



Qualitative Endline Evaluation Report

Life Skills for Equality Project, Cambodia (2021-23)

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December 2024

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Acknowledgments

The authors extend their gratitude to Tonin Soeun and Boralin Boray from Room to Read Cambodia for spearheading data collection, overseeing field coordination, and guiding the monitoring and evaluation process for the Life Skills for Equality Program.

We also appreciate Avicia Rodgers for her valuable support with copy-editing, and Daniel Oliver for his insightful feedback.

Additionally, we thank Nead and Sonty Tay for contributing their valuable time and insights, which greatly informed the study. Finally, we recognize Vantha Chea, Thuy Nguyen, and the broader team at Room to Read for their consistent efforts and dedication to the program's implementation.

Executive Summary

Room to Read's Girls' Education and Gender Equality Program has supported over 24,000 girls in Cambodia since 2003. In recent years, Room to Read has expanded its focus to include boys in its gender equality work, incorporating life skills education for boys. The Life Skills for Equality Project (LSEP) was launched in Cambodia in 2022 as a two-year program focused on supporting boys, with some co-educational elements. The LSEP involved curriculum delivery via focused sessions, a Life Skills Club, and engagement with both parents and stakeholders, including schools and local authorities.

To date, two cohorts of students have graduated from this program, with plans for continued implementation in Cambodia, as well as expansion to other Room to Read program countries. Given these plans, collecting and analysing data on the program's effectiveness, as well as feedback from stakeholders on their experiences, is crucial in informing future implementation and scaling efforts. The present Qualitative Endline Evaluation Report examines key thematic areas: content, session delivery, enabling environment, outcomes, and scalability.

The evaluation employed qualitative methods, including Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews. Participants were selected via a combination of randomized and purposive sampling, garnering student feedback only from those who had attended most sessions. Efforts were made to minimize biases in participant responses. Discussion and interview questionnaires, designed to investigate the above thematic areas (content, etc.) were thoroughly reviewed, translated, contextualized, and back translated for accuracy. External enumerators, who received in-depth training on the program and purpose of study, were hired to conduct data collection. Both deductive and inductive reasoning were used in the analysis to explore both predefined research questions and emergent themes from the data.

The study yielded rich data to inform future implementation. Key findings indicate that students experienced significant improvements in academic and socio-emotional skills. Parents, students, and facilitators reported positive changes in students' behavior, while teachers and facilitators also noted personal growth in areas such as gender awareness, communication, and teaching practices. Feedback on the program's design emphasized that practical, relevant, and interactive curriculum was most engaging and impactful.

Gender dynamics in the classroom, such as the composition of co-educational or same-sex classrooms and the sex of teachers, were considered, with both benefits and challenges noted in different contexts. Teachers and facilitators expressed overall satisfaction with the training and support provided by Room to Read but requested more targeted assistance. The program demonstrated efficient use of resources, and stakeholders made several recommendations for an effective scale-up. Overall, stakeholders expressed strong support for expanding the LSEP, highlighting its positive impact and potential for further growth.

A critical aspect of this study is its place in a series of evaluations of this program, including the Qualitative Midline Evaluation (conducted one year into the program) and the Quantitative Endline Evaluation (assessing changes in attitude and knowledge seen in participants, among

other content-related results). Taken in combination with the Midline results, the findings from this Endline Evaluation provide a comprehensive view of the program's effectiveness and the impact of the second year, particularly in terms of emotional resilience. The Quantitative Endline Evaluation further supports these findings, reinforcing the positive outcomes observed in life skills and related behaviors.

The present study reveals that the LSEP has shown promising results in fostering gender equality among stakeholders – participants, parents, and facilitators alike – and enhancing life skills among participants. The evaluation demonstrates the program's effectiveness in improving both academic and socio-emotional outcomes for participants, while also strengthening the capacity of teachers and parents. With clear recommendations for scaling, the program is well-positioned to expand its reach and continue making a meaningful impact in promoting gender equality and life skills education in Cambodia and beyond.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of the LSEP Pilot Project

The Life Skills for Equality Project (LSEP), part of Room to Read’s Girls’ Education and Gender Equality Program (GEP), was a two-year gender-transformative initiative launched in 2022 to promote gender equality in education. Initially designed as a pilot for one cohort, the program was extended to a second cohort at the request of the Cambodian government.

Implemented in grades 7 and 8 across four schools in Banteay Meanchey province, Cambodia, the LSEP focused on equipping boys with the skills needed to succeed in school and beyond, while also challenging harmful gender norms that limit both boys and girls. Although primarily aimed at boys, the program included co-educational sessions in which girls from Room to Read’s Girls’ Education Program participated, fostering inclusive discussions and collaborative learning environments. The first cohort graduated from the program in 2023, followed by the second cohort in 2024.

Key Components²

1. **Curriculum Delivery:** Boys participated in 17 sessions each year – 34 over two years – focused on life skills and gender equality, complemented by four annual sessions from the government’s local life skills curriculum.
2. **Life Skills Club:** A co-educational space where children practiced life skills, engaged in discussions, and contributed to community well-being.
3. **Parent Engagement:** Parents attended an orientation at the start of the program and meetings every six months. These meetings provided updates on their child’s progress and addressed concerns within the program’s context.
4. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Collaboration with schools, local authorities, and education stakeholders supported program implementation and explored its integration into formal education systems.

Implementation

The first cohort of the LSEP pilot engaged 386 boys³ and approximately 500 girls⁴ from the Girls’ Education Program, creating a collaborative and inclusive learning environment. The sessions were delivered by a team of five facilitators—three male and two female—and five schoolteachers, including four male teachers and one female teacher. These facilitators and

² For the details of the program component see “*Cambodia’s Life Skills for Equality Program- Endline Evaluation Report*”

³ The evaluation team did not get gender information directly from participants and the determination of boys/girls was provided by the program/school.

⁴ Who are also receiving additional 20 sessions delivered by Social Mobilizers.

teachers worked together to implement the program across four schools, as summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Summary of LSEP Program Participants (first cohort) Across Schools

District Name	School Name	Boys	Girls	Facilitators M/F)	Teachers (M/F)
Mongkol Borey	Chub Vary High School	95	122	1 (F)	1 (M)
	Preah Net Preah Lower Secondary	86	107	1 (M)	2 (1 M, 1 F)
Preah Net Preah	Raung Kor High School	132	131	1 (M), 1 (F)	1 (M)
	O Snguot Lower Secondary School	73	131	1 (M)	1 (M)
Total		386	491	5 (3 M, 2 F)	5 (4 M, 1 F)

1.2 LSEP Curriculum and Sessions

The LSEP curriculum covered various thematic areas designed to develop critical life skills. Some sessions were co-educational, allowing GEP girls to participate alongside boys, fostering inclusive learning. In 2022, during the first year of the pilot, four sessions were co-educational, while in 2023, 11 out of seventeen sessions were conducted with mixed-sex participation. Tables 2 and 3 display the grade 7 and grade 8 curriculum overview.

Table 2: Grade 7 Curriculum Overview

Thematic Area	Sessions (with numbers)
Introduction	#1. Introducing the Life Skills for Equality Project (LSEP)
Gender Roles and Division of Labor	#2. Gender Values Clarification, #4. Gender and Societal Expectations (Co-ed)
Puberty, Sexuality, and Health	#3. My Changing Body, #16. Being Respectful of Menstruation
Gender Norms, Masculinity, Relationships	#5. Masculinity, #8. Communication Skills, #15. New Emotions, Changing Relationships (Co-ed)
Succeeding in School and Life	#6. Succeeding in School, #9. Time Management, #17. We Are Empowered
Mental Health and Emotional Disclosure	#7. Understanding My Emotions, #14. My Support Network
Conflict and Violence in Community	#10. Power, #11. Types of Violence, #12. Keeping Myself and Others Safe (Co-ed), #13. Making My School Safe (Co-ed)

Table 3: Grade 8 Curriculum Overview

Thematic Area	Sessions (with numbers)
Introduction	#1. Welcome Back to the Life Skills for Equality Project
Puberty, Sexuality, and Health	#2. Taking Care of My Body and Mind, #11. Equal and Consensual Relationships, #12. Protecting Myself and My Future Partners
Gender Roles and Human Rights	#3. Challenging Gender Norms (Co-ed), #4. Gender and Human Rights (Co-ed), #16. Creating a More Equal Society (Co-ed)
Gender Norms, Masculinity, Relationships	#5. Gender and My Identities, #10. Power and Privilege (Co-ed), #14. Building My Community (Co-ed)
Succeeding in School and Life	#6. Leadership and Success (Co-ed), #8. Being an Advocate (Co-ed), #9. Building for Success (Co-ed), #17. An Empowered World (Co-ed)
Mental Health and Digital Safety	#7. Navigating Online Spaces, #15. Living in a Pandemic World (Co-ed)
Conflict and Harassment in Communities	#13. Creating a Safe Space (Co-ed)

Local Life Skills Sessions

In addition to these sessions, facilitators and teachers delivered four government-prescribed Local Life Skills sessions each year in a co-educational setting, focusing on 8 sessions including:

1. Personal Understanding (Grade-7)
2. Know About Me, Know About You (Grade-7)
3. I Need You, You Need Me (Grade-7)
4. Confidentiality (Grade-7)
5. Who am I (Grade-8)
6. Expressing emotion (Grade-8)
7. Emotional Management (Grade-8)
8. Unity Together (Grade-8)

Life Skills Focus

Through these sessions, the program aimed to build a foundation of essential life skills that empowered boys to support gender equality and to contribute to a more inclusive society. The LSEP program aimed to develop the following life skills among participants:

Table 4: LSEP Life Skills Framework

Theme	Life Skills
Emotional Resilience	Self-confidence, expressing and managing emotions, empathy
Decision Making	Self-Control, critical thinking, perseverance
Collaboration	Communication, relationship building

Other	Creative problem-solving
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Learning Agenda

During the inception of the pilot program, Room to Read developed a set of learning questions to learn from its implementation and inform its future design and potential scale-up in Cambodia and in other countries where Room to Read works. The learning questions focused on a wide range of aspects, including program design, implementation fidelity, outcomes, and scalability, aiming to generate evidence and lessons to refine the initiative and support its expansion (see Table 5 for details). Throughout the implementation of the LSEP, the team responded to each question through a mix of monitoring, research and mixed-methods evaluation methods. This study is the last effort to complete the answers to our learning agenda.

Table 5: LSEP's Learning Agenda

Topic Area	No.	Question
Pilot Implementation	1	What program inputs were implemented for each pilot school and participant group, and on what timeline?
Pilot Implementation	2	How do these program inputs compare to the intended model?
Pilot Implementation	3	What was the quality of session facilitation / delivery of content? How well-equipped are facilitators to deliver the sessions with quality?
Curriculum/Design	4	Were facilitators able to deliver all the planned content in the available time?
Curriculum/Design	5	What level of demand for this content is there among boys in these schools at outset?
Curriculum/Design	6	What curriculum content did boys find most enjoyable/relevant/useful?
Curriculum/Design	7	How do boys/girls experience the sessions they have together? The sessions they have apart? What advantages and disadvantages do they see in each mode? Was it difficult to discuss certain topics with the opposite gender present?
Curriculum/Design	8	Do boys report any preference for a male vs female facilitator? What advantages or disadvantages do they see for each?
Outcomes	9	What changes in attitude or knowledge do we see among boys participating in the pilot?
Outcomes	10	What changes, if any, have occurred in boys' relationships with and behaviors toward girls, and vice versa?
Outcomes	11	What changes in attitude or knowledge do we see among facilitators/teachers participating in the pilot?
Scaling	12	How scalable do we expect the program to be as currently designed? What changes may be needed to improve scalability?

Scaling	13	How well aligned were the actual costs of implementation with the budget?
Pilot Implementation	14	How effective was the staffing approach? Was the staffing structure appropriate? What were the characteristics (gender, age, experience, etc.) of the people filling key roles? Was the level of capacity in the various roles sufficient?
Curriculum/Design	15	What changes in attitude or knowledge do we see among girls in schools? Among parents?
Outcomes	16	What changes in school readiness do boys participating in the pilot identify?
Scaling	17	How sustainable do we expect the program to be as currently designed?

