough and comprehensive pre- and post-course assessments, we recognise that there are some limitations.

- Participants' ages varied greatly: from 10 to 23 years. This diversity meant that cognitive abilities differed and younger participants tended to ask for help during assessments. While help was provided with the survey, they were asked to work independently on the written test, which was also time bound. Patterns of incorrect answers and identical incorrect responses on the written test suggest that there may have been some copying between participants, despite procedures to mitigate this.

- Many of the participants who participated in pre-course assessments either never joined the course or dropped out of the course after joining and weren't present during post-course assessments, and the EDGE club at Bahadurpur closed down. This reduced our sample size thereby limiting our ability to estimate the overall learning of participants. In addition, several participants joined the course after pre-course assessments and while they were present for post-course assessments we are unable to track their progress, as there is no pre-course data to measure against.

- All the EDGE clubs had completed the 40 hour pilot course before post-course assessment visits so the sessions observed may not have been entirely representative of all EDGE club sessions. The coordinators chose to demonstrate activities they had already conducted which meant that participants knew the answers and the session was a revision of familiar work.

- No computers were used in two centres in the post-course session observations as there were power cuts. This meant that TCs were unable to assess the participants' level of comfort and familiarity with the core aspect of the course – the LearnEnglish for Schools package.

Learning from conducting these assessments has informed the design of monitoring and evaluation tools for the next phase.

6. Pilot course evaluation: results

6.1. Participants: assessments and surveys

The average age of the participants was 14.7 years, the youngest being 10 years old and the oldest at 23. The girls had a very varied formal education background – one has only studied up to Class 7; most (74 of 100) are still in school ranging from Class 5 to Class 10; some (16 of 100) are in high-school in Classes 11 and 12; only three girls are pursuing a Bachelor's degree. It is interesting to note that girls in the same age group are not necessarily in the same class. For example, one participant from Mungaska is 17 years old and in Class 6 (where the average age is 12-13), while one from Wazirabad is 11 years old and in Class 8 (where the average age is 13-14).

6.1.1. Oral assessment

Interviews were conducted with pairs of participants as part of pre-course assessments at five CIRCs. A total of 93 candidates were tested. These were conducted entirely in English based on the International Language Assessment (ILA) and were used to map candidates' spoken English ability onto the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as shown below. CEFR descriptors are found in Appendix E.

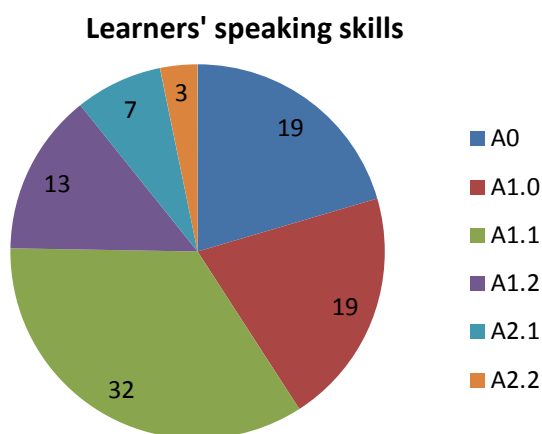**Learners' speaking skills**

Chart 1: Oral assessment - CEFR

Most participants who scored A0 on the oral assessment could state their name, age and class – but only in one format: *My name is ……, I am …….years old, I read in class …….* They were unable to alter these responses indicating that they had memorised their personal introductions. Several participants who had scored A1.1 could understand

questions about personal information but replied mostly in Hindi, with the odd English word or phrase thrown in. Reports from TCs included comments like the following:

Could not understand 'How old are you? / What is your age?'

Didn't know how to say chacha *in English. Could not understand most questions*

The interview also gave us an opportunity to identify potential PGLs based on their confidence and ability to respond. Twelve girls were identified, the most (five) being in Kapashera. Although their language levels were not very high they were described as confident and enthusiastic. Some examples of comments from TCs are:

Could answer in short sentences; can describe past activities and personal experiences in short sentences, could easily make comparisons but in short sentences. Fit to be a peer leader. (Code MU12[7], 16, Mungaska)

Understood most questions and tried to respond in broken sentences, has potential to be a peer leader. (Code CH5, 18, Chandoli)

It is pertinent to note that participant MU12 did in fact assist with club sessions as reported by the club coordinator during the post-course assessment visit revealing that the TC's assessment was accurate. Nevertheless, a more thorough method of identifying PGLs is being designed and this was only used as an exploration into whether we could implement the PGL model with these groups. Moreover, due to the tight schedule of the pilot project, we were not able to develop their skills further during this phase.

