



Building and Sustaining Girls' Networks

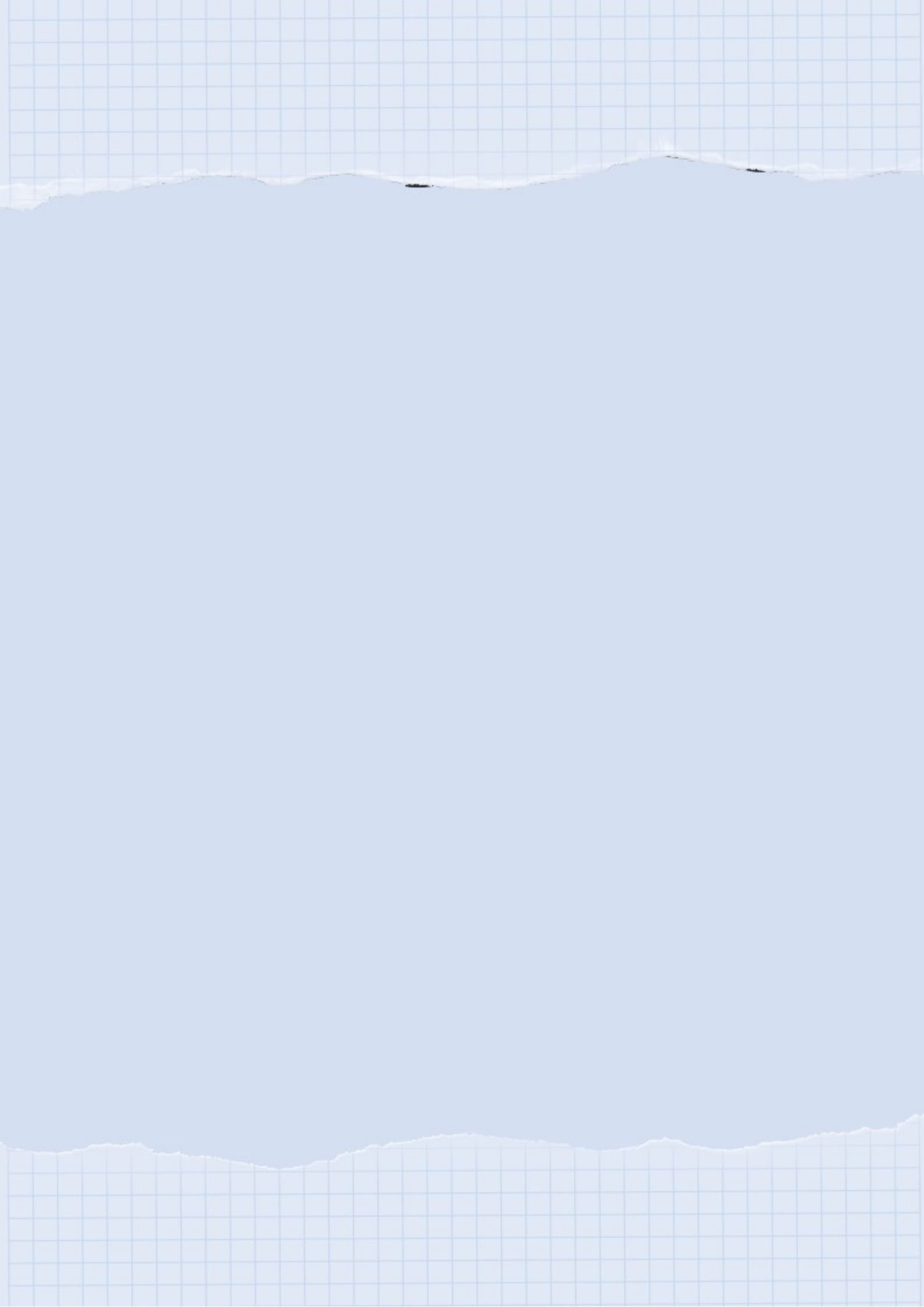
A Comprehensive Manual
for Implementation

POWER

4 Girls



FEMALE
LOUD - PROUD - FEMINISTS



Building and Sustaining Girls' Networks

A Comprehensive POWER4Girls' Manual for Implementation

Table of content

Table of content	2
List of sessions	5
Acknowledgements	6
Section 1: Introduction	7
Objective	8
Methodology	8
Limitations	9
Existing networks in Lebanon	9
How to use this manual	10
Structure	10
Considerations for using the manual	10
Section 2: Guidance on working with girls' networks	13
What is a girl's network?	15
Girls in emergency contexts	15
Core principles of working with girls' networks	15
Empowerment and agency	15
Navigating diversity	17
Avoiding tokenism	17
Preventing adultism	19
Managing power dynamics	19
Ensuring safe, girl-centered environments	21
Empowering leadership: Transitioning responsibilities from adults to girls	22
Creating trauma sensitive spaces	24
Tips for facilitation	25
• Responding to disruptive behavior during sessions	25
• Supporting girls facing self-doubt	26
• Facilitating fair and inclusive voting	26
• Managing conflict and interpersonal relationships	27
• Energizers and ice breakers	28

Section 3: Step-by-step guidelines on building the networks: 31

1 – Conceiving the network 32

Step 1 Involving and selecting the girls 32

- A. General considerations 32
 - a. Selecting members for the network 32
 - b. Addressing the challenges you might face while selecting the girls 33
- B. Step-by-step guidance 35
- C. Activities 36
- D. Additional considerations for emergency context 40

Step 2 Engaging with guardians 41

- A. General considerations 41
- B. Step-by-step guidance 41
- C. Activities 43
- D. Additional considerations for emergency context 46

2 – Setting up the network 47

Step 1 Establishing the network 47

1. Building trust 47

- A. General considerations 47
- B. Step-by-step guidance 47
- C. Activities 48

2. Setting the identity 60

- A. Step-by-step guidance 60
- B. Additional considerations in emergency contexts 61
- C. Activities 62

Step 2 Defining governance and developing the pace of the network 72

1. Choosing the structure 72

- A. General considerations 72
- B. Step-by-step guidance 73
- C. Structures comparative table 74

2. Creating the structure 76

- A. Step-by-step guidance 76
- B. Activities 77
- C. Additional considerations in emergency contexts 88

3. Assigning roles	89
A. Step-by-step guidance.....	89
B. Activities	90
4. Setting meetings schedule	97
A. Step-by-step guidance.....	97
B. Additional considerations in emergency contexts	97
Step 3 Kickstarting network initiatives	98
1. Choosing initiatives	98
A. General considerations.....	98
B. Step-by-step guidance	99
C. Additional considerations for emergency context.....	100
D. Activities	101
2. Defining work plans	106
A. Step-by-step guidance.....	106
B. Additional considerations for emergency context.....	107
C. Activities	108
Step 4 Phasing out	114
1. Supporting the Transition to Girl-Led Meetings.....	114
2. Planning for safe and accessible network spaces	115
Ongoing step: Evaluation	116
A. General considerations.....	116
1. Ongoing needs assessments.....	116
2. Evaluating projects and initiatives	116
B. Additional considerations for emergency context.....	117
3 – Sustaining the network	118
1. Continuous capacity and skills building	118
2. Broadening membership	119
3. Deciding on visibility	119
4. Sustaining motivation	120
5. Building partnerships	122
6. Incorporating mentorship	123
Challenges faced by girls' networks and their mitigation	124
Bibliography	125

List of sessions

Session with guardians	Introducing mothers to the girls network	43
Session 1	Building trust – Hero's journey & value exchange.....	48
Session 2	Building trust – Setting our values and norms.....	54
Session 3	Setting the identity – Agreeing on our vision and mission	62
Session 4	Setting the identity : Choosing the name.....	67
Session 5	Creating the structure.....	77
Session 6	Assigning the roles	90
Session 7	Choosing initiatives	101
Session 8	Defining the work plan	108



Acknowledgements

This manual would not have been possible without:

The direct contributions and feedback from adolescent girls engaged in UNICEF Programming across Lebanon

The in-depth knowledge from girls who were part of the networks' pilot phase

The UNICEF and FEMALE writing and review committee:

- Diala Ktaiche
- Fatima Jiwani
- Imane EL Hayek (Main author)
- Marwa Ershaidat
- May Abi Samra
- Nawal Ayad

The UNICEF partners and facilitators who piloted the manual and provided feedback leading to its final version:

- Amel Association International's facilitators and focal point Samah Hourri
- International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Lebanon's facilitator and focal point Mirella Abdo
- Lebanese Organization for Studies and Training (LOST)'s facilitators and focal point Fadia Ballouk
- Mouvement Social's facilitators and focal point Therese Jabrayan

Those who provided advice and guidance (UNICEF and FEMALE teams)

- Elias Al Maouchi
- Elise Yazbeck
- Ettie Higgins
- Fadia Chender
- Farah Nassar
- Giorgia Varisco
- Hanin Awde
- Hayat Mirshad
- Joane Cremesty
- Maha Muna
- Mariam Khodari
- Mira Al Bacha
- Wafaa Shahrour
- Zeina Merhi

We are also deeply grateful to the women and girls who participated in interviews and generously shared their experiences as part of this research process. Many preferred to remain unnamed, and we respectfully honor their choice and contributions.

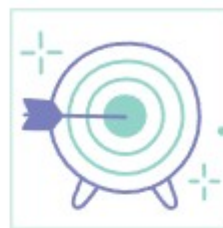
Section 1

Introduction



Objective

This document provides practical guidance for establishing and managing girls' networks in Lebanon following the completion of the POWER4GIRLS' Life Skills package¹ or any other similar life skill packages tailored for and with girls. It is part of the global UNICEF POWER4Girls' initiative aiming to accelerate at-scale action to advance the rights, wellbeing and leadership of adolescent girls, with the ambition to influence policy and programming work across the development-humanitarian ecosystem.



While initially developed by UNICEF and FEMALE² as part of the POWER4Girls' initiative, the strategies and tools outlined can also be adapted and applied to the creation of girls' networks more broadly. The manual aims to empower girls to lead gender equality initiatives, fostering their voices, power, and agency; and can serve as a resource for stakeholders looking to develop sustainable networks that support girls in similar contexts and regions.

Methodology

To develop this manual, research was conducted to better understand girls' networks, with a focus on Lebanon. This research adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining desk research and primary data collection to ensure a thorough understanding of the challenges and best practices in establishing and supporting girls' networks. The desk research involved reviewing existing guidelines, reports, and scholarly articles from organizations working with girls, as well as literature on feminist youth networks. This provided valuable insights into theoretical frameworks and strategies employed by similar organizations globally, allowing the research to build on established knowledge.



Primary data collection included consultations with leaders and facilitators involved in the life skills package. These consultations aimed to gather insights into their expectations, experiences, and the practical needs for developing a girls' network. The discussions focused on topics such as the timeline and duration of the project, team roles and dynamics, and facilitators' experiences in working with girls' activism and similar initiatives. These consultations also addressed potential challenges and solutions to ensure smooth implementation of the network, aligning the guidelines with the practical needs of the organizations while incorporating the aspirations of the girls.

In addition, interviews were conducted with organizations that are already running girls' networks, providing deeper understanding of their operational dynamics and success stories. These interviews also allowed for a closer look at the structural and organizational approaches adopted by existing networks. Lastly, interviews with women and girls participating in feminist youth networks in Lebanon were conducted, offering a valuable grassroots perspective on the needs, challenges, and aspirations of the target group.

After the first draft of the manual was developed, a pilot phase was implemented with 10 groups across four organizations and 4 governorates. Following this implementation, the manual was reviewed through multiple feedback channels: a survey shared with the facilitators, a one-day review workshop, and a feedback session conducted with eight of the participating groups. The feedback collected through these channels was compiled and analyzed to inform edits and adaptations to the manual, ensuring it reflected the practical experiences and suggestions of both facilitators and the girls involved in the building of the networks.

1 POWER4Girls Life Skills Package is a tailored UNICEF package for and with adolescent girls (11 to 18 years old). The package aims to equip girls with essential skills and knowledge to address harmful gender norms, increase their agency, leadership and safety from violence. It is made of a total of 21 sessions implemented twice per week over the course of 10 weeks and a half.

2 FEMALE is a community based non-profit grassroots feminist organization that works towards a just and safe world for women and girls in all their diversities through driving social-behavioral changes, movement building, knowledge production and dissemination, and policy reform. <https://www.fe-male.org/>

Limitations

The initial plan included consultations with the girls involved in the life skills package to ensure their voices would be reflected in the manual. However, due to the emergency context in which the manual was being written and delays in the timeline, it was not possible to gather input from these girls.



To mitigate this, the research incorporated multiple interviews with youth from other networks and focused on research related to girls' networking and activism, which largely centered on the voices of the girls themselves. Additionally, online platforms run by girls' networks were used as references to gain insight into their experiences and perspectives. This approach ensured that the voices of the girls remained central to the development of this document, despite the logistical challenges.

The review phase also had to take place before the groups completed their full implementation. As a result, the process was slightly premature, and it was not possible to create space for the girls to brainstorm collectively and provide more comprehensive feedback and practical recommendations. Instead, separate feedback sessions were conducted, which captured a range of perspectives. In some cases, the feedback was contradictory: sessions that were favorites for some groups were confusing or less effective for others. To address this, the manual includes notes and optional adaptations for specific sessions, allowing facilitators to tailor the content based on the different groups' dynamics and needs.

Existing networks in Lebanon

During the research phase, nine individuals involved in supporting girls' and youth networks in Lebanon were interviewed, including five young women/girls actively participating in these initiatives and four staff members from the organizations that support them. These networks varied in size, scope, and the age range of their members. They address a wide range of issues, including girls' and young women's leadership, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender-based violence (GBV), legal support for girls and women, minority rights, and social, cultural, and educational initiatives.



The consultations focused on several key areas, including the network's goals, structure, and criteria for selecting members. Insights were gathered on how roles and responsibilities were assigned, how decision-making processes were structured, and the support mechanisms established within the networks. The discussions also explored strategies for ensuring ongoing engagement and motivation within the network, as well as methods for managing activities and achieving goals. Safety and security concerns, including cultural sensitivities, physical and digital security, and community engagement, were key topics to ensure the protection of members. The consultations also identified challenges faced by existing networks in Lebanon and strategies used to overcome them, particularly in managing power dynamics between adults and girls. The insights gained from these consultations contributed significantly to informing a well-rounded, best-practice-driven approach to the creation and implementation of girls' networks in Lebanon.

How to use this manual

Structure

The manual is divided into three main sections: the introduction, general guidance on working with girls' networks, and step-by-step guidance on establishing girls' networks.



It is recommended to first read the general guidance on working with girls' networks before beginning any work related to the network. This section provides essential insights into the considerations when working with girls and throughout the entire process. By adhering to these core principles, you will help ensure that the network achieves its goal: treating and perceiving girls as active agents instead of passive ones, fostering leadership, and creating a safer space for them to lead. Alongside these principles, you will find practical tips and strategies to help facilitators navigate common challenges and guide them in their roles.

The step-by-step guidance is designed to be followed as the work progresses and outlines the steps for: 1) Conceiving the network, 2) Creating the network and 3) Sustaining the network.

Under each of these steps, and where relevant, you will find sections such as:

- **Step-by-Step Guidance:** It will outline the steps that facilitators will need to follow.
- **General Considerations:** It will outline the rationale behind each step as well as the considerations to keep in mind while implementing it.
- **Additional Considerations for Emergency Contexts:** It will outline the things that facilitators need to consider during emergency contexts, such as war and displacement, and how to adapt the process accordingly.
- **Activities:** It will suggest detailed activities that facilitators will roll out under the different steps of the process.

Considerations for using the manual

While the manual presents ideas in a step-by-step format to ensure smooth readability and implementation, **it is important to remember that flexibility and adaptability are key.** Creating networks is not the same as delivering a set of sessions; it is a collaborative process that evolves and matures as the people involved grow.

When implementing the "Activities" sections, keep the following in mind:

- **Be flexible:** Some sessions may need to be split into two parts, depending on the number of girls or their ability to follow the steps efficiently. Extending sessions, when necessary, but keep a balance between following the girls' pace and maintaining the flow of the work. Taking too long on the "building work" that precedes the implementation of initiatives can become boring for some girls. Remember that these steps not only lay the foundation for the network but also teach the girls the basics of collective work.
- **Adjust the agenda:** Some steps may require more time for the girls to fully grasp and implement. Certain topics might be challenging or controversial, and more conversation may be needed. Feel free to adjust the agenda as necessary to accommodate this.
- **Incorporate breaks and energizers:** Add breaks and energizers as needed throughout the sessions, gamify sessions when boredom occurs, and incorporate fun or creative rituals.
- **Divide group work thoughtfully:** Assign girls to smaller groups using simple, fun, and varied methods (such as counting off, picking categories, or using quick grouping games) to ensure that group compositions change regularly. This helps prevent the same girls from always working together, especially if seating arrangements tend to keep certain girls together.

- **Moderate group work:** Ensure that whenever group work is happening, the conversation is moderated. Encourage the girls to take on this role themselves, supporting them when necessary. This is a key step in developing their facilitation skills.
- **Don't fear constructive challenge:** In the pilot phase, girls gave positive feedback even for sessions facilitators found challenging. Some girls noted that even when sessions felt difficult, they were opportunities to learn and improve. This shows that while clarity and fun are key, constructive challenges can support growth and shouldn't be avoided.
- **Incorporate different voting methods:** When the activity requires voting, you can use different tools depending on the type of decision, the time restraints and the girls' preferences. Some of the tools suggested include voting by raising of hands, making different hand signals for different options, using colored stickers to mark favorite options on a board or flipchart, and using a ballot for major decisions such as elections to ensure confidentiality of vote.
- **Include informal sessions:** While the manual focuses on content-based sessions, it is beneficial to incorporate informal sessions, such as general check-in meetings, light recreational activities, and team-building or bonding activities. These are essential to maintain the "fun" aspect of the network, especially when you sense that the group's energy is dropping.
- **Have fun!** The session worksheets are here to support you: they're a great base, but don't worry about following them word for word. The goal is to create a space where girls can work together, grow, and enjoy the process. Let the energy of the group lead you when needed, and don't forget to enjoy the process together.

Important Consideration for Mixed Age Groups

This guideline is designed for the creation and management of girls' networks, specifically in the context of the POWER4GIRLS' package or similar life skills projects. The network can include girls from both age group divisions, but it is crucial to manage the network effectively by accounting for the differences between these age groups in its structure and activity implementation. Facilitators should consider age-appropriate activities, varying levels of maturity, and ensure that both younger and older girls feel equally engaged and empowered throughout the process. Proper management and diversifying approaches will help ensure the success of the network while fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all participants.

Section 2



Guidance on working with girls' networks



What is a girl's network?

Girls' networks are platforms that recognize and harness the power of girls as agents of change, enabling them to lead transformative actions in their communities. These networks support girls to unlock their potential, and help them overcome barriers, fostering a sense of belonging, solidarity, and resilience.



Through leadership development, mentorship, and advocacy, girls' collective power drives action to challenge societal norms, reshape opportunities, and promote gender equality. Operating on the principle of programming **with** girls - not for them - these networks ensure girls are central to decision-making and actions aimed at driving systemic change, creating lasting impact through collaboration.

Girls' networks are designed to support and amplify the collective power of girls. They recognize and harness the power of girls as agents of change, enabling them to design and lead transformative actions in their communities, and fostering a sense of belonging, solidarity, and resilience. Through leadership development, mentorship, and advocacy, girls' collective power drives action to challenge societal norms, reshape opportunities, and promote gender equality.

Girls in emergency contexts

Young girls are amongst the most vulnerable groups in emergency situations and may experience increased safety violations and human rights abuse. They often face a specific set of challenges including:

- Heightened risk of gender-based violence:
 - **Sexual violence** including rape, sexual exploitation, and trafficking, particularly in conflict zones or refugee settings.
 - **Early and/or forced marriage** as families may marry off their daughters early to reduce economic burdens and protect them from perceived threats.
 - **Domestic violence** which often increases, as stress and displacement may exacerbate pre-existing family tensions and abusive behaviors.
 - **Barriers to all types of services, especially protection services** as they may face obstacles in accessing protection and legal services, particularly if they are displaced, unaccompanied, or living in informal settlements.
- Displacement and separation:
 - In chaotic emergency settings, girls may become **separated from their families**, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and trafficking.
 - Displacement may force adolescent girls into **hazardous labor**, including domestic work or working in unsafe environments, to contribute to their family's survival.
- Health risks:
 - **Reproductive health complication** due to the limitation of access to SRHR services as well as early pregnancy and childbirth
 - **Mental health challenges**, including trauma from conflict, displacement, and loss, which can lead to depression, anxiety, and PTSD: issues that are often under-addressed in emergencies.
 - **Increased risk of malnutrition** particularly in displaced populations due to food scarcity, poor access to adequate nutrition, and neglect of their specific dietary needs.

- Educational disruption:
 - **Loss of access to education** due to conflict and displacement, which disrupts schooling for adolescent girls and creates long-term consequences for their personal development, economic opportunities, and empowerment. The psychological toll of war can also exacerbate educational disruptions as stress and trauma may affect their ability to focus and learn.³
 - **Increased dropout rates**, as girls are more likely than boys to drop out of school during emergencies, due to factors such as early marriage, the need to support their family, or lack of safe schooling facilities.
- Psychological and emotional vulnerabilities:
 - **Isolation and loss of social networks**, as the breakdown of community and family structures increases their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse.
 - **Stigma and marginalization**, particularly for adolescent girls from marginalized ethnic, religious, or social groups, further limiting their access to resources and support.
- Increased burden of care:
 - **Domestic responsibilities**, as adolescent girls often bear an unequal burden of caregiving and household responsibilities, such as caring for younger siblings, cooking, and cleaning. These duties limit their opportunities for education, leisure, and personal development.
 - **Increased burden of psychological support** to their families and younger siblings, further adding to their emotional and psychological strain.

Empowering young girls in conflict zones is a crucial, yet often neglected, aspect of war dynamics. In areas affected by violence, girls face distinct challenges that demand focused support to help them build resilience and secure a better future.⁴

- a. **Connect girls to critical and life-saving resources and information:** Proactive action involves more than just reducing the vulnerabilities and mitigating the risks faced by adolescent girls; it also requires connecting them to essential resources and recognizing their potential to actively contribute to aid delivery and recovery efforts.⁵
- b. **Empower girls through relevant skills and capacity building:** Adolescent girls play a vital role in their families and communities, contributing significantly throughout the different phases of emergencies. To safeguard and strengthen these contributions, it is essential to implement programs that intentionally build their skills and capacities.
- c. **Foster social connections:** Programs that focus on engaging adolescent girls in building strong social networks, fostering relationships with mentors, and enhancing leadership and life skills have proven successful in protecting them from various risks throughout all stages of emergencies.⁶
- d. **Engage adolescents as key actors in humanitarian response:** By actively involving adolescent girls in humanitarian responses, we can harness their capacity to support community resilience and recovery, empowering them to shape their own futures and contribute to rebuilding their communities.

3 <https://totalmilitaryinsight.com/empowerment-of-young-girls-in-war/>

4 <https://totalmilitaryinsight.com/empowerment-of-young-girls-in-war/>

5 <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/i-m-here-adolescent-girls-emergencies-approach-and-tools-improved-response>

6 Browne, E. (2013). Child friendly spaces for adolescent girls in emergency settings. (GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report 932). Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham

Core principles of working with girls' networks

Girls often experience social isolation, even in urban environments, as societal norms and barriers restrict their movement. As they approach puberty, their social worlds tend to shrink, with many being confined more to domestic spaces.⁷ This restriction is not a reflection of their abilities or desires, but rather the result of limited opportunities and the risks they face, including harassment, violence, and societal disapproval.

Discrimination, inequality and stereotypes against girls often intensify during adolescence, leading to more serious violations of their rights and cultural norms often act as barriers to realization of their career and life goals.⁸ **Adults need to be prepared, skilled, and trained in listening and collaborating with young people, and adapting their engagement strategies to the youths' evolving abilities.** This preparation is essential for effectively facilitating their involvement while ensuring a safe and risk-sensitive environment.⁹

The core principles of working with girls' networks are the following:

- Empowerment and agency
- Navigating diversity
- Avoiding tokenism
- Preventing adultism
- Managing power dynamics
- Ensuring safe, girl-centered environments
- Empowering leadership

Empowerment and agency

Empowerment can be defined as the ability to exercise choice, which involves three interrelated dimensions:

- 1- Resources (including both material and human/social resources),
- 2- Agency (the process of making choices),
- 3- Achievements (the outcomes of those choices).¹⁰

Girls' agency is frequently constrained by gender norms that restrict their freedom, opportunities, and decision-making, often reducing them to passive roles rather than allowing them to actively shape their lives. Additional factors such as race, disability, and socioeconomic status can further diminish girls' agency. Even in girls' networks, where there is an understanding of these complexities, it is crucial to also acknowledge the impact of age on their agency.

The intergenerational dynamics within these networks can create power imbalances between adults and girls. Adult mentors can greatly aid girls' development, challenge societal invisibility, and protect young activists in culturally hostile environments. However, they may also, whether intentionally or not, influence or control girls' voices to align with political strategies.¹¹

Sometimes, adults may dominate conversations, undermining their stated commitment to amplifying young voices. Managing these dynamics carefully is essential to ensure that girls' perspectives are genuinely respected and valued. Facilitators are encouraged to:

7 Austrian, Karen and Dennitah Ghati. (2010) *Girl-Centered Program Design: A Toolkit to Develop, Strengthen and Expand Adolescent Girls Programs*. Nairobi: Population Council.

8 Mendonca, Veera, Melinda Van Zyl and Karin Martinez. (2018) *Toolkit for Adolescent and Youth Engagement*, UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office.

9 *Ibid.*

10 Kabeer, N. (1999) *Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment*. *Development and Change*, 30, 435-464.

11 Vanner, Catherine, and Anuradha Dugal. (2020) *Personal, Powerful, Political: Activist Networks by, for, and with Girls and Young Women*. *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 13, no. 2.

- Inform girls about their right to express their views, with the understanding that these views will be genuinely considered.
- Communicate information about how their participation will be structured, its purpose, and potential impact in an accessible, age-appropriate, and inclusive manner.
- Let them know that participation is voluntary, with no pressure to share opinions and the option to withdraw at any time.
- Treat their views with respect and give them opportunities to propose and lead new ideas and activities.¹²

Dos and don'ts for facilitators: Empowerment and agency

Practical example: One of the proposed initiatives is running an online campaign on a sensitive or controversial issue. Adults are concerned about the safety of the girls due to legal or social backlash:



Do:

1. **Provide legal information:** Offer age-appropriate legal info sessions to educate girls about the relevant laws and potential repercussions related to their campaign topics.
2. **Introduce risk management:** Teach girls about risk management, including tools and strategies for understanding, evaluating, and mitigating risks. Support them in using these tools effectively.
3. **Conduct digital safety training:** Provide training on digital safety and security to ensure girls are aware of online risks and how to protect themselves.
4. **Support safe messaging:** Help the girls craft their messages in the safest possible way, ensuring that their content is both impactful and secure.
5. **Help girls set mitigation plans:** Make sure that mitigation plans are realistic and feasible and consider girls' resources and available external support. Decide with girls on alternative without policing and censoring content of girls



Do Not:

1. **Police or censor content:** Avoid policing or censoring the content created by the girls. Allow them the freedom to express their views within a supportive framework.
2. **Force a different narrative:** Do not force a different direction or narrative on the campaign. Respect and support the girls' chosen focus and messaging.