1.3 Study Objective

The present qualitative endline study is part of the LSEP’s program evaluation design⁵. It sought to document the experiences of various stakeholders, including students, teachers, facilitators, parents, and the program implementation team. Through this approach, we sought to highlight the challenges and gaps identified during program implementation, as well as gather in-depth feedback on program components such as session content, delivery methods, and program monitoring and evaluation systems. This study also aimed to identify program strengths and weaknesses and to collect recommendations for further development and adaptation of the program in different countries and regions. This study addressed learning questions 6 through 17 from the LSEP’s learning agenda, focusing on program design, quality of implementation, outcomes, and scalability, as highlighted in Table 5; other questions had been previously addressed.

⁵ See “Cambodia’s Life Skills for Equality Program- Endline Evaluation Report” for the details of the program evaluation design. Available at <https://www.roomtoread.org/impact-and-reach/>

2. Methodology

To explore the research objectives, this study employed qualitative methods, with data collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted with key stakeholder groups.

2.1 Data Collection Approaches

1. **Students:** FGDs and KIIs were conducted with children who participated in the first cohort of the LSEP program. Each FGD lasted approximately one hour, while KIIs typically ranged between 45 minutes and one hour.
2. **Teachers and Facilitators:** Semi-structured interviews with school directors, teachers and facilitators provided insights into program delivery and operational challenges. These interviews also lasted 45 minutes to one hour.
3. **Parents:** FGDs were organized with parents or guardians of students to capture their perspectives on the program's impact. Each session lasted 45 minutes to one hour.
4. **Program Implementation Team:** Interviews with Room to Read staff were conducted both in person and via email. In-person interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, while emailed questions allowed detailed responses.

2.2 Participant Selection

A purposive sampling approach was used to ensure the inclusion of stakeholders most relevant to the study objectives. Participants were drawn from the first cohort of the LSEP program, which had completed the curriculum a year prior. These students were in Grade 9 at the time of data collection. While they no longer actively participated in the program, indirect exposure may have continued through ongoing activities with the second cohort in the same schools.

To identify eligible participants, a list of first-cohort students still enrolled in the program schools was cross-referenced with Program Implementation Monitoring (PIM) data. Students who attended at least 75% of sessions were filtered and randomized into primary and backup lists for FGDs and KIIs. Backup participants, pre-informed about their potential involvement, were included when primary participants were unavailable.

2.3 Consent Process

As the participants were minors, parental consent was obtained prior to data collection. Only students with signed consent forms were allowed to participate. Furthermore, prior to collecting data from the stakeholders, their verbal assent was secured before proceeding with the interview and recording their responses.

2.4 Sampling

The intended sample included diverse stakeholder groups, summarized in Table 6. Due to several field adjustments, the final number of participants differed slightly from these targets.

Table 6: Planned Sample Size

School	FGDs	KIIs with Students	Teachers, Facilitators, and School Directors	Parent FGDs	Staff Interviews
Chub Vary High School	2 (one with boys, one with girls)	4 (two boys, two girls)	1 School Director, 2 Facilitators (1 M, 1 F)	1	2 (Program Officer, GEP Manager)
Preah Net Preah Secondary	2 (one with boys, one with girls)	4 (two boys, two girls)	1 School Director, 1 Teacher (1 M), 2 Facilitators (2 M)	1	
O Snguot Secondary School	2 (one with boys, one with girls)	4 (two boys, two girls)	1 School Director, 1 Teacher (1 M), 2 Facilitators (2 F)	1	
Raung Kor High School	2 (one with boys, one with girls)	4 (two boys, two girls)	1 School Director, 1 Teacher (1 M), 1 Facilitator (1 M)	1	
Total	8 FGDs	Sixteen students	4 School Directors, 3 Teachers (3 M), 7 Facilitators (4 M, 3 F)	4 FGDs	Two staff

2.5 Field Adjustments

During fieldwork, additional adjustments were made to enhance the data collection process. Two adjustments are noted. First, **increased student participation** in relation to the original targets. Additional KIIs were conducted with students due to their willingness to participate, even when not selected to be part of the study. Therefore, backup students with pre-signed parental consent were included as requested. Second, **additional facilitators were interviewed**. Two facilitators who were engaged with the second cohort of the program (i.e., new) were also interviewed to gain insights into program continuity and their experiences. The final participant count is summarized in Table 7.

Table 7: Final Sample

Stakeholder	FGDs Conducted	KIIs Conducted
Boys	4	17
Girls	4	12
Teachers	-	3
Facilitators	-	7
Head Teachers/Directors	-	4
Parents	4	-
GEP Staff	-	2

FGD Participant Attendance

Each FGD was planned to include eight participants, though attendance varied slightly. Table 8 below details attendance per FGD by school.

Table 8: FGD Participants Numbers

School	Boys FGD Participants	Girls FGD Participants	Parent FGD Participants
Chub Vary School	8	8	8
Preah Net Preah School	8	8	9
O Snugot School	5	8	7
Raung Kor School	8	8	8

2.6 Development of Tools

The development of data collection tools was guided by the LSEP learning agenda and insights from previous program evaluations. A detailed questionnaire was designed to address critical areas of inquiry and was structured around five major thematic areas: **content, session delivery, enabling environment, outcomes, and scalability**. This thematic organization ensured the tools comprehensively captured the program's key dimensions and were able to gather information to respond to the corresponding research questions in the learning agenda.

The draft questionnaires were tailored to different respondent groups, including students, parents, teachers, facilitators, and school directors. Questions were carefully prioritized to ensure relevance and focus. After initial drafting, the tools were shared with Room to Read's Global Office (GO) Girls' Education Program (GEP) and Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation (RME) teams for feedback. Based on their reviews, additions, reductions, and refinements were made to address gaps or redundancies.

Once finalized, the English version of the tools was formatted for clarity and consistency to ensure ease of administration in the field.

2.7 Translation and Back Translation

To ensure the tools were culturally and linguistically appropriate, the English version was translated into Khmer through a meticulous process. Room to Read Cambodia's RME team conducted the initial translation, paying close attention to the technical terminology and contextual nuances required for alignment with the LSEP curriculum. This Khmer version was then reviewed by Room to Read Cambodia's GEP team manager to confirm its accuracy and relevance to the local context.

Once finalized, the Khmer version was back translated into English by a member of Room to Read Cambodia's communications team. This back-translated version was compared with the

original English tool by the GO-RME team to identify any inconsistencies. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved collaboratively between the Cambodia and Global RME teams. After thorough review and adjustments, the final tools were approved for use in the field.

2.8 Enumerator Training

The Room to Read Cambodia team hired four enumerators to conduct data collection, selecting two male and two female enumerators to ensure gender-balanced engagement, and gender-sensitive approaches, particularly for interviews and discussions with female participants. Enumerators were chosen based on predefined criteria, including prior experience with qualitative data collection, familiarity with the local context, and effective communication skills in English and Khmer.

To prepare the enumerators, a comprehensive two-day training session was conducted on August 18th and 19th. This training, led by the GO GEP RME⁶ Associate Director and Room to Read's Cambodia RME Manager covered the following components:

- An overview of the LSEP program and study objectives.
- A detailed explanation of the data collection tools and protocols.
- Guidelines for obtaining informed consent for interviews, FGDs, and audio recordings.
- Training on Room to Read's child protection policies and ethical considerations for working with minors.
- Best practices for facilitating qualitative data collection, including note-taking and probing techniques.
- Quality control measures to ensure the integrity of data collection.

On the second day of training, enumerators participated in mock FGDs and KIIs with practice respondents at a nearby school. This hands-on exercise allowed them to refine their interviewing and facilitation skills while receiving feedback from trainers. By the end of the training, enumerators were fully equipped to conduct data collection effectively and sensitively.

2.9 Data Collection and Daily Debriefing

Data collection was conducted between August 20th and August 28th. Each day was divided into two parts: data collection during the morning and early afternoon, followed by debriefing and transcription sessions in the late afternoon.

- **Data Collection:** Enumerators conducted FGDs and KIIs with students, parents, facilitators, teachers, and school directors. The GO GEP RME Associate Director conducted some interviews directly, particularly with school directors, facilitators, and

⁶ Global Office, Girls' Education and Gender Equality, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation.

students, to gather nuanced insights. Interviews and discussions were audio-recorded with participants' consent to ensure accuracy.

- **Debriefing Sessions:** At the end of each day, the team gathered to review field notes, discuss challenges, and share observations. These sessions were facilitated by the GO GEP RME Associate Director and the Cambodia RME Manager. Debriefings helped identify emerging themes, adjust data collection strategies as needed, and ensure consistency across interviews.

2.10 Transcription and Note-Taking

Following each day's data collection, enumerators transcribed audio recordings and field notes in English. This process ensured that the data was both detailed and immediately accessible for analysis. Transcriptions captured verbatim responses, providing rich qualitative data for subsequent coding and interpretation. The collaborative approach between the enumerators and the supervising RME team ensured high-quality data, with any ambiguities resolved promptly.

2.11 Analysis Approach

The analysis of qualitative data in this study followed a systematic and logical framework rooted in both deductive and inductive reasoning. This dual approach was essential to ensure that the analysis captured both pre-determined themes aligned with the study's objectives and new insights that emerged organically from the data.

Deductive and Inductive Reasoning

The analytical process began with a deductive approach, wherein data were organized according to pre-established themes derived from the learning agenda and study objectives. These themes were **content, session delivery, enabling environment, outcomes, and scalability**. Using these standard themes ensured that the analysis remained focused and aligned with the intended areas of inquiry.

Simultaneously, an inductive approach was integrated to identify patterns, perspectives, and insights that were not anticipated in the original framework and/or that referred to the phenomena with more detail than what was captured by the overarching themes. By allowing the data to speak for itself, we added depth to the analysis. Together, these approaches provided a balanced methodology, ensuring both rigor and adaptability.

Thematic Analysis Process

The thematic analysis followed a structured and iterative process to organize, code, and interpret the qualitative data. The following steps were undertaken:

1. **Data Preparation:** Transcriptions of all Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were meticulously compiled into Word documents. This step ensured accuracy and consistency in the data before the coding process began.

2. **Coding Framework Development:** A comprehensive coding framework was developed to classify the data into major themes:

- Content: Participants' reflections on the program's session content, including recall, engagement, and specific topics.
- Session Delivery: Feedback on facilitation quality, preferences for single-sex or co-educational sessions, and overall satisfaction with the delivery.
- Enabling Environment: External factors influencing participant experiences, such as family and community support or barriers.
- Outcomes: Behavioural, attitudinal, and knowledge changes because of the program.
- Scalability: Suggestions for program improvements and recommendations for broader implementation.

Within these major themes, subthemes were created to capture more nuanced details, such as session recall, delivery satisfaction, family support, school-related outcomes, behavioural changes, and scale-up recommendations.

3. **Coding:** The coding process integrated deductive and inductive approaches:

- Deductive Coding: Data were categorized into the pre-established themes, ensuring alignment with the study's initial focus areas.
- Inductive Coding: Emergent insights, patterns, and perspectives were identified and coded under new subthemes. This allowed for the discovery of unexpected findings, enriching the analysis.

4. **Quantification of Themes:** Frequencies were calculated within each theme and subtheme to quantify the prevalence of specific topics across KIIs and FGDs. This step highlighted dominant patterns and ensured an evidence-based representation of key findings.

5. **Synthesis and Interpretation:** Summaries of coded data were prepared to synthesize the findings. These summaries provided a clear narrative of participant feedback, highlighting recurring themes, variations across stakeholder groups, and actionable insights for program improvement.

2.12 Limitations

Some methodological limitations are noted. One notable limitation was the timing of data collection. Students from the first cohort completed the program a year prior, which may have affected their ability to recall specific session content or names accurately. To address this

potential recency bias, we provided participants with a detailed list of all sessions during interviews to assist their memory and ensure more accurate responses.

Another limitation relates to the possibility of social desirability bias, where participants may have felt compelled to provide responses that they believed would please the enumerators or reflect favourably on their own behaviours. To mitigate this, we triangulated data by incorporating the perspectives of multiple stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and facilitators, which allowed us to validate the students' narratives and identify patterns across different respondent groups.