Reports from TCs and a study of the resulting scores questioned the reliability of the ILA for the EDGE learner profile. Questions were entirely oral, with no visual prompts so no 'help' for participants. The lack of fresh starts also prevented candidates from recovering after setbacks in previous sections. We therefore decided not to use the ILA for post-course assessments and regional colleagues designed a contextually relevant speaking test which was trialled in two CIRCs in May 2016. This test will now be finalised and used in future phases of EDGE.

6.1.2. LearnEnglish for Schools written test

A multiple-choice test was designed based on the content of the LearnEnglish for Schools package. It gauges test-takers' knowledge of basic grammar and vocabulary

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[7] Details in Appendix C. Due to data protection compliance, participant records have been anonymised in this report. The EDGE project team has all candidate records.

and consists of eighteen question arranged in order of increasing difficulty. The test was scored out of 99.

Participants were given the test during pre- as well as post-course assessments, in order to track and measure their progress over the period of the EDGE programme. As shown in Table 3 below, 93 participants were tested in pre-course and 81 post-course. A total of 53 participants were present on both days when TCs conducted the pre- and post-course assessments. There was a marked improvement in total scores and the overall average with Mungaska taking the lead with an increase of 19.6 marks. Wazirabad, however, improved only marginally and shows that this CIRC needs significant support in future phases.

Location of centre	Number Pre-course	Number Post-course	New	Pre- and post	Average scores - pre	Average scores - post	Difference
Bahadurpur	13	**Batch discontinued**					
Chandoli	11	15	9	6	31.6	46.8	15.2
Mungaska	28	31	4	16	45.8	65.4	19.6
Kapashera	20	22	3	19	57.8	68.2	10.4
Wazirabad	21	13	1	12	51.3	57.0	5.7
Total	**93**	**81**	**17**	**53**	**186.5**	**237.4**	**50.9**

Table 3: Pre- and post-course written assessment score comparison

Isolation of the scores of the 53 participants who did both the pre- and post-course tests paints a very positive picture as shown in Chart 2 below. In the pre-course, the majority of the participants (43%) scored in the 41–60 range. This dropped to 13 in the post-course where the majority of participants (52%) scored in the 61–80 range. This is a significant improvement in a 40-hour course. As shown in Appendix C, in most cases there was at least a marginal improvement in scores with a participant in Mungaska (Code MU3) taking the biggest leap from 34 in the pre-course to 70.5 in the post-course (+36.5 marks). However, nine participants scored less in the post-course than the pre-course. Reasons for this will need to be investigated.

Written scores - pre- and post-course
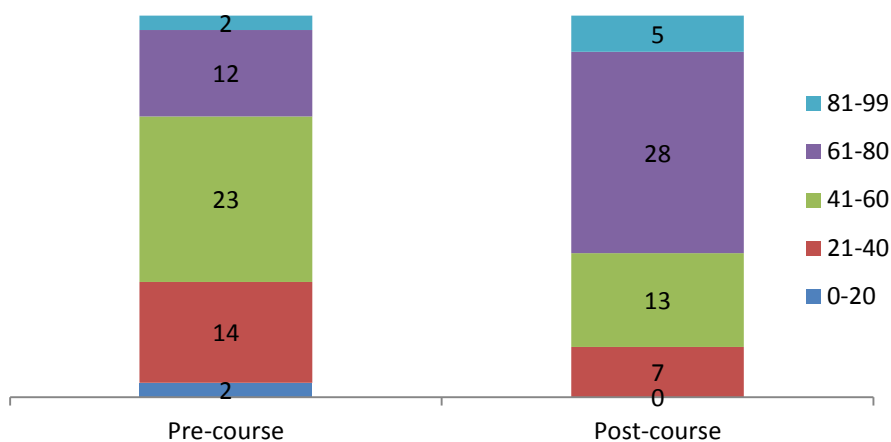
Chart 2: Comparison of scores

6.1.3. Computer familiarity survey

In order to determine participants' use of and attitudes to Information and Communications Technology (ICT), a brief survey was translated into Hindi and administered as individual questionnaires. Responses were collated as a group. Before the pilot programme a total of 93 participants completed the survey and a total of 81 after the course. Results from Bahadurpur (13) are not included and only the results of the participants who completed both the pre- and post-course assessments are shown here. Hence percentages are used to describe the data.