Navigating diversity

Adolescent girls are not a homogeneous group. They can be classified by age, such as younger girls (ages 11-14) and older girls (ages 15-19), and by life circumstances and social categories, including social class, race, in-school or out-of-school status, girls with disabilities, working girls, refugees, married adolescents, or young mothers, among others. Each subgroup faces different challenges and has different needs. Facilitators are advised to:

- **Account for these differences in the different aspects of your network's structure:** For instance, the timing and frequency of meetings may need to accommodate the availability of different groups; in-school girls might be available only after school or on weekends, while out-of-school girls might have more flexible schedules. Additionally, younger girls might have limited mobility, affecting where you can hold meetings and activities.¹³
- **Support the girls in identifying their priorities and to instill an understanding of intersectionality among them:** Cultural differences, age, and varying levels of vulnerability can also significantly influence the causes adolescent girls prioritize. For example, girls facing economic challenges may be more interested in projects aimed at improving livelihoods than in policy-targeted causes. Similarly, addressing child marriage may be a top priority for some girls, while others may not see it as a pressing issue in their immediate context and may focus on different concerns.
- **Be mindful of the girls' cultural backgrounds and the existing cultural tensions between communities:** This awareness is essential to prevent judgments among the girls and to ensure they collaborate without adopting a savior mentality. Encouraging mutual respect and understanding, while recognizing diverse perspectives and priorities, helps create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all participants.

Girls' development stages

Adolescent girls experience distinct stages of development, each with unique characteristics and challenges. The following outlines the key features of early and late adolescence, highlighting the critical developmental changes during each stage.

Early adolescence (10 to 14 years): This period, dominated by puberty and brain development, is a critical time for girls as they form their identities and explore new interests, including romantic relationships. Psychologically, girls may be highly susceptible to peer influence, have limited future orientation, and engage in risk-taking behaviors with poor self-regulation. Supportive environments at school, home, and in the community are essential for their well-being during this stage.¹⁴

Late adolescence (15 to 19 years): In this stage, girls transition into adulthood, acquiring the skills and knowledge needed for higher education and employment. Pubertal and brain development continue, enhancing their ability to make thoughtful decisions and plan for the future. Girls gain more autonomy from their families while remaining dependent on educational settings for continued support if they stay in school.¹⁵

Avoiding tokenism

Tokenism refers to the practice of making a superficial or symbolic effort to include marginalized groups in activities or organizations, often to create an appearance of diversity or inclusivity without providing them with real influence or decision-making power. It often happens when young people may be given a voice merely to create a young people-friendly image for adults¹⁶.

¹³ Austrian et al. *Girl-Centered Program Design*

¹⁴ Mendonca et al. *Toolkit for Adolescent and Youth Engagement*

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

The principle of **"Nothing about us without us"** directly addresses and counters the issue of tokenism by ensuring that participation is both genuine and impactful. Youth should be included in the decision-making process, share leadership roles, co-evaluate projects and be given the opportunity to become independent.

To avoid tokenism in youth engagement, facilitators are encouraged to

- **Be specific about your goals and plan thoroughly**, ensuring transparency and genuine representation of diverse young voices.
- **Engage and support multiple young people**, track retention, and seek regular feedback to refine your approach.
- **Identify and remove barriers that some girls might face to be actively engaged**: Girls usually know what their needs are, you can ask them how certain barriers they are facing can be addressed.
- **Involve youth early in the planning stages** and provide accessible training to foster meaningful participation and leadership.¹⁷

Dos and don'ts for facilitators: Avoiding tokenism

Practical example: An organization supporting a girls' network working on the issue of child marriage is invited to participate in a stakeholders meeting discussing policy relating to the issue:



Do:

1. **Ensure representation:** Include the girls actively working on the initiative in the meeting, making sure they are present and have the opportunity to contribute. Make sure girls decide who among them will be attending the meeting.
2. **Consider timing and accessibility:** Schedule the meeting at a time and place that is convenient and safe for the girls, avoiding school hours or late-night timings that could be unsafe.
3. **Prepare the girls:** Provide guidance and training on how such meetings typically operate, clarify the agenda in advance, and help the girls prepare so they can contribute effectively.
4. **Encourage active participation:** Actively seek the girls' opinions and encourage their interventions during the meeting. Make sure girls are not talking the least during the meeting.
5. **Defend their voices:** Stand up against any dismissive or infantilizing behavior from other stakeholders to ensure that the girls' contributions are respected and taken seriously.



Do not:

1. **Reinforce tokenism:** Do not send only one girl representative into a room full of adults, which can create a power imbalance and limit the impact of her input.
2. **Over-control:** Do not pre-plan or overly control the girls' interventions. Allow them to express their views freely.
3. **Speak for the girls:** Ensure they have the space and support to articulate their own perspectives and experiences.

¹⁷ Youth Friendly, *How to avoid Tokenism*, <https://www.youthfriendly.com/tokenism>

Preventing adultism

Adultism manifests in youth activism spaces through age-based power dynamics, where adult activists or allies often control the structure and facilitation of these spaces. This control can result in adults dictating what is deemed "political" or "legitimate" or "acceptable" in both digital and physical spaces. While these actions are often not malicious, they reflect underlying adultism norms that can undermine the value and impact of youth activism.¹⁸

"Adultism is understood as the oppression experienced by children and young people at the hands of adults and adult-produced/adult-tailored systems."¹⁹ Recent reports show that the scope and significance of youth activism is growing in the current political climate, yet their perspectives on their own activism are often undervalued, devalued, or silenced altogether.

The creation of a Girls' network aims to move away from approaches that merely consult or involve young people as beneficiaries, and towards engagement approaches that recognize that young people are actors with their own agency, with a right to engage in decision-making.

Youth activists, according to Liou (2020), identify several subtle forms of adultism, such as:

- Trivializing their initiatives by labeling them as "cute" or "adorable".
- Infantilizing them by avoiding any push backs on the assumption that they are "ignorant".
- Only taking their contributions seriously when they adopt adult-like behaviors, such as speaking in a professional manner.

Genuine allyship, as observed by these youth, involves:

- Actively listening to their perspectives without immediately proposing solutions.
- Providing support and building relationships based on trust and care.
- Educating oneself about the issues before stepping into an ally role.
- Allowing youth to lead by stepping back and refraining from overshadowing their efforts.²⁰

Managing power dynamics

The intergenerational work that aims to create girl-led networks is characterized by complicated power dynamics.

In Lebanon, girls face a contradictory environment where they are simultaneously infantilized and expected to adopt adult responsibilities, such as dealing with issues like child marriage. Additionally, girl activists encounter dual pressures: they may be idealized as symbols of strength and courage while simultaneously being vilified or dismissed due to both their gender and their age.

Adult facilitators supporting girls' networks should:

- Acknowledge these tensions and be aware of their own biases and the power dynamics at play.
- Recognize how their perceptions and actions might influence or limit the autonomy of young activists.
- Practice effective mentorship by:
 - Actively addressing these biases
 - Supporting girls in navigating their roles without imposing adult-centric views
 - Ensuring that the dynamics of power do not undermine the girls' voices and contributions.

18 Liou, A & Literat, Ioana. (2020). "We Need You to Listen to Us": Youth Activist Perspectives on Intergenerational Dynamics and Adult Solidarity in Youth Movements. *International Journal of Communication*. 14. 4662-4682.

19 LeFrançois, B.A. (2014). *Adultism*. In: Teo, T. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology*. Springer, New York, NY

20 Ibid.

By acknowledging and countering these challenges, adult mentors can foster a more equitable and supportive environment for girl activists.

Dos and don'ts for facilitators: Managing power dynamics



Dos:

1. **Empower autonomy:** Provide young activists with the tools and support they need to lead and make decisions independently. Encourage their self-reliance and respect their ability to drive their own initiatives.
2. **Include youth in decision-making:** Involve young activists at various stages of decision-making and throughout the project lifecycle. Ensure they have a meaningful role in shaping goals, strategies, and evaluations. Even if you are late in your work, make sure to include youth in decision making even if the process takes longer.
3. **Acknowledge context:** Understand and consider the broader social, economic, and environmental challenges that young people face. Integrate this awareness into your support and program design.
4. **Engage regularly:** Maintain consistent, meaningful communication with young activists. Regularly seek their input and feedback to ensure that programs and initiatives align with their needs and perspectives.
5. **Respect and integrate diverse perspectives:** Value and incorporate the cultural, generational, and individual differences of young activists. Avoid assumptions based on age or background, and actively include their unique viewpoints.
6. **Provide safer spaces:** Create a supportive and secure environment for girls, particularly when addressing sensitive issues. Offer training on digital safety and risk management as needed.



Don'ts:

1. **Engage in dysfunctional rescuing:** Do not intervene or make decisions based on the assumption that they cannot manage on their own. Avoid actions that limit their ability to develop self-sufficiency.
2. **Blame the victim:** Do not attribute challenges or behavioral issues solely to the young people without considering the broader systemic factors affecting them. Avoid blaming youth for circumstances beyond their control.
3. **Avoid contact:** Do not create or implement programs without regular, meaningful engagement with young activists. Ensure that your initiatives are based on their actual needs and interests.
4. **Deny distinctiveness:** Do not ignore or overlook the unique cultural and generational perspectives of young activists. Avoid treating age and cultural differences as irrelevant or superficial.
5. **Deny of political significance:** Do not downplay or ignore the social and political realities faced by young people. Acknowledge and address the systemic challenges and inequities that impact their activism.
6. **Reinforce the "super girl" fantasy:** Refrain from over-glorifying young activists, as this can set unattainable standards and create unrealistic expectations, putting undue pressure on most young girls involved in initiatives.

Ensuring safe, girl-centered environments

Facilitators should first refer to the guidance in the POWER4GIRLS Life Skills Package for establishing Girl-friendly spaces, ensuring that physical and emotional safety criteria are met. In addition to this, facilitators should also take the following considerations into account to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all participants:

- **Design an inclusive and engaging meeting space:** The physical space where girls meet plays a key role in how safe, included, and open they feel. Beyond meeting safety requirements, the setup and atmosphere of the space should support participation, connection, and a sense of ownership. A comfortable and girl-centered space can increase engagement, support leadership, and foster stronger group dynamics. While this ideal setup may not always be fully possible, acknowledging limitations and making small adjustments can still make a meaningful difference.
 - Arrange seating in a circle to encourage open conversation and reduce power dynamics.
 - Ensure the space is flexible enough to allow for both full group discussions and smaller teamwork.
 - Provide room for physical activities, energizers, or movement-based games. (You can use connected outdoor spaces when available)
 - Create a shared space that feels like it belongs to the girls and where they can display their work, track their journey, and organize materials.
 - Allow girls to personalize or decorate the space in ways that reflect their identity and group culture.
 - Avoid rigid, classroom-style setups (e.g., desks in rows or teacher-led formats) that limit participation and reinforce passive roles.
- **Ensure the girls define what makes their space safer:** *(This code of conduct could be explained to girls as similar to the group agreements they had as part of the life skills package but with adaptations.)*
 - Involve the girls in establishing a code of conduct among themselves.
 - Involve the girls in establishing a code between them and their mentors which includes confidentiality guidelines.
 - Provide feedback mechanisms that allow girls to voice concerns. Allow girls to choose mechanisms that they feel comfortable resorting to: comment boxes, third party feedback focal points etc.
- **Set organization guidelines:**
 - Ensure a safer space where girls can express themselves freely without fear of judgment
 - Implement policies to protect participants from harassment and discrimination.
 - Enforce a zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse or harassment with thorough training for all members on handling disclosures and conducting safe referrals.
- **Acknowledge and identify power dynamics:**
 - Address power dynamics through the code of conduct to ensure no girl exerts undue influence over others (if a girl is older, or goes to school compared to another who doesn't, girl that is shy etc.)
 - Ensure no bullying happens and there is no harmful spread of rumors.
- **Put girls at the center of building the network** to enhance ownership and belonging: This involvement not only supports their personal development but also enhances their overall sense of safety and emotional well-being within the program²¹.
 - Ensure the girls have a key role in building the network.

21 Mendonca et al. *Toolkit for Adolescent and Youth Engagement*

- Ensure girls are able to choose activities and take on leadership roles without an adult guiding them to a specific activity.
- **Account for external risks:**
 - Recognize that girls expressing views and being actively involved in initiatives can bring them risks, including social pressure from family and friends, exposure to violence, exploitation, or other negative consequences.²²
 - Build networks of girls as part of a comprehensive package of services for and with girls and the whole community focused on addressing harmful social norms.
- **Minimize risks by being attentive to the emotional impacts:**
 - Ensure the environment respects and supports participants' feelings and experiences.
 - Prioritize self-care and community care to prevent burnout.
 - Provide specialized support when needed.

Empowering leadership: Transitioning responsibilities from adults to girls

As the girls' network evolves, a key objective is to gradually shift leadership responsibilities from adults to the girls themselves, ensuring that the transition is both effective and empowering.

Levels of youth involvement in decision-making

The "No lost generation Toolkit" for adolescent and youth engagement defines various levels of involvement for young people in decision-making:

- At the **informing** level, young people are simply provided with information but do not influence decisions.
- In the **influencing** stage, their feedback is sought and considered, though it does not impact the final decisions.
- The **partnering** level involves serious consideration of young people's input, where their contributions significantly shape decisions, and they work collaboratively with adults.
- At the **empowering** stage, young people share decision-making responsibilities with adults, contributing jointly to outcomes.
- Finally, at the **leading** level, young people have full control over decisions, with their authority formally acknowledged and independently exercised.²³

Developing leadership and empowerment in girls' networks

Initially, adults may need to take a more hands-on role in setting up initiatives, providing guidance, and facilitating meetings. However, the ultimate goal is for girls' leadership skills to be developed, enabling them to lead meetings and initiatives with confidence. This is a key consideration throughout the process of creating and activating the girls' networks. Facilitators are recommended to:

1. **Ensure the girls are expressing their views:**
 - Allocate sufficient time and resources to ensure that young people are well-prepared, confident, and have the opportunity to share their views.
 - Be attentive to the girls' ages and their developmental stages.²⁴

²² Ibid

²³ Mendonca et al. *Toolkit for Adolescent and Youth Engagement*

²⁴ Ibid

2. Identify and provide needed leadership skills:

- Identify and cultivate the core leadership skills that will be essential for the girls in their respective roles, such as facilitation, decision-making, and project management.
- Offer workshops or training sessions focused on these skills, allowing the girls to practice in a supportive environment, or conduct interactive sessions on how to effectively lead a group discussion, manage conflicts, and organize tasks.
- Register the girls in external training sessions that provide these skills (e.g., facilitation, conflict resolution, etc.) when these cannot be offered in-house. Encourage and facilitate their participation by keeping an eye out for relevant opportunities and supporting the girls in accessing them.

3. Integrate the girls into the leadership structure of the network:

- As the girls begin to grasp these skills, they transition gradually by having them co-facilitate meetings with adults. This approach provides practical learning experience, where they can observe and participate in the facilitation process while still having adult support.
- Over time, they increase their responsibilities, allowing them to lead smaller segments of meetings or specific parts of projects.

4. Encourage mentorship:

- Encourage a mentorship model where experienced older girls can mentor and guide newer members. This not only helps in transferring knowledge but also builds a supportive leadership culture within the network.
- Provide regular feedback and celebrate their successes to build confidence and recognize their growth.

5. Transition to a girl led network:

- Eventually, the aim is for the meetings to be fully facilitated by the girls, with adults taking on a more advisory role. This transition should be gradual and reflective of their growing capabilities.
- Ensure that there is a clear support structure in place where girls can seek advice and feedback as needed.
- Empower the girls to take on major roles and responsibilities to foster their leadership development and ensure that the network operates effectively and sustainably with a strong, self-sufficient leadership team.



Creating trauma sensitive spaces

Being trauma-sensitive means recognizing the impact that past trauma can have on individuals and creating an environment that acknowledges and responds to those experiences with understanding and care. Creating trauma-sensitive spaces is crucial for ensuring that girls feel safe, supported, and able to participate fully without fear of re-traumatization. By acknowledging and addressing past trauma, these spaces foster trust, emotional well-being, and healthy participation. This approach helps empower girls, promotes healing, and creates a more inclusive and supportive environment for personal growth.

Practical step to create a trauma-sensitive space: "safe space check-in circles"

To create a trauma-sensitive space for girls, consider implementing "Safe Space Check-In Circles" at the beginning of each meeting or session. These check-ins allow participants to share how they are feeling, without pressure or judgment, and can be done in small groups or individually if preferred. Here's how to facilitate it:

- **Start with group agreements:** Establish basic ground agreements for confidentiality, respect, and understanding. Emphasize that participants can share only what they are comfortable with and that there are no wrong feelings or answers.
- **Provide different participation options:** Allow for multiple ways of participation based on comfort levels. Girls can share verbally, write down their thoughts on paper or, or use non-verbal cues (such as a simple gesture or color-coded cards to indicate their emotional state).
- **Create an emotional check-in routine:** Begin every session by asking girls to identify how they are feeling (e.g., through a color-coded system like "red" for upset, "yellow" for neutral, "green" for okay) or by using simple emotional scales (1 to 5). This gives the facilitator a sense of the group's emotional state and allows for the appropriate tone and support to be offered.
- **Offer one-on-one options:** Recognizing that some girls may struggle to participate in a group setting, provide opportunities for one-on-one check-ins, where girls can speak privately with a facilitator or peer. This offers a safer, more personal space for those dealing with trauma or stress.
- **Ensure flexibility:** Be mindful of external factors impacting participation, such as domestic responsibilities or external stressors. Allow girls the flexibility to attend part of the session, participate remotely, or take breaks as needed.
- **Promote peer support:** Encourage a buddy system where girls can check in on each other outside of formal sessions, fostering a sense of community support. This also helps strengthen the overall group bond and makes girls feel more connected, especially if they are unable to attend every meeting due to external pressures.

By offering multiple participation channels and prioritizing emotional safety, you can create a flexible, trauma-sensitive environment that enables girls to engage in a way that respects their emotional needs and current circumstances.

* Additional information on trauma informed programming can be found [here](#).²⁵

* Additional information on the adaptation of the physical space for trauma informed design can be found [here](#).²⁶

25 Family & Youth Services Bureau. *Creating safe spaces: Facilitator's guide to trauma-informed programming* <https://teenpregnancy.acf.hhs.gov/resources/creating-safe-spaces-facilitators-guide-trauma-informed-programming>

26 The National Council, *Recommendations for Trauma-Informed Design* <https://www.nationalcouncildocs.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Trauma-Informed-Design-Summary.pdf>

Tips for facilitation

This manual assumes that the girls' network is implemented following the POWER4GIRLS Life skills Package, and facilitators should refer to the facilitation guide section of that manual for detailed tips on facilitation techniques, effective communication, handling difficult topics, inclusion, and safeguarding. The tips below provide additional practical guidance for challenges that might arise during the network-building phase.

Responding to disruptive behavior during sessions

Disruptive behaviors - such as interrupting, talking over others, or making side comments - can affect the group's dynamic and make it harder for everyone to feel heard and included. Instead of treating these moments as disciplinary issues, facilitators should approach them as opportunities to reflect, re-engage, and strengthen the group's shared values and communication habits. Consistent, respectful responses help build a space rooted in accountability and empathy.

To address disruptive behaviors during sessions:

- **Refer to group norms and values:** Gently name the behavior and connect it back to the shared agreements. For example: "We agreed to listen to each other. Interrupting goes against our value of respect." If the behavior is repetitive or particularly disruptive, take a moment to invite reflection from the group by asking why that value was important when it was first set.
- **Ask reflective questions:** Calmly and quietly check in with the girl, for example, "Is there something on your mind?" or "Do you feel like your voice hasn't been heard?" This opens space for self-awareness and dialogue.
- **Observe patterns and adjust session flow:** Notice if disruptions often happen at the same time, during long discussions, when energy drops, or when activities feel too technical. Use this insight to adjust by adding energizers, movement-based tasks, or breaks.
- **Establish non-verbal cues:** In groups where disruptions are frequent, agree on subtle hand signals or gestures to gently remind each other to listen, wait their turn, or re-focus, without calling someone out verbally.
- **Acknowledge individual strengths:** Look for moments when a girl shows leadership, creativity, or care, particularly if her behavior is sometimes challenging. Reflect those back to her to support her confidence and reinforce positive contributions.
- **Offer small, structured roles:** Assigning simple roles, like timekeeper, co-leading an energizer, or helping organize materials, can redirect disruptive energy into constructive participation and help girls feel trusted and included.
- **Engage the group in setting consequences:** When certain behaviors persist, involve the girls in defining what fair and consistent consequences should look like. Plan this as part of a regular session, not as a reaction to a specific incident, to avoid singling anyone out. This approach reinforces shared responsibility and encourages the group to take ownership of maintaining a respectful space.
- **Maintain calm and consistency:** Use a respectful tone and stay neutral when redirecting. Avoid reacting emotionally or shaming individuals. Return to the group's shared values as the foundation for addressing challenges.

Supporting girls facing self-doubt

It's common for girls to experience moments of self-doubt, fear of not being "good enough," or feeling like they can't accomplish their role, especially when they are asked to lead, speak up, or try something new. To support and empower girls when confidence drops:

- **Normalize the feeling:** Let girls know that many people, even adults, feel this way sometimes. Saying, "It's okay to feel nervous or unsure. That doesn't mean you're not ready," can relieve pressure.
- **Celebrate effort, not just outcome:** Focus praise on process, such as trying something new, showing up, or taking a risk. This helps girls feel valued even when they're outside their comfort zone.
- **Reflect back their impact:** Remind girls how their actions, no matter how small, have affected others in the group. For example, "When you asked that question, others felt brave enough to share too."
- **Use peer encouragement:** Create structured moments where girls give each other feedback or appreciation. Hearing positive reflections from peers can be powerful, especially at key moments such as before an important event, right after roles have been assigned, or following a challenging task.
- **Offer low-pressure leadership opportunities:** Give shyer girls chances to lead in ways that feel manageable, like co-facilitating a game or helping set up materials. Small wins build momentum.
- **Share real-life role models:** Use stories of women and girls who have overcome self-doubt or failed and tried again. This helps girls see that growth is part of the journey.
- **Avoid pushing:** If a girl resists or downplays her strengths, avoid saying things like "Don't be silly! you're great!" Instead, stay curious and supportive and engage in a real conversation about her doubts or worries: "What makes you feel that way? Let's look at what you've already done."

Facilitating fair and inclusive voting

Voting is a valuable tool for decision-making within girls' networks, but it can sometimes reveal complex social dynamics such as peer pressure or group loyalty. To ensure that voting truly reflects each girl's independent voice and promotes fairness, facilitators should consider the following practical tips:

- **Use multiple votes or sticker voting:** Allow girls to cast votes for more than one option to reduce competition and encourage consideration of diverse ideas. This can also help prevent dominance by a single viewpoint. (Observe the process closely to make sure everyone has contributed)
- **Promote free and independent choices:** Encourage girls to vote without feeling pressured by peers or group loyalty. Remind participants that every opinion matters and there is no "right" or "wrong" choice.
- **Assess confidentiality needs:** Some decisions may require anonymous voting to protect girls' comfort and honesty, while others can be open. Adapt the voting process to match the sensitivity of the issue.
- **Break clique dynamics in group work:** To minimize bloc voting, diversify group compositions for key activities and decision-making tasks. Ensure smaller groups are not formed along clique lines, encouraging cross-group collaboration.

Managing conflict and interpersonal relationships

Conflicts are a natural part of group dynamics, and when addressed in a healthy and constructive manner, they can strengthen relationships and contribute to personal growth. To help in managing conflicts facilitators should:

- **Use group norms and values as a reference:** Refer back to the rules and values the girls created together to guide behavior and address challenges. Keep them visible during sessions as a reminder of shared commitments.
- **Build trust with activities:** Use quick icebreakers or team games regularly to help girls feel safe and connected, reducing misunderstandings.
- **Watch for bullying signs:** Notice if some girls are excluded, teased, or whispered about. Don't wait, address it with the group or one-on-one.
- **Use role-play to teach empathy:** When bullying or conflict comes up, role-play scenarios to help girls practice kindness and understanding.
- **Encourage "I feel" statements:** Teach girls to express their feelings without blaming others. For example, "I feel upset when..." helps keep conversations calm.
- **Encourage active listening:** Teach girls to listen fully without interrupting, by making eye contact, nodding, and summarizing what others say before responding.
- **Act quickly on conflicts:** When a problem arises, talk privately with those involved first, then bring the group together if needed to solve it.
- **Use problem-solving together:** Guide girls to suggest solutions and agree on fair ways to handle disagreements. Encourage girls to help mediate small disputes or remind others of the group rules.
- **Keep your calm and neutrality:** Stay calm, listen fully, and don't take sides. Model respectful communication.



Energizers and ice breakers

Below is a selection of icebreakers and energizers that can be used across sessions. These are centered on building team spirit, improving communication, and fostering trust among the girls. For specific sessions, other more tailored icebreakers may be suggested at the beginning of the session. Feel free to use either, depending on what the group needs, whether at the start of the session, in the middle, or when energy is low. Where relevant, suggested debriefing questions are included to help facilitators connect the activity to a key idea or topic being explored.

Girls should also be encouraged to suggest or lead their own games and energizers. This not only builds ownership and creativity, but also helps surface activities that are culturally relevant, familiar, and fun for the group.

Human knot

How to play:

- Ask the girls to stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder.
- Each girl reaches across the circle with her right hand to grab the hand of someone who is not standing next to her.
- Then, do the same with the left hand, grabbing a different person's hand.
- The group must now work together to untangle the knot without letting go of any hands.
- The goal is to return to a circle shape.

Debrief (optional): What made this easy or difficult? How did you communicate? What helped the most in solving the knot?



Mirror, mirror

How to play:

- Ask the girls to pair up and stand facing each other.
- One girl is the "mirror," the other is the "person."
- The "person" begins slowly moving (raising arms, tilting head, shifting weight, etc.) and the "mirror" must copy exactly, trying to move in sync.
- Ask the girls to make it gradually more challenging yet achievable.
- After a few minutes, switch roles.

Debrief (optional): How did it feel to lead? How did it feel to follow?



Pass the clap

How to Play:

- Have the girls stand in a circle.
- One girl turns to the girl on her left, makes eye contact, and claps once at the same time as her.
- The clap is then "passed" around the circle in this way: eye contact, synchronized clap, next person.
- Challenge: Try to speed it up without breaking the rhythm!
- Variation: Send two claps in opposite directions or add a fun sound or dance move!



Back-to-back drawing

How to Play:

- Girls pair up and sit back-to-back. One girl has a simple drawing (e.g., a flower, house, symbol), and the other has a blank sheet and pen.
- Without showing the image, the girl with the drawing gives instructions on how to draw it.
- The other has to draw as close as possible to the original drawing (same size, shape etc...)
- When done, compare results!