Additionally, to further address response bias, two scalability-focused questions were added during field data collection: (1) whether participants believed the program should be implemented in other schools and (2) what changes they anticipated in boys from those schools if the program were scaled. Although these questions were not part of the original tool, their inclusion was strategic. By asking participants to project potential changes in other boys, we aimed to reduce bias in their self-reported changes. This approach helped us to validate self-reported changes by the students as well as students were less likely to overstate their own transformations when discussing hypothetical scenarios for others. These questions also provided valuable insights into the perceived adaptability and potential impact of the program beyond the initial cohort.

Finally, like most qualitative studies, this research has limited generalizability due to its smaller sample size. To enhance the reliability and diversity of insights, we employed a combination of random and purposive sampling, focusing on students with the highest attendance in the program. This sampling strategy allowed us to capture a broad range of perspectives and ensured that findings were grounded in the experiences of those most engaged with the program. While the findings are not statistically generalizable⁷, they offer deep, context-specific insights into the program's implementation, outcomes, and scalability.

⁷ Please see the LSEP Quantitative Endline Study for the statistically significant changes.

3. Key Findings

3.1 Program Outcomes

The LSEP participants believe that the program helped them improve their academic performance, time management, and goal-setting abilities.

The Life Skills for Equality Project (LSEP) is associated to positive changes in the academic performance and personal development of both boys and girls. Under the program, students reported learning essential skills such as time management, goal-setting, and collaborative learning, leading to more focused study habits and a deeper commitment to education. Boys and girls alike shared how their newfound abilities helped them excel in school and organize their time effectively, while also fostering a sense of discipline and responsibility.

Boys were keen to share improvements in study habits and related academic skills. One boy noted, *"I know how to organize plans, manage my schedule, and set clear goals for my future."* Another participant mentioned, *"I studied hard and created a study club where we review lessons and explain [content] to each other, which has improved my studies."* Additionally, a third boy reflected on his improved time management by saying, *"The LSEP program helped me in school...My study is better than before - I don't waste my time going out with friends because I have to spare my time for study and help my parents at home... I am able to manage my time ..."*

Girls also reported similar improvements in their academic performance. One girl shared, *"I know how to organize my study schedule, and my results have improved. I am more focused on learning now."* Another girl explained, *"I became better at planning, setting clear career goals, and became braver and more aware of societal situations. I believe that after taking the life skills program, my academic performance at school has improved. For example, before, I used to rank 10th in my class, but afterward, I became more confident, studied harder, and ranked 5th or 7th."* These testimonies reflect self-reported improvements in students' study habits, making them more engaged and focused.

However, not all students reported positive changes. Two girls mentioned that their academic performance had not changed even after participating in the program. While this was not the predominant experience, it highlights that the impact of the program may have varied for some students.

Time management was another area where students noted progress. A boy shared, *"I understand the value of time, and now I balance schoolwork and housework efficiently, especially during exams."* Similarly, a girl remarked, *"We now know how to manage schedules, balance leisure activities, and maintain good relationships."* This skill helped students become more organized and efficient in their academic pursuits.

Many students highlighted the benefit of peer collaboration in their academic improvement. One boy stated, *"I have gained confidence in explaining lessons to others, which also deepens my own understanding."* A girl reflected on her experience by saying, *"I created a weekly study plan and helped my friends focus on lessons to improve our studies together."* This

collaborative approach allowed students to support each other, reinforcing the program's emphasis on teamwork.

LSEP students report higher levels of self-confidence and communication skills, potentially leading to greater self-expression and collaboration.

The LSEP is associated to enhancing the self-confidence and communication skills of students. Participants frequently reported feeling more empowered to express themselves, to interact confidently with others, and to engage meaningfully in both academic and social contexts. However, some students expressed that their confidence and communication skills had not significantly changed following the program.

Boys frequently mentioned how the program helped them become more confident in public interactions and in expressing themselves. One boy explained, *"I have become brave enough to speak publicly to others and other students at school. For example, I had the opportunity to serve as a Master of Ceremony (MC), speaking publicly not only at school but also at a workshop with RtR in Siem Reap Province. Setting up my life goals and plans helps me reach my goals by motivating me to study hard and stick to the plan."* Another boy highlighted how he had grown in his ability to support others, saying, *"I can share what I have learned with my community. I helped correct others when they made a mistake."* These statements indicate a shift toward greater confidence in public speaking and leadership.

The program also fostered better communication skills among boys, particularly in their ability to work collaboratively and share knowledge. One boy shared, *"I have learned to communicate better with my peers, which makes studying and working together more effective."* Additionally, boys noted increased sensitivity in their communication, with one stating, *"I am able to manage my time for doing housework and schoolwork properly, especially when I have exams. I am able to communicate with people involved in arguments to reduce violence against each other. I can manage my emotions to stay calm, not talk too much, and not get angry easily. The Life Skills session has also helped me achieve better study results."* This reflects a transformation in their approach to interpersonal relationships.

Girls also described how their communication skills and confidence had improved. One girl remarked, *"The program has helped me gain more knowledge on life skills and my studies. I have become better at speaking up in class and explaining what I have learned to others."* Another noted, *"I can now approach my teachers and ask questions when I don't understand something, which has improved my studies and my confidence."* These experiences illustrate how the program has likely empowered girls to take initiative and engage actively in academic discussions.

LSEP participants report improvements in their ability to express and manage their emotions, potentially leading to stronger self-awareness, emotional regulation, and empathy in their interactions.

The Life Skills for Equality Project (LSEP) participants report improved ability to express and manage their emotions effectively. According to participants, the program allowed them to better understand their feelings, regulate their responses in challenging situations, and develop healthier interpersonal relationships.

Boys frequently emphasized the transformative effect the program had on their emotional management. One boy shared his experience in detail, stating, *"After attending the LSEP program, I see myself changed from being a person who always used anger to solve problems, but now I use my knowledge instead. Before, I was an angry boy, but now I can control my emotions."* This reflection highlights a shift from impulsive reactions to thoughtful problem-solving, demonstrating the program's potential to foster emotional maturity.

For many boys, this newfound ability to manage their emotions extended to their role in preventing and addressing conflicts. One participant explained, *"I understand the changes happening in my body. I know how to use power in a better way. For example, when we have power, we should not use it to oppress others or use violence against people. Once, I saw violence against girls, and I got involved in trying to stop it. Sometimes they would stop, but other times they wouldn't, so I would just walk away and tell them that I would call the police, and then they stop."*

Girls associated progress in balancing emotional regulation with personal growth. One girl reflected on the program, *"It helps me to reflect on my past behavior. Previously, I was not respectful and did not adhere to proper etiquette with elders, villagers, and teachers, and I had a mischievous character. However, now I know how to greet others politely, understand myself better, and have made progress in my studies"* Another participant explained, *"I am more am more understanding of myself, I am able to express emotions to others with less embarrassment, to become a leader, to become a good listener, to better understand others, to protect oneself and others from harassment, and to help solve my own problems within the family and in society.."* These shifts highlight how the program likely empowered girls to develop emotional resilience and empathy in their interactions.

Participants noted improved relationships between boys and girls, though they still had to align with societal norms to avoid judgment from their families and communities.

The LSEP potentially contributed to improved relationships between boys and girls, fostering respect, understanding, and collaboration. Participants described how the program helped them build confidence, break stereotypes, and engage with each other more thoughtfully. Yet, even as progress felt evident to participants, a layer of self-restraint persisted, driven by societal norms and fear of judgment, revealing the complexities of these evolving relationships.

Boys and girls spoke candidly about the positive changes they experienced. Many boys reflected on how the program had given them the courage to interact more openly with girls. One boy shared, *"Our relationship with girls has improved. I am now brave enough to talk to them, and we share lessons and help each other with studies."* This sentiment was echoed by another boy, who remarked, *"We respect and understand girls better now. I've learned to speak gently and avoid behaviors that might upset them."* These reflections point towards potential success in fostering empathy and respect, transforming interactions that were once marked by hesitation or discomfort.

Girls, too, described a noticeable shift in how boys treated them, highlighting improved respect and support. *"The boys no longer act rudely towards us. They are more polite, check on us*

when we're absent, and treat us kindly," one girl explained, reflecting on the positive changes she noticed in their interactions. Another girl shared how the program fostered mutual understanding and practical assistance, saying, *"It helps me understand boys' problems and allows us to assist each other when needed. For example, when my motorbike broke down, the boys helped me by taking it to the repair shop."* This newfound cooperation was coupled with an increased sense of loyalty and trust, as the same girl noted, *"I maintain loyalty by keeping my friends' secrets confidential."* She further elaborated on the changes in boys' behavior after participating in the program, emphasizing, *"The boys show more respect and do not act rudely towards girls, using gentle words after joining the LSEP class. They show good behavior and are more flexible. They treat the girls very well. For example, when I was absent from class or ill, they checked in on me via chat messages or through friends."* These reflections illustrate how the program potentially improved relationships between boys and girls by creating a culture of mutual respect and care, where all students support one another inside and outside the classroom.

Teachers and facilitators provided additional insights into the changes observed in this regard. One facilitator reflected on how boys, who initially engaged in teasing, had become more respectful and considerate. *"Boys have changed their behavior. For example, their communication in grades 7 and 8 was like gang behavior and was impolite, especially towards the girls. Now, they have improved their communication and are trying to study harder,"* the facilitator noted. Teachers also observed increased collaboration and openness among students, with one commenting, *"They have become more helpful, more willing to share, and more opinions than before."* These behavioral shifts suggest success in promoting a culture of mutual respect and collaboration.

The data also suggested improvements in academic interactions, where boys and girls began to see each other as valuable collaborators. Boys spoke of how they now felt comfortable seeking help from girls, with one sharing, *"I am brave enough to talk to girls now. The relationship has improved and become closer. During the mixed class, I made more friends with girls and can now ask them questions when I don't understand lessons."* Girls, in turn, appreciated boys' increased willingness to help, with one noting, *"The boys help us explain exercises and are more open-minded than before."*

Despite these reported improvements, some students still experienced limited changes in their interactions with the opposite sex, largely due to concerns about being misunderstood or judged. Societal and cultural expectations reinforced reserved behavior, as students remained mindful of how their interactions might be perceived by peers, teachers, and family members.

In some cases, girls avoided close friendships with boys to prevent misconceptions, while boys expressed concerns about unintentionally offending girls. One boy shared, *"My relationship with boys is very good now. With girls, nothing has changed significantly, but the relationship has become closer. However, I think if I say something sensitive like I do with the boys, they might get angry. That's why sometimes I'm afraid to talk to girls."* Similarly, some girls remained cautious, avoiding close interactions to prevent being perceived as having inappropriate relationships.

One girl explained, *"I'm not very close to boys because I'm worried it might be perceived as inappropriate or as if we're in a relationship. Walking with a boy might be viewed differently. I only get close to girls, with whom I can share personal matters, family issues, and studies. I don't really trust boys, and I don't dare let male friends come to my house because I'm concerned about what my family might think. My parents might see it as inappropriate, assuming we're in a relationship, and even if I explain otherwise, they might not believe me."*

These concerns frequently led to self-censorship, limiting the potential for more open interactions. Overall, while the program facilitated meaningful improvements in fostering respectful and supportive relationships, societal norms and cultural expectations remained powerful forces shaping how these interactions evolved.

Parents observed positive changes in their children's behavior, responsibility, and respect for others, along with a shift in their own beliefs about gender roles, inspired by the values promoted in the LSEP program.

Parental feedback is consistent with the self-reported behavioural changes observed in children participating in the LSEP program, particularly in areas of responsibility, respect, and empathy. Parents noted positive changes in their children's attitudes and behaviours, including increased willingness to help with household tasks, improved communication, and a more responsible approach to daily responsibilities. For example, parents observed that both boys and girls were more inclined to assist with housework without being reminded, showing respect toward family members and elders, and maintaining polite language. One parent shared, *"My son has started helping me with the family business and sharing in the housework. He also shows more affection towards his mother than before and is trying hard to study."*

In addition to behavioural changes within the household, parents noted an improvement in children's interactions with peers and community members. Boys were described as becoming more respectful toward girls and reducing aggressive or inappropriate language, fostering a more harmonious dynamic with female classmates and siblings. One parent remarked, *"They know how to respect and value girls, treat each other with respect, and avoid using bad words."* Similarly, girls exhibited greater empathy and confidence in managing relationships and engaging with others. Parents observed that children were more helpful, engaged in open communication, and displayed maturity in handling social interactions.