Computer usage is limited with 79% reporting that when they do use computers it is at the CIRCs. Most do not have computers at home but they all enjoying using them.

As shown in Chart 3 below, when a comparison is made in survey results between pre- and post-course, the frequency with which participants use computers has risen significantly. At total of 49% say they use computers either every day or almost every day as against a total of 19% in the pre-course. The last column (Rarely/ Never) shows a positive trend with fewer participants from 18% in the pre-course saying they rarely or never use computers to 45% in the post-course showing that indeed participants are using computers more frequently.

How often do you use computers?
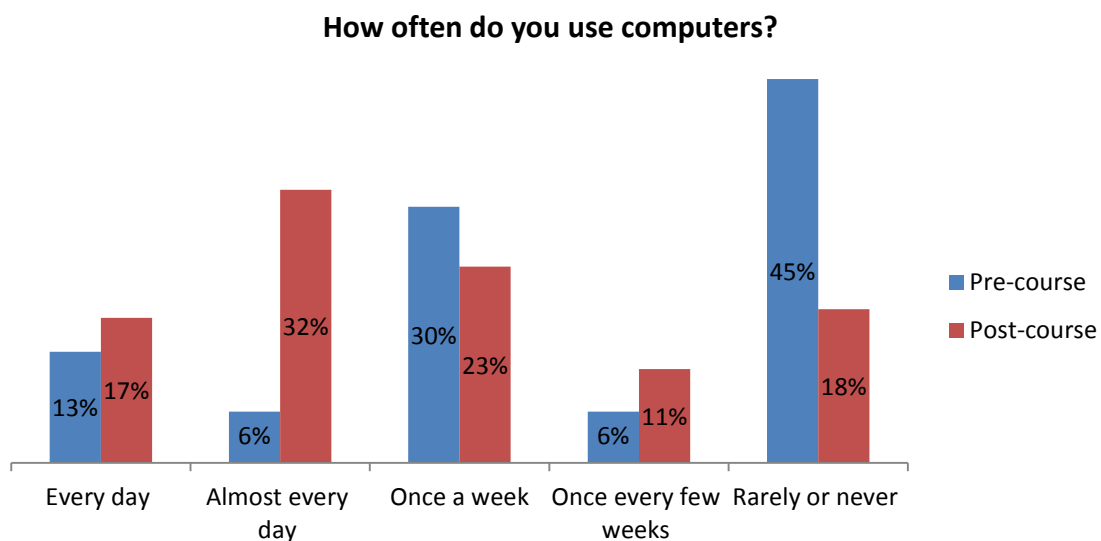
Chart 3: Frequency of using computers

Picture 3: EDGE club in session, Mungaska

The participants were asked to assess themselves on how confident they felt about doing various tasks on the computer. As shown in Chart 4 below, confidence levels have noticeably increased. In the pre-course survey, 54% of participants said they were either confident or very confident while using a mouse. This increased to 72% post course. Similarly, 40% in the pre-course rose to 58% saying that they were either confident or very confident in using a touch pad. 52% increased to 69% who said they were either confident or very confident when playing games on the computer. Notably, in all three tasks, participants the area 'I've never tried it' reduced considerably – from 28%, 41% and 32% to 10%, 21% and 15% when using a mouse, using a touch pad and playing games respectively.