Debrief (optional): What made giving and following instructions difficult? What helped? How is this like real communication?



Pass the movement

How to Play:

- Ask the girls to stand in a single-file line, all facing the same direction.
- The girl at the end of the line (in the back) comes up with a short movement (e.g., riding a bike, baking a cake).
- She taps the shoulder of the girl in front of her and shows the movement only once.
- That girl passes it along to the next, and so on, until the last girl in the front of the line performs it.
- Finally, the first and last girls perform their versions side by side.

Debrief (optional) : How did the movement change? Why? What does this teach us about how information or messages can change when not communicated clearly? How can this relate to how gossip spreads?



Group juggle - name toss

How to Play:

- Girls stand in a circle. Start with one soft ball (can be made off crumbled paper). One girl calls someone's name and tosses the ball to them.
- That girl does the same, passing to someone else (always using the name before tossing).
- Tell them to remember who they're throwing the ball to
- Continue until everyone has received the ball once.
- keeping the same order, repeat a few times to build speed. (Make sure names are still called out loud!)
- Add more balls to make it harder and funnier!



Yes, let's!

How to Play:

- All girls are asked to walk around the space for a few minutes.
- One girl suggests a silly activity (e.g., "Let's hop like frogs!"). Everyone shouts, "Yes, let's!" and does the action for a few seconds until someone else suggests a new one.
- (So if they're tired from hopping like a frog the next person might suggest something calmer: Let's pretend to sleep!"
- Keep going for 5-10 minutes.

Debrief (optional): How did it feel to follow others' ideas? Did everyone get a chance to lead? What happens when no one takes initiative?



Silent line-up challenge

How to Play:

- Ask the group to line up in order (e.g., by birthday, height, or number of siblings) without talking.
- The only rule is that they can't talk: They can use gestures and expressions only.
- When done, ask them to say their answers aloud and see if they got it right.

Debrief (optional): How did you communicate without words? What strategies worked best?



Keepy Uppy

How to Play:

- Use a balloon or light ball and have girls stand randomly (not in a circle.)
- The goal is simple: keep the balloon in the air without letting it touch the ground.
- Girls can only hit it once at a time and must work together to keep it up.
- The same girl can't hit it twice in a row.
- Have everyone count aloud how many times they manage to keep it up without it falling.
- If it drops or the same girl hits it twice in a row, start over.



Common ground

How to Play:

- Have girls stand in a circle.
- You stand in the middle and say a statement like, "Everyone who has a sister," or "Everyone who likes mangoes."
- Anyone who agrees runs to switch spots with someone else.
- The last girl left in the middle makes the next statement.

Note: This can become a recurring energizer that the group plays at different moments in the program. The girls can keep track of their highest score, set goals, and try to beat their previous records. It's a simple but powerful way to build teamwork, celebrate progress, and keep things fun and energizing.



Section 3



Step-by-step guidelines on building the networks



1 – Conceiving the network

"Conceiving the network" refers to the initial steps of starting the network, which include:

- 1 gathering and selecting interested girls,
- 2 ensuring their participation by addressing their needs,
- 3 engaging with their guardians to secure their support and involvement.
- 4 ensuring appropriate space (*Covered above*)

This phase lays the groundwork for the network's formation.



Step 1: Involving and selecting the girls



When determining criteria for membership in a girls' network, it's important to ensure that these criteria align with the network's overall vision and objectives. While the specific goals will be defined by the girls themselves based on their needs and aspirations, the criteria for joining should reflect a general interest in taking action and working on initiatives that positively impact their community, rather than just seeking a social space.

A. General considerations

a. Selecting members for the network

- **Evaluate girls' genuine interest in the network** and their commitment to its mission: Members should demonstrate enthusiasm for the network's goals and a willingness to actively participate in its activities and initiatives.
- **Make sure girls are prepared to join the network** by ensuring they have been part of the POWER4GIRLS' Life Skills Package. This includes understanding what being part of a network means. Session 19, *Girl Collective Power*, in the Life Skills manual explains the concept of networks and their purpose. If a significant amount of time has passed since that session, or if you feel the idea wasn't fully understood, hold a brief discussion before the application process to remind the girls what a network is and the kind of networks we aim to create.
- **Recognize that some girls may join the network primarily due to social isolation**, viewing it as one of their few social connections even if they are not initially deeply invested in the network's broader mission, and this is totally acceptable, don't exclude them.
- **Design criteria to promote inclusivity and equity**: Ensure criteria are designed to avoid exclusion based on race, disability, socio-economic status, or other forms of discrimination. Discrimination can sometimes be subtle; for example, a girl might not be able to attend due to poor economic status that hinders her ability to afford transportation. Similarly, a girl might seem less engaged due to problems at home.
- **Address participation challenges**: While a committed core team is essential for the network's functioning, and working with some girls may present challenges, it is crucial to explore and implement measures to support and sustain their participation if they show interest. Excluding girls based on these factors undermines the network's mission and impact. Discuss with your supervisor if and how you can address barriers that prevent girls from taking part in the network.

- **Recognize and adapt to evolving circumstances:** When working with adolescent girls over an extended period, recognize that their vulnerability and circumstances can evolve. For instance, a girl who initially joined the network might later face significant life events such as marriage, pregnancy or displacement. It is essential that the criteria used to select participants do not lead to their dismissal or exclusion due to changes in their personal circumstances. The network should strive to accommodate these changes and continue to support all members as their situations develop.

b. Addressing the challenges you might face while selecting the girls

What to do when the number of interested girls surpasses the network's capacity?

- Consider alternative ways to involve them, such as periodically sharing information about the network, involving them in select activities (such as volunteering or participating), or planning social events that include them.
- Ensure that those who are interested but unable to fully commit, and those who are only interested for the purpose of socializing, are not alienated or excluded.

It is normal for girls to have different levels of interests and engagement in the network. This approach benefits the network by eventually enlarging its impact beyond its initial members and ensures that girls do not feel rejected. It supports their continued engagement and offers the potential for them to become more interested and committed over time, especially as they witness the network's impact and success.

How to address bias or discriminatory behaviors in the group?

The network will include girls from diverse social and economic backgrounds, and it is crucial to recognize and respect these differences to foster an inclusive environment.

- **Review past interactions for signs of bias:** When recruiting from a pool of girls previously engaged (*in the POWER4GIRLS' Life Skills Package*) it is essential to review past interactions for any signs of bias or discriminatory behavior, and address these issues proactively to maintain a supportive and equitable space.
- **Address underlying causes of discriminatory behavior:** If discriminatory behavior has been observed, it is important to understand and address the underlying causes rather than reacting punitively. Engaging in open dialogue and providing education are key to resolving these issues constructively. The objective is to foster understanding and promote positive change, rather than alienating or antagonizing those involved.
 - If complaints come up during initial interviews, address them with perpetrators while maintaining confidentiality before starting the work.
 - If dynamics have been observed during the implementation of the life skills package, address them in interviews of all the girls joining the network.

How to support shyer or less involved girls?

Many girls may come from environments where they are not accustomed to having their voice heard. They might not be exposed to open discussions or are discouraged from participating in certain conversations. Siblings who are both part of the project might also have dynamics that prevent one of them from openly expressing herself or participating. Facilitators are encouraged to:

- **Seek active inclusion of less involved girls:** It is crucial not to exclude shyer or less involved girls based on their initial level of participation. Instead, the network should actively seek to include them by creating supportive and non-judgmental spaces where they can gradually become more engaged. Facilitators can do this by using different tools that can make shyer girls feel more comfortable to participate, such as: one-on-one meetings when needed, pairing shyer girls with other girls they are friends with or feel comfortable engaging with etc.

- **Encourage confidence building through mentorship and guidance:** Encouraging their involvement consists of identifying roles and opportunities that match their interests and providing gentle guidance to help them build confidence. By offering mentorship and fostering a nurturing atmosphere, the network can support these girls in overcoming barriers and developing their voices.

How to ensure diversity in girls' skills and interests?

When establishing the network, it's important for facilitators to:

- **Recognize that the skills of the girls will vary significantly.** For instance, girls with experience in organizations like Girl Scouts might already possess strong skills in communal responsibilities and understanding group structures. On the other hand, some girls may be new to such roles and have less experience in these areas.
- **Include both experienced and inexperienced members** to create a balanced and effective team. This approach allows those with more experience to share their knowledge and skills, helping others develop their abilities.
- **Encourage a culture of mentorship and collaboration** to ensure that everyone benefits from each other's strengths and experiences, fostering an environment where all members can grow and contribute to the network's success.

How to address transportation barriers?

Transportation is a common challenge that may limit some girls' ability to consistently participate in the network. While covering transport costs may not always be feasible due to budget limitations, and could unintentionally shift the group's dynamics, there are several alternative approaches. Facilitators are encouraged to:

- **Explore co-travel solutions** by connecting girls who live in nearby areas to share rides when possible (with the consent of their parents).
- **Organize transportation directly** when resources allow, especially for key events or meetings.
- **Allow occasional remote participation** for girls facing temporary or recurring transportation difficulties, while maintaining a primarily in-person structure.
- **Encourage self-reliance and problem-solving**, supporting girls in identifying their own transportation solutions when feasible.

8. Step-by-step guidance

Step-by-step guidance for the selection process

❑ **Recap session (Optional):**

- Consider holding a recap session with all girls eligible to join the network. *(This is especially useful when multiple groups who do not yet know each other will be forming one network, or when a long time has elapsed since session 19 (Girl Collective Power) of the Life Skills Package)*
- Host a brief, semi-formal discussion to revisit the concept of girls' networks.
- Create a playful and welcoming environment by making the rest of the session light and engaging.
- Include team-building games and activities that help girls bond, have fun, and begin forming connections across groups.

❑ **Gathering applications:**

- Invite girls to express interest and submit their information *(Sample of questions provided below)*
- The best way is to conduct one on one interviews with the girls to best understand their interests and specific circumstances. If this is not possible, you can have them fill in a form instead. Keep in mind that some girls might need support in filling it. Note that the information gathered at this stage will also be useful at later stages, especially when deciding on the structure of the network.
- Assess with the girls their level of skills and experience.
- Check if any interior dynamics are preventing girls from participating in the network

❑ **Initial screening:**

- Assess each applicant's genuine interest, commitment and skills.
- Determine if the number exceeds capacity and identify potential members.

❑ **Prioritize criteria:**

- Select the team based on genuine interest, commitment, and potential for active participation.
- Ensure a balanced selection of girls with prior skills or experience.

❑ **Diversity and Bias Review:**

- Ensure diversity in the selection process and address any past biases.
- Maintain an equitable and inclusive environment.

❑ **Support measures:**

- Implement support for those interested but might be facing economic or personal challenges to facilitate their participation
- This includes support measures to accommodate the needs of girls with disabilities, as well as support in resolving dynamics between the girls themselves when needed.

❑ **Engagement for non-selected:**

- Keep non-selected girls informed about network activities.
- Invite them to occasional events to maintain their engagement.

❑ **Ongoing adaptation:**

- Monitor and accommodate changes in members' circumstances.
- Continue supporting and engaging all participants.

❑ **Feedback and improvement:**

- Gather feedback using girl-friendly feedback tools and refine the process as needed.

C. Activities

Sample of form to be filled by facilitators during one on one interviews:

Before starting the questions, please remember not to guide the girls in their responses. Avoid providing options or answers. Ensure that each question is open-ended, allowing the participants to express their thoughts freely and share their perspectives. Explain key terms and give examples when needed.

1. Personal information:

- Name:
- Age:
- Location:
- School Grade:
- Hobbies and Interests:
- Do you go to school? (Yes / no)
- Do you have other major responsibilities?
 - ☐ Yes: I take care of siblings / other family members frequently (*for example: I babysit my sisters everyday while my parents are at work*)
 - ☐ Yes : I work outside of home
 - ☐ Yes : others _____
 - ☐ No
- Are you a refugee / displaced?
 - ☐ Yes - A refugee (With documented status)
 - ☐ Yes - A refugee (With undocumented status)
 - ☐ Yes - Internally displaced
 - ☐ No
- Do you live with your parents?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No with other family members
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Others (*Note if parents passed*) _____

2. Awareness and interest:

- Girls' network is a supportive community where girls can connect, share experiences, and empower each other. It encourages them to take initiatives together, learn from each other's experiences, foster growth, and build solidarity. Are you interested in joining a new girls' network? (*Select one*)
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Not Sure / Other
 - (*If not sure / other*) what can help you make a decision?
 - Need more time to think
 - Need to ask parents
 - Need more information about the network objectives
 - Other (please specify): _____
- What excites you about joining the network?? (*Ask as an open ended question - Select all that apply*)
 - ☐ Learning new skills
 - ☐ Meeting new friends
 - ☐ Working on important issues
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____

3. Identifying needs and goals:

- What issues or causes are most important to you? *(Ask as an open ended question, support with options if needed - Select all that apply)*
 - ☐ Fairness and equality between all members of a community
 - ☐ Better education
 - ☐ Health and well-being
 - ☐ Environmental protection
 - ☐ Helping others in the community
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- What do you hope the network can help with? *(Ask as an open ended question, support with options if needed - Select all that apply)*
 - ☐ Helping girls feel strong and confident
 - ☐ Standing up for important issues
 - ☐ Doing projects to help the community
 - ☐ Learning new skills
 - ☐ Bringing girls together in collective action
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____

4. Frequency and format:

- How often would you like the network to have activities or meetings?
 - ☐ Every week
 - ☐ Every two weeks
 - ☐ Once a month
 - ☐ I can not attend activities and meetings
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- When is the best time for you to join these meetings? *(Select all that apply)*
 - ☐ In the morning
 - ☐ In the afternoon
 - ☐ After school
 - ☐ On weekends
 - ☐ During holidays
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- Are there any specific times when you would not be able to attend?
 - ☐ In the morning
 - ☐ In the afternoon
 - ☐ After school
 - ☐ On specific week days (please specify): _____
 - ☐ On weekends
 - ☐ During holidays
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____

- What are the tasks you are most interested in? *(Ask as an open ended question, support with options if needed - Select all that apply)*

- ☐ Talking to other girls inside the network
- ☐ Talking to other girls outside the network
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Helping plan workshops or trainings
- ☐ Helping plan event or activities
- ☐ Taking on artistic or creative tasks
- ☐ Mentoring other girls
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

5. Challenges and barriers:

- What might make it hard for you to join or stay involved in the network? *(Open ended question - Select all that apply)*

- ☐ Finding time
- ☐ Money issues
- ☐ Getting to the place
- ☐ Family opinions
- ☐ Dynamics inside the group (Bullying / discrimination by other participants...)
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

- How can the network help make these things easier for girls? *(Open ended question - Select all that apply)*

- ☐ Offering flexible meeting times
- ☐ Providing financial support or resources
- ☐ Arranging transportation
- ☐ Communicating with family
- ☐ Communicating with other participants
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

- Do you have any concerns about being part of a girls' network in your community? *(Open ended)*

6. Support and resources:

- How can the network help you grow and learn? *(Select all that apply)*

- ☐ Providing learning opportunities
- ☐ Offering mentorship
- ☐ Organizing skill-building activities
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

7. Leadership and structure:

- How would you like the network to be organized? (Select one)
 - ☐ **Everyone works together equally:** All members share responsibilities and work as a team, with no one person in charge.
 - ☐ **A few people take the lead:** A small group of people handles specific tasks, but everyone is still involved in making decisions together.
 - ☐ **One leader guides the group:** One person takes charge of organizing activities, while others support and participate in decisions.
 - ☐ **Everyone is connected and shares responsibility:** All members are equally responsible for tasks and decisions, with no clear leader. Everyone's ideas are equally valued and shared.
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____

8. Community and impact:

- How do you think the network can make a positive difference in your community? (*Open ended question - Select all that apply*)
 - ☐ Helping others in need
 - ☐ Raising awareness about important issues
 - ☐ Organizing community events
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- What kind of activities or projects would you like to see the network do in your community? (*Open ended question - Select all that apply*)
 - ☐ Community service projects
 - ☐ Educational workshops
 - ☐ Awareness campaigns
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____

9. Additional comments:

- Is there anything else you want to share about what you would like for a new girls' network? (*Open-ended*)

D. Additional considerations for emergency context

❑ Trauma-informed approach when evaluating commitment:

- Recognize that trauma may affect a girl's ability to engage fully. Don't force girls to participate, allow them to determine the pace of the process.
- Refer girls to adequate services when needed, including psychological support and counseling. This can help girls manage trauma and begin to commit to the network's activities.

❑ Crisis-specific engagement:

- Provide flexibility in how girls can engage with the network. For example, some girls may only be able to participate in less frequent, informal activities initially, or may need more support in understanding the network's long-term goals.

❑ Safety and protection:

- Ensure that the network can offer a safer space where girls can be heard and supported despite the challenging circumstances.
- Prioritize safety for girls who may be dealing with displacement or instability.
- Be ready to handle GBV or PSEA disclosure. Review the guidelines and make sure you have the updated list of available GBV services in the area you're working in.

❑ Adaptation of criteria:

- Adapt the membership criteria to be more flexible to account for evolving circumstances. For instance, it might be necessary to include girls who have experienced displacement or have been affected by the emergency, at least in certain activities relating to the network.

In the scope of this project, which aims to work with the girls who have previously been part of the AG life skill package, this criteria might need to be reconsidered, at least for a certain level of involvement. Girls with displaced family members in their households, for example, can invite them to specific meetings or gatherings, or actively involve them as volunteers in certain initiatives. (This practical aspect will be developed in the "choosing the structure" section of this guideline)

❑ Addressing marginalization:

- Actively reach out to the most marginalized and vulnerable groups such as girls who have disabilities, unaccompanied minors, or those from minority ethnic or religious backgrounds. Your outreach strategies need to account for the barriers that marginalized groups face to access your services generally. Think of time of visits, location, involvement of caregivers when needed, etc.
- Beware that girls who have been displaced may also experience social stigma or exclusion from host communities, making outreach and inclusivity even more crucial.

❑ Encouraging participation amid trauma and increased responsibilities:

- Be aware that some girls may have difficulty participating due to trauma, stress and increased domestic responsibilities.
- Create a trauma-sensitive environment where girls feel safe, heard, and understood.
- Offer multiple ways for girls to participate, whether through informal group discussions, one-on-one interactions, or remote communication channels (if safe and feasible). Always ask girls what participation methods work better for them.

❑ Peer support systems:

- Establish peer support systems, where more confident or resilient girls can support those who are more withdrawn or less confident. This can be particularly important in a crisis setting, where girls may face new anxieties and fears.

❑ **Building confidence:**

- Give more time and individualized support for girls who are more isolated or less confident to help them participate.
- Focus on creating small, manageable opportunities for these girls to engage, fostering confidence and a sense of belonging.

❑ **Skills inventory in crisis contexts:**

- Assess the practical survival skills that girls may have acquired due to the emergency context, such as coping with stress, finding food, or providing care to family members. These evolving capabilities, shaped by the crisis, are valuable and should be acknowledged as part of the unique skill set that girls bring to the network.

❑ **Skill development for resilience:**

- Focus on building skills that not only help the girls engage with the network but also support their personal resilience in crisis contexts. This may include leadership skills, conflict resolution, and resource management.



Step 2: Engaging with guardians



A. General considerations

"Respect and support from their families and friends enables girls and young women to be effective in their advocacy."²⁷ Engaging with guardians is a crucial step in establishing a successful network for adolescent girls, particularly when their mothers have previously been involved in the early stages of the POWER4GIRLS Life Skills Package. It is essential to ensure that guardians are fully onboard with the network's mission and activities to prevent any potential objections or issues in the future.

Moreover, building trust between the organizations supporting the establishment of the networks and the local communities in which they operate is key to avoiding tensions and resistance, and can minimize the risks associated with girls' participation in such initiatives.

How you engage with these adults significantly impacts your ability to gain their support. Viewing them as obstacles may lead them to act as barriers to your program. Conversely, if you approach them as valuable contributors to your program, even if the engagement process is challenging, you are more likely to earn their approval and support.²⁸

B. Step-by-step guidance

- 1. Begin by organizing informational sessions** with guardians to clearly explain the network's objectives, structure, and benefits for their daughters. Highlight how the network promotes personal growth, leadership skills, and community involvement, aligning with the values and goals of the existing life skills program they already support. *(For the girls who have been part of the "Life Skills Package", explain that this is a new phase of the project, highlight the impact of the package with practical examples about their daughters, as well as the importance of continuing the work with the girls)*

²⁷ Megaw, T., Winterford, K., Arifiani, S. D., Low, I., and Robinson, L. (2021). *Regional Research on Girls' Civic Engagement and Activism for Gender Equality in Asia-Pacific*. Prepared for Plan International Asia-Pacific Hub, by Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney.

²⁸ Austrian et al. *Girl-Centered Program Design*

2. **Address any concerns guardians may have**, such as time commitments, safety, academic impact, and cultural perceptions. During the sessions, assure them of the support mechanisms, like flexible participation options, and demonstrate how the network can support their daughters in becoming confident, responsible individuals.

If a parent is not supportive of their daughter joining, listen without judgment. Ask if they'd be open to a one-on-one conversation later, where you can better understand their concerns and explain the benefits again. Sometimes, engaging a trusted community member to vouch for the program may help.

3. **Provide a platform for guardians to express their cultural concerns** and work collaboratively to find respectful solutions that align with both their values and the network's objectives.
4. **Incorporate guardians into the needs assessment process** to ensure the program aligns with community perspectives. At the program's start or when introducing changes, hold focus groups with parents to gather insights on challenges girls face, solicit their suggestions, and review program activities.
5. **Ensure that the language used in the program is culturally acceptable and understandable.** Avoid terminology that might be perceived as controversial or alienating. For example, terms like "gender" might be perceived as part of a Western agenda, even if the content itself is well-received. Carefully choose your terms to facilitate acceptance and support from the community.
6. **Involve community adults in other programs** or assign them, with the girls' support, specific roles within the initiatives whenever possible. This involvement helps build trust and allows them to better understand the organization and staff, reducing concerns and facilitating broader community support.
7. **Involve parents again at key milestones:** Initial engagement is only the beginning. Some parents may need ongoing reassurance, especially as the girls' leadership grows and their initiatives become more independent. Consider planning occasional follow-up meetings or inviting parents to milestone events.



C. Activities

Session with guardians

Introducing mothers to the girls network



Target: Guardians of selected girls



Objective:

- Get to know mothers of girls attending the Network
- Introduce mother to the Network and its benefits for their daughters
- Address guardians concerns and questions



Duration: 60 min

STARTING OFF: Welcome and ice breaker: 10min



Say: Hello, my name is [Facilitator's Name], and I'm excited to meet all of you today. I've had the pleasure of working with your daughters during the POWER4GIRLS Life Skills Package, and now we're entering an exciting new phase.

We might have met previously before your daughters joined the life skills sessions. Today, I'll introduce you to the next step in our journey: establishing a Girls' Network that will build on the skills your daughters have already developed. But first, let's get to know each other better.



Note to facilitator: If you are a new facilitator, try to have facilitator who met with caregivers before present, and explain you will lead on this component



Do: Ask each guardian to share their name and a positive quality they admire in their daughter. For example: "I'm [Name], and I admire my daughter's determination."



Note to facilitator: While caregivers might focus on positive appearances of their girls, important for facilitator to try to drive away from physical appearances and give examples related to personality of girls without pushing too much

Step 1 – Remind guardians of the measures taken in the Life Skills package: 15min

Say:

- We've already seen the value of the Life Skills Package in supporting your daughters' growth and well-being. Now, in this next phase, we aim to create a Girls' Network to continue this journey. This network will provide a platform for your daughters to take on leadership roles, engage in community activities, and support each other as they continue to develop their skills and confidence.
- Let me begin by reminding you of the steps we have already taken in the Life Skills Package to ensure a safe and welcoming space for everyone. We will continue following the same practices in the Girls' Network sessions.

Ask: Have any of you noticed any positive changes in your daughters following the life skills package?

Explain:

- The Adolescent Space is a safe and comfortable space for all those who come to the center, especially girls. Considerations have been applied to make sure girls feel comfortable coming to the center, participating in activities. Staff has been trained to listen to girls, answer their questions, and support them when needed.
- As with the Life Skills Package, we have designated a specific space within the Adolescent Area for girls only, ensuring that both you and your daughters feel at ease when they attend. The staff facilitating these sessions will be women, including myself, with the support of X (Introduce the Child Safeguarding and Gender Specialist).
- We always like to hear from you. There are reporting and feedback mechanisms available if you or your daughters have anything to share with us, or concerns about the space, behaviors and attitudes of staff or anyone coming to the space. We would like you to feel as comfortable as possible to share concerns and feedback because we always strive to make this space safer and accessible to everyone.

Step 2 – Introduce the network: 15min

Ask:

- What other strengths would you want your daughters to develop?
- Do you know what girls' networks are?

Do: Ask each question and facilitate a brief discussion on each

Say: It's wonderful to see your commitment to your girls' growth. Now, I'm excited to explain the next step in our journey, the creation of the Girls' Network!

**Explain:**

- A Girls' Network is a special space where young girls come together to learn from each other and support one another. It's a place for them to grow, share their ideas, and develop important life skills. It's not just about learning new things, it's about building confidence, leadership, and forming lasting friendships.
- As part of the network, the girls will also have the opportunity to come up with meaningful initiatives they'd like to pursue within the community, as well as how they can share the knowledge and skills they've gained with other girls.
- This network will give your daughters the opportunity to engage in meaningful activities and take initiatives where they can express themselves. By working together, they can develop important skills, like communication and problem-solving, which will help them in their future, their families and their communities.
- The network will meet regularly, with the girls engaging in activities, discussions, and mentorship with one another. They will also have the chance to lead small community projects.
- As they implement their ideas, they may need your support! You might have the opportunity to volunteer with the Girls' Network or attend their activities. This is not required, but it will give you the chance to connect with your daughters around topics that are meaningful to them

Step 3 – Address concerns and questions: 15min



Say: I understand that you may have questions or concerns. This is an important step for your daughters, and we want to ensure you feel comfortable with the process. Let's take some time to address any thoughts or concerns you might have.

**Ask:**

- What do you think of the idea of your girls joining this network?
- How do you think participating in this network will benefit your daughter?
- What are your main concerns about the Girls' Network, if any?
- Are there any cultural or logistical concerns we should be aware of, such as time commitments, location, or safety?



Do: Allow time for guardians to share and provide reassurances where needed. Emphasize flexibility in participation and highlight the support mechanisms available (e.g., safe spaces, mentorship, and ongoing communication with facilitators).

**Note to facilitator:**

Mothers might bring up concerns on topics that conform with expectations of society from women and girls, such as the need to focus on getting married, or dedicate their time to domestic tasks. Make sure to remind them that participation will be flexible and the time commitment will not be major. Don't go into discussions around them. The purpose of this session is to make them feel more comfortable sending their daughters, and not to challenge their attitudes and behaviors.