The program's influence also extended to changing parental beliefs about gender roles and equality. Many parents reported a shift in their own perspectives, inspired by their children's growth and the values promoted by the program. Traditional beliefs, such as women's roles being confined to household tasks, were challenged, with parents recognizing the importance of equal opportunities for boys and girls. *"The old saying that 'Women cannot spin the cookstove': This mindset has changed nowadays. This concept was also deep in my mindset, but I have recently changed my mindset after seeing how well my daughter is doing in school,"* one parent noted, adding that witnessing their child's progress has led to a mindset change. This broader acceptance of gender equality signifies a positive cultural shift within families, further reinforced by the program's life skills education.

Teachers and facilitators reported personal growth in gender awareness, communication, and teaching practices, leading to greater empathy, acceptance, and adaptability in both professional and personal spheres.

Teachers and facilitators reported a shift in their perspective on gender roles, becoming more supportive and engaging in shared household responsibilities. For instance, a male teacher shared, *"I now share the housework with my wife more than before and no longer assign tasks based on sex."* They expressed greater comfort with previously challenging tasks, such as buying sanitary products, and have become more empathetic toward their students and families. Furthermore, they also noted improvements in their communication skills, including speaking gently and respectfully to students and family members. One facilitator mentioned, *"I used to be someone who didn't talk much, but after joining this program, I've improved my communication."* Many also highlighted learning to manage emotions more effectively, avoiding harsh or violent responses and adopting calm problem-solving approaches.

Some facilitators reported that their attitudes toward same-sex relationships evolved, showing increased acceptance and understanding. For example, a facilitator shared, *"Previously, I didn't accept same-sex relationships; I thought it was inappropriate."* Through the program, they gained insight into respecting various identities and teaching these values to students. The program's focus on power dynamics and privilege helped educators understand these concepts deeply and apply them in teaching. Facilitators emphasized that they became more aware of harmful stereotypes and worked to avoid reinforcing them. As one facilitator said, *"I can share with them the privilege that they have."*

Teachers and facilitators also reported enhancements in their teaching techniques, gaining a clearer distinction between traditional teaching and active facilitation. They adapted their methods to engage students more effectively, encouraging goal-setting and personal development. Teachers and facilitators believe that the shift not only benefited their students but also enriched their own lives, as they integrated life skills training into their personal routines, creating a balanced and supportive approach to growth and learning.

3.2 LSEP Program Design and Implementation

Overall recall of the sessions remained low.

Students struggled to recall sessions names and content. After being provided with a list of session titles, they were able to remember and discuss the sessions they attended. Despite this support, overall recall remained low, likely due to recency bias, as students completed the program over a year ago. The LSEP program involved a total of forty-two sessions over the two-year pilot period, with twenty-one sessions each year—17 of Room to Read's Life Skills sessions and four government-prescribed Local Life Skills (LLS) sessions. Boys attended all twenty-one sessions each year, participating in the full range of program activities. In contrast, girls attended only the co-educational sessions, participating in eight sessions during the first year and fifteen in the second.

This difference in session exposure is reflected in recall patterns: boys remembered a wider variety of themes, frequently mentioning sessions focused on Masculinity, Gender, Power, and Time Management, as well as Anger Management, My Changing Body, and relationship building. Girls, with their more limited exposure, recalled fewer themes overall, primarily remembering sessions on safe space, gender, and power. This pattern suggests that boys, who engaged more extensively with the program, may have connected more readily with content related to gender roles, power dynamics, and personal development, while girls' recall was limited, reflecting their reduced session attendance within the program. In addition, girls are exposed to more life skills sessions outside the LSEP, potentially affecting their ability to recall LSEP sessions.

Students found the sessions that were straightforward and practical to apply in daily life the most enjoyable, while they least enjoyed sessions that were technical, complex, and difficult to relate to real-world experiences.

The sessions that students enjoyed most varied between boys and girls. For boys, the most appreciated sessions were *Masculinity*, *Time Management*, and *Leadership and Success*. Boys connected with the masculinity session, with one noting, *"The men must be brave, strong, and gentle, and not use violence with women."* The time management session was also valued, with a boy sharing, *"I learned to respect time, avoid wasting it, and understand when to do something and when not to."* Boys appreciated learning practical skills that they felt could apply directly to managing responsibilities in their daily lives. Similarly, the leadership session resonated with boys as they aspired to develop skills useful for future family and community roles.

In contrast, girls enjoyed sessions that emphasized emotional and social connections, such as *I Need You, You Need Me*, *Leadership and Success*, and *Control My Emotions*. The session *I Need You, You Need Me* was particularly impactful, with one girl explaining, *"I like this session because everyone loses motivation sometimes, so I need someone who can comfort me, and I also comfort them when they need it."* Girls also valued the leadership session for the insights it provided on guiding others toward success. Emotional management was another favourite, as one girl noted, *"Learning how to manage my emotions helped me control my anger."* These sessions provided girls with tools for personal and emotional support, which they found empowering and relevant to their lives.

The least enjoyable sessions revealed areas of discomfort and disengagement. For boys, *Power*, *Being Respectful of Menstruation*, and *Expressing Emotions* were among the least favoured. Boys found the power session challenging to relate to, with one stating, *"The session on power felt unnecessary and was hard to apply."* The menstruation session initially seemed irrelevant, with one boy commenting, *"I thought this session should be taught only to girls. However, I later realized that it is actually good for boys to participate because it helps us understand the challenges girls face and encourages us to be more considerate."* Although some boys came to appreciate its value, topics related to menstruation remained uncomfortable for many. Sessions involving emotional expression were also unpopular, as boys often felt uneasy sharing their feelings openly.

For girls, sessions like *Expressing Emotions*, *Gender and Societal Expectations*, and *Changing Body* were less enjoyable. Girls often felt uncomfortable expressing emotions in mixed-sex settings due to ridicule from male classmates, with one girl sharing, “*When I show my true emotions, boys say I am weak.*” The *Changing Body* session was challenging, as girls felt embarrassed discussing physical changes in front of boys. Sensitive topics, especially when discussed with male peers, often led to discomfort, and limited engagement for girls.

Some sessions that students found least enjoyable were also those they struggled to understand. Abstract or technical topics like *Gender and Societal Expectations*, *Advocacy for Oneself and Others*, and *Building My Community* proved challenging to connect with practical experiences. Boys found it difficult to see the relevance, with one boy saying, “*The session on Power and Gender was hard to apply because I don’t see how it fits into my life outside of class.*” Girls faced similar challenges, particularly in sessions introducing new terminology or complex social ideas. One girl noted, “*I don’t understand how to use what we learned about gender roles in real life, and I’m not sure when I’ll need it.*” The disconnect between session content and practical application hindered students’ ability to engage meaningfully.

Teachers and facilitators echoed these sentiments, finding it challenging to teach sessions that were difficult for students to apply in daily life. Many reported difficulties with terms like “privilege,” “identity,” “safe space,” “gender,” and “equality.” These concepts were not only hard for students to grasp but also challenging for some facilitators, who expressed the need for additional support to understand and explain them. As one teacher noted, “*These modern terms make it difficult for students to understand, and some of the words are unfamiliar even to me.*” Facilitators found that terms like “privilege” felt too abstract, making it hard to connect them to students’ everyday lives.

Students’ self-reported learning closely aligns with the areas they found most enjoyable and easiest to connect to their lives.

We observed that students’ self-reported learning closely aligned with the areas they found most enjoyable or engaging. The findings reveal that students benefited the most from sessions that emphasized Empowerment and Personal Growth, Gender Equality, and Time Management and Goal Setting. Across all students, there is unmistakable evidence of growth in life skills, particularly in challenging traditional norms and adopting new strategies for academic and personal success. A boy highlighted the importance of non-discrimination, sharing, “*I don’t discriminate based on jobs, whether they are considered girls’ or boys’ jobs,*” reflecting an increased awareness of gender equality.

For boys, the key areas of learning included Time Management, Empowerment, and Gender Equality. Many boys demonstrated improvement in managing their time, with one stating, “*I am able to manage my study time. I study more than before, especially Khmer and Math.*” Another boy reflected on his learning about gender equality, saying, “*The men and women can express their voice in the society. Girls and boys have equal rights. Men and women can work the same.*”

Girls showed significant shifts in Empowerment, Emotional Management, and Gender Equality. Empowerment emerged as a dominant theme, with girls increasingly confident in their rights and capabilities. One participant shared, *“I know about my own rights, and I understand that girls can work as well as boys.”* Emotional skills also improved, as noted by a girl who shared, *“Now, I can manage my emotions and engage in mutual understanding and tolerance.”*

The LSEP Program enabled students to reflect on and understand areas of societal discrimination, such as gender-based inequalities in jobs and other spheres. Most boys and girls identified areas where gender discrimination occurs, though for some boys, their reflections were influenced by traditional norms. For instance, one boy reflected on what he learned in the program about masculinity, saying, *“A real man does not cry. A real man must be muscular and tall. A real man must be gentle, respectful, and responsible. A real man does not hurt others and has to value people.”* This response reflects a partial acceptance of traditional masculine ideals, such as the expectation that men must be tough and should not cry.

Although most boys expressed a growing recognition of gender equality, traditional views on masculinity remain deeply rooted for some, highlighting the complexity of change and the ongoing influence of societal norms.

Students appreciated interactive teaching methods and a supportive environment but felt that improved classroom management and slower lesson pacing would enhance their learning experience.

Boys frequently noted the enjoyment they derived from interactive and engaging teaching approaches, especially the use of games, role-playing, and group discussions. One boy shared, *“Our teacher used games like ‘Guide Me the Way,’ where we followed a leader with our eyes closed. It taught us about trust and teamwork.”* Boys also appreciated participatory activities, with another commenting, *“Teamwork and group discussions make learning fun and help us understand better.”* Clear explanations and adaptive communication from teachers were also highly valued. Boys mentioned that teachers who spoke clearly and adjusted their pace made it easier to follow along, with one noting, *“The teacher has a calm voice, explains clearly, and takes time to make sure we get it.”* Additionally, boys felt comfortable in the non-threatening, respectful classroom environment, with one boy reflecting, *“Our teacher is patient, doesn’t get angry, and listens to our questions.”*

Girls echoed many of the boys' sentiments about interactive teaching methods, finding that games, visual aids, and group study created a positive and memorable learning environment. One girl highlighted, *“Games before lessons, respectful teachers, and group discussions make learning interesting and enjoyable.”* Girls also valued empathetic teaching approaches and the emotional support from their teachers, with one girl stating, *“Our teacher is kind, explains well, and makes us feel comfortable to share and ask questions.”* Girls especially appreciated when teachers included social issues and discussions on personal development, noting that such topics allowed them to feel seen and encouraged. One participant reflected, *“The teacher helps us be brave, explains social issues, and respects what we have to say.”*

Some students identified areas for improvement in classroom delivery, particularly in managing disruptions and pacing lessons effectively. The LSEP sessions typically accommodate 20 students per facilitator or teacher. However, in mixed sessions, the number of students doubles. To address this, facilitators either organized two separate sessions for mixed groups or brought in an additional teacher or facilitator to co-facilitate. Students highlighted that leniency in classroom management sometimes allowed disruptive behavior to interfere with their focus. In mixed-sex settings, boys observed that *“the different attitudes between boys and girls, along with noisy students, make it hard to concentrate.”* Similarly, girls expressed frustration, with one remarking, *“The teacher is too lenient, so students get noisy, and it’s hard to concentrate.”* Many students suggested that clearer boundaries and stronger rule enforcement could help maintain a more focused learning environment.

The pace and clarity of lessons were also mentioned as areas for improvement. Both boys and girls expressed a desire for teachers to slow down and provide more thorough explanations on complex topics. Boys highlighted the need for teachers to “review lessons more carefully,” and one boy suggested, *“Sometimes the lesson moves too fast, and I wish the teacher would go over things more slowly.”* Girls echoed this sentiment, with one girl noting, *“The teacher should explain more slowly and check if we understand before moving on.”* This feedback underscores the students’ desire for teachers to adjust the delivery speed and confirm comprehension to enhance their learning experience.