It must be noted that this data is clearly very preliminary in terms of the participants' expertise with using computers. Future phases will build on this increase in confidence using hardware to develop skills in using software packages.
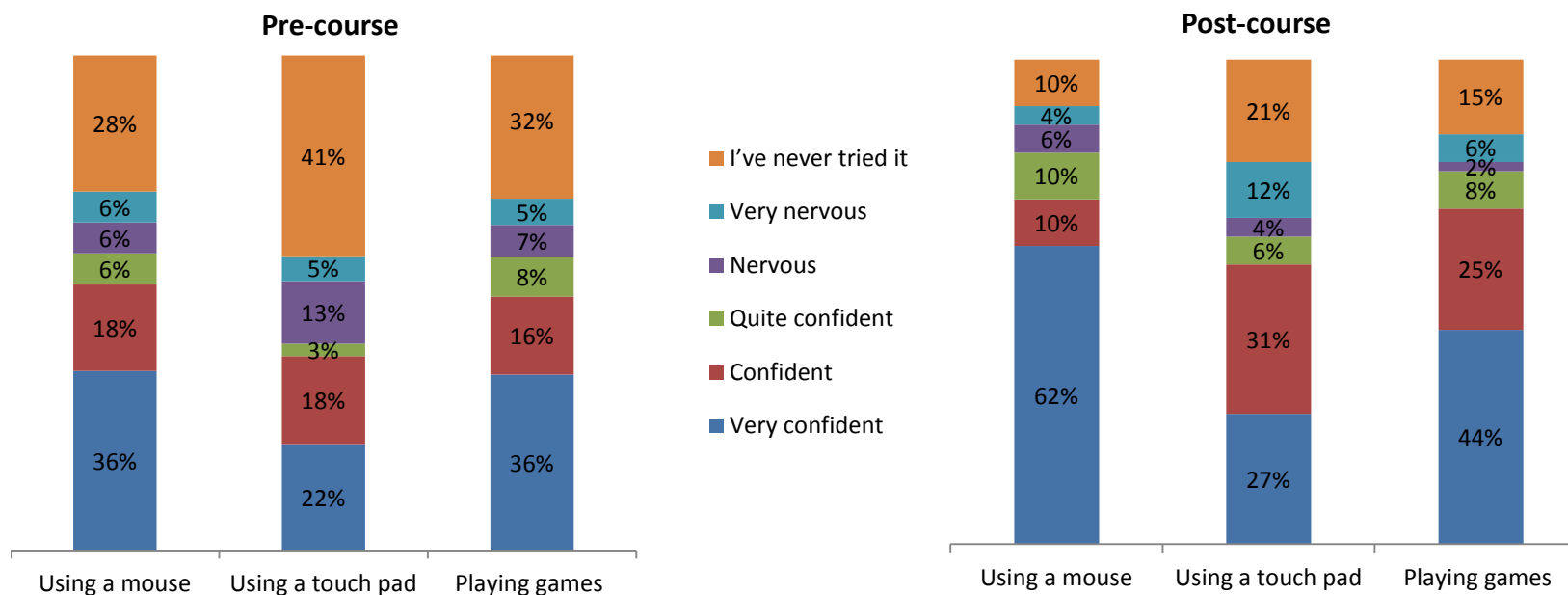
Chart 4: Self-reported confidence using computers: pre- and post-course

6.2. Post-course session observations, focus groups and interviews

6.2.1. EDGE club session observations

Included in the post-course assessment were observations of EDGE club sessions. These were not intended as an evaluation, but to see how these were conducted to inform the development of training material for future phases. This approach was adopted due to three main reasons. Firstly, there was no baseline to measure against as none of the coordinators had ever facilitated such clubs before. Secondly, the short duration and tight schedule of the course did not allow for a refresher training midway to remind coordinators of the skills they needed. Finally, of the five coordinators who were trained directly by the British Council before the course, only two continued through to the end. Given these circumstances, it would not have been fair to conduct an evaluation. Nonetheless, the observations were extremely valuable in highlighting areas that need strengthening in future phases of the EDGE programme.

As shown in Table 4 below, across the four centres there are significant differences between the number of participants (8-18), computer:learner ratio, and methods of delivery (female coordinators were reported to praise and encourage participants more than the male coordinators). Similarities are that all centres have completed the EDGE course (albeit using different options), none of them demonstrate activities before setting them as tasks for participants and in only one session was English used to communicate with the coordinator. As one TC wrote:

95% L1 used during the session except language read out from the flashcard (both – coordinator and participants).