If a guardian asks if this is an employment opportunity, explain that the Girls' Network is not a job or employment program. Instead, it is a space focused on personal growth, leadership skills, and community involvement, which can help prepare their daughters for future opportunities. Emphasize that while it does not provide income, it supports their daughters in gaining valuable skills and confidence.

CLOSING: Closing and Next Steps: 5min

“ Say: Thank you for your valuable feedback and for being here today. Your involvement is key to the success of the Girls' Network, and we look forward to working together to support your daughters in this exciting next step.

? Ask: What is the thing that excites you the most about your girls joining the network?

“ Say: Thank you for sharing your ideas! We will try to incorporate them in our work to make sure this project brings the best for your daughters. In the future, if you have any questions about the Network, don't hesitate to talk to me or the Child Safeguarding and Gender Specialist.

D. Additional considerations for emergency context**Acknowledge the crisis context:**

- Start by acknowledging the current crisis and the urgent realities families are facing. This will help to build rapport and demonstrate that you understand the difficulties they are experiencing.
- Tailor your messaging to reflect on how the girls' network can support their daughters' resilience, well-being, and empowerment during such challenging times.

Flexible participation:

- Engage guardians in discussions about how girls can participate in a way that accommodates disruptions due to displacement, trauma, or family obligations.

Address concerns about time and responsibilities:

- Reframe the network as an investment in their daughters' safety and future. In displacement, parents may perceive the network as a distraction or unnecessary due to the immediate survival needs of the family.
- Offer flexible participation options that don't conflict with household duties.
- Ask parents to suggest a time that doesn't overlap with girls' other household responsibilities.

Address immediate safety concerns:

- Acknowledge the heightened risks of violence and exploitation in emergencies and emphasize how the network provides a safe space for girls.
- Be transparent about the safety and protection measures in place, ensuring guardians that their daughters will not be exposed to additional risks.

Build trust with displaced parents:

- Introduce the organizations transparently, establish credibility, and involve local leaders to help vouch for the network's legitimacy. Displaced families may be unfamiliar with the organizations operating in their new environments, leading to skepticism or distrust.

2 – Setting up the network

"Setting up the network" refers to the foundational steps of establishing the network for the girls. This phase involves building trust through storytelling and aligning on common values and norms. It also includes defining the network's identity by agreeing on its mission, vision, and name, establishing its governance by determining its structure, assigning roles, and agreeing on decision-making processes. Finally, it involves activating the network by selecting an initiative and launching its work plan. This phase allows us to gradually move from the conceptual to the practical, setting the groundwork for the network's long-term success and sustainability.



Step 1: Establishing the network



1. Building trust

A. General considerations

Building and maintaining genuine relationships is crucial for successful collaboration and lays the groundwork for a culture where network members prioritize trust over control. Trust doesn't require agreement or personal liking but does involve open, honest discussions on challenging issues. This trust allows diverse members to navigate conflicts and collaborate despite differences and enhances the networks' impact.²⁹

Building trust is an ongoing process. In addition to the initial steps taken to establish trust within the network, it is essential to make trust-building a continuous aspect of your work. Incorporating various trust-building activities and games throughout the sessions can help maintain and strengthen trust over time.

B. Step-by-step guidance

- a. **Share stories:** Stories can be used in organizing as a powerful tool for inspiration, fostering engagement and connection among members, and most crucially, motivating others to join our cause.³⁰ The story of self can be used in girls' networks as a powerful tool to convey values, share contexts and identify common themes.
- b. **Collectively set shared values:** Setting shared values in girls' networks is essential for fostering unity, guiding decision-making, and enhancing collaboration. These values create a common foundation that helps members build trust and mutual respect, connect deeply, align their actions, and resolve conflicts consistently in a supportive environment where members feel valued.
- c. **Collectively set norms:** In girls' networks, many members might be new to collective settings and may not know what to expect. It is essential for members to understand each other's needs, expectations, motivations and sensitivities, and to set norms that reflect these insights. This helps ensure that everyone feels respected, valued and supported, creating a harmonious environment that enhances collaboration and mutual understanding.

²⁹ Ehrlichman, D., Sawyer, D., & Wei-Skillern, J. (2015). *Five Steps to Building an Effective Impact Network*. Stanford Social Innovation Review

³⁰ Leading Change Network, Marshall Ganz, New Organizing Institute, Peter Gibbs, Shea Sinnott, (2014) *Organizing, people, power, change*, Leading Change Network, New Organizing Institute

C. Activities

- To build trust, strengthen connections through storytelling and shared experiences
- To introduce the purpose of the Girls' Network and set the tone for collaboration and mutual support.
- To begin identifying shared values that will shape how the group works together.

Session 1 Building trust – Hero's journey & value exchange



Target: All age groups



Objective:

- To build trust, strengthen connections and identify common values through storytelling and shared experiences.
- To introduce the purpose of the Girls' Network and set the tone for collaboration and mutual support.
- To begin identifying shared values that will shape how the group works together.



Duration: 120min



Materials:

- Paper, Colored markers and pencils,
- Balloons
- Sample of hero's journey map
- Optional: Stickers and other decorative items

ICE BREAKERS:

Balloon name game

How to play:

Step 1:

- Give each girl a balloon and a marker.
- Ask them to write their first name clearly on the balloon + a small icon that represents them,
- Support the girls who can't write by writing their names without singling them out.
- Collect all balloons and mix them up in the center of the room.

Step 2:

- Set the rules: No talking or communicating (not even gestures).
- Each girl must find her own balloon from the pile
- Time them from the moment they start to when everyone finds their balloon.



Step 3:

- Put the balloons back in the center
- This time, the girls can talk and help each other.
- Each girl will likely pick up a balloon, read the name out loud, and give it to the right person.
- Time it again.

Step 4: Debrief by asking:

- Which round was faster / easier?
- Why do you think it was faster the second time?
- How did it feel to help others / be helped?
- What can we learn from this about working together in the Girls' Network?

Step 5: Explain:

- When we only focused on our own goal, it took longer and was harder. But when we worked as a team and supported each other, we succeeded faster, and it felt better. That's exactly what we want this Girls' Network to be about: helping each other, not just ourselves.

STARTING OFF: Welcome and introduction (30 min)**Say:**

- Welcome to the network! You are all here because you expressed interest in working together to achieve great things.
- Everyone here has been part of the POWER4GIRLS' life skill package or other life skills packages tailored for girls, so many of you might already know each other! But let's play a game to get to know everyone.

**Do:** Do the icebreaker then a round of names.**Ask:** Can you remind me what a Girls' Network is?**Explain:**

- A Girls' Network is a special space just for you and other girls, where you can come together to share ideas, learn from each other, and support one another. It's a place where you can feel comfortable, safe, and heard. In the network, you'll have the chance to talk about things that matter to you, like school, family, friends, and your dreams for the future.
- One of the main goals of the network is for you to take initiatives in your community. This means coming up with ideas that can make a difference, whether it's helping others, starting projects, talking about the issues you're facing, or making your community a better place. You will work together with other girls to choose and plan activities that you care about.
- In the network, you won't just learn new things, you'll get the chance to lead on things, and build friendships that last. You'll have the opportunity to speak up, be yourself, and make a real impact on the world around you.
- Being part of the Girls' Network is about supporting each other, working together, and making sure all girls feel strong, confident, and ready to take on challenges in their communities and beyond!





Say: Today, we will get the chance to know each other more deeply. Let's take some time to understand how our personal journeys and experiences shape us and how we can learn from each other.



Ask: What is the main reason you chose to join this network?

ACTIVITY 1: Sharing stories (65 min)

Step 1 - Hero's journey mapping: 30 min



Say:

- We all have a hero's journey: A hero's journey is the story of how you face a challenge, get help, learn something important, and grow stronger
- Think about a time when you faced a significant challenge or learned an important lesson. I want you to draw a 'map' of your journey on the paper, marking key moments such as the challenge, the support you received, and the lessons learned.



Do:

- Bring out the poster of the heroes' journey (or draw it) and explain it.
- Give the girls 15-20 minutes to draw their own hero's journey maps.
- Encourage creativity in their drawings (symbols, colors, etc.).
- Remind them that there are no right or wrong answers and they should feel free to express themselves.
- Remind them that these are stories they are willing to share with the group.



Note to facilitator: During the first session the facilitator can use a simple real life event from their own life as an example, this can help build trust and relatability with the girls while also providing a concrete example. Alternatively below are 2 examples to clarify the exercise,

Example 1:

- Challenge: "I moved to a new school and felt lonely."
- Support: "My teacher / relative helped me make friends."
- Struggle: "It was hard to join new groups."
- Lesson learned: "I learned to be brave and talk to others during recess."
- Growth: "I became more confident, made new friends and felt happier."
- Sharing Wisdom: "I helped a new student feel welcome."

Example 2:

- Challenge: "Some older students were teasing my friend at school, and I didn't know what to do."
- Support: "My older sister told me it's okay to speak up when something is unfair."
- Struggle: "I was afraid that the others would start teasing me too if I spoke out."
- Lesson Learned: "I learned that being brave means doing the right thing even when it's hard."
- Growth: "I stood up for my friend and felt proud. I became more confident."
- Sharing Wisdom: "I talked about what happened to my friends and reminded others to be kind."

Account for the different levels of literacy, encourage girls who can not write to express their milestones and challenges through icons and drawings.

For girls who find drawing or abstract thinking challenging, suggest a simplified format like: Write or draw 3 key points: Challenge, Support, and Lesson Learned, then gently ask them who supported them, on how they applied what they learnt later.

BREAK / ENERGIZER (10 min)



Step 2 - Story exchange: 20 min

Do Do:

- Put the girls in groups of 3
- Allow each girl 6-7min each to share their stories.
- Make sure to pair up girls who might not know each other well
- Remind the girls to actively listen and respect each other's stories.



Say: Now, share your story with each other. Take turns sharing your hero's journey. Think about the following questions:

1. What was the experience?
2. How did it make you feel?
3. How did this challenge affect who you are today?



Explain: It's important to listen deeply when others share their experiences. You might find common themes or values that help build empathy and understanding. You might also learn from the difference in your experiences.



Note to facilitator: Ensure girls are actively listening to each other's stories and address any disruptions by reminding them of the value of respect among the group.

Step 3 - Group discussion: 15 min



Say: Let's come together and reflect on the common themes and values that emerged. How can these values strengthen our group? How can we support each other in future challenges?

Do Do:

- Gather the group together in a circle.
- Ask girls to share inspiring insights they gathered from listening to others.

**Ask:**

- How did sharing your story with others make you feel?
- What was something inspiring that you heard or learnt from listening to each other's story?
- How were the other girl's stories similar or different from yours?

CLOSING: (15 min)**Step 1: Confirming the regular meeting time: 5 min**

Say: We will meet again next week at the same time. I chose this time based on the information you shared in your applications, it was the one that worked best for most of you. Before we finish, let's quickly check: does this time still work for everyone?

- *(If everyone nods or agrees):* Great! It's important we try to stick to one regular time so we can stay consistent and make it easier for everyone to plan ahead.
- *(If there are a few hesitations or small differences, like wanting to start a bit earlier or later):* It sounds like there are just a few tweaks we might want to make *(for example, whether we start at 8 or 9)* "Let's do a quick raise of hands between those two options..." or "would you be open to a compromise, *(like 8:30?)*"
- *(If the current time doesn't work for a large number of girls):* That's totally okay, sometimes things change. Based on your earlier preferences, I have a backup option ready. Let's do a quick raise of hands and see which time works best for most of us.



Do: If changing time is necessary, do a quick raise of hands count.



Note to facilitator: *If time issues come up later, do not allow side conversations about it or make changes by yourself. Remind the group that the meeting time was decided together, based on their input. If a change is needed, it should be discussed openly with everyone involved. You can always revisit this conversation in a future session, just replicate this quick process when needed.*

Step 2: Round of appreciation: 10 min

Ask: Thank you all for sharing such important stories about yourselves. Now that we got to know each other a bit more deeply, let's each share one thing we learnt today about the person sitting to our right and that we appreciate.

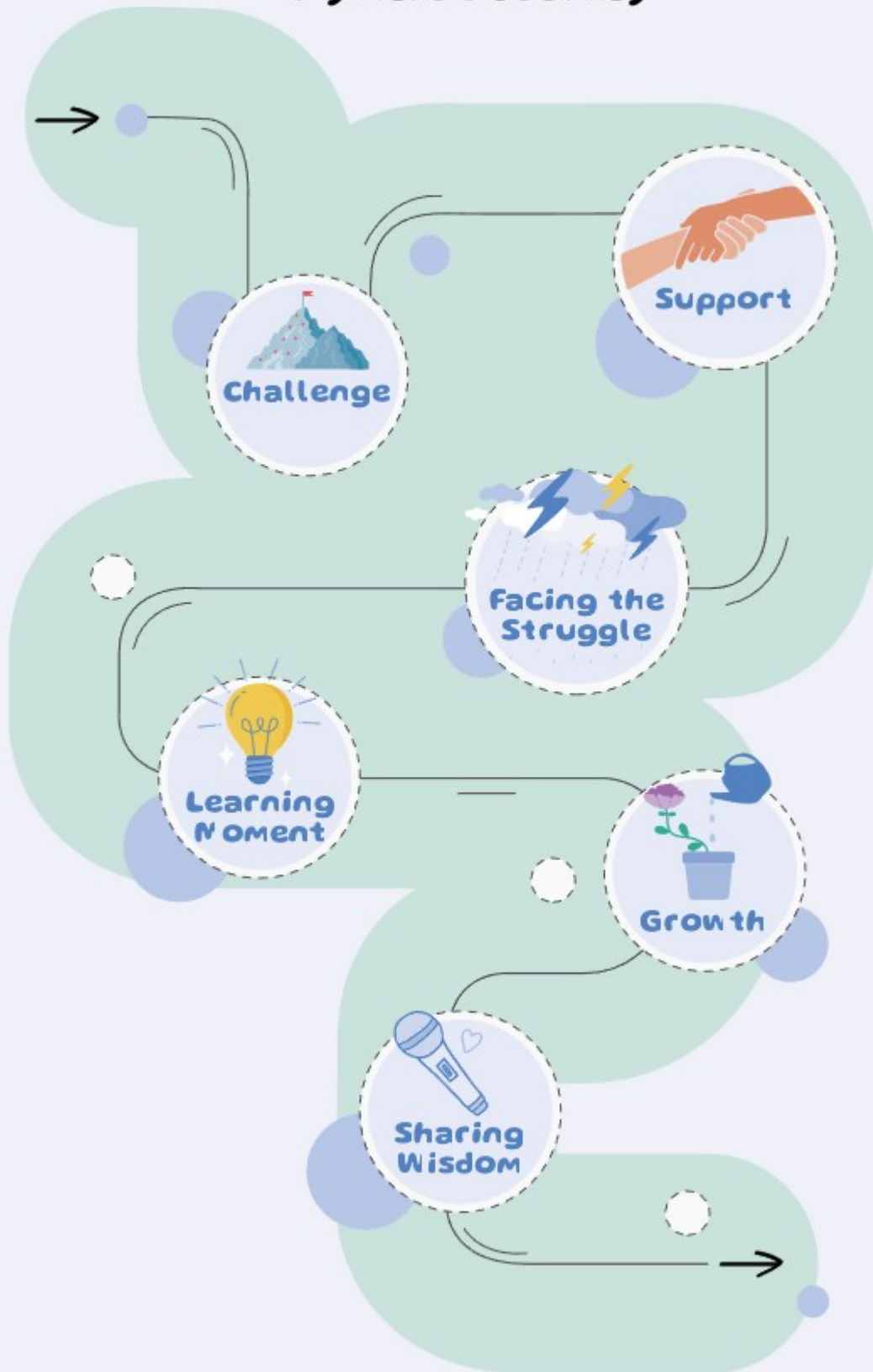


Do: When girls are done sharing, close with a round of applause



Say: Thank you for coming today. I will be available in the next 20 min if anyone wants to talk to me privately.

My Hero's Journey



Session 2 Building trust – Setting our values and norms



Target: All age groups



Objective:

- To collaboratively identify and visualize shared values and understand their importance in creating a strong, united, and supportive group.
- To collaboratively identify behaviors that make members feel safe or unsafe, respected or disrespected.
- To define behaviors that ensure the group works effectively, fostering a positive and productive environment.



Duration: 120min



Materials:

- Magazines, Colored paper, Markers, Glue sticks, Large poster boards
- Value cards + empty cards to add missing values (e.g., kindness, respect, teamwork, honesty, empathy)
- Whiteboard or large paper

ICEBREAKER:



Move If You..

How to play

- Girls stand in a circle. The facilitator calls out statements.
- Anyone who relates to the statement moves to a new spot in the circle.
- They have to move as fast as possible and can only walk inside the circle.

Statements:

- Move if you've helped someone recently.
- Move if you've ever stood up for someone who was being treated unfairly.
- Move if you believe that kindness makes a difference.
- Move if you think being honest is important, even when it's hard.
- Move if you like being part of a team.
- Move if you've ever been a leader in something - big or small.
- Move if you like helping others solve problems.
- Move if you think listening is just as important as talking.
- Move if you've ever had to say sorry to someone.
- Move if you've helped take care of someone in your family.
- Move if you've ever encouraged a friend who was feeling down.
- Move if you've made a new friend this year.
- Move if you believe every girl has the right to speak up.
- Move if you've ever done something difficult then felt proud.

STARTING OFF: Welcome and introduction (10 min)

Do **Do:** Start the session with an icebreaker

“ Say:

- In today's session, we will talk about the values and norms that we want to guide our network. These are the things that are most important to us, like respect, trust, and kindness.
- Values guide the way we treat each other and how we work together in this network. By agreeing on them, we will create a safe and supportive space where everyone feels comfortable and empowered to contribute.

? Ask:

- Who knows what “values” mean?
- Can you give an example of a value?
- Why do you think it's important to agree on shared values in a group?

“ Say:

Last session, we shared stories about challenges we faced. Think about your story. Was there a value in it? Like being honest, helping someone, or not giving up? What value do you think your story showed?

? Ask:

Who remembers what value showed in their own story last time?

(Encourage 3-4 volunteers to share. Don't push if girls are shy – just ask them to think quietly.)

ACTIVITY 1: Setting the values (50 min)

Step 1 - Values introduction: 10 min

Do Do:

- Prepare the value cards (Value + icon) and use it for explanation.
- Put the value cards in the middle of the room.
- Have the group sit in a circle around the cards.
- Read the values to girls or ask a volunteer to read them out loud.
- Ask the girls what they think it means, take 1 - 2 answers for each, and explain any value that is unclear with an example.

**Facilitator's note:**

The example values listed here are meant to support you during the activity, especially if girls have trouble explaining what a value means or how it shows up in real life. Do not write them but use them as simple explanations only when needed.

You don't have to use all the values listed. Focus on those that naturally reflect the girls' personal stories from the previous session, or those that emerge clearly during the skit or discussion.

You can run the charades in more than one round, depending on the number of girls and how engaged they are.

If girls mention or reflect other values during the discussion, write them down, mention them out loud, and ask the girls to suggest a simple symbol or icon to represent that value on a new card.

Keep it flexible and girl-led, this is about helping them shape their own group culture.

Example of values 	 Kindness Helping someone who's sad or left out.	 Respect Listening when someone speaks, even if you disagree.	 Honesty (Magnifying glass icon) Telling the truth even when it's hard.	 Teamwork Working together to clean up or finish an activity.
 Courage Speaking in front of the group even if you're nervous.	 Friendship Checking in on a friend who has been absent or missed a session.	 Responsibility Arriving on time and helping others do the same.	 Fairness / justice Making sure everyone gets a turn in a game or discussion.	 Support Encouraging a friend who feels unsure or shy.
 Listening Letting someone finish their story without interrupting.	 Loyalty Standing up for a friend when others talk behind her back.	 Patience Waiting calmly when things are delayed.	 Empathy Understanding how someone else feels, even if it's different from you.	 Inclusiveness Making sure no one is left out of games or conversations.

Step 2 - "Act the value" charade game: 20 min



Say:

- Now we're going to play a game to help us understand our values even better, through charades! That means using your body to act something out but without saying the value!
- Each group will randomly pick a value and act it out. The rest of the group will try to guess which value they are showing!
- You can decide if you want to speak or stay silent, like a mini play or a mime!



Do:

- Divide the girls into small groups (3-4 girls per group).
- Let them randomly pick a value card. (Have the cards face down)
- Give them 5-10 minutes to prepare a short skit (2-3 minutes).
- After each skit, the rest of the group guesses what value was shown.
- Invite the performing group to confirm the value and explain why they chose that scene.



Note to facilitator: If a group is struggling, support them and encourage them to act out real-life situations, like helping a friend, resolving a conflict, or working together. Remind them there's no wrong way to do it, it's about having fun and showing what the value means to them. Keep it light and playful!

Keep an eye on group interactions to ensure everyone feels comfortable and included. Gently remind the group that this is a supportive space where we respect each other's ideas and efforts - there's no wrong way to express a value.

Step 3 - Group discussion and value selection: 20 min



Do:

- Gather everyone in a circle. Place the value cards (with symbols) in the center of the circle where everyone can see them clearly.
- Invite each girl, one by one, to choose one value card, and briefly say why this value matters to her. She can speak from her own story or what she saw in others' stories, or the role plays.
- Write down the chosen values on a flipchart or board. Cluster any repeated ones (e.g., if 3 girls say "kindness," mark it as x3).



Say:

- Now that we've seen how these values can show up in our group through acting and stories, let's take a moment to reflect on which ones feel the most important to us.
- These values will be at the heart of our Girls' Network. They will help us guide how we treat each other and how we work together.



Ask

- What is the value card that feels most important to you?
- Tell us, in just a few words, why you chose it.
- There's no wrong answer! Every value you choose matters.



BREAK / ENERGIZER (10 min)

ACTIVITY 2: Setting the norms (50 min)

Step 1: Applying the values: 15 min

“ Say: Now that we’ve chosen our most important values, let’s think about how we can actually live them in this group.

? Ask:

- How can this value manifest in our group?
- For each of the values we agreed on, who can help me come up with one simple sentence that shows how we’ll apply it in our group? (For example)
 - Kindness *“We treat each other with care, even when we disagree.”*
 - Inclusivity *“In this group, everyone’s opinion matters!”*
 - Respect *“We listen when someone else is speaking.”*

Do Do:

- Take (1-2) intervention for each then help them phrase the sentence.
- Make sure girls agree to your phrasing after each statement. (For example, thumbs up or other physical movement)
- Write these value sentences on a big sheet of paper. These will become your Network Values Poster to hang up for future sessions.

Step 2: What makes us feel uncomfortable? 20 min

“ Say:

- Now that we’ve talked about what’s important to us, our values, let’s take a moment to think about what kinds of behaviors go *against* those values.
- What are some things that people do that make you feel uncomfortable, disrespected, or left out in a group?
- Encourage them to think about:
 - Times they didn’t feel heard or respected
 - Behaviors that stop people from contributing
 - Things that make the group feel chaotic or unfair

Do Do:

- Divide girls into groups of (4-5)
- Give the girls a flipchart and sticky notes
- Ask the girls to individually write down or draw their ideas for 3min before the group work starts

Introduction of moderators:**Explain:**

- As we just agreed, we want to make sure that everyone's voice is heard, and that every girl has the opportunity to share her thoughts and ideas. (*Name corresponding value / behavior chosen*)
- Every time we work in groups, someone will volunteer to moderate the smaller conversations!
- The moderator makes sure everyone on the table gets a chance to speak, and that everyone listens to each other with respect. We'll be working in groups often, and every girl will have a chance to take on that role.
- Remember, your job is not to dominate the conversation but to ensure everyone gets a chance to share their thoughts. Keep things balanced, encourage quieter members, and make sure no one is left out.

**Do:**

- Select one volunteer by group
- Support in moderating group work where necessary: Monitor the group discussions to ensure members have an equal chance of participation and intervene kindly when necessary. For example, if someone hasn't spoken in a while, you might say, 'Let's hear what [name] thinks about this topic'
- Give the group work 10 - 15 min.



Note to facilitator: Remember to always choose a moderator and ensure moderation runs smoothly in groups in future sessions. This is crucial as it helps girls build their moderation and facilitation skills and prepares them to be able to lead on bigger meetings in the future.

Step 3: Sharing & compiling our rules: 15 min**Do:**

- Have each group present their short list (2-3 minutes per group).
- Write down their ideas as they come (on a flipchart or large paper). Use positive, girl-friendly phrasing.
- Make sure to include practical group habits, not just emotional safety, but what helps the group function.
- Offer gentle prompts if needed:
 - What should happen if someone misses a session?
 - What behaviors could cause people working together in a team to fight?
 - How do we make sure no one feels left behind?



Say: We now have a list of rules and habits that help us feel safe, respected, and able to work together. These are the group norms we'll follow to make this space great for everyone.

Examples of norms: *We don't interrupt: everyone gets a turn. We come on time and stay present. We help others catch up if they miss a session. We don't laugh at someone's mistake. We are kind and open, even if we disagree. We keep everything between us confidential. We make sure everyone's opinion is heard and reflected in our work.*

Do Do:

- Read the compiled list out loud
- Ask the girls for thumbs up for each one if they agree

CLOSING: Adopting the shared norms and values (5min)

“ Say: This is now the common agreement we have created, we will now show our commitment to it by collectively signing it!

Do Do:

- Hang the flipcharts in the space
- Have the girls sign it / write their name on it or draw a small sign or symbol that represents them.
- Finish off with a round of applause.

“ Say: Thank you for coming today. I will be available in the next 20 min if anyone wants to talk to me privately.



Note to facilitator: At the end of this round of activities, capture the agreed-upon behaviors and values on flipcharts and display them on the wall in the space used for the meetings. This will serve as a reminder each time the group meets, helping the girls remember and reflect on these key principles.

2. Setting the identity

A. Step-by-step guidance

Defining the identity of a girls' network is essential because it provides a clear sense of purpose and direction, ensuring that all members are aligned and motivated towards common objectives.

- Set the vision (Dream):** The vision statement captures the long-term aspirations and impact the network aims to achieve. Clarifying the network's dream and understanding the context in which it operates is essential to help its members understand and embrace the network principle of acting as a node, not hub.³¹
- Set the mission (Purpose):** A clear mission outlines the network's core purpose and activities, guides decision-making and allows the establishment of specific goals. This clarity not only empowers the girls by giving their efforts meaningful context but also strengthens the network's ability to address the needs and aspirations of its members effectively, and makes expanding the network easier in the future as it ensures new joiners will immediately have a clear idea of the purpose.
- Choose a name:** Additionally, choosing a name for the network - or the teams within the network - helps create a strong identity that fosters a sense of belonging and pride among members. A meaningful name and distinct identity help the network stand out, resonate with its members, and communicate its values and objectives to the wider community.

³¹ Ehrlichman, et al. *Five Steps to Building an Effective Impact Network*.

To make these exercises more engaging, use age-appropriate language, such as "dreams" instead of "vision" and "purpose" instead of "mission." The goal is to help the girls reflect on and share the personal aspirations that led them to join the network. By understanding each other's goals and finding common ground, they will feel more motivated and connected. Making these tasks interactive and enjoyable will enhance their sense of ownership and excitement about the network's identity and goals.