Students preferred single sex sessions to discuss sensitive topics yet also noted benefits of mixed-sex environments.

The students expressed clear preferences for either single-sex or mixed-sex sessions, depending on the themes and learning dynamics. Overall, boys and girls displayed distinct reasons for favouring certain settings, which were often based on comfort, confidence, and focus.

Table 9: Students’ preference of single-sex vs. co-educational sessions

Preference Type	Boys	Girls
Single-Sex (Boys-Only)	20	0
Single-Sex (Girls-Only)	0	27
Co-educational (Mixed Sessions)	10	13

Most students preferred single-sex sessions for topics that required vulnerability or focused on sensitive issues. Boys indicated that they felt more comfortable and confident in boys-only sessions, where they could participate openly without worrying about how their responses would be perceived by girls. *“I feel comfortable sharing my ideas in a boys-only class,”* shared one student. Another commented, *“I didn’t feel shy, so I could concentrate better.”* Boys frequently noted that boys-only sessions fostered camaraderie and reduced their hesitation in discussing personal or socially sensitive matters, like masculinity and self-expression.

Girls similarly preferred girls-only sessions for sensitive discussions, particularly around topics related to body changes and menstruation. One girl expressed, *“When learning about menstruation, I feel embarrassed talking about it with boys in the room.”* Girls found that the supportive atmosphere in girls-only settings encouraged them to participate without fear of judgment or disruption. In girls-only groups, they reported feeling safer to engage fully, knowing that they could share openly and be understood by peers facing similar experiences. *“We encourage each other to read and participate without laughing at each other,”* noted one girl, reflecting the comfort and solidarity fostered in single-sex environments.

While students showed a strong preference for single-sex sessions for certain topics, they also saw benefits in mixed sessions, especially for themes involving communication skills, teamwork, and life skills. Both boys and girls appreciated the opportunity to gain insights from each other, which they felt enriched discussions and allowed for a broader understanding of topics. One boy shared, *“In mixed sessions, we get to hear different perspectives from girls, and that helps us learn more.”* Another added, *“Girls often have different viewpoints, especially in group discussions, and that makes the session more interesting.”*

Girls similarly valued mixed sessions for the chance to engage with boys’ perspectives, particularly on topics like equality and societal roles. *“It’s important to learn with boys so we can understand each other better,”* one girl shared. Another noted, *“When we learn together, it brings the same level of courage in everyone.”* Girls appreciated that mixed sessions helped build mutual respect and understanding, especially when discussing non-sensitive themes like communication skills and general societal expectations.

Students described challenges with sensitive topics in mixed settings.

Despite recognizing the value of mixed sessions, both boys and girls found discussing sensitive topics, such as puberty and emotional expression, very challenging in mixed-sex settings. Boys felt that these sessions could be uncomfortable, with one student noting, *“I feel shy talking about my feelings in front of the girls; it’s easier with just the boys.”* Another shared, *“In mixed sessions, I worry that girls might laugh if I say something wrong.”* Boys felt that they could be more open in boys-only settings, particularly when discussing topics around self-image, emotions, and societal expectations of masculinity.

Girls, too, found mixed settings challenging for sensitive discussions, often due to disruptions from boys or fear of judgment. *“Boys don’t always take the lessons seriously, and it’s hard to focus when they’re laughing,”* one girl explained. Others mentioned that topics like body changes felt too personal to discuss in front of boys, with one girl stating, *“Talking about puberty with boys in the room feels embarrassing, and it’s hard to pay attention.”* Both boys and girls suggested that topics requiring emotional expression, trust-building, or confidentiality might be better suited to single-sex settings, where they felt freer to engage deeply without fear of ridicule.

Teachers also note challenges and benefits in co-educational classrooms.

According to teachers, boys and girls displayed a higher level of cooperation and understanding in mixed-sex sessions. Teachers observed that boys and girls tended to cooperate better and share more when learning together. For instance, boys were noted to behave more respectfully and participate more when girls were present, becoming less playful and more reserved. As one teacher explained, *"Learning together with both boys and girls helps them understand each other better, cooperate, and share more."* Another teacher remarked that, unlike in boys-only sessions where boys tend to joke and play around, in mixed sessions, they *"I've observed that if I only teach boys, they tend to be passive. However, when girls are included, the boys seem more active, participate more in group work, and engage in discussions."* This shift suggests that the presence of girls encourages boys to take the sessions more seriously, likely due to a heightened sense of accountability.

Girls were generally observed to be more attentive, active, and willing to express themselves in mixed-sex settings, often participating more than boys. One teacher stated, *"The girls are more involved in answering questions and participating in group work than the boys."* Conversely, boys often relied on girls for support in group activities, with a facilitator pointing out, *"Boys tend to rely on girls and are less proactive."* Teachers found that boys felt more comfortable and confident discussing topics related to masculinity or self-protection in boys-only sessions, which allowed for candid sharing without the shyness that emerged in mixed groups. A male facilitator mentioned, *"When I facilitated or delivered the 'being a man' session to the boys, we felt comfortable to share. It was not hard for me. There was not much shyness between me and my students."*

However, managing mixed-sex sessions presented unique challenges, especially when sensitive topics were introduced. Boys often felt shy or embarrassed when discussing topics related to reproductive organs or emotions in front of girls, leading to teasing and joking behaviors that disrupted the session. One teacher noted, *"Students started joking and teasing each other"* during these lessons, making it difficult to maintain focus. In contrast, in all-boys sessions, boys were reportedly more confident and vocal, especially when discussing emotional or personal topics, as a facilitator highlighted, *"Boys are less confident when studying with girls."* Boys tended to express their opinions more freely without the presence of girls, suggesting that separate sessions allowed them a more comfortable environment for open discussion on sensitive issues.

Same sex teachers were preferred when discussing sensitive topics.

Boys showed a strong preference for male teachers, attributing their comfort and ease in class to clear communication, structured explanations, and the assertiveness that male teachers brought to the classroom. Male teachers were perceived as confident and straightforward, especially when addressing sensitive topics, with boys noting that *"male teachers are not shy about sensitive topics"* and *"have clear voices and provide more examples."* Boys found that male teachers' ability to foster an engaging and confident learning environment made it easier to focus and participate without hesitation, particularly on personal or complex topics. Familiarity

with male teachers also contributed to boys' preference, with one student saying, *"I feel brave enough to stand up or raise my hand to ask questions without hesitation."*

Female students overwhelmingly preferred female teachers, particularly in discussions involving sensitive or gender-specific subjects. Female teachers were appreciated for their empathetic approach, providing a safe and supportive environment where girls felt less shy discussing personal matters. As one student noted, *"female teachers make the student feel less shy in sensitive topics."* Female students also valued the nurturing and engaging teaching style of female teachers, noting that *"female teachers involve students in games and make learning enjoyable."* The shared experiences and understanding between female teachers and students made it easier for the latter to participate and feel understood, fostering a relatable and supportive classroom environment.

While preferences leaned toward male teachers for male students and female teachers for female students, all participants acknowledged that male and female teachers brought valuable, complementary strengths to their classrooms. A balanced view was shared by one student who remarked, *"both teachers are good and speak well."* Female students also highlighted that male teachers could foster bravery and resilience, adding that *"male teachers are louder and more assertive, which is good."* This appreciation underscores the value students placed on a teaching approach that leverages the strengths of all teachers to enhance learning outcomes. However, this comment also underscores the prevalence of gender stereotypes, with male teachers perceived as more assertive.

Both boys and girls experienced support from family, community, and school environments, though barriers rooted in gender norms and peer expectations limited their ability to practice life skills freely.

The study revealed that both boys and girls had numerous opportunities to apply life skills across family, community, and school settings, with positive support received in several ways. Boys often benefited from family encouragement to manage time, take on household responsibilities, and practice non-violence, reflecting a shift in gender role expectations at home. They engaged actively in community settings, frequently mediating conflicts and promoting values of equality and confidentiality among peers. Within school, boys took on leadership roles, supporting classmates academically and modelling respectful behaviour. Girls, meanwhile, advocated for education within the family, challenged traditional household roles, and encouraged equitable participation in chores. In the community, they were instrumental in resolving conflicts, promoting hygiene, and raising awareness about human rights, demonstrating leadership and initiative. School offered girls an encouraging space for academic growth, collaboration with peers, and application of self-management skills.

Despite these positive experiences, there were barriers that prevented students from fully practicing life skills across these settings, differing in intensity and nature for boys and girls. Boys often encountered peer-driven limitations that discouraged emotional expression and engagement in sensitive discussions. Some boys feared judgment during presentations, while others reported discouragement from peers when intervening in conflicts, reflecting societal expectations around masculinity. Girls faced restrictions rooted in traditional family and

community expectations, especially when exploring social activities or non-traditional career paths. Some girls shared family-imposed limitations, such as one who noted, “*My family doesn’t want me to become a teacher because the salary is not high.*” Community expectations also limited girls’ ability to be assertive in social settings, with friends discouraging outspoken behaviour.

Table 10: Community, parental, and school level support towards students

Support Areas	Boys	Girls
Family Support	Boys applied lessons on time management, chores, emotional control, and non-violence. They received encouragement and learned to share responsibilities like housework and sports with family members.	Girls focused on advocating for staying in school, household equality, emotional management, and mediation of conflicts. They also received support to pursue academic goals.
Community Support	Boys engaged in mediating conflicts, sharing lessons about confidentiality and equality, and encouraging positive behaviour among peers. They also received encouragement from community members.	Girls were more active in the community, mediating conflicts, promoting hygiene, and sharing knowledge about human rights and equality. They faced challenges such as resistance from some members but still played a mediating role.
School Support	Boys used school as a space for learning and teaching lessons to peers, practicing emotional control, and supporting classmates in studies. School encouraged respect, discipline, and leadership.	Girls received academic encouragement and practiced self-management, studying independently, and collaborating with friends in the school environment. Teachers provided a supportive and encouraging space for their growth.

Co-facilitation enhanced classroom management and lesson delivery for teachers and facilitators, while some logistical challenges around scheduling presented obstacles.

In the LSEP, co-facilitation was identified as a valuable method for improving classroom management and facilitating lesson delivery. Teachers and facilitators reported that co-facilitating helped them manage large mixed-sex classes, typically exceeding 40 students, more effectively by dividing the students into smaller, more manageable groups. This structure enabled each facilitator to focus on individual groups, keeping students engaged and on-task. One teacher shared that with a co-facilitator’s assistance, they could observe and support students more closely: “*The RtR organization usually sits in to observe, take photos, and assist with group work when I’m not able to manage students.*” This shared responsibility not only enhanced lesson delivery but also allowed teachers to navigate challenging classroom dynamics more seamlessly.

Another advantage of co-facilitation was its role in maintaining lesson consistency and minimizing errors. Teachers appreciated having a second facilitator to ensure lessons stayed on track, as they could quickly clarify or adjust content if needed. This was particularly helpful in sessions involving complex or sensitive topics. A teacher noted, *“The co-facilitation can also help cover areas where we might make mistakes or miss information.”* With two facilitators, lessons were more adaptable and could accommodate last-minute adjustments if one teacher were unavailable, ensuring a stable learning environment for students.

However, the co-facilitation approach also presented some logistical challenges, especially with scheduling. Facilitators occasionally encountered difficulties coordinating their teaching times, leading to overlapping or repeated content for certain groups. One facilitator shared that *“It’s sometimes difficult during the mixed class when the co-facilitator’s schedule overlaps with mine.”* This difficulty in aligning schedules emphasized the need for improved coordination to maintain consistent support across classrooms.

In addition to co-facilitation, the program’s delivery structure emphasized engaging and flexible teaching. Facilitators found that visual aids like posters, coloured paper, and interactive group activities (e.g., role-playing) were instrumental in capturing students’ attention and encouraging participation. These tools helped engage quieter students, making the classroom environment more inclusive and comfortable. As one facilitator described, *“Encourage quiet students to express their opinions in class,”* highlighting the importance of creating a space for all voices.