	Chandoli	Kapashera	Mungaska	Wazirabad
Observer name	Adib Modak	Arun Ganapathy	Gayatri Natrajan	Kunal Sharma
Date	20 March	17 March	20 March	28 March
Start time	10:53 AM	2:05 PM	12:00 PM	2:40 PM
End time	11:16 AM	3:15 PM	12:50 PM	3:30 PM
Number of participants	15	23	8	18
PART 1 – SESSION OBSERVATION				
1. General information[8]				
Computers are used	✗	✓	✓	✗
Computer to learner ratio is at least 1:3	✓	✗	✗	✗

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[8] In all these cases, the answers relate to the observed session alone.

LE for Schools is used	✖	✓	✓	✖
Name of activity:	N/A	I can run Incy-Wincy Spider	We're going to the zoo	N/A
LE for Schools workbook is used	✖	✖	✖	✖
Name of activity:	N/A		They have completed the book	Workbook can't be used without DVD
Flashcards are used	✓	✓	✓	✓
Name of activity:	Parts of the body	Weather	Animals Colours Family Numbers Green habits	Parts of the body Sports Jobs ABC
Games are played	✓	✓	✓	✓
Name of activity:	Parts of the body		Jobs, Cooking	Parts of the body, Sports, Jobs, ABC
Additional materials		British Council website		
2. Methodology				
The coordinator…				
gives clear instructions in English	✖	✓	✖	✓
follows the EDGE timetable	✖	✓	✓	✖
Option:	N/A	2	2	N/A
demonstrates activities clearly	✗	✗	✗	✗
praises and encourages the participants	✗	✗	✓	✓
follows the session plan	Partially	✗	Partially	✗
The participants …				
work in pairs / groups	✓	✓	✗	✓
use English with the coordinator	✗	✗	✗	✓
use English with each other	Partially	✗	✗	✓
Additional information:				
Regular attendance	6	20	About 25	18 (5 participants dropped out due to exams)
Number of completed sessions	40	20	40	20
Option:	1	2	2	1
Have you completed the pilot course?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 4: EDGE club observation session

6.2.2. Focus group discussions

TCs conducted FDGs with randomly selected participants to find out about their opinions of the EDGE materials and the clubs in general. Interactions lasted about 45 minutes with a total of 48 participants. Participants were between 10 to 19 years and six are not in school. EDGE clubs started between 17 January and 8 February, and depending on which option was selected, clubs met weekly for one hour six days or for two hours three days. Because CIRCs are located in the community, participants could drop in any time and some reported having extra practice lessons on Sundays.

In general the participants enjoyed EDGE clubs because of the opportunity to learn both English and computer skills. The songs and games on the LearnEnglish for Schools package were particularly popular. In order to gain a picture of typical EDGE clubs, the participants were asked to describe them and it was evident that coordinators had followed the structure and format as instructed in their pre-course training. It was also evident that they shared an excellent rapport with their coordinators. As the EDGE Project Coordinator wrote:

The girls at Mungaska call their coordinator, Shehnaz Khan, 'Bhabhi' indicating their high level of comfort with and trust in her.

Although the participants are from rural, conservative backgrounds they did not report facing any challenges in attending EDGE clubs. At Chandoli, however, the group revealed that six participants were forbidden by their parents from coming to the CIRC. As a result, the coordinator conducted EDGE clubs at a learner's home. However this is not an ideal solution as it raises serious potential concerns with respect to adhering to Child Protection standards.

Participants self-reported an improvement in confidence and English vocabulary. They were particularly proud of now being able to have short conversations in English such as asking and telling the time, talking about the weather and their daily routine and understanding some phrases in TV shows.

Most participants do not own computers and their only access is at CIRCs. In fact, for several participants their first interaction with computers was at EDGE sessions. Despite this, many reported increased confidence when operating a computer because they have had time to practise.

Learners unanimously said that they would like EDGE clubs to continue. Many were keen to receive a certificate on course completion to use for employment purposes. In

addition, many were encouraged to hear about the PGL model as they could then help their peers.

6.2.3. Coordinator interviews

Coordinators were asked about their roles and responsibilities and all demonstrated clarity in definition and a clear communication of expectations by DEF colleagues: their primary responsibility to deliver the EDGE course and facilitate interactive activities in club sessions Male coordinators had the added responsibility of building trust and rapport with parents due to cultural barriers and a mistrust of male teachers. Given these challenges, it is commendable that the two male coordinators have completed the entire course in their centres. Additionally, DEF colleagues responded rapidly to this need and assigned female coordinators in two centres. Irrespective of gender, all coordinators said they had enjoyed the experience.