B. Additional considerations in emergency contexts

- **Building trust under emergency conditions:**

In a crisis or emergency context, building trust becomes even more critical but may take more time. Adolescent girls in war settings may have experienced trauma or have been separated from family, and tensions between host communities and displaced individuals may arise due to the socio economic and security challenges created by displacement which can make trust-building more challenging.

- Allocate more time and effort to create rapport and reassurance amongst girls.

- **Adapting shared values and norms to the emergency context:**

In an emergency, the needs and priorities of adolescent girls may shift rapidly.

- Revisit shared values and norms regularly, as the emergency context could alter what is considered important (e.g., safety, survival, immediate support).
- Remain flexible and open to revising norms and values as needed to reflect the changing realities and to ensure that girls' voices are at the center of these discussions.

- **Setting a clear mission amidst crisis:**

During an emergency, the mission of the girls' network should focus not only on empowerment but also on providing immediate relief, providing life-saving information and addressing urgent needs, such as safety, access to healthcare, and food security.

- Balance between the long-term goals of empowerment and the immediate needs of displaced or crisis-affected communities in the area where the networks operate.
- Reassess and evolve the mission as the situation progresses, especially if the emergency context changes rapidly.

C. Activities

Session 3 Setting the identity – Agreeing on our vision and mission



Target: All age groups



Objective:

- To create a shared vision and mission for the network.



Duration: 120min



Materials:

- Large sheets of paper or poster boards.
- Markers, pens, and colored pencils for drawing and writing activities.
- Stickers and other decorative materials.

STARTING OFF: Welcome and review (10 min)

Hello!



Do: Start the session with an icebreaker



Ask:

- Can you remind me what we did last time?
- Why were the values and norms so important to us?



Say:

- Today, we will work together to create the vision for our network and decide on the mission we want to pursue.
- This will help us set the foundation for our journey as a group and guide us in choosing the goals and actions we want to focus on.
- By the end of this session, we'll have a clear idea of what we want to achieve as a network



ACTIVITY 1: Dream big – vision creation (55 min)

Step 1 - Warm-up: "What's hard about being a girl?": 15 min

Say:

- Before we imagine what kind of network we want, let's think about something else first: What are some of the things that make life hard for girls like us?
- Think back to the challenges we talked about in the Life Skills Package, the unfair things that make life harder for girls.

Ask

- What are some things girls face that we wish were different?
- What challenges came up in your personal stories?
- What do we want to be different in our communities, schools, or homes?

Do:

- Give each girl 2–3 sticky notes.
- Ask them to write or draw 1 challenge on each note.
- Stick them on a flipchart or wall labeled: "Challenges we want to change"
- Quickly cluster similar ideas.

Step 2: Dreaming for the network: 10 min

Say:

- Now it's time to flip the story.
- Imagine you're a team of superheroes. You've seen these challenges, and now, you get to change the world.

Ask:

- What's the dream you're working toward? What would the world look like if your mission succeeded
- What's the dream you have, not just for yourself, but for all girls, to make things better, safer, and more powerful for us?

Do:

- Ask everyone to close their eyes for a minute and imagine: "You've succeeded. It's 5 years from now. What does the world look like for girls like you?"
- Pass out paper and markers. Each girl draws or writes their dream - the best future they imagine for girls.
- Use prompts like:
 - What do girls have that they didn't have before?
 - What changed in how people treat girls?
 - What makes this world better than before?

Step 3: Group work: 15 min

Say: Now that each of you has imagined your dream, let's work together in small groups to find what you have in common. What parts of your dreams can become one shared vision?



Do:

- Divide the girls into small groups (3-5 people per group) and provide each group with a flipchart
- Ask each group to create one shared mini vision based on their common dreams, using drawings or a short sentence.



Ask

- As you listen to each other, look for common themes: what words, images, or hopes show up more than once?
 - *We dream that no girl ever feels left out: we create spaces where everyone belongs and is treated like a friend.*
 - *We want to support each other through tough times by talking about mental health and showing up for our sisters.*
 - *We dream of creating awareness about the real challenges girls face and take action to change them.*

Step 4 - Group presentation and collective vision statement: 15 min

Say:

- Now that each group has created their superhero mission, it's time for us to come together as one big team. Just like superheroes form one powerful squad, we're going to combine all your ideas into one shared mission that reflects who we are as a network.
- Let's listen carefully to each other, and we'll find the words and ideas that we all believe in.



Ask: (*Prompts in between presentations*)

- What words or ideas do we hear more than once?
- What is a message that feels really important to include in the final mission?
- Which parts of these dreams feel exciting or powerful to you?



Do:

- Let each group present their dream in 2- 3 minutes.
- Write down common ideas and themes on a whiteboard.
- Facilitate discussion to create a **Collective Vision Statement** that represents the group's dreams.
- Propose a draft sentence using the girls' words. *For example: "Our dream is to support and empower every girl to be confident, speak up, and create change in her community."*



Facilitators notes: Below are some examples on how to bring different themes into a cohesive vision :

We dream of a world where every girl can play, learn, and be herself, without fear, without being left out, and with friends who cheer her on every step of the way. (Themes: friendship, safety, confidence, inclusion)

We imagine a space where girls from every background feel seen and supported. Where we grow together, fight injustice, and build a better world for all girls. (Themes: solidarity, inclusion, justice)



BREAK / ENERGIZER (10 min)

ACTIVITY 2: Mission possible – Mission map creation (35 min)

Step 1 - Create the mission map: 15 min



Say:

- If the vision is where we're going, the mission is the way we get there. What can we actually do together as a group to make our dream real?
- Think of your group like a team on a mission. What actions will you take? What powers will you use?



Do:

- In the same groups give girls large sheets of paper, markers, stickers, and any other fun materials.
- Encourage them to draw paths, symbols, or even superhero-like illustrations to show their mission areas. You can show them how to practically do it.
- Use drawings or paths to symbolize different mission areas like "Education Zone," "Community Quest," or "Awareness Adventure. (For example, if our mission is to empower girls, how do we get there? Creating safer spaces for them, creating awareness sessions, teaching them skills that could give them useful skills in the job market etc..)
- Ask them to include:
 - What actions they want to take
 - Who they want to help
 - How they want to help
 - What their superpowers are as a group



Note to facilitator: Examples for Inspiration:

- We'll run confidence-building workshops for younger girls.
- We'll create a space where no girl feels left out.
- We'll talk to teachers about things that make girls uncomfortable.
- We'll make videos to raise awareness about the challenges.

Step 2 - Group presentation and refinement: 20 min

Say: Now let's share our mission statements and see how we can make one final mission statement that represents all of us!

Do:

- Let each group present their Mission Map and mission statement (2 - 3 minutes per group).
- Write down common ideas from each group's presentation.
- Facilitate conversation to create the **final mission statement** that combines everyone's ideas and goals.



Note to facilitator: When helping the girls create a mission statement, guide them to think about the purpose and goals of the network. A good mission statement should be clear, concise, and action-oriented. It should reflect the group's shared values and vision, providing a sense of direction. Here are a few examples to provide inspiration:

- Our mission is to raise awareness about [insert issue, e.g., gender equality, mental health, climate change] by creating educational campaigns, hosting events, and empowering girls to take action in their communities to inspire change.
- We aim to create a network that fosters creativity, confidence, and courage, empowering each girl to explore her potential and take on challenges in her personal and professional life.
- We are committed to creating a safe and inclusive space where girls from different backgrounds can come together, learn new skills, and inspire each other to make a positive impact in our communities

CLOSING: Celebrate the creation of the vision and the mission (5 min)



Say: Congratulations! We have now created the roadmap of our work together! Let's make it into a billboard we can keep in the space

Do:

- Write the vision and the mission on a big flip chart
- Provide girls with colors and stickers and ask them to decorate it
- Hang the flipchart on the wall and take pictures with it.
- Finish off with a round of applause.

Say: Thank you for coming today. I will be available in the next 20 min if anyone wants to talk to me privately.



Note to facilitator: Make sure to write the mission statement on a flipchart and keep it displayed in each session. This will serve as a constant reminder of the network's goals and help guide discussions and decisions as you move forward.

Session 4 Setting the identity: Choosing the name



Target: All age groups



Objective:

- To create a shared vision and mission for the network.



Duration: 120min



Materials:

- Flip charts
- The flipcharts of the values / norms / mission and vision from the previous sessions
- Sticky notes or stickers (for voting), Large cardboard

ICEBREAKER:



"The Story Behind My Name"

How to Play: Do it either in plenary, or in small groups depending on the total number of the girls.

- Ask girls to share:
 - What their name means
 - Why they were given that name
 - Or a story connected to their name/nickname

Optional: For girls who don't want to share about their real name, offer a creative twist: "If you could give yourself a name that reflects your strength, what would it be?"

STARTING OFF: Welcome and review (15 min)



Do: Start the session with an icebreaker



Ask: Can you remind me what we did in the past few times?



Do:

- Have the flipcharts from previous sessions (values, norms, mission, vision) displayed around the room.
- Facilitate a group discussion to summarize the outcomes of the past sessions using the following prompts:

- What were the major values we agreed on?
- What were the main norms we agreed on?
- What is the common dream for the network?
- What is the mission we agreed on?



Say:

- Today, we'll take some time to choose a name for our network that reflects who we are and what we stand for. This name will represent our identity and the work we'll do together.
- We'll also reflect on how far we've come so far by evaluating the process and discussing what we've learned. This will help us ensure that we're on the right track and ready for the next steps in building our network.

ACTIVITY 1 : Choosing the name (45min)

Step 1 - Brainstorm names: 15 min



Say: Now that we have our vision and mission, it's time to choose a name for our network! This name will represent who we are and what we stand for. Let's get creative!



Do:

- Split the girls into small mixed groups.
- Ask each group to come up with a list of fun, cool, or inspiring names for the network.
- Encourage them to think about the mission and vision when coming up with the names!

Step 2 - Share and discuss: 15 min



Say: Let's hear the names each group came up with. We'll discuss them and think about which name really fits our group.



Do:

- Have each group share their top name ideas.
- Discuss each name's meaning and how it connects to the values, vision, and mission of the network.
- Write all the names on the board and leave space between them for the votes.

Step 3 - Vote: 15 min



Say: Time to choose! Let's vote for our favorite name. Each of you will get 3 stickers to vote on the names you like best. You can use your stickers to vote for a few different names if you want!

Do:

- Provide each girl with 3 stickers.
- Let them vote for their favorite names.
- Tally the votes and announce the winning name!



Explain: This name is more than just a label. It represents everything we've created together. It shows who we are, what we stand for, and the amazing things we're going to do as a network. We all helped create it, so let's own it and make it come to life!

**BREAK / ENERGIZER (10 min)****ACTIVITY 2: Evaluation and visualization (45min)****Step 1 - Introduce the talking stick circle: 5min**

Say: We've accomplished a lot in the last few sessions by agreeing on the principles that will guide us moving forward. Let's reflect on what we've done so far.

Do

- Arrange the seating so that everyone can sit in a circle, ready to pass the stick around.
- Have a physical object (such as a stick, stone, or any meaningful object) to represent the Talking Stick.

**Say**

- Today, we're going to use a Talking Stick to help us share our thoughts and feelings.
- The Talking Stick gives each person a special moment to speak without being interrupted. You don't have to talk for a long time if you don't want to, and you can share as little or as much as you feel comfortable with.
- The most important thing is that we all get a chance to say something, even if it's just a quick thought.

Step 2 - Hold the talking stick circle: 25min**Say:**

- We're going to take turns sharing our thoughts using the Talking Stick. When you hold the stick, it's your turn to talk. When you're not holding it, your role is to listen attentively. Today, we're reflecting on the journey we've been on together so far, and how it's been for you.
- Through the past few weeks, we've worked together to think about the network we want to build. We shared our stories, discussed our values, and decided how to make each other feel safe and respected. We've also agreed on a common dream and mission. Today we chose the name of our network!
- Now, we'll each have 1 -2 minutes (*depending on the number of girls*) to share our thoughts on how it's been for us so far. I'm going to ask you some questions, and when you hold the Talking Stick, you can share whatever comes to mind.

**Ask:**

- How do you feel about the work we've done so far?
- Do you feel that the things we agreed on represent you?
- What have you learned from the past few sessions about working together to create ideas?



Say: Remember, you don't have to answer all these questions, you can talk as little or as much as you want within the time limit, and share anything you feel like telling the group. I will raise my hand so you know when the minute is up, but feel free to finish your thought before passing the stick to the next person!

**Do:**

- Start passing on the stick to one side
- Time intervention and make sure to agree on a gentle hand sign to inform when the minute has elapsed.
- If girls repeatedly ignore the hand sign, kindly remind them in between interventions (*For example: Just a little reminder to watch for the hand sign so we can make sure everyone gets a chance to share.*)
- Finish off the circle when the stick gets back to you by thanking everyone for sharing their thoughts and ensuring their feedback will be taken into account.
- Note down any feedback to ensure it is included in future sessions when needed

Step 3 - Visualize identity: 15min

**Say:**

- Now, let's create a visual representation of our network's identity! We're going to work together on a drawing that represents who we are and what we stand for.
- This poster will show our collective spirit, so remember to take turns drawing, coloring, and adding to it.
- You can either start by drawing or cutting shapes at your desk and gluing them onto the main board, or draw directly on the cardboard. Just be mindful of the space and time you're using, and make sure everyone gets a chance to contribute!!

**Do:**

- Provide a large cardboard
- Write the agreed-upon name written in the center.
- Ask the girls to decorate the name, create a logo, or add any creative elements that represent the network's vision, values, and mission.



Note to facilitator: *If you've noticed that some participants don't enjoy drawing, offer them alternative ways of expressing themselves. You can also divide the group, for example, one group can work on the drawing, while the other creates a choreography, movement, or chant/slogan that represents the network, and a couple girls can take nice pictures of the process with everyone's consent.*

CLOSING: Celebration (5 min)

Say: We have worked really hard and accomplished so much in the past month, let's celebrate our success together



Do:

- Ensure all the major flipcharts are exposed in the room for the girls to walk around and remember the accomplishments (Values, norms/behaviors, vision, mission and name)
- Let the groups present their poster and/or chant.
- Play music and encourage the girls to dance and sing.
- If possible, provide snacks and juice for this session to create a celebration vibe.
- Finish off with a round of applause.



Say: Thank you for coming today. I will be available in the next 20 min if anyone wants to talk to me privately.





Step 2: Defining governance and developing the pace of the network



1. Choosing the structure

A. General considerations

When establishing a new network, it's crucial to define its structure, including member selection, roles, work levels, communication channels, responsibilities, priorities, and budget.

While networks can vary in their organizational forms, this diversity is not inherently negative. It is important to recognize and accommodate these different structures to effectively meet the network's needs and goals.³²

In the context of girls' networks, it is better to sway away from flat Network structures. These models can lead to confusion and lack of clear leadership, which may overwhelm new members who are still learning to navigate organizational roles. Starting with flat structures often blurs responsibilities and slows decision-making due to the need for consensus.

For new groups, a circular or simple hierarchical structure provides the necessary guidance, clear roles, and efficient processes to foster confidence, cohesion, and effective collaboration. **The circular structure is often preferable because:**

- It creates diverse leadership opportunities so more members can practice leadership
- It reduces harmful dynamics that can arise around a single authority,
- It is well suited when several smaller groups are merging into one network (this can form a matrix-style arrangement),



Note: The activity in Session 5 assumes a circular structure. If you choose a different structure, you can adapt the activity to fit your model.

When choosing a circular structure, the exact structure will depend on the group's size and interests. Make sure the smaller teams reflect the girl's interests and inclinations. Use the outcome of the surveys completed at the beginning as well as the outcome of the conversations in sessions 3 and 4 to form a clearer idea of what the group needs. For example, if the group has agreed that their main tool is awareness raising, their teams might focus on outreach, content creation and event planning, if they lean more towards vocational trainings or practical activities, the structure may also include logistic and a finance team, if they're interested in multiple types of activities the teams might be divided into "activities", "membership", and "communications".

Regardless of the structure adopted, **incorporating an advisory board** can be a valuable practice. Initially, adult advisors can provide essential guidance and support, helping to navigate challenges and offering expertise in areas such as organizational development, fundraising, and community relations. Over time, as the network matures, older girls who have been active members and demonstrated leadership qualities can transition into advisory roles. This not only empowers them but also helps the network move towards independence, ensuring sustainability and continued growth.

³² International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2023). *Guidelines and toolbox for youth networks*, Geneva

When roles within a group or committee are not clearly defined, members may assume that someone else will handle tasks, leading to important work being overlooked or falling to the same few individuals, which can result in burnout. This lack of clarity can also limit opportunities for other members to develop their skills and take on leadership roles. Adapting the structure ensures that work is fairly distributed, roles are clearly defined, and everyone has the chance to contribute and grow.

B. Step-by-step guidance

- a. **Begin by adopting a circular structure:** based on the pilot, this is the most practical starting model for sharing responsibility and preventing concentration of power. The facilitator should support the girls in shaping the circles and defining the roles within this framework. This structure can evolve and expand as the group grows.
- b. **Define the structure based on your goals and needs:** consider the network's mission and vision. Use these goals to guide how the girls shape their circles. For example, if your mission includes multiple areas - such as community building, raising awareness, and education - and the group has capacity for several initiatives, you might divide the circles by theme or focus area. On the other hand, if your vision is centered around a single campaign or issue, it may be more useful to divide circles by function, such as membership, logistics, communications, or social media.
- c. **Assess size, complexity, and member skills:** Consider the size of the group, the complexity of your goals, and the interests and skills of members. Use insights from the earlier survey, such as what excites members about joining the network, to help shape circles that reflect both group needs and individual motivation. While these preferences may have shifted over time, they still offer a useful starting point. For example, if some girls are eager to learn new skills and take on leadership, while others are more focused on building friendships, you might create a mix of circles, some more task-focused, others more social or peer-support oriented, so that everyone finds meaningful ways to participate.
- d. **Consider age division:** When designing the network structure, consider the varying needs of different age groups. For younger girls, such as those in early adolescence, a structure that provides more guidance and clearly defined roles helps build confidence and understanding. Older girls, in late adolescence, may benefit from greater autonomy and leadership opportunities. One approach could be to create initiative-based committees that offer additional support to those addressing the needs of younger girls, while still allowing older girls to take on leadership roles and more complex tasks. Another option is integrating age-specific roles of committees, such as mentorship programs where older members guide younger ones. This ensures tailored support and appropriately challenges members according to their development stage.
- e. **Maintain flexibility and adaptability:** keep the structure flexible and ready to change as the network's needs evolve. The initial circular setup is a starting point, not fixed. Facilitators should guide the girls to review and adapt the structure, not make these decisions for them. For example, if the network begins running a peer-support and referral system that requires clear safety procedures, the group could pilot a small Management Circle (e.g., Safeguarding lead, Referral coordinator) to coordinate and share these protocols across other circles. Review with the girls regularly (suggest every 3 months) and agree on small pilot changes before making permanent shifts.

C. Structures comparative table



Note to facilitator: The selection of the structure at this stage should be done by the facilitator taking into account the factors noted above, as well as the pros and cons cited in this table. Keep in mind that the structure might evolve as the network starts operating.

Type of network	How it works	Pros and cons	Best for
Hierarchical / Functional structure	A small, elected leadership team (President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer) guides the group and makes big-picture decisions. Small teams handle day-to-day tasks (events, fundraising, safety planning) and, when given permission, make routine choices. Clear ways to share ideas (regular updates, feedback moments) can make sure everyone can be heard. Example: a safety team creates simple rules for meetups, and the leadership team supports and shares those rules.	Pros: • Clear lines of authority and responsibility. • Efficient decision-making with defined roles. Cons: • Can be rigid and may limit member involvement in decision-making.	Networks need clear leadership and well-defined roles, especially if the network is large or complex.
Flat structure	A core team coordinates day-to-day tasks, but all members have equal say in decisions and planning. The group discusses and agrees collectively on activities, with the core team handling logistics. Example: the whole group votes on session topics and everyone helps run them.	Pros: • Encourages equal participation and collaboration. • Can be more flexible and adaptable to changes. Cons: • May lead to slower decision-making if there is no clear leadership. • Potential for role overlap or confusion.	Smaller networks or those that prioritize collaboration and shared leadership.

Matrix structure	People belong to both functional circles (e.g., Communications, Event planning) and project teams (e.g., a campaign), so members work across teams and report to different role leads for different tasks. This lets local groups share resources for joint projects while keeping their own day-to-day work. Example: outreach reps from three local circles join a central campaign team to plan a network-wide awareness day.	Pros: • Facilitates collaboration across different areas. • Flexibility in managing projects and tasks. Cons: • Can be complex and challenging to manage. • May lead to confusion about reporting lines and responsibilities.	Networks that work on multiple projects or initiatives requiring cross-functional collaboration.
Circular Structure	Work is split into linked teams (circles) that focus on things like Membership, Outreach, Activities. Each team has simple roles (leader for meetings, note-taker, and a rep) and reps meet together to keep everyone in sync. Groups make choices together using clear steps so no one person ends up running everything. Example: Activities plans sessions, Outreach invites girls, and the reps meet to make sure sessions are full.	Pros: • Encourages communication and collaboration between different teams. • Visual representation of equal importance of various roles. Cons: • Can be less clear in terms of authority and decision-making hierarchy. • May require careful coordination to avoid overlap.	Networks that want to emphasize teamwork and communication across various functions.
Network Structure	A central coordinating core helps connect many independent groups or individuals who run their own projects. The core supports communication and resource sharing but does not control every activity; contributors lead their own work. Example: different local groups run separate community projects while the core team collects and shares tips, space, and a calendar of events.	Pros: • Highly flexible and adaptable. • Encourages innovation and individual contributions. Cons: • Can lead to inconsistent coordination and communication. • May require strong central coordination to ensure alignment.	Networks with a diverse range of activities and members who contribute independently.

2. Creating the structure

A. Step-by-step guidance

- a. **Define the roles and responsibilities:** Once the structure has been chosen, begin by establishing a detailed description of each role within the chosen governance structure. Clearly outline the responsibilities and time commitment associated with each position to ensure that tasks are manageable and align with the capabilities of your members. This step is crucial in preventing role overload and ensuring that all member's contributions are both feasible and valued
- b. **Define decision making process:** Clarify how decisions are made within the network. For example, determine whether committees have the authority to make decisions independently or if they need board approval. Define the role of the advisory board in the decision-making process, including when they should be consulted or make final decisions. This process should be flexible and evolve as the network grows and becomes more self-sufficient.
- c. **Define membership:** Outline what it means to be a member of the network, drawing inspiration from the mission and values of the network. Specify the criteria for membership, including any requirements or expectations. Define what members are committing to in terms of participation, contribution, and engagement. For example, new members might be expected to attend a certain number of meetings or participate in at least one committee. Clearly defined membership criteria help ensure that all members understand their role and are motivated to contribute effectively.
- d. **Define communication channels:** Establishing effective communication channels can help keep members informed and engaged. When setting up these channels, consider that not all members may have access to the same level of technology. To address this, use a combination of communication methods to ensure inclusivity. For instance, in addition to digital platforms like group chats or social media, provide options such as phone calls for those with limited internet access. Regularly share summaries of key activities and decisions through accessible formats such as print outs and offer alternative ways for members to participate and stay informed. This approach helps ensure that all members, regardless of their technological resources, remain connected and actively involved in the network.



B. Activities

Session 5 Creating the structure



Target: All age groups



Objective:

- To introduce the governance structure of the network and define the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes.
- To ensure clarity about membership commitments and communication methods within the network.



Duration: 130min

Materials:



- Visual representation of the chosen structure on a large poster.
- Large flip charts or poster boards for group discussions
- Role cards for Activity 1
- Markers, stickers, and colored pens
- Picture cards for roles and responsibilities (to represent tasks visually) + empty cards to add roles if needed
- Paper cups

ICE BREAKER:



Mini team race:

How to play:

- Split the girls into small groups of 4–5.
- Give each group a stack of 15 paper cups and one small timer (or use your phone)
- Each team has to build a pyramid (base 5, then 4, then 3, 2, 1)
- Rules are:
 - Only one person may touch the cups at a time
 - team members must tag-in/out when they switch who builds.
 - Each member should place at least 2 cups
- Start timer for 3 minutes.
- After the time: each group shows their pyramid.

Welcome and overview (5 min)

Do Start the session with a quick icebreaker

Say:

- In today's session, we'll work together to create the structure of our network. This means deciding how we want to organize ourselves, what roles we'll have, and how we'll make decisions together.
- By establishing a structure, we'll ensure that our network is strong, organized, and able to work effectively towards our goals.

Ask: If you were to plan a snack table for our group, what are the things we need to do?

Do Take a few responses (examples to prompt): "buy the snacks," "invite the girls," "set the table," "serve snacks," "clean up afterwards."

ACTIVITY 1: Understanding our structure & defining roles (55 min)

Step 1 - Roles roleplay: 15 min

Say: When we are a big group and we want to plan something, we need to decide who does what. These are called roles.

Do

- Split into three small groups.
- Give every group the same simple task: "Plan and show how you'd run a snack table for our next meeting (choose snacks, set up, welcome people, serve, clean). You have 8 minutes to plan and 2 minutes to present."
- Give each group materials as noted below
- Each group shows their quick plan (who would do what and how they'd run the snack table) and demonstrates one short action (e.g., pretend to welcome, set a plate).

Instructions to groups

- **Group A** - No roles: Do not give them roles - just cut out cards with tasks - everyone should try to do all of them together without dividing work.
- **Group B** - Mixed/last-minute: Give them role cards without clear tasks. Midway through the task, tell them to assign the roles if they haven't.
- **Group C** - Structured team: Give them cut outs of the different role cards with the tasks assigned for each and ask them to assign roles at the start.

Role cards:

Moderator	Snack buyer	Outreach and welcome
 Tasks: → Facilitate group conversations → Make sure everyone is informed of what is happening → Make sure preparations are going smoothly	 Tasks: → Decide where to buy snacks from → Get agreement on how much money to spend → Get the money and buy snacks	 Tasks: → Invite girls to the event → Count the girls who are coming → Welcome girls when they arrive at the event
Serving team	Social media	Helper
 Tasks: → Set up the tables and chairs → Bring out the snacks	 Tasks: → Take pictures of the event → Write captions → Post on social media	 Tasks: → Fill in any remaining tasks or gaps → Make sure cleaning duties are assigned

Step 2: Debrief: 10 min**Ask:**

- What happened while you planned? (Who made decisions? Was it easy to agree?) *(get answers from the 3 groups)*
- How did you feel about work, confident, confused, rushed?
- Compare outcomes aloud: Which group had the clearest plan? Which felt easiest to do? Which seemed most likely to get everything done?

**Explain:**

- See how having clear roles and a simple plan helps everyone do their part. When no one has roles, people step on each other, forget things, or nothing gets finished. That is why we build a structure: so everyone can use their strengths and things actually happen.
- All the roles and responsibilities are essential for making the event happen.

**Note to facilitator:**

- Keep timing strict in the roleplay so groups feel the difference under pressure.
- Observe and name one clear example during debrief ("Group B forgot to name someone to bring money", etc.).
- Save any useful role ideas from groups for the role poster.