To adapt to diverse classroom needs, facilitators tailored their language and behaviour, adjusting based on students’ comprehension levels and gender dynamics. Techniques like hand-clapping and playful group interactions fostered a relaxed learning atmosphere, while games and group activities emphasized effort and confidence over correct answers, making learning supportive and accessible for students. Thorough preparation and ongoing student monitoring were beneficial for effective delivery. Facilitators not only prepared meticulously for each session but also conducted home visits to observe behaviour changes, maintaining open communication with parents. One facilitator emphasized, *“Monitoring the students’ behaviour changes by visiting their homes and asking their parents,”* showing that engagement extended beyond the classroom. Reinforcement strategies, like using social media platforms and peer-sharing methods, further supported student collaboration and lesson retention outside of class.

3.3 Staffing and Support

The staffing structure for the program was perceived as effective, with a balanced and supportive team that met the demands of the project.

The staffing approach for the LSEP program was thoughtfully structured to meet the program's needs, ensuring a seamless implementation during the pilot phase. Recruitment was handled efficiently, with all roles filled in a timely manner, allowing for smooth project initiation. Each new team member received comprehensive orientation, preparing them to take on responsibilities across multiple schools. This preparation was critical to the program’s ability to function without interruptions and meet its goals.

A significant strength of the staffing structure was its balanced gender representation, which allowed the program to engage both boys and girls effectively. The team's diverse composition enabled facilitators to connect with students from diverse backgrounds, creating an inclusive environment. This balance was further supported by the Senior Program Officer, who played an essential role in managing the staffing arrangements, overseeing day-to-day activities, and coordinating support for teachers and facilitators. By working closely with the LSEP facilitators and teachers, the Senior Program Officer helped ensure consistency and quality in program delivery across all schools.

While the staffing approach was successful, areas for potential enhancement were identified. Future recruitment efforts could focus on candidates with backgrounds in youth work, education, and gender studies, which would bring valuable skills to the team. Additionally, hiring more local staff, from the same province where the program was being implemented, was suggested to reduce turnover and strengthen connections within the communities served. Tailoring support based on individual staff needs was also recommended, with newer team members receiving additional coaching, while more experienced staff could support each other collaboratively. This structured support approach would enable team members at all levels to feel confident and effective in their roles.

The monitoring and evaluation system for the LSEP program functioned well yet can be improved in diverse ways.

The LSEP project employed a robust monitoring system that utilized six tools: Welcome Home Visits (LSEP-M1), Student Attendance Forms (LSEP-M2), Parent Attendance Forms (LSEP-M3), Life Skills Session Observations (LSEP-M4), Facilitator Session Reflection Reports (LSEP-M5), and Facilitator Monthly Plans and Reports (LSEP-M6). These tools enabled program field staff to track progress effectively. Four of these tools—LSEP-M2, LSEP-M3, LSEP-M4, and LSEP-M5—were consolidated into an Excel-based Program Implementation Monitoring (PIM) system, which facilitated monthly tracking across key components such as attendance, session delivery, and observations.

The PIM tool functioned well under the management of Senior Program Officer, who consolidated data monthly and sent it to the RME team for quality checks and quarterly analyses. The quarterly reports were shared across management levels, enabling real-time adjustments and improvements in program delivery. Despite its effectiveness, some refinements were suggested. For example, Welcome Home Visits, conducted at the start of the program, could be expanded to include a second visit at the end of the first year. This additional touchpoint would allow the program team to gather valuable feedback from parents on behavioral changes in their children. Furthermore, it was recommended that the Facilitator Monthly Plan (LSEP-M6) be reframed as a project management tool rather than a monitoring instrument to better align with its purpose.

The shift to digital data collection using SurveyCTO was highlighted as a major strength of the monitoring process. The system saved time and reduced costs while minimizing paper use, aligning with Room to Read's commitment to sustainability. However, for future scale-up, the

team suggested integrating a database that aligns with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MoEYS) system, such as KOBO in Cambodia. This integration would ensure a sustainable monitoring process when the program transitions to local government oversight.

The team also recommended introducing pre- and post-tests at the start and end of each school year to measure students' knowledge and behavioural changes more effectively. Conducted by Life Skills teachers, these tests would provide a clearer view of the program's year-on-year gain and help refine its implementation.

The monitoring and evaluation reports were highly valued by program management, as they enabled real-time tracking of progress, identified gaps, and facilitated timely interventions. These reports also provided key findings that were shared with stakeholders, fostering learning and transparency. Despite this, gaps were identified, such as the lack of interventions for boys identified as at-risk and the absence of formal guidelines for data validation. Addressing these issues would strengthen the monitoring system's reliability and ensure that actionable responses are integrated into program implementation.

Cultural sensitivities presented additional challenges to monitor the program. For instance, session three, *"My Changing Body,"* was particularly difficult for teachers to deliver and for students and parents to engage with, as Cambodian norms discourage open discussions about such topics. Teachers reported discomfort and resistance, underscoring the need to adapt the session's content and language to align better with local cultural expectations. Aside from curricular adaptations, a robust monitoring system should capture these challenges so that session delivery is contextualized accordingly.

In summary, the LSEP monitoring and evaluation system was effective in supporting program implementation and providing valuable insights. However, addressing the identified gaps, enhancing cultural responsiveness, aligning with government to support curriculum integration, and refining tools would further strengthen its impact and ensure its sustainability in Cambodia and other contexts.

Teachers appreciated the comprehensive training and responsive feedback processes provided by Room to Read, though they highlighted areas for improvement in curriculum resources and training.

Room to Read's support was seen as instrumental in the successful implementation of the life skills curriculum, with teachers and facilitators noting various aspects of support that were beneficial as well as areas needing further enhancement. Many teachers felt that the foundational training and accessible materials gave them a solid basis for delivering the curriculum effectively. Among ten respondents, six (four facilitators and two teachers) expressed satisfaction with the structured support. Structured support included training, guidance, and lesson plans. As one facilitator shared, *"I have received the support I expected because I participated in two training sessions for staff."* This level of initial preparation was viewed as comprehensive and beneficial, allowing them to approach the curriculum confidently.

The responsiveness of RtR to teacher feedback was also widely appreciated. Teachers felt that their insights were valued, leading to meaningful adjustments in the curriculum based on classroom challenges. One teacher remarked, *“I once shared feedback during a workshop... they made the changes based on the suggestion,”* illustrating the open feedback loop that RtR fostered. Regular monthly meetings with supervisors further bolstered this support, providing a platform for continuous improvement through shared experiences and feedback.

However, a few areas emerged where teachers expressed reservations. Three respondents mentioned needing further expertise, particularly around complex topics like gender. One facilitator noted, *“I think the training was enough, but I believe I need to strengthen my knowledge further,”* indicating a desire for deeper knowledge, especially in gender-sensitive areas. This sentiment was echoed by another facilitator, who highlighted that while gender discussions were encouraged, *“the term ‘gender’ sounds good to listen to, but its meanings and the ways of practicing are difficult.”*

In addition to content-focused training, some teachers identified gaps in the availability of resources and suggested further capacity-building. For instance, a teacher pointed out that RtR’s materials did not always include complete documentation for certain activities, particularly regarding classroom games, saying, *“RtR organization did not have a complete set of documents with methods for all the games.”* This feedback indicates the importance of providing thorough, clear resources to ensure ease of lesson delivery and teacher confidence.

Teachers and facilitators expressed a desire for additional, targeted support to strengthen the program further.

First, teachers requested more training on complex topics such as gender roles, menstruation, and advanced life skills, particularly for older students up to Grade 9. One facilitator suggested that expanding life skills lessons for higher grades would be valuable, noting, *“It’s recommended to teach life skills up to the 9th grade, as it’s beneficial for boys.”* There was also interest in having more prepared teaching materials, such as flip charts, to make lesson delivery smoother.

Second, some teachers and/or facilitators felt that certain teaching guidelines were overly complex and recommended simplifying these techniques to better engage students and manage time. A facilitator observed, *“Sometimes, the technique or their teaching guideline was a little bit hard to understand.”* Streamlining session activities and reducing repetitive elements were suggested to maintain student engagement.

Third, teachers valued regular feedback yet suggested that supervisors observe their sessions more frequently to provide constructive input. This was seen as essential for continuous improvement, with one facilitator expressing, *“I want the supervisor to observe my teaching and provide feedback so I can improve.”*

Fourth, teachers saw benefit in more frequent capacity-building sessions, ideally every two months, to foster collaboration, address challenges, and share effective strategies. One facilitator suggested, *“Senior management should provide more capacity building,”* indicating a desire for consistent professional development.

Last, teachers and facilitators showed interest in broadening the curriculum to include additional topics related to personal development and responsibilities, as well as gender-sensitive content. One facilitator shared that the program had positively influenced their own views on gender, saying, *“I have changed my perception and thinking, such as choosing appropriate clothing colours for boys and girls.”*

3.4 Scalability and Cost-Efficiency

The implementation of the LSEP program demonstrated efficient use of resources.

The implementation costs of the LSEP program were aligned with the approved budget, reflecting prudent financial management. The program team was able to effectively control costs and adapt to budgetary constraints without compromising the quality of program delivery. Senior Program Officer observed that, *“In general, the actual implementation costs were mostly aligned with the budget approved for each year,”* underscoring the careful planning and cost monitoring that allowed the program to operate within its financial limits.

However, a few unexpected expenses arose, due to circumstances beyond the team’s control. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted initial plans for training delivery, necessitating a shift in location from Banteay Meanchey to Phnom Penh. This adjustment required additional budget to accommodate travel and logistics for participants. In addition, there was some turnover within the team, creating additional costs. Despite these unanticipated costs, the team showed flexibility and ability to accommodate to the changing circumstances.

Stakeholders Strongly Support Scaling up the Life Skills Education Program (LSEP) in Cambodia.

Stakeholders, including students, teachers, facilitators, head teachers and program officers, showed strong support for expanding the Life Skills for Equality Project (LSEP) to additional schools. Such support highlights its recognized potential to foster essential life skills, improve social interactions, and create a more respectful, inclusive environment. Students, teachers, facilitators, the head teacher, and the program manager, all envision a positive impact through scale-up, with each stakeholder group bringing unique insights into the anticipated benefits and areas of growth.

From the students’ perspective, expanding LSEP would empower more young people to develop skills in time management, emotional regulation, respect for diversity, and improved attitudes towards gender equality. Children highlighted how the program equips them with tools to manage daily life challenges, build empathy, and foster mutual understanding. They see the expansion as an opportunity to promote positive behaviours like teamwork, open communication, and non-discrimination. Male students pointed out that these skills could reduce instances of teasing and improve relationships with female peers, while girls felt that an expanded program would allow for a greater understanding of gender equality and enhance boys’ sensitivity toward issues that affect girls, such as respect and personal boundaries.

Teachers and facilitators echoed this sentiment, recognizing that scaling LSEP could profoundly impact students' social and academic lives. They observed that the program has already led to noticeable improvements in students' confidence, behaviour, and interpersonal skills, with students displaying increased self-management and responsibility. Expanding the program, they believe, would offer students in more schools the same benefits, helping them navigate the challenges of adolescence with a stronger support system. Facilitators noted that an LSEP scale-up would also contribute to a safer and more cooperative school environment by reinforcing positive behaviours and respectful attitudes in students. Teachers see the program as essential for preparing students not only for academic success but also for their roles as responsible, respectful citizens in their communities.

The head teacher shared a similar perspective, emphasizing that the LSEP program's emphasis on life skills provides students with both hard and soft skills that are essential for personal and social development. According to the head teacher, scaling the program would instil confidence in students, enabling them to lead, communicate effectively, and address issues such as discrimination and gender stereotypes. The head teacher also noted that expanding LSEP could positively influence overall school culture by creating a supportive environment that encourages student collaboration, respect, and mutual support. This approach could transform schools into hubs of inclusivity and shared responsibility, setting a standard for student behaviour and academic engagement across the educational system.