Coordinators were asked if this role contributed to their own professional development and if the EDGE pilot course has helped them develop their English and IT skills. One coordinator is doing her B.Ed. and said this was 'good practice'. Most felt that the experience of facilitating clubs has developed their confidence in English but did not report any improvement in ICT skills. The next phase of the EDGE programme needs to include more input and development opportunities for coordinators.

All the coordinators reported that the club members had enjoyed the EDGE course. At first the participants were shy and reticent but this is no longer the case. The 'fear of English' had reduced evidenced in the increase in the number of questions being asked in club sessions. Another positive impact was the development of social skills. Through the club format, the participants learnt to work together, support each other and some have developed leadership skills. In addition to the excellent results on the written test, some learners told their coordinators that they are now able to understand their school English textbooks better.

Among the difficulties faced, coordinators said explaining words and phrases without always resorting to translation was particularly challenging. In some cases, learners found topics too easy. The next phase of EDGE needs to include more techniques for coordinators (and PGLs) for the difficulties identified.

7. Conclusion

A study states that 'on the whole, adolescent girls in developing countries spend less time in school than boys, perform a disproportionate share of domestic work, have less mobility outside the home and fewer acceptable public spaces for leisure activity, and claim fewer friends, mentors, and social outlets'.[9] This report confirms the relevance of after-school, peer-led clubs for adolescent girls, particularly in marginalised communities. They are, sometimes, the girls' only outlet and respite from the social challenges they face.

A striking feature of the EDGE pilot project is the positive and enthusiastic response of the participants to the course content, material and structure and the measurable impact this course has had on them. The format helped give the participants confidence and developed their social skills as well, leading to impressive overall progress.

We look forward to working with Digital Empowerment Foundation to implement a comprehensive, long-term and sustainable programme to empower the next generation of women in India.

Picture 4: EDGE club, Kapashera

[9] Levine, R., C. Lloyd, M. Greene, and C. Grown. *Girls Count: A Global Investment & Action Agenda.* Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, 2008.

BRITISH COUNCIL

Appendix A: Initial training schedule and activities

The training outcomes are for the participants to:

- understand the pilot project aims, purpose and structure
- become familiar with the content and structure of the LearnEnglish for Schools DVD
- become familiar with 20 flashcards (and their language content)
- become familiar with 20 game tasks
- practise and extend instructional and facilitative English language
- micro-teach in groups and give and receive feedback from their peers

Day 1		
10:00 - 10:15	Welcome and outline of training	Trainer
10:15 - 10:45	Introduction to the pilot project	Trainer-led > Discussion in groups
10:45 – 13:00 (including a 15-min tea break)	LearnEnglish for Schools DVD	Trainer-led > Participants try out selected activities and feed back
13:00 – 13:45	Lunch	
13:45 – 14:45	Introduction to flashcards	Trainer-led > Participants try out in groups, feed back
14:45 – 15:00	Tea break	
15:00 – 16:00	Introduction to games	Trainer-led > Participants try out in groups, feed back
16:00 – 16:30	Day 1 wrap-up	Trainer / Participants quiz each other on content

Day 2		
10:00 - 10:30	Q&A	Trainer-led – reflection on previous day's work
10:30 - 11:00	Facilitating EDGE clubs	Trainer-led > Discussion in groups
11:00 - 11:15	Tea break	
11:15 - 11:45	Preparing for micro-teaching	Participants work in pairs
11:45 – 13:00	Micro-teaching	Participants micro-teach each other
13:00 – 13:45	Lunch	
13:45 – 14:45	Reflection on micro-teaching	Trainer-led
14:45 – 15:15	Facilitating EDGE clubs - challenges and solutions	Poster activity
15:15 -15:30	Tea break	
15:30 – 16:00	What next?	Discussion about next steps, support and schedule