Step 3: Structure introduction: 10 min

Do: Show the big circle poster: small coordination circle in the middle (3–4 reps) with 3–5 radiating teams (example: Activities, Outreach, Media, Logistics, Membership - See "Choosing the structure" for more). Use colors and icons.

**Say:**

- We picked a circle structure, so teams share leadership and everyone helps.
- This is the structure we will use to organize our work together. But we're not just going to talk about it, we're going to decide how each role works and what everyone will do!
- For a small project, like planning the snack, each person can take a role, but when we're a bigger group working on bigger initiatives, we can form small teams to make sure everyone is involved.
- Each team focuses on one aspect of the work, and makes sure the different roles and tasks in it happen.
- Each small team also picks a representative to coordinate with the other groups, informs them what their group is doing, and informs their group of what is happening with the others. That way the job gets done and teams meet in the middle to solve bigger questions. This keeps work shared and makes sure everyone knows what's happening.

**Ask:**

- Is this clear to everyone? Does anyone have any questions?
- Who can summarize what a structure means and how our structure works?



Note to facilitator: Make sure to give practical examples based on the circle division you've chosen. These examples are meant to help you understand the different possible combinations and roles within a circular structure. They are not a fixed model that you must follow exactly. Feel free to adapt and combine circles in ways that best fit your group's unique goals and interests.

- The membership team can have people who deal with members, whether it's facilitating conversations, inviting them to meetings, or making sure that everyone is satisfied, while the logistics team is responsible for all the practical things, such as buying items or booking a space. A communications team can manage invitations, reminders, and updates. (etc..)
- The awareness team focuses on planning sessions with the girls and creating social media content to raise awareness. Meanwhile, the events team organizes fun activities where girls can meet and build friendships, the design team makes posters, graphics, and videos to support everyone's work. (etc..)
- The media circle can focus on storytelling and visual content, the performance or arts circle might plan creative expressions like skits or songs, while the documentation circle keeps track of what the group is doing, taking photos, or collecting quotes from members to share in public.
- The leadership circle can support girls to develop confidence and public speaking skills, the community service circle can organize local projects to help others, while the creative expression circle can provide space for arts and storytelling, and a communications circle can handle sharing the group's work through social media and newsletters.

Step 4 - Brainstorming roles & responsibilities: 20min



Say: Now, we're going to discuss some of the roles that we might need in our network



Do:

- Raise each role card, with the name of the role and a clear icon on each, once at a time
- Ask girls to list the tasks that you think each role should take on
- Place the card in the correct circle depending on your division
- Account for extra / empty cards to make sure any extra roles mentioned by the girls are noted
- Discuss what they think is important for each role.
- Ask the girls to reflect on missing roles they think would be fitting



Ask:

- What are the tasks that the person taking this role should take?
- What skills or strength does this role require?
- How much time does it take?
- In which team does this role fall?
- Are there any other roles you would like to do, or that you think that the network might need that were not mentioned?



Explain:

- When we choose a role, it does not mean we can not support each other outside of it.
- For example, if you're in the membership team, and your team needs balloons and you know a good balloon seller, you can definitely inform the person buying the balloons. Similarly, if you have a cool idea for a poster you can share it, even if you're in another team.
- Roles are not supposed to limit us, they just help us know who is responsible for getting a task done, and who ultimately makes the decisions when needed.



Say: We've now agreed on the main roles needed to keep our network running. As we move forward, we can adjust and adapt these roles based on our experiences and the work we do together!

Examples for role cards:

These are examples to inspire facilitators, adjust based on your group's size, your teams' division and on girls' capacities, interests and suggestions

Membership Circle

Coordinator

- Invite everyone to meetings.
- Send meeting agenda and reminders.
- Share meeting notes and progress updates.
- Check in with team reps after meetings.

Facilitator

- Prepare meeting agendas.
- Guide discussion so everyone can speak.
- Make sure tasks are assigned to teams/people.

Group supporter

- Invites people to activities and sessions.
- Plans fun activities for the group.
- Support in resolving conflicts or misunderstandings.

Communications & Outreach Circle

Social Media:

- Write friendly captions for posts.
- Schedule or post updates about events.
- Respond to comments/messages.
- Check photo permissions before posting.

Photographer / Designer:

- Take photos at events (ask permission first).
- Choose photos for sharing.
- Create simple posters or visuals.

Outreach (events focus):

- Make a plan to invite more girls to activities.
- Contact schools, centers, or community groups.
- Hand out or share flyers/links about events.

Speaker / Representative:

- Speak for the network at outside events or meetings.
- Share quick network updates when asked.

Logistics Circle

Procurement:

- Contact businesses or partners for supplies or space.
- Negotiate or ask for in-kind support.
- Collect or arrange delivery of items.

Finances:

- Keep a simple record of money in and out.
- Collect small payments or contributions when needed.
- Budget for events.

Activities Circle

Event Planner:

- Choose event ideas and create a plan.
- Invite guest speakers and brief them.
- Gather and prepare materials for activities.
- Test games or exercises beforehand.

Session Host:

- Welcome participants and explain the plan.
- keep activities on time and supported.
- Make sure the event is running smoothly.

BREAK / ENERGIZER (10 min)



ACTIVITY 2: Decision-making process (30 min)

Step 1 - Brainstorming decision-making: 10 min



Say: Now, let's talk about how we're going to make decisions together. Do we want to vote on everything, or do certain roles make decisions? How can we make sure everyone's opinion is heard?



Do:

- In small groups, ask the girls to think of the decisions that needed to be made in the snack preparation event
 - What are some of the decisions that need to be made?
 - Who should be making each of these decisions?
 - Do we all need to agree on every single one of them or are there some things we can decide as a team? / "which team should decide on what?"
 - How do we make sure everyone's voice is heard?

Step 2 - Creating a collective decision-making chart: 20 min



Say: "Great ideas, everyone! Let's put them all together into one decision-making flow. This will guide us when we need to make choices as a network."



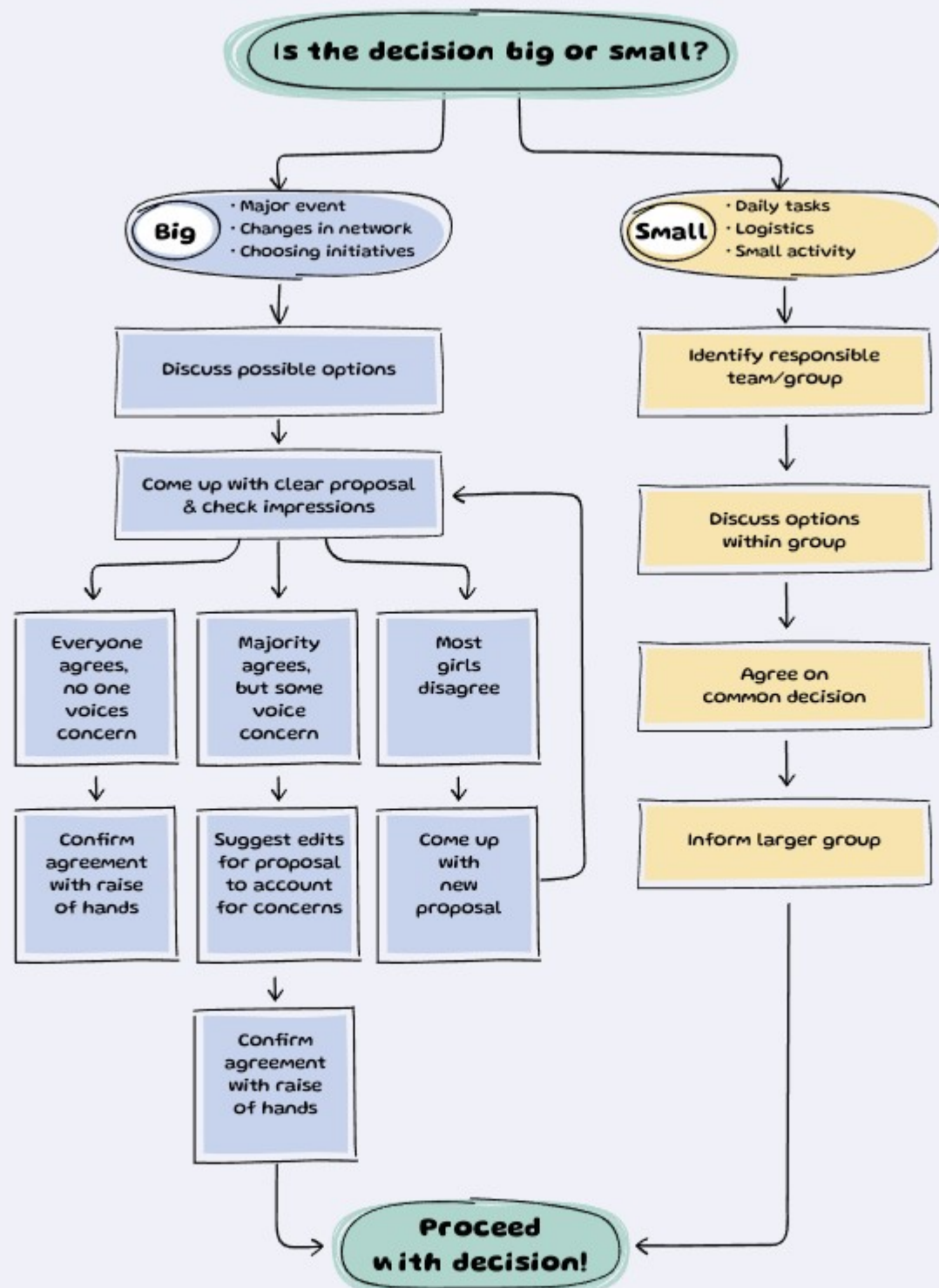
Do:

- Create a large group chart or diagram based on the ideas shared.
- Ask the girls to share the decisions they've thought off and add on any missing decisions (for example)
 - What snacks should we buy?
 - What brand?
 - Where should we buy them from?
 - How much money should we spend on snacks?
 - What is the color of the decoration for the event?
 - Where should the event happen?
 - Should we post photos of the event on social media?
 - If yes: What should be written in the caption?
 - Someone suggested we should also invite girls from outside the network to introduce them to our work, should we do it or not?
- Write down the decision-making steps clearly. For example:
 - **Step 1:** Is it a big decision?.
 - **Step 2:** If it's big, we all vote or discuss it together.
 - **Step 3:** If it's small, team members decide (other options would be depending on the structure, for instance giving the event planning group the right to make decisions related to event planning etc..)
- If needed, leave space for future changes or flexibility as the network grows.



Say:

- The chart we just created will guide us whenever we need to make decisions
- Is it clear to everyone?
- Does anyone disagree on any of the ideas we decided on?



Note to Facilitator: The following example of a decision-making chart is meant to show you what it could look like. The specific steps should be reflective of the discussion with the girls and do not have to follow the sample provided. Feel free to adapt and modify the chart based on the ideas and preferences shared by the group during the session. The goal is to create a process that works best for your network and ensures that everyone's voice is heard while making decisions.

ACTIVITY 3: Defining membership & communication (15 min)

Step 1 - Discussing the membership promise: 15 min



Say: Being part of this network means we all need to show up and contribute. Let's talk about what it means to be a member of this network.



Ask :

- What do we expect from each other as members? (refer back to norms agreed upon in session 2)
- How do we handle it if someone isn't meeting expectations? (Examples)
 - If someone is repeatedly late /missing from meeting
 - If someone cannot commit to the role they chose
 - If someone is being disrespectful towards other team members?



Do:

- Facilitate discussion
- Summarize the answers in a positive action-oriented way (examples)
 - *We brief each other when someone misses a meeting.*
 - *If someone is repeatedly absent, we check on them. If they can no longer attend, we ask someone else to fill their role.*
 - *If someone cannot commit to a task, it's their duty to inform their team to make sure someone else does it.*
 - *When mistakes happen, we apologize and try to make it right.*
- Check with girls whether they agree to each statement before writing it down on the flipchart
- Once the list is complete, title the flipchart "membership promise" and ask girls to sign it or draw a symbol that represents them on it.

CLOSING: Conclusion & wrap-up (5 min)

“ Say: Great job, everyone! We’ve now defined the roles, responsibilities, decision-making process, and membership expectations. This will help us work together smoothly and stay connected as we build this network!

Do:

- Thank the girls for their participation and emphasize that the structure and commitments can evolve as the network grows.
- If possible, celebrate by providing the girls with a physical symbol of them “officially” joining the network, such as a bracelet / necklace / keychain or pin with the name of the network!
- Finish off with a round of applause.

“ Say:

- Thank you for coming today.
- *(If possible to extend the next session)* Next time, we’re going to do something really exciting: we’ll be assigning the roles and, for some of them, we’ll even have an election to choose the leaders! It’s going to be a big day! To make sure we have enough time to do everything, would it be okay if we meet for 2.5 hours instead of just one hour next time? Raise your hand if you’re up for it!
- I will be available in the next 20 min if anyone wants to talk to me privately.



C. Additional considerations in emergency contexts

Governance structures in crisis:

In a crisis context, governance structures may need to be more flexible. While a clear structure is essential, network roles may need to be adjusted frequently based on available resources, evolving needs, and fluctuating participation levels. Decision-making processes should also be streamlined to allow for quick responses to urgent needs. For instance, a more centralized approach to decision-making may be required initially, with rapid consultations with girls to ensure their voices are heard, especially when security or logistics are factors. As the emergency situation stabilizes, governance structures can gradually return to a more participatory model.

The process of collectively setting the structure can be skipped in an emergency context, and the focus can shift on choosing initiatives and defining work plans. A preliminary working structure should, however, be planned by the facilitators considering the following factors:

- **Adapting roles and responsibilities under emergency conditions:**

Emergency contexts often require roles and responsibilities to be more fluid and adaptable. Network members, particularly older girls, might need to take on additional roles, such as distributing aid, providing peer support, or participating in community advocacy efforts.

- Clearly define tasks based on chosen initiatives but ensure there is flexibility in how these are executed, understanding that emergency situations may lead to unexpected challenges, such as transportation issues or sudden security concerns.
- Keep lines of communication open to ensure that all members understand their roles and that there is no burnout among a few members.

- **Reassessing communication channels:**

In emergency contexts, access to communication technologies can be limited or uneven.

- Evaluate each girl's access to different communication methods and provide alternative channels for those who might not have regular access to digital platforms.

- **Engaging displaced girls through volunteering and participation opportunities:**

In an emergency context, many girls might get displaced and start building rapport with local girls who are already part of the network. It is important that the initial structures ensure space for their active involvement and participation. This can be by creating:

- A core team (*Which includes the girls who have been part of the life skills package*): This team would be the one reflecting on the planning aspect of the network, including setting its identity, mission and vision.
- A larger team (Which can include displaced or affected individuals who show interest in joining the network) which can be consulted when choosing the initiatives and become part of the task forces implementing them.

- **Flexibility in member engagement:**

In times of crisis, not all girls will be able to commit to regular meetings or structured activities.

- Provide opportunities for girls to engage at their own pace, such as through short-term or crisis-focused tasks (such as helping distribute emergency supplies, joining community protection efforts, etc.).
- Engage girls at different levels of involvement, offering them flexibility in how they participate, for instance creating a poster they can send remotely for girls who cannot attend in person.
- Recognize that some girls may initially participate out of a need for social support or basic needs and gradually build their engagement by showing how the network can address these needs while also providing them opportunities for leadership and empowerment.

3. Assigning roles

A. Step-by-step guidance

Once the governance structure for the girls' network is established, setting up an effective system for role assignment and rotation becomes crucial. This process involves determining how roles will be chosen and how they will rotate, while balancing the need for skill development and leadership opportunities. Facilitators should:

- a. **Establish a clear method for assigning roles:** Decide whether roles will be filled through elections, nominations, or appointments. Elections provide a democratic approach that encourages engagement and allows new members to bring fresh perspectives. This method can be particularly motivating, as consultations with girls' networks have shown that election times often generate excitement and involvement. Alternatively, nominations or appointments may be suitable for roles requiring specific skills or experiences, especially in newer networks where members are still developing their capabilities.
- b. **Balance roles:** For the initial rotation, it is vital to balance skill levels among the roles. Aim to leverage the strengths of members who already demonstrate leadership or relevant skills while also creating opportunities for those with less experience to learn and grow. This can be achieved by pairing more experienced members with less experienced ones or by assigning roles that offer a mix of responsibilities, allowing everyone to contribute meaningfully and develop their skills over time. For example, an experienced member could lead a project while a less experienced member assists, providing a learning opportunity. Similarly, the first advisory board might initially include adults who support the network's establishment and gradually incorporate more experienced girls as they evolve through the structure.
- c. **Set rotation schedule:** Determine a rotation schedule that provides enough time for members to develop their skills while ensuring regular refreshment of leadership. Terms of six months to one year are often effective, allowing members to gain experience and then transition to new roles. This approach ensures a steady flow of fresh ideas and maintains a dynamic and responsive network.
- d. **Adapt to member development:** As members' skills evolve, adjust the rotation process to reflect their growth and the network's needs. Provide opportunities for experienced members to move from executive roles to advisory or mentorship positions, where they can offer guidance and support to new leaders. Ensure the rotation system remains flexible, adapting based on feedback and the network's changing dynamics.

By carefully designing the role assignment and rotation process, you create an environment where leadership is nurtured and all members have the chance to contribute and grow, ensuring a vibrant and effective network.

B. Activities

Session 6 Assigning the roles



Target: All age groups



Objective:

- To establish a clear system for role assignment and rotation within the network.
- To balance leadership opportunities, skill development, and growth for all members.
- To create excitement and engagement around role assignment, whether through elections, nominations, or appointments.



Duration: 120 - 150min



Materials:

- Flipcharts and markers
- Large paper or poster boards
- Role cards + Picture cards for each role (icons representing tasks)
- Large flipchart with a representation of the structure
- Stickers or colorful markers for visual participation
- Sticky notes for brainstorming
- Objects that can be used as ballot boxes (Bowls, cups or boxes)
- Small papers and pens for voting

STARTING OFF: Welcome & review (10 min)



Do **Do:** Start the session with an icebreaker

“ Say: Welcome back, everyone! In our last session, we worked together to define the key roles in our network. Today, we're going to focus on how we will assign and rotate these roles.

? Ask: Can you remind me of the main roles we agreed on last time?



ACTIVITY: Assigning the roles (100 – 120 min)

Step 1 - Reflection on leadership and roles: 10 min



Say: Let's take a moment to reflect on the leadership roles we've discussed in previous sessions. We know that everyone has different strengths, but we all play an important role. Let's think about how we'll share leadership responsibilities, so no one is carrying everything on their own.



Do:

- Facilitate a brief discussion about how leadership is shared within the group
- Use prompts such as
 - What does leadership mean to you?
 - How can we support each other even when some people take on bigger roles?
 - How do we make sure everyone has the chance to grow as a leader?



Explain:

- Leadership is about working together and supporting each other.
- When leadership is shared, it helps prevent one person from feeling overwhelmed and ensures that everyone has an opportunity to contribute and develop their skills.
- Leadership isn't just about being in charge. It's about helping others, solving problems together, and being responsible for the success of the group.
- By sharing leadership, we create a stronger, more supportive team, and everyone feels valued and empowered to take on different roles.

Step 2 - Role assignment system: 20 min



Explain:

- We have defined the list of roles last time, we still need to decide how we will assign these roles. We can do this through elections (voting), or appointments. Each system has its benefits.
- Elections give everyone a say, and appointments are great when we need specific skills or expertise, or when only one person is interested in a role .
 - **Elections** – where everyone votes for the person they think would do the best job for each role.
 - **Appointments** – where certain roles are given based on experience or particular strengths.
- We'll also need to think about how we rotate roles to ensure everyone gets a chance to lead.
- "Let's discuss which method would work best for our network."



Do:

- Create two large sections on the flipchart: "Elections" and "Appointments".
- Ask the girls to brainstorm the pros and cons of each method. Use sticky notes to collect their ideas.
- Facilitate a group discussion around how each role can be assigned, using prompts such as:

- What skills does this role need? Do we have these skills in the network?
- How do we balance assigning roles based on skills and giving new members learning opportunities?
- Is this a leadership position?
- How can we ensure everyone gets a chance to lead?
- Once the discussion is over, decide together which method(s) to use for each role and place it on the flipchart. *(For example: The person who speaks on behalf of the group or the person who resolves conflicts need to be chosen by the whole group, but the person who does finances needs to be skilled in maths or the designer/ photographer needs to have artistic skills and should be appointed - note that the representative of each team or circle should be elected by the members of the team)*

“ Say:

- Now that we have decided how to assign roles, it will be important to rotate them. Regular rotation of roles helps everyone grow, develop new skills, and keeps the network fresh and exciting.
- As a start I suggest that the roles will rotate every (X) months, we can discuss together after the first rotation how your experience was and collectively decide on how frequent the rotations should be.

Step 3 - Self-assessment of interests and skills: 10 min

“ Say: Before we move forward with assigning roles, we want to make sure everyone has a chance to reflect on what interests and skills they bring to the table.

Do Do:

- Ask the following questions out loud leaving a few minutes after each
 - Which roles resonate with your interests or passions?
 - What skills do you feel confident in, and what skills would you like to develop?
 - Are you interested in taking on leadership roles, or would you prefer a more supportive role to learn from others? Remember that all roles are important and necessary for the network to thrive.
- Make sure the roles with their visual icons are visible so girls can express their preferences through drawing if needed.

BREAK / ENERGIZER (10 min)



Step 4 - Sharing preferences: 15 min

“ Say:

- Now that you've had a chance to reflect individually, let's move into small group discussions.
- In your groups, share your thoughts about the roles that appeal to you, the skills you feel confident in, and any roles you'd like to try for the upcoming rotation.
- This will help us better understand each other's preferences and make sure that everyone's interests are heard.

Do:

- Divide the group into small clusters of 3 girls.
- Ask each group to discuss the following:
 - Which roles appeal to you and why?
 - What strengths or skills would you bring to each role?
 - Which roles would you like to try for the upcoming rotation?
- Allow each group 10 minutes for their discussion.
- Afterward, have each group share the key points of their discussion with the larger group.

**Explain:**

- It's also important to remember that even if someone takes on a specific role, it doesn't mean they will be doing all the work alone. The work will be shared by everyone in the group.
- For example, while one person might take the lead as an event planner, the rest of the group will still be involved in helping out with tasks, organizing activities, and offering support.
- Everyone in the group will play a part in making sure the tasks are completed, no matter which role they hold.



Note to facilitator: This will also give the facilitator an idea about the interest of the different girls to make sure roles are divided accordingly.

Step 5 - Role election or assignment process: (40 - 60 min)



Say: Great job, everyone! Now that we've agreed on using elections and appointments for assigning our leadership roles, let's dive into how we'll put this into practice. We'll go through each option step-by-step so that everyone feels comfortable with the process.

Do:

- Before moving into the selection process, invite the girls to write their names on sticky notes and place them on the role cards they are most interested in. Let them know they can put their names on more than one role if they're unsure or excited about a few different options. That's totally okay at this stage!
- Support any girls who may need help writing their names.
- Once all the names are up, take a step back with the group to look at where the interest lies. This step helps everyone visualize who's interested in what and makes it easier to guide the selection process.
- If only one person is interested in a certain role, that can simplify the decision. If several girls are interested in the same role, this helps spark discussion or guide voting.
- Once a girl is selected for a specific role, gently remind the group that she'll now be removed from the other roles she expressed interest in, so that everyone gets a chance to take part and lead in some way.
- Do not remove the names of the girls who didn't get selected from role cards

Option 1: Election Process

Say: First, let's look at how we'll vote for the roles that require elections. In this process, if you want a role, you will have the chance to explain why you're a good fit for it. Then, everyone will vote for who they think should take on each role.

Do: Allow girls to campaign for the role:

Say: If you want to take on a specific role, please take a moment to explain why you are a good fit for that role. What skills and knowledge do you have that will help you fulfill this role? We will then vote on who will take on each role.

Do:

- Give each girl the opportunity to speak for a minute and share why she's interested in the role.
- Facilitate the voting process as detailed below.

Say: Now that everyone has shared their thoughts, it's time to vote. We can either vote by raising hands or vote privately by writing the name and placing it in a box. Raise your hand if you'd prefer to vote privately, or give me a thumbs-up if you're okay with raising your hand for the vote

Do:

a. If the majority prefers a private vote:

- Assign different bowls for the different positions and write the name of the position with its icon
- Provide each girls with multiple small papers and a pen
- Support the girls who have limited literacy write their preferred name for each position.
- Count the votes in each bowl and announce the winners *(For example: The votes are in! [Name] has received the most votes for [role]. Congratulations to everyone who will take on a leadership role!)*

b. If everyone agree to vote publically:

- Proceed with reading the names of each position and have a raise of hands for each candidate
- Count hands and announce the winners. *(Congratulations [Name] you are now [role], remember, these roles will rotate and everyone will get a chance of trying this role in the future)*

c. If the majority prefers a public vote: but a few girls prefer to vote privately:

Say: We'll hear a few reasons for why we prefer each of the options

Do: Facilitate a quick (5 -10min) discussion about the reasons.

Say: "Now that we have heard each other's reasons, let's see how everyone feels, raise your hand if you still prefer to vote privately.

(If some girls raise their hand) Say: we value our team spirit and want to make sure every single member of our groups feels safe and comfortable, given the fact that this decision has to do with our norms of [safety] [respect] [confidentiality] for everyone, we will proceed in voting privately. *(Proceed with voting privately as described above)*



Note to facilitator: These different voting options are designed to ensure that all participants feel comfortable with the process and can express their preferences in the way that works best for them. This approach encourages healthy decision-making and provides an opportunity for the girls to practice making collective decisions. However, if you feel this process is too complicated or time-consuming, you can simplify it by using the ballot system. The goal is to make sure the voting process is inclusive and comfortable for everyone.

Option 2: Appointment Process



Say:

- Let's move into assigning the roles that we agreed should be appointed, meaning they require specific skills or experience.
- These are roles where it's especially important that the person taking them feels confident or ready, and that the group agrees they're a good fit based on the criteria we discussed earlier.