Room to Read's GEP Program Manager (GEP PM) highlighted the scalability of LSEP, acknowledging the program's ability to adapt to diverse educational contexts. The GEP PM envisions the expansion of LSEP to systematically address the life skills gap across regions, equipping students with the skills necessary to succeed in their personal lives and contribute positively to their communities. The GEP PM also pointed out that scaling up the program could encourage more schools to incorporate life skills education as a core subject, so that eventually every teacher is prepared to deliver life skills sessions, thus embedding these critical skills into the broader educational framework. Last, the GEP PM suggested that a successful integration would require a closer alignment between RtR's curriculum and the government's life skills framework. This would ensure that life skills education becomes a sustainable, ongoing component of students' learning experiences.

Interviews with stakeholders elucidated several recommended changes for effective scale-up.

Room to Read is collaborating with Government Officials to scale up key elements of the LSEP in Cambodia. Program officers, students, head teachers, teachers and facilitators provided several recommendations for an optimal scale-up of the LSEP⁸. First, there was a consensus on the need to extend the program to higher grades, including grades 9 and 10, to build on students' life skills as they prepare for adulthood. Conversely, for younger students, particularly

⁸ It is worth noting that stakeholders spoke freely, without acknowledging that some of their suggestions may not be feasible in a full scale up.

in grades 7 and 8, simplifying content and teaching approaches was suggested to maintain engagement and ensure age-appropriate learning.

Second, to ensure comfort and openness, stakeholders recommend sex-specific teaching for sensitive topics, such as body changes, reproductive health, and menstruation. Respondents believed that assigning male teachers to boys, and female teachers to girls, for these topics, would make students feel more at ease, fostering a safe space for personal discussions.

Third, stakeholders suggested additional dosage across several areas. On one hand, stakeholders, particularly teachers and facilitators, noted that the impact of the program would be enhanced if sessions were allocated more time, allowing for in-depth discussions and completion of all activities. Additionally, dedicated classroom space would provide a stable environment for sessions, particularly in overcrowded schools. Extending session durations to two hours was suggested to ensure students fully engage with each lesson. Alternatively, simplifying the content of the sessions could support engagement. On the other hand, teachers and facilitators requested more training, particularly on complex topics such as gender roles and social issues, as well as regular capacity-building sessions.

Fourth, stakeholders suggested using successful pilot schools as examples to showcase best practices and outcomes. This would help ease the scale-up process by providing new schools with a clear template to follow. Stakeholders emphasized the need for localized curriculum adjustments to meet specific community needs, particularly in regions with unique cultural or logistical challenges.

Fifth, for long-term sustainability, stakeholders believed that integrating the program into the national curriculum would be beneficial. By officially embedding LSEP in school programs, the curriculum could be consistently delivered, and life skills education would no longer depend solely on external support. This integration would also ensure that teachers view life skills as a core subject, enhancing its credibility and importance. Integration would also support the adoption of RtR's teaching methodologies into all other subjects. Last, integration could include elements of RtR's core GEP (e.g., mentoring), to support all students, boys included, to stay and thrive in school.

Last, some stakeholders noted logistical challenges, such as overlapping schedules, insufficient teaching materials, and limited classroom space. In a scale-up scenario, stakeholders recommended to provide additional resources, such as flip charts and lesson guides, to make lessons smoother and more engaging. Perhaps developing and printing standard materials, and/or digitalize them, would be an efficient way of supporting teachers in this regard. Simplified and adaptable teaching techniques were also suggested to enhance accessibility and maintain student engagement across diverse settings.

4. Discussion

The Life Skills for Equality Project in Cambodia was designed to support students, particularly boys, through life skills and gender programming and engage them in the quest for gender equality. A pilot version of the program was implemented in Cambodia, between 2021 and 2023 for first cohort and 2022 and 2024 for second cohort. To maximize learnings, our Global Office RM&E team put forth an ambitious Learning Agenda that required diverse methodologies and data collection efforts to respond to. Through several rounds of monitoring, qualitative and quantitative evaluation studies, the team answered all the questions outlined in the Learning Agenda. This report described in detail the results of the Qualitative Endline evaluation, which focused on ten research questions.

First, in relation to program outcomes, the study provided insights into the types of changes experienced by LSEP participants. Students of all genders described ways in which they felt that the program had positively enhanced their life skills and gender knowledge. Most notably, students felt that participation in the program was followed by improvements in their ability to plan their time and work, collaborate with peers, and communicate with others. These results are consistent with the results from the Qualitative Midline Evaluation⁹, which described enhanced time management and studying skills among all participants. In addition, the program was associated with improvements along the emotional resilience domain, with boys highlighting ways in which the program increased their awareness of emotions and how these emotions affect their behavior. Altogether, these increased skills were associated with improved behaviors, including study habits, conflict resolution, and interpersonal communication. These improvements along the emotional resilience domain did not manifest at Midline, suggesting that they happened in the second year of the program. Indeed, this result is consistent with the Quantitative Endline Evaluation⁶, which showed that boys who participate in the LSEP improve their ability to express and manage emotions when receiving two years of programming. It is clear from students' testimonies and multiple evaluation sources, that the LSEP had a profound impact on their life skills and associated behaviors.

Critically, the LSEP program has successfully fostered respectful relationships between boys and girls. The program did provide opportunities for interaction with the opposite sex, and students described feeling more confident in approaching those interactions. Some boys described ways in which they have changed their approaches in those interactions, suggesting a significant improvement since Midline, where noticeable changes happened at the attitudinal level only. However, gender norms continue to guide and restrain these relationships. It is evident from students' testimonies that boys approach girls and not vice versa, and that girls continue to see themselves as more passive agents in those interactions. Most of the changes observed by participants related to boys' attitudes and manners, as opposed to girls'. Positively, students report not only better but also more frequent interactions with peers from the opposite sex. The entire set of responses shows that some male students continue to feel uncomfortable approaching female peers, and that a few students do not yet perceive meaningful change in this regard. Overall, our

⁹ Visit <https://www.roomtoread.org/impact-and-reach/> for details.

evidence suggests that it takes more than two years to fully transform the nature of these relationships on a scale.

Data collected from other stakeholders confirm these self-reported changes. For example, parents noted changes at home, including an increased willingness to help with household tasks, better communication, more respectful interactions, and higher engagement. Similarly, teachers and facilitators noted improved communication between girls and boys in co-educational settings. In addition, data collected from facilitators and parents revealed that the LSEP influenced outcomes beyond students' attitudes and behaviors. Many caregivers began challenging traditional gender norms showing increased commitment towards gender equality. Teachers and facilitators also reported becoming more active in the quest for gender equality. Such changes manifested at home, where teachers and facilitators promoted a fairer distribution of chores, but also in their more accepting attitudes towards same-sex relationships. Last, teachers and facilitators reported improvements in their teaching, because of facilitating the LSEP.

In relation to the program delivery, students manifested a high satisfaction with the way in which the sessions were provided. Students particularly enjoyed sessions that were straightforward and that had real-life applications. Similarly, they did not always enjoy sessions that felt too technical, complex or unrelated to their lives. These results echo the Qualitative Midline Evaluation results, which showed that the preferred sessions were those related to Confidentiality and Succeeding at School. At endline, the preferred sessions included Masculinity, Time Management, and Leadership and Success, because they could connect their content to their lives. Girls particularly liked sessions that emphasized emotional and social connections, consistent with Quantitative Endline Results, which show that girls significantly increased their empathy scores after participating in the program. Consistent with previous data collection cycles and evaluations, students revealed that the least enjoyable sessions were those associated with discomfort, difficulty, or irrelevance. The Quantitative Endline Results echoes these results.

Students noticed some strengths and shortcomings in the LSEP delivery. Students appreciated interactive and participatory teaching methods, including the games, role-playing, group discussions and visual aids. Students also appreciated teachers who showed flexibility in pacing and communication style. However, multiple students shared concerns about the leniency in classroom management which enabled disruptive behaviour. Students also mentioned that the pace of the delivery could have been slower, to fully absorb the lessons. Importantly, students believed that the sex composition of the classroom, including the sex of the teacher, was fundamental to their experience. Students preferred single sex sessions to discuss sensitive topics, and mixed-sex sessions to gain insights from peers of a different sex. These findings are consistent with the Qualitative Midline Evaluation findings, which also showed that students preferred single sex environments to learn sensitive content, and that students felt more attuned to people of their same sex. While students value mixed-sex classrooms, they continue to express discomfort about them, even if the topics discussed are non-sensitive. Boys do tend to change their behaviour around girls, which at times leads to less-disruptions in the classroom, but which presents unique challenges, nevertheless. For example, boys feel less confident

around girls. Last, this evaluation showed that students felt increased access to opportunities to practice their newly acquired skills, at home, at school, and in their communities. However, the evaluation also revealed persistent cultural barriers in this regard, suggesting a need for increased community engagement on the side of the program.

Stakeholders highlighted co-facilitation as an effective strategy for improving classroom management and lesson delivery. Co-facilitation enabled a better handling of large, mixed-sex classes by dividing students into smaller groups. This approach allowed facilitators to focus on individual groups, keeping students engaged and addressing their needs more closely. It also improved lesson consistency, minimized errors, and allowed for adaptability, particularly in addressing complex topics or accommodating last-minute changes. However, co-facilitation posed logistical challenges, such as scheduling conflicts, which sometimes resulted in overlapping or repeated content. Improved coordination was identified as necessary to address this issue. To improve the delivery of the sessions, teachers also expressed interest in additional training, enhanced mentoring, an expansion of the curriculum into personal development, and a simplification of teaching techniques.

The evaluation provided valuable insights into the sustainability and scalability of the program. First, teams should anticipate potential unexpected costs and incorporate budgetary flexibility into their plans to address these challenges effectively. Second, stakeholders recommend leveraging pilot LSEP schools as models for broader implementation in other schools and regions. Third, for enhanced sustainability, integrating the program into related government efforts is essential. Fourth, the LSEP demonstrates potential benefits not only for students in grades 7 and 8 but also for older students. Stakeholders suggest that the program could be particularly impactful for those in grades 9 and beyond, while simplifying lesson content for younger students in grades 7 and 8 would improve accessibility. Finally, recommendations from this and previous evaluations highlight the need to increase program dosage, strengthen connections between lessons and students' real-life experiences, increase the time and material used in hands-on activities, and expand teacher capacity-building opportunities. These recommendations suggest that an optimal delivery of the program may require additional school-level resources.

While these suggestions are very valuable, integrating programs such as the LSEP into government curriculum carries limitations. Suggestions provided by stakeholders may not be feasible in a scaled-up scenario. For example, in Cambodia, the possibility of supporting single sex sessions at scale is limited. Therefore, teams should consider other avenues to deal with the discomfort that students feel discussing certain topics (i.e., sensitive topics) in front of students of a different sex. More generally, targeted training such as the one provided by RtR may need revisions before being incorporated into government systems. For example, gender topics tend to be difficult for teachers and facilitators, and it could be challenging to manage differential needs in this regard. Some teachers within a country may hold high levels of gender knowledge and for others, it may take longer to feel comfortable teaching gender topics. Perhaps a way to deal with this challenge is to conduct a national-level baseline of teachers' knowledge on gender topics and adjust training content and frequency accordingly. For example, it could be that the optimal avenue to support teachers, at scale, is to design base level training, depending on

teachers' knowledge, and provide several options for refresher trainings and technical support. Overall, systems will need to adapt programs such as the LSEP in multiple ways. These adaptations may not always be straightforward.

The LSEP program holds significant potential to influence life skills, gender knowledge and attitudes, discriminatory behaviors, and gender equality at scale. For students, the program offers numerous benefits, including greater academic engagement, improved behavioral outcomes, enhanced communication skills, stronger relationships with peers of all genders, and increased interest in promoting gender equality. It also equips students with the tools to challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes within their homes, schools, and communities. Expanding LSEP could amplify its impact, transforming community dynamics as students bring life skills into their neighborhoods, fostering respect, empathy, and cooperation among peers and family members. The program, in its current form, champions critical thinking, problem-solving, and respect for diversity—values that align closely with national educational objectives. Integrating elements of the LSEP into the official curriculum would address the gap in structured life skills education, ensuring that all students gain access to a comprehensive, values-based education. We hope the insights shared in this report and throughout the full LSEP evaluation will inform and support efforts to achieve this vision.