Appendix B: Methodology and approach

Stakeholder	Data collection method	Tools	Sample size	Objectives
Learners	Interviews (quantitative)	Oral assessment (Pre-course only)	All learners enrolled	• Assess the language levels of the learners' spoken English
	Written test (quantitative)	LearnEnglish for Schools written assessment	All learners enrolled	• Assess learners' existing English language skills (grammar and vocabulary) with respect to the content on the LearnEnglish for Schools package
	Survey (qualitative and quantitative)	Computer familiarity and attitudes survey	All learners enrolled	• To find out about learners' previous experience and usage of computers • To discover self-reported levels of IT confidence and familiarity
	Focus groups (qualitative and quantitative)	Learner focus group	One FGD per centre with 10 - 12 participants	• Seek learners' feedback on the content • Discover how familiar learners are with content, material and format • Seek learners' input on the EDGE programme
Coordinators	Session observation (qualitative and quantitative) Interview (qualitative and quantitative)	Session observation Coordinator interview	All four coordinators	• Find out about delivery of the EDGE programme • Observe general EDGE club size and number of learners in a session • Seek coordinators' input on the EDGE programme

Appendix C: Learner details: both pre- and post-course assessments

Center	Code	Age	Class	Pre-course oral score	Pre-course score	Post-course score
Chandoli	CH1	17	9	A 0	25	44
	CH2	17	9	A 0	25	59
	CH3	15	12	A 0	29.5	37.5
	CH4	19	10	A 0	31.5	44
	CH5	18	BA - 1st Year	A1.1	36	59
	CH6	17	12	A 0	40	37.5
Kapashera	KA1	17	9	A1.1	36	34
	KA2	16	10	A1.2	46	63
	KA3	14	8	A2.1	47	72
	KA4	13	7	A 0	48	51
	KA5	14	8	A1.1	48	59
	KA6	15	8	A1.2	50	71
	KA7	13	7	A1.1	52	62
	KA8	15	10	A1.1	52	68
	KA9	13	7	A1.1	54	68
	KA10	13	6	A1.1	56	54
	KA11	20	BA - 2nd Year	A2.1	58	81
	KA12	17	10	A1.1	59	78
	KA13	15	10	A1.1	61	59
	KA14	14	9	A1.2	63	81
	KA15	13	8	A2.1	66	73
	KA16	16	11	A2.1	68	71
	KA17	13	6	A2.1	69	73
	KA18	16	11	A2.1	72	85
	KA19	17	10	A2.2	95	93
Mungaska	MU1	14	8	A1.1	26	61
	MU2	14	8	A 0	30	54
	MU3	14	9	A 0	34	70.5
	MU4	18	11	A1.1	35	53.5
	MU5	17	6	A 0	37	63

	MU6	15	8	A1.1	39	63.5
	MU7	15	11	A 0	42	66
	MU8	15	9	A1.1	42	69.5
	MU9	16	10	A1.1	43	74.5
	MU10	14	8	A1.1	50	79
	MU11	17	11	A1.1	51	55
	MU12	16	9	A2.2	57	64.5
	MU13	14	10	A1.1	58	72.5
	MU14	13	8	A1.1	60	63.5
	MU15	13	8	A2.1	63	66.5
	MU16	17	12	A1.2	66	71
	WA1	11	8	A1.1	10.5	30
	WA2	16	9	A1.1	15.5	33
	WA3	12	6	A1.0	26	39.5
	WA4	11	6	A1.0	43.5	58
	WA5	10	6	A1.0	50.5	39
Wazirabad	WA6	13	6	A1.1	51.5	61
	WA7	11	5	A1.0	52	47.5
	WA8	12	7	A1.1	64	75
	WA9	11	7	A1.0	71	63.5
	WA10	16	11	A1.2	73.5	74
	WA11	16	11	A1.2	76.5	73.5
	WA12	13	9	A1.2	81.5	91

Appendix D: Schedule of assessments: pre- and post-course

Pre-course assessments			
Location	**Date**	**Centre**	**Activities**
Alwar	19 January	Chandoli	• Oral assessment • LearnEnglish for Schools written test • Computer familiarity and attitudes survey
	20 January	Mungaska	
Delhi	20 January	Bahadurpur	
	19 January	Kapashera	
	19 January	Wazirabad	
Post-course assessments			
Location	**Date**	**Centre**	**Activities**
Alwar	20 March	Chandoli	• Session observation and Coordinator interview • Learner focus group • LearnEnglish for Schools written test • Computer familiarity and attitudes survey
	20 March	Mungaska	
Delhi	17 March	Kapashera	
	28 March	Wazirabad	

Appendix E: CEFR descriptors for informal speaking assessment[10]

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