Do:

- Review the sticky notes placed on the technical or appointed roles (e.g., finance, photography, design).
- Go role by role with the group:
 - Read out the names on the sticky notes for each role
 - Briefly remind the group of the key skills or responsibilities for the role.
 - Facilitate a short discussion if there is more than one name listed.

a. If only one name remains on a role card:

- Confirm that the girl is still interested and feels comfortable with the role.
 - Assign the role

b. If multiple names remain on the role card:

- Assign roles based on skills and interest. *(For example: It seems that [A] and [B] both have the required skills for this role, but [A] has had more experience trying it out with the scouts, while [B] has is also interested in [other roles] how do you feel about [A] taking on this role, while [B] takes on the other) or (It's amazing that more than one of you has this skill and is excited about this role! For today, we'll choose just one person to take the lead. But keep this in mind for the future. When we start planning our project together, it could be a great opportunity to use this skill in your ideas. Maybe you can think of a project where we need a lot of (photography/ facilitation/ design)so that more of you can put your talents to use!)*
- Facilitate a discussion on how the role can be shared
 - Lead + Support model: One girl takes the lead while the other supports and learns, then they switch next rotation.
 - Divide the tasks: The role is shared, with each girl taking on different parts of the work. *(Two girls doing design: one designs posters, the other handles social media visuals.)*
 - Co-holding the role (if practical): Both girls work together equally and make decisions as a pair. *(For example: two girls can co-hold the finance role: they meet together to make calculations, check each other's work, and avoid mistakes)*

Step 6: Visualizing the structure: 5 min



Say:

- Now that all the roles have been assigned, let's remember something important: every single one of you is a key part of this network. Leadership isn't about doing everything or being 'above' anyone, it's just about helping the group stay organized and making sure things move forward. But we all have an important role in making the network work!
- If your name wasn't chosen for a lead role this time, that doesn't mean you're less involved. It means you're part of the team that will bring that role to life. [The network's name] needs everyone's ideas, energy, and skills to really work. And because we rotate roles, you'll get the chance to lead if and when you're ready.



Do:

- Keep all sticky notes with girls' names attached to the role cards, even for those who were not selected as leads. This shows everyone's interest and participation.
- Place each role card inside the structure flipchart according to larger circle or team it belongs to, based on the group structure agreed upon earlier
 - Invite the girls to gather around their teams or circles, standing near the role cards where their names are placed.
 - Ask the group to briefly meet each other, say hello, and make a quick cheer for their team!



Note to facilitator: Encourage shy girls who have shown interest in roles but are too shy to nominate themselves by nominating them, or individually asking them which role they would like to be assigned.

CLOSING: Celebration (5 min)



Say: Congratulations everyone for creating our dream team, I am sure you are all going to accomplish great things together!



Do: Initiate a round of applause for the newly selected positions



Say: Thank you for coming today. I will be available in the next 20 min if anyone wants to talk to me privately.

4. Setting meetings schedule

A. Step-by-step guidance

Establishing a clear and effective meeting schedule is essential for the smooth operation of your girls' network.

- a. **Assess the availability and preferences of your members:** This will help in scheduling meetings that are convenient for the majority and ensure higher attendance and participation.
 - Conduct surveys or discussions to find out their preferred meeting times and durations.
 - Gather information on preferred days of the week, times of day, and duration for meetings, which are least likely to be postponed or cancelled.
- b. **Establish a balanced meeting schedule:** Set up a regular meeting cadence for different groups. For committees, bi-weekly or monthly meetings might suffice, depending on their workload and goals. The board may meet monthly or quarterly to review strategic progress and make high-level decisions. General membership meetings could be held monthly or quarterly to keep everyone informed and engaged.
- c. **Ensure flexibility and adaptation:** Recognize that members' availability may change with the seasons. For example, during summer vacation, members might be more available, so you could plan more intensive or frequent meetings or events. Conversely, during exam periods or the school year, scale back to accommodate academic pressures.



Note to facilitator: At this stage this does not need to be done collaboratively, facilitators can design the schedule and share it with participants for feedback. Adjustments can be done as needed.

B. Additional considerations in emergency contexts

- **Setting meeting schedules:** Meeting schedules must be highly flexible in a crisis:
 - Consider safety, resource constraints, and emotional toll.
 - Be prepared to adjust meeting frequency based on how the situation evolves.
- **Smart communication channels:** Communication can often be cut off in emergencies (due to issues like power outages, lack of phone access, or other logistical challenges).
 - Establish smart communication channels. Ensure that you have a backup plan to reach all participants, whether via multiple phone numbers, or local contacts who are nearby and can help pass along important updates.
 - Ensure that girls receive timely updates about any last-minute meeting changes, preventing confusion and minimizing the risk of uninformed members attending.



Step 3: Kickstarting network initiatives



Activating the network involves choosing initiatives that align with the network's vision and mission and the needs of its members. It requires careful selection of projects that reflect the group's priorities and then developing a work plan to ensure effective implementation. By setting clear goals, defining tasks, and mobilizing resources, the network can thrive and continue to grow, creating a lasting impact in the community.

1. Choosing initiatives

A. General considerations

While girls may encounter shared challenges, it's essential to consult them directly to identify their critical issues. Without this input, you risk making incorrect assumptions that could hinder your program's effectiveness. As mentioned, adolescent girls are not a monolithic group; the issues they face are influenced by their age, geographical location, cultural context, and life stage.³³ It is important to keep this in mind when supporting the girls in selecting initiatives, ensuring that all ideas are considered and that the selection process is not influenced by facilitator bias.

Before beginning the selection process, it can be helpful to create a shared understanding of what advocacy and collective action can look like. Planning a session on advocacy or inviting a guest speaker or trainer who can share experiences from real initiatives can help the girls better understand the potential of their own ideas. This can include relatable examples of speaking up for better school conditions, safer communities, or equal opportunities. These kinds of activities help clarify the difference between raising awareness, influencing decisions, and leading change. When girls see diverse, real-life stories of youth-led action, it becomes easier for them to imagine what they could do together.

After identifying the network's mission and values it is important to ensure any new initiative is in harmony with the network's objectives, and that different initiatives respond to the priorities of girls of different ages or backgrounds within. Beware of the older participants' ideas do not overshadow those of the younger ones.

Before selecting an initiative with the girls (and especially before defining the action plan) the facilitator should have a clear understanding of what types of initiatives are feasible within the available budget, timeline, and scope.

If there's uncertainty about what can be funded, consider inviting someone from the donor or implementation team to join the part of the session where girls present their ideas. This helps avoid having to reject an initiative later. Be transparent with the girls about why this guest is joining, and frame it as an exciting chance to pitch their ideas to someone who can help ensure resources.

33 Austrian et al, *Girl-Centered Program Design*

B. Step-by-step guidance

- a. **Inspire the girl:** Before brainstorming initiatives, make sure the girls understand what an initiative is and feel inspired by what's possible when they act together. This can include:
 - A session on what advocacy means and how it can be done
 - An info session showcasing existing girl-led initiatives
 - Inviting a guest speaker from a local initiative to share their story
 - Organizing interviews with women or community leaders who have led successful initiatives
- b. **Establish criteria for selection of initiatives:** such as alignment with goals, member interest, feasibility, and potential impact, to prioritize and select the most promising initiatives.
 - Use these criteria to make informed decisions and ensure that the chosen initiatives are both practical and meaningful for the network.
- c. **Engage members in the process:**
 - Engage members in the selection process, organize brainstorming sessions and utilize creative methods like idea boards or suggestion boxes to collect a wide range of proposals.
 - Encourage deeper reflection by inviting members to run "campaigns" amongst each other where they try to gather support for their ideas from other members in the network.
 - This approach not only helps members articulate and refine their ideas but also enhances their leadership skills and ensures a greater understanding of the challenges and perspectives of others in the group.
- d. **Evaluate the feasibility and potential impact:**
 - Assess the resources required, such as time, budget, and materials, to determine whether the network can support the initiative or if additional resources are needed.
 - Consider both the short-term and long-term benefits of each idea and how well it aligns with the network's goals.
 - Prompt members with questions like "What do we need to do to implement this idea?" and "What will happen if we implement this idea?" to facilitate a thorough analysis.
- e. **Collectively select initiatives:**
 - Have the girls collectively select their preferred initiative through a voting process.
 - This democratic approach ensures that the chosen initiative reflects the group's consensus.
 - Initiatives that generate interest but are deemed less feasible or impactful at the moment can be set aside and revisited later as resources become available.
 - This process ensures that decisions are made thoughtfully, inclusively, and with a clear understanding of the network's capacity and goals.

C. Additional considerations for emergency context

- **Prioritize immediate needs:**

- First address urgent issues like safety, health, and access to education, while still maintaining a focus on long-term development goals.
- Balance these priorities to ensure that the network remains responsive to the immediate needs of girls, while also laying the foundation for sustainable growth and empowerment.

- **Consult girls**

- Involve the girls directly in identifying critical issues through safe spaces, surveys, and informal discussions, ensuring their evolving needs are reflected in initiatives.
- Survey displaced girls in the area prior to the selection of initiatives, and sharing the outcomes with the core members, might give them important insight, and help them choose initiatives that both excite them and reflect the needs and priorities of the broader community.

- **Align initiatives with network goals:**

- Align initiatives with the overarching goals of the network. Even when some initiatives may focus on immediate relief, they should still connect to the broader mission of empowerment.
- Emphasize how supporting vulnerable groups, such as girls and women, during a crisis is an integral part of creating a more empowered society.

- **Ensure feasibility in selection criteria:**

- When selecting initiatives, consider the feasibility of each option in light of limited resources and shifting circumstances.
- Assess initiatives based on their potential for immediate impact, ensuring they are adaptable and achievable within the crisis context.



D. Activities

Session 7 Choosing initiatives



Target: All age groups



Objective:

- To engage the girls in an interactive, collaborative process where they identify critical issues
- To brainstorm possible initiatives, evaluate their feasibility, and collectively select the most impactful and feasible initiative for the girls' network.



Duration: 120min

Materials:



- Large sheets of poster paper or whiteboards
- Markers, colored pens, and sticky notes
- Voting cards or colored stickers
- Campaign poster templates
- Large collaborative poster (for final reflections)
- Flipcharts from session 3 (Challenges, mission and vision)

STARTING OFF: Welcome and review (10 min)



Do: Start with an icebreaker



Ask: Can anyone remind us what we did last time?

ICEBREAKER:

Would You Rather:

How to play:

- Girls stand in a line or circle.
- The facilitator reads out "Would you rather..." questions.
- Girls move to one side or the other depending on their answer.

Sample statements: (these are some ideas with a mix of initiative-related and fun/funny options, feel free to come up with your own)

- Would you rather speak in front of your whole school OR write an article/ draw a picture for the newsletter?
- Would you rather be famous for your singing OR famous for your kindness?
- Would you rather have spaghetti for hair OR jellybeans for teeth?
- Would you rather have a superpower to make everyone smile OR to fix broken things?
- Would you rather lead a campaign to stop bullying OR organize a fun talent show?
- Would you rather make a video to raise awareness OR design posters for your school?
- Would you rather speak in cat language for a day OR have to hop everywhere like a frog?
- Would you rather create a group to protect the environment OR host a workshop on girls' health?
- Would you rather learn to skateboard OR learn how to cook your favorite meal?

ACTIVITY: Choosing a Campaign (95 min)

Step 1 - Looking back: 15 min



Say:

- Before we start choosing our initiative, let's go back to the heart of why we're here. In an earlier session, you shared some of the challenges girls face: the things that make life harder, unfair, or uncomfortable.
- Today, we'll look at them again, not just as problems, but as things we might actually be able to change. That's what our work is all about: seeing something that's not right or missing, and coming together to imagine solutions and take action.



Do:

- Bring out the flipcharts from Session 3: Challenges, Vision, and Mission.
- Point to the Challenges flipchart. Read out some of the key words or phrases from the sticky notes.
- Ask for additional challenges and write them down as they come up



Ask:

- You had mentioned [Key word], do you remember what this challenge was about?
- Are there any new challenges you've noticed since we did this activity? Something else that feels unfair or needs to change?

If the group participated in a session or talk on advocacy, it reminded them of some of the issues that were discussed (e.g., school rules, safety, stereotypes, lack of access to resources). This can inspire them and help spark ideas and show the kind of social or community challenges they might choose to act on.

Do:

- Point to the dream and mission flipcharts
- Invite girls to remember their vision and mission and express them in their own words.
- Read the mission out loud slowly to summarize their intervention.

Ask:

- Do you remember what your mission was? Can anyone explain it in their own words?
- Why did we choose this mission? What does it mean to us?

Step 2 - Campaign prep: Brainstorming & idea generation: 15min**Say:**

- Now, let's get creative and think about how to address some of these issues. We'll brainstorm different ideas for initiatives that can help our community or make a positive change.
- Think about our dream and mission and the challenges that you care about most whether we mentioned them already or not.

Do:

- Divide the group into smaller mixed-age teams (3-5 people per group). Give each group a large sheet of paper, markers, and sticky notes. Each group will work on the following:
 - **Idea Generation:** On sticky notes, each member will write down or draw the issue they believe is important, and possible solutions to address those issues. Encourage them to think both creatively and practically and to keep the network's mission in mind
 - **Refinement:** After all the ideas are written down, the group will organize them into categories (e.g., "community engagement," "education," "health" "social issues" "building sisterhood") and then select 2-3 ideas they feel passionate about. This is an opportunity to reflect on both the urgency of the issues and the impact they can make.

Step 3 - Idea announcement and group formation: 15min**Say:**

We've brainstormed a lot of great ideas, and now we'll share them with the whole group. Each group will announce the ideas they've come up with, and after hearing all of them, you'll have the opportunity to choose the one you're most passionate about.

Do:

- Each group announces the **2-3** ideas they came up with, explaining briefly what each idea entails. (many ideas might be similar, so cluster them as you go)
- As the girls list their ideas, write them on the board with a number next to each one. If two ideas have many similar components, give them the same number.
- Once all ideas are announced, write the numbers on different pieces of paper and place each on a different table or space.

Say:

Now that we've shared all the ideas, I'll read the numbers aloud along with the ideas. If you're excited about a particular idea, please go to the table with the number that matches the idea you like the most. Take a moment to think about which one you feel passionate about, and then make your way to that table.

Do Do:

- Read the numbers aloud with the corresponding ideas, and ask the girls to go to the table of the idea they are most excited about.
- If one or two girls find themselves alone at a table gently encourage them to pick another idea *(for example: This is a great idea indeed, but since we eventually need to only pick a few ideas that the whole group is excited about, think about your next favorite and join their group)*
- If too many girls gather around the same idea, encourage them to consider the other options *(For example, Say: It's great to see so much interest in this idea! To make sure we have a good balance and can consider other ideas as well, I'd encourage a few of you to think about your second favorite idea and join that group. This will help us give attention to all the options)*

Step 4 - The Campaign challenge: 15min**“ Say:**

- Now that you're all in groups, it's time to create a campaign for your chosen initiative.
- You need to convince the whole network why your initiative is the best option to pursue.
- Think about the impact it will have, the resources you need, and how it aligns with our values.

Do Do:

- Prepare flipcharts to fill by each group that include the following prompts with an icon that represents the words:
 - Name of the initiative and description
 - A fun slogan or catchphrase
 - Why do we think it's important (encourage them to think of the mission and the vision)
 - What do we need to make it happen? (time, volunteers, materials, etc.)
- Each group uses markers and poster paper to fill in their chart and create campaign materials that showcase their chosen initiative.

BREAK / ENERGIZER (10 min)**Step 5 - Presenting ideas: 25 min****“ Say:** Now that our ideas are ready, let's present them to the group**Do Do:**

- Each group will then present their initiative to the entire network. Encourage them to be creative (using skits, visual aids, or chants) to make their presentation engaging. Presentations should explain:
 - What problem the initiative addresses
 - How it aligns with the network's values and goals
 - What resources are needed
 - Why the initiative will make a positive impact in the community

- Allow the other girls to ask questions about initiatives after each presentation, make sure to probe when necessary with questions such as:
 - What resources (time, money, materials) are needed for each initiative?
 - How feasible is it to implement this initiative within our current capacity?
 - Does this initiative align with our mission and values?
- This can help the group decide which initiatives are not only exciting but also realistic.

Step 6 - Voting: 10min

Say:

- Now that we heard the initiatives, it's time to vote. You'll each get (2 or 3) voting stickers.
- You can vote for one initiative or distribute your stickers among the initiatives you think are most important.

Do:

- Hand out the voting stickers:
- Each girl will place her stickers on the initiatives she believes should be prioritized.
- Once everyone has voted, tally the votes.
- If an initiative receives a large number of votes but isn't feasible at the moment, place it on a "future initiatives" list to revisit later.
- Choose as many initiatives as you think are realistic and feasible with resources.

CLOSING: Celebration (5 min)



 **Say:** Now that we've chosen our initiative, let's celebrate! We've made an important decision as a group. Let's work together to make this initiative a reality.

Do:

- Create a large collaborative poster that features the selected initiative.
- Display it in the group's space to remind everyone of their collective efforts.
- Encourage the girls to add any final thoughts or commitments to the poster.
- Finish off with a round of applause.

 **Say:** Thank you for coming today. I will be available in the next 20 min if anyone wants to talk to me privately.

2. Defining work plans

A. Step-by-step guidance

Once the initiatives have been selected, setting a comprehensive work plan is essential for effective implementation. This process should be participatory and dynamic, allowing for refinement over time to continually align with members' aspirations.

- a. **Set specific goals:** Begin by defining specific goals for each initiative, ensuring that these goals are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. For example, if the initiative aims to conduct awareness sessions, set a clear target for how many sessions can realistically be organized within the given timeframe. This will provide clear direction and measurable objectives for the initiative, making it easier for members to understand and work towards.
- b. **Develop an action plan:**
 - Outline the major tasks needed to achieve each goal.
 - Create a step-by-step action plan detailing what needs to be done, by whom, and by when. *(Template provided as part of activity below)*
 - Since the network already has a defined structure, assign tasks according to the roles and responsibilities within that structure.
 - For example, if there's a committee for event planning, specify their tasks related to the initiative, such as organizing logistics or promoting the event.
- c. **Create a timeline:**
 - Develop a timeline that includes deadlines for each task and milestone.
 - Ensure the timeline is realistic, considering the members' availability, such as school schedules or other commitments.
 - Incorporate regular check-ins or meetings to track progress and address any issues.
 - The timeline should be easy to follow and adaptable if needed.
- d. **Mobilize resources:**
 - Identify the resources required for the initiative, such as materials, funds, or volunteer support.
 - Determine how these resources will be acquired or allocated.
 - Plan how to secure any additional resources through fundraising, donations, or support from network members if needed.
- e. **Engage members:**
 - Ensure all members involved are clear about their roles and responsibilities within the work plan.
 - Provide any necessary training or guidance to help them fulfill their tasks.
 - Foster a sense of ownership and involvement by regularly updating them on progress and including them in decision-making as appropriate.

B. Additional considerations for emergency context

Focus on immediate, short-term goals: Prioritize initiatives with clear, short-term objectives that address the immediate emerging needs

SMART Goals: While SMART goals remain essential, ensure that they account for the constraints of the emergency context. Goals should be both ambitious and achievable within limited resources, time, and unpredictable circumstances. For instance, consider the availability of venues, security concerns, or fluctuating access to girls due to movement restrictions.

Develop an action plan: Break down tasks into smaller, manageable steps with clear assignments, ensuring that critical actions are taken first. The plan should include emergency contingencies, such as alternative locations or virtual activities, in case logistical issues arise.

Create a realistic timeline: Ensure timelines are adaptive and reflect the fluctuating availability of members, which may change based on the unpredictable nature of the emergency. Flexibility is key, as progress may be slowed by external factors like movement restrictions or safety concerns.

Mobilize resources quickly: Resource mobilization may need to be more urgent in an emergency. Leverage existing humanitarian support systems and community networks for material, financial, or human resources. Be proactive in seeking support from local actors, NGOs, or donor organizations with an emergency response focus. If resources are unavailable, make sure to use the advocacy route.

Engage members: Provide clarity on each member's role, but ensure they have the flexibility to adapt their involvement according to their personal circumstances. In an emergency, not all members may be available at the same time, so build in backup plans or secondary roles for key tasks to ensure continuity.

Implement the plan: Stay agile during implementation. Emergency situations often require frequent reevaluation, so create regular feedback loops to adjust the plan in real-time. Foster open, ongoing communication and ensure members can report challenges or new developments quickly.



C. Activities

Session 8 Defining the work plan



Target: All age groups



Objective:

- To collaboratively create a detailed, engaging work plan for the selected initiative(s)
- To brainstorm multiple goals as a group and break down the action steps according to roles within the network structure.



Duration: 120min



Materials:

- Large flip charts, whiteboards, or poster boards
- Markers, sticky notes
- Printable worksheets for goals, tasks, and timelines
- Optional: "Mission Leader" badges or stickers for fun

STARTING OFF: Welcome and review (5 min)



Do: Start with an icebreaker.



Say: Welcome to Mission possible! Today, we'll be planning out how to make our chosen initiative a success! Everyone will play an important role in creating a clear action plan, and together, we will make it happen!



Ask: Can anyone remind us what was the initiative we agreed on last time?



Do:

- Play energetic music at the beginning of the session
- Introduce the theme with enthusiasm.
- Hand out "Mission Leader" badges or stickers to all participants to make the event fun and engaging. (optional)
- Set a positive, energetic tone for the activity and explain that the group will work together to transform the chosen initiative into an actionable plan.

ACTIVITY: Setting the work plan (95 min)

Step 1 - Understand SMART goals: 20 min

Facilitators' note: SMART goals are a way to make sure the goals you set are clear and achievable. It stands for:

S = Specific: Your goal should be clear and focused. What exactly do you want to do? Example: Instead of saying "I want to get better at soccer," you could say, "I want to practice dribbling for 20 minutes every day."

M = Measurable: You need to be able to track your progress. How will you know if you're doing it? Example: "I will practice dribbling for 20 minutes every day" - You can count the minutes to see how you're doing.

A = Achievable: Your goal should be something you can actually do. Is it possible for you to reach it? Example: If you're just starting soccer, practicing for 5 minutes a day might be a good first step.

R = Relevant: The goal should matter to you. Why do you want to achieve it? Example: "I want to get better at soccer so I can play on my school team."

T = Time-bound: Set a deadline for when you want to achieve your goal. When do you want to reach it? Example: "I want to be able to dribble for 20 minutes every day for the next 2 weeks."



Say: Before we jump into planning today, let's quickly remember the snack table activity from a while back, where each group had to plan how to run a snack table. Who remembers what that was like?



Ask: (Take quick few words answers)

- What were some of the jobs we needed to do?
- What happened when no one had a clear job or plan?



Do:

- Use the snack table activity to explain SMART goals in a simple, relatable way.
- Ask the girls to reflect on defining their goal
- As they share ideas, connect each response to a SMART characteristic, using the explanations below to guide the discussion.
- Once a point is clear, write it up where everyone can see, and label it with the matching SMART element.
- Encourage practical thinking. If the group gets stuck, gently prompt them with questions.
- Make sure all five SMART elements are covered. If one doesn't come up naturally, introduce it yourself using the examples provided below.



Ask: Let's imagine we were actually doing that snack table for real, not just pretending. What kind of specific details would we need to think about to plan properly? What are the decisions made or the questions we need to ask ourselves to define that goal?

- We need to specify how many people we're inviting. (Because this affects how much food we bring, right?) (**Measurable**)
- We need to decide what kind of food we're bringing. (Is it chips and juice? Are we cooking? Is it

a potluck?) *(Because the different options need very different resources. If we're buying snacks we just need to go to the shop, but if we're cooking, we need to make sure we have a kitchen available)*
(Specific)

- We need to make sure we have enough money to do it, that there's a room or space to hold it, and that girls actually want to come. *(For example if we only have 20\$, or a very small space, we can't invite 50 girls to that snack!)* **(Achievable)**
- Can we do it in the time we have? Like if we only have one hour, is that enough? *(Because otherwise, the girls would arrive before everything is ready.)* **(Time-bound)**
- Does this snack event even make sense for what we're trying to do? *(Because as a group, we've already chosen our mission. So we want to make sure this activity helps us get there. For example, if our goal is to bring girls together and build a fun, positive experience, then yes, a snack event is perfect. But if our goal is to raise awareness about menstrual health, then snacks alone aren't enough. We might need to add a short awareness talk, or share posters or small leaflets alongside the snacks.)* **(Relevance)**



Say: That's exactly what SMART goals help us do: break down a big idea into something real and doable. Now that we understand how to spot a SMART goal, let's use this to shape our own initiative.

Step 1.5 : Optional activity

In case SMART goals are not yet fully understood or if the group is more energetic and needs more interaction, you can add this activity to reinforce the concept before moving to Step 2. Be sure to account for extra time in the session plan if you choose to include this.



Say:

- Let's play a quick game: it's called SMART or Not? I'll read out a goal. If you think it's a SMART goal, move to the right side of the room. If it's not SMART, move to the left. Get ready to move fast, no overthinking. Ready?
- We want to help people in our community. *(Not SMART: It's too vague, with no specific actions or measurable outcome.)*
- We will raise \$500 for a charity of our choice by holding a fundraiser within the next 3 weeks. *(SMART)*
- We want to make our network bigger. *(Not SMART: It's not specific enough. How many new members? By when?)*
- We will raise awareness about important issues *(Not SMART: While it's a good goal, it's vague and doesn't specify what issues, how, or by when?)*
- We will create and distribute 500 flyers about mental health resources in our community within the next 3 weeks *(SMART)*



Do:

- Have the girls all start in the center of the room.
- Read each goal out in random order, including both SMART and not SMART examples.
- After each goal, wait for the girls to choose a side.
- When it's not smart, slowly list the SMART characteristics (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) and ask them to clap once for the ones missing.
- If the space doesn't allow 2 sides, propose a fun twist like "Jump in place for SMART" and "Spin in place for Not SMART".

Step 2 - Group brainstorm - defining multiple goals: 15 min



Say: Now it's time to brainstorm the goals we want to achieve with our initiative. We'll come up with multiple goals that are specific, measurable and achievable within a specific time



Do:

- Bring the entire group together to brainstorm ideas. Use a large flipchart or whiteboard to write down goals as they are suggested. Encourage the girls to think about:
 - What do we want to achieve with this initiative?
 - What should the outcome look like?
 - What steps can we take to make it successful?
- Ensure the goals follow the **SMART** criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). Examples might include:
 - "Create 5 awareness posters by [specific date]"
 - "Host 3 community outreach sessions in the next month"
 - "Collect donations or supplies from 10 local businesses by [deadline]"
- Once the group has come up with multiple goals, facilitate a quick voting process to prioritize the most important and realistic goals to pursue. This will give everyone a sense of ownership and direction.

Step 3 - Breaking down the action plan: 20 min



Say: Now that we have our main goals, we need to break them down into specific action steps. Let's figure out who will do what and what resources we need.



Do:

- Divide the group into smaller teams, each focusing on one of the major goals. The teams should include girls with different roles within the network. Each group will:
 - Identify the specific tasks needed to achieve their goal
 - Determine what resources are needed (materials, volunteers, etc.)
- For example, if one group is working on designing and distributing posters, their tasks might include:
 - "Create poster design drafts"
 - "Print posters"
 - "Contact schools to ask if we can hang posters"
 - "Set up a team to distribute them"
- Encourage the groups to break their goal down into smaller, manageable tasks and think about how they can collaborate to accomplish each step, keeping in mind their roles.
- Have each group briefly list the steps and make sure we have the resources needed
- As the girls list their answers fill in the chart provided below on a board or flipchart.



Say: Now, each group will quickly list the steps they think are necessary to achieve their goal and the resources we'll need to make it happen. If something seems impossible to acquire we can discuss alternatives!

Sample of action plan

Facilitator note: During this step, girls should be encouraged to fill the steps and what for each goal, the who and when section will be filled in the group setting in the next activity.

GOAL	STEP	WHO (will do the task)	WHAT (Do they need)	WHEN (Should it be done?)	PROGRESS
Name major goal (For example provide X girls with sessions on (topic))	Name specific step: (For example: Create large invitation poster)	Name of the person taking on the task	List of items needed to accomplish the task (For example - Large poster - Markers - Paint)	Date by which the task is planned to happen	Fill with colored stickers: • Red for late • Green for done • Yellow for need help
	(For example: Invite X person to give us a talk on (topic))		(For example: - Contact of person - Access to a phone)		

BREAK / ENERGIZER (10 min)



Step 4 - Creating the timeline: 15 min



Say: Now that we have our action steps, let's create a timeline. This will help us stay on track and ensure we're completing tasks at the right time.



Do:

- Bring everyone back together and, as a group, create a timeline for the initiative.
- Use a large sheet of paper, whiteboard, or poster board to map out the major goals, tasks, and deadlines. Make sure to:
 - Start with the big goals and add in the smaller tasks suggested by the small groups
 - Include realistic time frames for when each task should be completed
 - Ensure the timeline accommodates check-ins or meetings to track progress
- For example, tasks might need to be completed in the first week, while others may take longer. Encourage regular progress updates so everyone stays informed.

Step 5: Role assignment and mobilizing resources: 15 min



Say: Now that we have our plan, let's remember roles and imagine how we can divide tasks according to them and what resources we'll need to bring this plan to life.

Do Do:

- Based on the existing network structure, assign specific tasks and responsibilities to individuals or small sub-teams. Each team will take ownership of their part of the plan, such as:
 - Event planning team (logistics, venue)
 - Communications team (social media, outreach)
 - Resource mobilization team (fundraising, donations)
- Ensure each team understands their role and what resources (e.g., materials, volunteers, financial support) they will need. Have them brainstorm how they will acquire these resources and ensure they have everything required to succeed.

Step 6 - Check-in and team collaboration: 10 min

Ask: End with a reflection session to talk about how everyone feels about the plan and the work ahead. Ask questions like:

- How do you feel about our plan so far?
- What excites you the most about this project?
- What challenges do you think we'll face, and how can we overcome them?



Say: "How will we track our progress and keep everyone motivated? Let's come up with a system for checking in and collaborating as a team."

Do Do:

- Discuss ways to stay on top of the tasks.
 - Suggest tools like regular check-in meetings to review progress.
 - Present a sample of a progress board where completed tasks can be marked off or short.

CLOSING: Clarification and visualization (10 min)

Say: We are ready to kick off our mission! Now that each of us knows their task the fun part of the work will start! We will be checking on the progress next time, and discussing any challenges or difficulties we face!



Ask: Is everyone clear on the next steps? Do you have any questions?"

Do Do:

- Clarify any remaining questions or concerns to make sure everyone feels comfortable with their roles and responsibilities. Ensure that everyone knows when and how to report their progress.
- Hang the progress board in a central space and have the girls decorate it.
- Finish off with a round of applause.



Say: Thank you for coming today. I will be available in the next 20 min if anyone wants to talk to me privately.



Step 4: Phasing out



1. Supporting the Transition to Girl-Led Meetings

At this point, the initiative has been chosen, roles are assigned, and the work is ready to begin! However, even as the girls step into leadership, they might still need some support during the transition to fully girl-led meetings. Facilitators should focus on providing guidance while allowing the girls to take the lead as much as possible. This process should be flexible and based on the needs and preferences of the group.

- Check with the girls on the support needed:
 - Have a discussion with the girls about what kind of support they feel they need in the transition. Do they feel comfortable running their first few meetings independently, or would they prefer assistance in the initial stages?
 - If they feel they still need support, take on a supportive role rather than leading. For example, you can co-facilitate a meeting with them but not lead it entirely. Alternatively, you could help with a specific task, such as making initial contact with someone, but allow them to take on the communication and follow-through.
- **Guide the girls with key roles:** Ensure that girls in key roles (like coordinators or facilitators or representatives) are clear about their responsibilities.
 - For example, check with the membership team on how to communicate information to everyone, and if they need technical support in this area.
 - If needed, provide help in planning meeting agendas, setting timelines, or organizing logistics.
 - Allow the girls to take the lead in these tasks, but offer guidance and mentorship as they develop their skills.
- **Provide supervision and feedback when agreed upon:** As the meetings progress some girls might feel confident taking charge, while others may still need extra guidance in their initial meetings. Adapt to their needs.
 - Provide actionable and supportive feedback when requested to help them grow and improve, focusing on areas where they may need more practice.
 - When issues arise, such as conflict or group dynamics, offer assistance but encourage the girls to take the lead in resolving them.
- **Complete transition to girl-led meetings:** Once the girls are comfortable and confident in their roles, gradually move toward a full transition to girl-led meetings.
 - At this point, facilitators should no longer be actively involved in facilitating the sessions but should remain available for occasional support or feedback when needed.
 - This phase may look different for every group. Some girls might be ready to fully take over, while others may need periodic check-ins.

2. Planning for safe and accessible network spaces

Building a network goes beyond the foundational 8 sessions! The practical work of the network starts now, and it's crucial to ensure that girls have access to safe, comfortable spaces to continue their meetings. This should be accounted for in the budgeting and resources at the beginning of the project, facilitators must also consider the girls' specific needs and preferences for meeting spaces. Here are some key considerations:

- **Ideal space continuity:** Ideally, girls should continue to meet in the same space where they gathered during the initial sessions to maintain consistency. However, if this isn't possible, facilitators should work closely with the girls to explore alternative options.
- **Involve the girls and their guardians:** Any space chosen must be safe, accessible, and culturally appropriate for the girls and their families. Engage both the girls and their guardians (when needed) in the decision-making process to ensure the location meets everyone's needs. Comfort levels may vary, so it's important to reflect on what works best for each group.
- **Map suitable spaces:** Discuss various spaces that may work for the group, such as local community centers, nearby school rooms, other partner organizations with available spaces, or even libraries or safe outdoor locations.
- **Plan for adult supervision based on age:** Consider the need for supervision based on age. Some girls may want independence, but others may need more guidance. Support the girls in reflecting on realistic options. For instance, if they want complete independence but the library isn't safe to visit alone, consider solutions like having a trusted older mentor attend, or using the school library instead.
- **Plan for off-site activities:** Working within the network might require girls to be outside of the center, whether for regular meetings, planned events, or to represent the network in the community. Be sure to make all logistical arrangements in line with your organization's procedures, such as securing any necessary permissions, ensuring safety protocols, and addressing insurance requirements for activities outside the center.



Ongoing step: Evaluation



Evaluation in a girls' network is essential to ensure that the program remains relevant and responsive to the participants' evolving needs. It involves regularly assessing the program's activities, goals, and impact to understand what is working well and what needs improvement. This ongoing process allows the network to stay adaptable and continue providing the most meaningful support to the girls as they grow and face new challenges.

A. General considerations

1. Ongoing needs assessments

Adolescence is marked by rapid change, and needs and priorities evolve significantly from ages 11 to 18. While initial needs assessments are crucial for starting a program, it's also important to periodically gather information about specific topics or situations throughout the program's duration

- **Conduct regular needs assessment:** This can be done once a year, unless special circumstances arise, to help keep your program aligned with the current issues faced by the girls, without overwhelming your staff.³⁴
- **Draw on girls' experiences to help the network evolve:** As participants grow older and potentially beyond the project's initial age range, it is essential to draw on their experiences and continue involving them in the program.
- **Updating the program's content and structure based on evolving needs:** Regularly update the program to maintain its relevance.
- **Keep the program flexible and responsive through ongoing assessments:** external factors such as political instability or wars, or personal changes like migration, schooling, or marital status may also impact the girls and require further adaptations to the program. Ensure that the network continues to effectively support and address the needs of all participants.

2. Evaluating projects and initiatives

To effectively evaluate initiatives and their impact, it is crucial to:

- **Develop girl-friendly evaluation tools in collaboration with your MEAL team:** utilize them to collect relevant information about your program. These tools should gather data on both participants and activities, providing a comprehensive view of the program's performance.
- **Involve adolescents in the evaluation process:** to explain the process through which you evaluate the program and get them in the creation of tools to evaluate their initiatives. This provides them with a sense of ownership and transparency. This approach not only enhances accountability but also helps in understanding and refining the program's impact effectively
- **Assign clear responsibilities to staff and girls:** Staff should manage these evaluation tasks to ensure thorough and accurate data collection. As the work of the network evolves, involve the girls in evaluating their own work and initiatives.

³⁴ Ibid

- **Avoid collecting more information than necessary.** Streamline your data collection to focus on what will directly inform improvements and demonstrate the impact of your initiatives.
- **Integrate evaluation processes into the network's structure:**³⁵ Helps maintain focus on defined goals and ensures that the network goals are being met by integrating evaluation activities as part of the sessions. Use interactive tools such as talking stick circle, as well as group activities, open discussions and forms to fill.
- **Inform the girls on how their feedback is contributing to shaping the network:** Commitment to follow-up and evaluation is vital. Participants, particularly young people, have the right to receive clear feedback on how their involvement has contributed to outcomes.³⁶

B. Additional considerations for emergency context

Regular and rapid needs assessments: Assess needs regularly and frequently, depending on the severity of the emergency. This ensures the network stays responsive to immediate challenges.

Contextual sensitivity: The needs of adolescent girls in an emergency are likely to differ from those in non-crisis settings. External factors such as access to safe spaces, education, health services, or basic resources, become urgent concerns. Assess how these factors affect girls' vulnerability and tailor support accordingly, especially for marginalized or displaced groups.

Incorporate girls' evolving needs: Adolescence, especially in emergencies, is a period of rapid change. Girls may experience shifts in their physical, emotional, and social needs due to displacement, loss, or changing family dynamics. Regularly assess how these changes impact their wellbeing, safety, and aspirations. This will help ensure the program evolves with them.

Dynamic evaluation metrics: Instead of relying on static measures, develop evaluation tools that can assess the shifting dynamics of emergency situations. For example, track how the emergency context (e.g., ongoing conflict or displacement) affects participation, security, and engagement levels in the network. Flexibility is key, as traditional evaluation methods might not apply directly to the changing realities of an emergency.

Adaptation to external shocks: Emergencies can introduce sudden changes such as escalated violence, displacement, or public health crises, all of which may shift girls' priorities and access to resources. Assess how these external shocks are impacting the girls and adapt program activities in response, prioritizing safety, health, and emergency response initiatives.

Feedback and accountability: In emergencies, it is critical to provide quick and clear feedback to participants on how their input is influencing decisions. Ensure that the findings from needs assessments are communicated back to the girls regularly, showing how their feedback is shaping program responses. Transparency builds trust and reinforces the relevance of the program.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Mendonca et al. *Toolkit for Adolescent and Youth Engagement*

3 – Sustaining the network

Sustaining a network is about ensuring that the group remains active, motivated, and effective over time. It involves maintaining engagement, managing resources, and adapting to changes, all while staying true to the network's core mission and values. A well-sustained network thrives through continuous support, regular activities, and a sense of belonging for its members. It's important because it helps ensure the longevity and success of the network, enabling it to continue making an impact and supporting its members in their growth and goals.

1. Continuous capacity and skills building

To be able to implement the initiatives, and ensure members continue to grow, it is essential to create ongoing opportunities for learning and skill development. This not only strengthens the individual capacities of the girls but also supports the network's ability to sustain and expand its work.

- **Offer sessions on key skills** such as leadership, negotiation, communication, and time management.
- **Create workshops** on advocacy and social media safety, especially if the group is engaging in public-facing initiatives.
- **Facilitate group discussions** on dealing with disagreement and conflict, ensuring peer-to-peer respect and accountability.
- **Invite girls from previous or parallel initiatives** or girls operating in other networks to present their experiences, share challenges and successes, and motivate current members.
- **Encourage members to identify skills they'd like to learn** and co-create a learning plan for the network.
- **Include psychosocial support (PSS)** components when possible that help girls navigate stress, conflict, and emotional well-being.

2. Broadening membership

To broaden membership and sustain network initiatives:

- a. **Recruit and engage new volunteers:** Regularly introducing new volunteers injects fresh energy and motivation.
- b. **Maintain a clear, self-sustaining structure:** As the work evolves, ensure that the structure facilitates smooth onboarding and integration of newcomers.
- c. **Promote the network to girls in the community:** Have focal members effectively promote and share projects and offer them training and workshops to enhance their skills.
- d. **Maintain the basics:** Ensure new members meet the criteria and align with the network's values, vision and mission.

Additional considerations for emergency context:

- **Rapid onboarding and flexibility:** Girls may join the network quickly, often due to urgent needs or displacement.
 - Ensure that the onboarding process is streamlined and flexible, with clear roles and training that can be adapted for individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences. This can involve offering virtual or localized sessions for those who cannot attend in-person.
- **Emergency-specific roles:** There may be an increased number of girls who need immediate support.
 - Create short-term, flexible roles or task forces that new members can fill. This will allow them to quickly contribute without overwhelming them or requiring long-term commitments.

3. Deciding on visibility

Visibility refers to how publicly known or seen the network's activities, members, and actions are. It involves decisions around what information is shared, where it is shared, and who sees it. When deciding on visibility, it is also important to consider individual visibility such as whether to show faces in photos or not, or how much personal information should be made public. These decisions should be made with the comfort and safety of all members in mind.

High visibility for the networks can inspire current members to remain engaged and draw in more young people, motivating them to get involved and participate in activities.³⁷ However it comes with risks, especially in contexts where safety and privacy are crucial.

Below are the levels of visibility:

Types of visibility	Examples
Low visibility	• Sharing updates within a small, private group (e.g., WhatsApp group, private Facebook group, or email newsletter). • Posting event details in a closed circle, without public announcement. • Using private or semi-private settings for meetings and events.
Medium visibility	• Publicly sharing event details on social media but only to select followers or groups (e.g., a closed Facebook group or an Instagram post that is not tagged publicly). • Mentioning upcoming activities in local community newsletters or through email lists. • Publicizing events to a targeted audience (e.g., through posters within the local community, but not on large social media platforms).
High visibility	• Posting on widely accessible social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube) where anyone can see the activities, events, and projects. • Engaging with media (e.g., interviews, press releases, news coverage) that highlights the group's work and mission. • Partnering with larger organizations or influencers to publicly endorse the network and its goals.

³⁷ IFRC, *Guidelines and toolbox for youth networks*

- a. **Assess the risk:** Assess the risks associated with visibility, particularly in the Lebanese context where civil society spaces are shrinking.
- b. **Decide collectively on visibility:** There are different types of visibility (low, medium, high) and should be decided by girls. Ensure that consent is obtained from girls before sharing any information about activities publicly.
- c. **Evaluate on a case-by-case basis:** Assess whether the benefits of visibility outweigh the potential risks.

Additional considerations for emergency context:

- **Risk management with increased visibility:**
 - Assess the risks of sharing information about network activities. For instance, publicizing an initiative that supports relief may expose members of the network to increased pressure, overwhelm them with the numbers of people seeking it, and create guilt when they're unable to fulfill the growing need.
- **Confidentiality and protection:**
 - Emphasize that the safety and well-being of participants are the top priority when deciding on visibility or public outreach (e.g., through media or social platforms).
 - Maintain a clear, risk-aware protocol that considers the security of members and their families in crisis contexts. Beware of the potential of targeting relief initiatives in certain areas.

4. Sustaining motivation

Maintaining motivation in a girls' network can be challenging, especially when initial excitement fades and attendance becomes irregular. Common issues affecting attendance include scheduling conflicts with school or other commitments, meetings that are either too long or not frequent enough, and lack of support from parents or guardians. Practical issues like needing childcare or finding the program uninteresting can also contribute to dropouts.³⁸

- a. **Address attendance issues:** If attendance drops, it's a good idea to conduct a needs assessment to understand why and make necessary adjustments.
- b. **Provide incentives:** Providing incentives can help keep participants motivated. This could include certificates, badges, awards, or featuring their achievements in newsletters or on social media. Recognizing their contributions and showing how their work positively impacts the community can also boost motivation.³⁹
- c. **Use impact as a motivator:** Impact can be a significant motivator for participants. Many women and girls in consultations shared that what kept them engaged was witnessing the positive effects of their work on their communities and receiving recognition and gratitude from those they helped. This personal connection to the impact of their efforts not only fuels their motivation but also reinforces their commitment to the cause. Therefore, involving girls in evaluating the impact of their initiatives is crucial to ensure they see the direct results of their contributions.
- d. **Offer opportunities:** Offering opportunities such as training, grants, competitions, learning opportunities and events focused on girls' issues at local, national, or regional levels, or where they can connect with other active girls' networks from different areas can be very motivating. However, it's crucial to consider potential barriers, such as restrictions from guardians or connectivity issues.

³⁸ Austrian et al, *Girl-Centered Program Design*

³⁹ *Ibid*

To address these, actively seek out diverse opportunities that accommodate different needs. For instance, if some girls cannot attend in person events away from their areas, find online options for them and support their participation by covering any associated costs or providing access to necessary resources.

- e. **Keep it fun:** Ensuring that the work remains fun helps to sustain enthusiasm and interest among participants. It's important to balance technical tasks with opportunities for social interaction and team building.
- f. **Foster social connections:** building solidarity, and a sense of belonging can significantly contribute to a positive and motivating environment. Incorporate elements such as social events, informal gatherings, and creative activities into the program to maintain this balance. By blending serious work with enjoyable experiences, participants are more likely to stay committed and enthusiastic about their involvement, making the overall experience more rewarding and fulfilling. Introduce girls to other local/international girls' networks and solidarity groups.

Additional considerations for emergency context:

- **Acknowledging the emotional impact:**
 - Recognize that participation in a crisis context may be emotionally taxing.
 - Ensure that the network offers stress-relief activities to help girls cope.
 - Foster a sense of solidarity, resilience, and collective purpose to keep motivation high, especially when immediate needs overshadow long-term goals.
- **Celebrating small Wins:** In an emergency setting, even small victories can be powerful motivators.
 - Highlight and celebrate any positive outcomes, whether it's the completion of a workshop, providing support to others, or organizing an awareness campaign. This will help girls feel that their contributions are meaningful even in the face of ongoing challenges.
- **Keeping the fun:** it's easy for work on initiatives to become overwhelming and stressful.
 - Balance between focused, goal-oriented meetings and lighter, stress-relieving activities to maintain a positive atmosphere and prevent burnout.
 - Incorporate fun, informal gatherings where girls can engage in play, creative activities, or simple conversations without the pressure of achieving specific outcomes. These moments provide essential breaks and give girls the space to reconnect, relax, and feel joy.
- **Immediate impact opportunities:** In an emergency, girls may be particularly motivated by the opportunity to address urgent needs in their community (e.g., disaster relief, advocacy for displaced people).
 - Make sure to highlight opportunities that directly respond to the emergency situation.
 - Provide platforms where girls can immediately make a difference.

5. Building partnerships

Supporting girls in building partnerships beyond the organization that is helping them establish the network is crucial for its success and sustainability.

- a. **Identify and activate potential support:** Work with girls to identify resources, strategies, and support networks needed for their civic, social, and economic projects. Assist them in utilizing their cultural, religious, and family strengths to boost their initiatives, and provide guidance on effectively managing and mobilizing project funds (such as training on proposal writing, or organizational management etc..)
- b. **Build partnerships with other youth-led networks:** Identify youth-led networks locally, regionally, and internationally. Establish partnerships by informing them about your initiatives, inviting them to participate, and showing genuine interest in their work.
- c. **Build links with partners:** Identifying partners that are accessible and associated with the thematic areas that the network is focused on will help it to obtain extra references and garner support for the project. These partnerships enable girls to collaborate with existing initiatives and access additional opportunities in the future, enhancing the network's impact and continuity.
- d. **Building on other activities/services in centers:** Encourage girls to integrate their network initiatives into existing programs within the center and other local community services, such as after-school clubs or vocational training. By building on these activities, girls can enhance visibility, engage more peers, and secure ongoing support, increasing the network's relevance, impact, and sustainability.
- e. **Do strategic planning:** Help young people advocate effectively by guiding them in planning strategic meetings and managing communications to highlight the impact of their involvement.
- f. **Map stakeholders:** Support in building the skills necessary to map stakeholders and identify supportive, neutral, or opposing figures in family, community, and government roles.⁴⁰

Additional considerations for emergency context:

- **Emergency-Responsive Partnerships:** In times of crisis, forming alliances with organizations providing emergency aid, advocacy, and support services (e.g., NGOs, UN agencies, local authorities) can amplify the network's impact. These partners can offer resources, safety mechanisms, or logistical support that aligns with the network's goals.
- **Strengthening Advocacy Efforts:** In emergency settings, girls' voices are often marginalized. Empower girls in the network to engage in advocacy, focusing on their specific needs in crisis (e.g., protection, education, health). Equip them with skills to engage with stakeholders (such as humanitarian organizations or local government) and help raise awareness about girls' rights and needs during the crisis.

6. Incorporating mentorship

Peer-to-peer support and sharing experiences are crucial for a network's sustainability.

- a. **Establish mentorship mechanisms:** Design mentorship programs where experienced members take on significant support roles can help ensure the network's longevity and expand the support network for the girls. This approach enhances feelings of belonging and ownership of the program, boosts self-esteem, and helps break down personal and societal barriers.
- b. **Establish mentorship criteria:** Clear criteria for mentors are essential to ensure they have the necessary training, information, and interpersonal skills.
- c. **Train and coach mentors:**
 - Ensure all mentors are trained in facilitation and mentoring skills.
 - Train mentors on procedures for reporting serious issues, such as gender-based violence.
 - Provide mentors with adult coaching and support when facing challenges.
- d. **Ensure willingness from mentees to be mentored:** Mentees must be willing and open to engaging in these mentorship relationships.
- e. **Follow up regularly:** Regular follow-up by coaches, especially at the beginning of the mentorship program, is essential to oversee these relationships and provide advice and support as needed. Ensure both mentors and mentees fully understand their role and that the mentorship relationship remains healthy and fulfilling for both the mentor and the mentee.
- f. **Account for mentee's preferences:** When incorporating mentorship into your program, it's important to consider the characteristics that resonate with the girls. Those without parental figures may benefit from older mentors who can act as advocates, while those with parents might prefer mentors closer to their own age for more relatable support and open conversations.⁴¹

For a detailed guideline on the creation of mentorship programs refer to IRC's mentorship booklet [Here](#).

Additional considerations for emergency context:

- **Peer Mentorship and Support Networks:** In crisis situations, peer support becomes even more crucial. Encourage mentorship programs that pair girls with similar experiences or challenges (e.g., refugee girls mentoring newcomers) to provide emotional and practical support. This can create an immediate, safe space for girls to share and learn from each other.
- **Adult Mentorship with Crisis Expertise:** Consider integrating adult mentors with experience in managing crisis situations (e.g., humanitarian workers, mental health professionals, or social workers). These mentors can provide specialized guidance to help young people navigate the complexities of the emergency situation.

⁴¹ Austrian, et al., *Girl-Centered Program Design*

Challenges faced by girls' networks and their mitigation

Challenge	Description	Mitigation
Reaching more vulnerable girls	Reaching some of the most vulnerable girls can be challenging, requiring the persuasion of their guardians, employers, or husbands to support their participation. It's also essential to convince the girls themselves that they are valued and welcome. ⁴²	The process requires time and careful planning. It is crucial to involve families and communities in the process and emphasize the girls' value within the program. Girls can use the support of adult allies to reach more vulnerable girls: mothers, facilitators, supportive community leaders etc.
Sustaining the work	Informal networks often struggle to sustain their work after organizational support ends. Challenges include difficulties in fundraising, and lack of resources like space and logistics.	Train girls in budgeting and fundraising, and provide support even after the project ends, especially for legal matters. This will help ensure continuity and sustainability.
Shrinking space for civil society	Civil society space is shrinking, and freedoms are being restricted. Prevention is often more effective than mitigation in managing these risks.	Carefully manage messaging, assess visibility on a case-by-case basis, and adapt activities as needed to remain flexible in response to unpredictable challenges.
Competition among initiatives	Limited funding and overlapping goals can create toxic competition, jealousy, and unrealistic expectations among initiatives, fostering insecurity within the network.	Promote transparency, ensure equal opportunities across initiatives, and foster a collaborative, not competitive, environment by openly discussing resource allocation.
Financial burden	The financial burden of organizing activities, such as transportation costs for beneficiaries, can lead to frustration and burnout. Additionally, donor requirements can make it hard to secure funds.	Account for all potential costs, including transportation and specialized training, in the budget. Work with donors to understand and meet the necessary requirements while ensuring full cost coverage.
Being taken Seriously	Girls may struggle to be respected by the wider community, despite efforts to train staff to avoid adultism and patronizing behaviors.	Strengthen girls' communication and negotiation skills, and accompany them to key meetings at the start of initiatives to enhance their credibility and effectiveness.

⁴² Ibid

Bibliography

Austrian, Karen and Dennitah Ghati. (2010) *Girl-Centered Program Design: A Toolkit to Develop, Strengthen and Expand Adolescent Girls Programs*. Nairobi: Population Council
https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1773&context=departments_sbsr-pgy

Mendonca, Veera, Melinda Van Zyl and Karin Martinez. (2018) *Toolkit for Adolescent and Youth Engagement*, UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office
<https://www.nolostgeneration.org/media/3091/file/Toolkit%20for%20adolescent%20and%20youth%20engagement.pdf>

Kabeer, N. (1999) *Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment*. Development and Change, 30, 435-464. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00125>

Vanner, Catherine, and Anuradha Dugal. (2020) *Personal, Powerful, Political: Activist Networks by, for, and with Girls and Young Women*. *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 13, no. 2.
<https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/girlhood-studies/13/2/ghs130202.xml>

LeFrançois, B.A. (2014). *Adulthood*. In: Teo, T. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology*. Springer, New York, NY.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-5583-7_6

Liou, A & Literat, Ioana. (2020). "We Need You to Listen to Us": Youth Activist Perspectives on Intergenerational Dynamics and Adult Solidarity in Youth Movements. *California, International Journal of Communication*. 14, 4662-4682
<https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/15807/0>

Megaw, T., Winterford, K., Arifani, S. D., Low, I., and Robinson, L. (2021). *Regional Research on Girls' Civic Engagement and Activism for Gender Equality in Asia-Pacific: breaking down barriers and unlocking their potential*. Prepared for Plan International Asia-Pacific Hub, by Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney
https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/2021-09/Regional_research_on_girls%E2%80%99_civic_engagement_and_activism_for_gender_equality_in_APAC_final.pdf

Ehrlichman, D., Sawyer, D., & Wei-Skillern, J. (2015). *Five Steps to Building an Effective Impact Network*. Stanford Social Innovation Review
https://ssir.org/articles/entry/five_steps_to_building_an_effective_impact_network

Leading Change Network, Marshall Ganz, New Organizing Institute, Peter Gibbs, Shea Sinnott, (2014) *Organizing, people, power, change*. Leading Change Network, New Organizing Institute
https://commonslibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/Organizers_Handbook.pdf

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2023), *Guidelines and toolbox for youth networks*, Geneva
https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/IFRC-youth_networks-EN-web_compressed.pdf

Notes

Notes