5. Annexes

Annex 1. Recommended change for grade eight curricular sessions

LSEP CURRICULUM GRADE 8 – team reflection on the previous implementation (Updated 2024.09.15)

Overall comments: In general, the reflection with the team has been suggested in the following session. The suggestions are more on simplifying the sentences, correct wording, providing examples, and adding tips for the facilitation etc.	
#1-Welcome back to the Life Skills for Equality Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act 1.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise wording in Khmer. Khmer spelling in the facilitator note. Adding sentence for facilitator to in the #4 which is talking about 8-12 statement. E.g., Ask students some difficult sentences to give them a chance to discuss and present personal reasons for their choices. Act 1.2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point #4. Show students the sample of examples (e.g., keep confidential, share what I know) Act 1.3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Do” 1 – Adding the sentence. Show life skills keywords that are written on 1/2 A4 paper and have students volunteer to define those life skills definition. “Do” 2 – Then introduce students to learn more about the meaning of these life skills in the student workbook.
#2-Taking care of my body and mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act 2.1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are hardly to do meditation/concentration due to classroom environment. There should have a script for facilitators in advance. Simplify the questions in the table of questions for discussion. The revision in this session is about spelling.
# 3-Challenging Gender norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act 3.1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Do” 1: adding the word negative Gender norm (cannot do) in the general to empathy the gender identity. “Do” 3: simplify the sentence. “Do” 5: adding a note for the facilitator including (Note: The facilitator must pay attention to every student because some phrases can have a positive meaning, so if the student cannot be torn, it means that it reinforces gender inequality. E.g., I was told that men cannot beat weak women.) Act 3.2: Debate (35mn), in a general comment in this activity, participants show less activity to participate because. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too many instructions and long Students have never done/experienced before The instruction is too formal and time-consuming. It seems difficult topics for children to understand. Note enough time to practice. <p>We would suggest selecting a simple topic that is relevant to the local context and fits the level of the student. The facilitator could be flexible to introduce a straightforward way for students to do the exercise. We keep the original do but, in the training, teachers will empathize with that.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add point #5. Give examples of how to find and express supportive or negative ideas on a topic. It is important to help students better understand what they are going to do.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Simplify the sentence in the discussion question.
#4-Gender and Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act 4.1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Do”1: In general, this activity takes a bit long and is not possible for students to do. There are so many key words and students are difficult to understand their meanings. <p>We should simplify the following methods:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stick the keywords on A4 paper or poster and stick them on the board. 2. Distribute the definition to each student, read it, and close it after the keywords. 3. Distribute documents to girls and let boys open student books 4. Students volunteer to read those keywords and definitions <p>Song’s Story: the story is a bit long</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revise Khmer words in the Song’s story and make it shorter
# 5-Gender and My identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act 5.2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Star identity”: The instructions are complicated and take a bit of time. The Facilitator needs to simply the way to do it.
#6-Leadership and Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 6.1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Time consuming ○ The classroom is not appropriate for the methods since the students need to rotate around the rooms which are almost full of tables. ○ And students do not understand some of key words, so facilitators take more time to explain some of key works, find the new space and only review wording.
# 7-Navigating New Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 7.1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Add the sentence: Post numbers 1 to 10 in the corner of the table or on the wall and ask students to gather at the back of the classroom. Point to the number on the table/wall. ○ Revise wording • Activity 7.2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The students are difficult to initiate the ideas of designing the poster or contents. ○ Need to give more explaining and ongoing support by groups. In sharing, the facilitators should use Gallery Walk approach.
# 8-Being an Advocate for myself and others	Just simplify some questions
# 9-Building for Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 9.1: The Successful Tree <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adding the sentence and question below say (before the facilitator's note). ○ Review short-term and long-term goals through a poster. ○ Ask students who would like to share their long-term personal goals. ○ Simplify each sentence “Do” 1, so that the student would be about activities. • Activity 9.2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do_ “The Abstract backpack” which is an extra homework for the students by the end of sessions nine does not often work because of time consuming and unclear instruction. This should be taken off from session nine.
# 10-Power and Privilege	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In general, the session is quite complicated, students do not understand the concept of power. • Activity 10.1 should be simplified (Abstract backpack), thus, we might need to simplify the flow including. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain to students about privileges by displaying the definition on a flipchart 2. Give two examples of experiences that you encountered unexpectedly and advantages that you had without effort. 3. Simplify the questions in the chart with identifying expected answers in advance.
# 11-Title Types of Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act.11.2. Ask for Consent game. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In general, the activities are a bit difficult to do in small groups because one. Time Constraint 2. Group Management and space.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Difficult to guide and coordinate each group. Suggest to just demonstrating some group according to the time and space (as stated in #4). This will get more input in the teacher training on whether we need to be flexible on this.
# 12-Title Keeping Myself and Others Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act. 12.2: My body and my right. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is limitation on understanding/differentiating of Reproductive Health and Sexual Health by the students and facilitators. ○ Thus, should give more explanation with clear examples
# 13-Creating a Safe Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act 13.1 The Song <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The song is not extremely attractive, not very audible/popular when playing, but there is a helpful image to get the full meaning of the song. ○ YouTube might have the song with the image. Or choose the contents that fit and are available. • Act. 13.2 Stand Up (in the Do) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In general challenges: one. Students do not seem to know what to do and how to achieve results after graduation. (2). Inadequate space and time. (3). Students are poor reading. (4). Students may copy/follow each other five. Most options write too long. <p>Adding a note in the first point: Introduce students that they are going to play a game. The teacher will read the scenario first, and then the students decide for themselves by going to their respective options. Students read the choice on their own from options 1 to 17 or at the end of the sentence before they can return to their seats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would it be possible to get the feedback from the training next week?
# 14-Building My Community	Just revise the wording and simplify the sentence
# 15-Living in a Pandemic World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act. 15.1. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is a bit complication in explanation whereas teachers/facilitators use A4 papers and the flipchart with the circles, and the students use pictures in their work sheets. ○ The facilitators draw a big pic of human in the flip chart as the students' work sheet and explain. So, everyone will be on the same page
# 16-Creating a More Equal Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act. 16.1. Debate session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This activity takes more time, and the instruction is quite long and too complex. The team's suggestion to revise the flow. We will demo this once again during the teacher training and will see how it works.
#17-An Empowered World	N/A

Annex 2. Tools

LSEP Follow-up Study Tools

KII Guide Teachers and Facilitators

#	Questions/Prompts	Enumerator Notes
Introduction		
	<p>My name is _____, and I work for Room to Read. We are holding this discussion to better understand your experience with the Life Skills for Equality Project (LSEP) and your thoughts on gender-related topics and issues. You have been selected to participate in this key informant interview since you participated in the LSEP program and facilitated sessions.</p> <p>Rest assured; your responses will be kept anonymous. This means that outside of the research team, your responses will not be shared with anyone that can be traced back to you, such as your students, parents, Room to Read staff, or schools.</p> <p>We are here to learn from you, and your honest answers will help us learn best. There are no right or wrong answers to our questions. The goal is to understand your opinions and experiences.</p> <p>For us to document this conversation, we will be taking notes throughout the interview. In addition, we would also like to record your responses. You can choose not to answer any or all questions, to stop the recording at any time, or to stop the interview at any time. You can also request to be removed from this study, and we will delete any information you provided us with. This interview should last 1 hour.</p> <p>Do you have any questions?</p> <p>Do you agree to participate in this discussion?</p> <p>Do you agree to have your answers recorded?</p> <p>Thank you very much.</p> <p>[If participants agree] I will now start the recording.</p>	Double-check and take note of the respondent's age and sex.
Icebreaker questions		
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you tell me a bit about yourself? Are you from Banteay Meanchey province? How many years of teaching/facilitating experiences do you have? How many sessions of LSEP curriculum did you facilitate? 	The objective of these questions is to ease the respondents participating in the discussion and get their background information. No need to probe here; at most 3 minutes for this section.
Delivery		
2	How do boys/girls experience the sessions they have learned together?	
2a	How is this different from the sessions they have apart?	

2b	What advantages and disadvantages do you see in each mode?	
3	Did you co-facilitate any sessions with other teachers / facilitators? If so, was this helpful? Please describe your experience co-facilitating.	
4	In your opinion, what technologies and/or characteristics of the delivery structure played a key role in the success of the delivery?	
Content		
5	In which ways do you think that the content of the LSEP is relevant to adolescent boys and girls?	
5a	Which areas of the curriculum felt irrelevant? And why?	
5b	Which areas of the curriculum felt too difficult to teach? And why?	
Training		
6	Did you feel adequately supported implementing the curriculum as expected? Why or why not?	
7	What content and/or type of support would have been helpful?	
Outcome		
8	What changes in attitude or knowledge do you notice in yourself, because of teaching this program?	
9	What changes do you notice in boys' behavior toward girls and in general and vice versa, because of participating in this program?	Probe for behavioral change in school such as. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being more disciplined? • Academically focused etc. • if boys are helping more in school? • Gendered roles such as boys doing work that are deemed as "girl's" work
10	What changes do you notice in boys' relationships with girls, and vice versa, because of participating in this program?	
11	Which part of the program would you say made the biggest difference in students' knowledge and attitudes? This can be anything related to the content, the teaching methodologies or the setting in which the program took place. Please explain.	

FGD Guide Parents

#	Questions/Prompts	Enumerator Notes
Introduction		

	<p>Hello everyone! My name is _____, and I work for Room to Read. We are holding this discussion to better understand your thoughts and experiences as parents with the Life Skills for Equality Project (LSEP) in which your children had participated in school during year 2021 to 2023.</p> <p>Rest assured; your responses will be kept anonymous. This means that outside of the research team, your responses will not be shared with anyone that can be traced back to you.</p> <p>We are here to learn from you, and your honest answers will help us learn best. There are no right or wrong answers to our questions. The goal is to understand your opinions.</p> <p>For us to document this conversation, we will be taking notes throughout the discussion. In addition, we would also like to record your responses. You can choose not to answer any or all questions, to stop the recording at any time, or to stop the discussion at any time. You can also request to be removed from this study, and we will delete any information you provided us with. This discussion should last 1 hour.</p> <p>Does anyone have any questions?</p> <p>Do you all agree to participate in this discussion?</p> <p>Do you all agree to have your answers recorded?</p> <p>Thank you very much.</p> <p>[If participants agree] I will now start the recording.</p>	<p>Enumerators can explain the term “experience” if necessary</p> <p>Encourage participants to openly discuss broad questions. Ensure to probe for specific points listed in enumerator notes if they don’t come up in conversation naturally. Additional questions in bullets are provided to support this questioning if it is necessary.</p>
Icebreaker questions		
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can we go around and let us know how many children of yours study at this school? Please also let us know which grades/classes they are in? How many of you are aware of the Life Skill for Equality project? 	<p>The objective of these questions is to ease the respondents to participate in the discussion. No need to prove here; a lot at most 3 minutes for this section.</p> <p>If none of the parents are aware of the LSEP project, then refer to the handout and give a brief of the project.</p>
Content		
2	How relevant do you think it is for children (adolescents) to get life skills education?	Please refer to the handout of the program.
2a	Is this different for boys than for girls? Why?	
3	How relevant do you think it is for children (adolescents) to get gender education?	Please refer to the program handout.
3a	Is this different for boys than for girls? Why?	

4	Are there any aspects of the content taught via the LSEP program that you find concerning? If yes, what?	Probe participants why do they find it concerning?
Enabling environment		
5	Can you remember/describe any conversations at home that were prompted by your child's participation in LSEP?	
6	What changes in attitude or knowledge do you notice among your children, because of participating in this program	Follow up on where they notice these changes, e.g., at home, community, etc.?
6a	Do you think that this is different for boys than for girls? Please explain what is different, changes in attitude or knowledge? Why?	Probe for examples
7	What changes do you notice in boys' behavior toward girls, and vice versa, because of participating in this program?	
8	What changes do you notice in boys' relationships with girls, and vice versa, because of participating in this program?	
9	Have you changed your own beliefs about how boys and girls should behave, after seeing these changes? And if so, in what ways?	Probe for examples

KII Guide GEP Team

#	Questions/Prompts	Enumerator Notes
Introduction		
	<p>Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview</p> <p>For us to document this conversation, we will be taking notes throughout the interview. In addition, we would also like to record your responses. This interview should last 1 hour.</p> <p>Do you have any questions?</p> <p>Do you agree to participate in this discussion?</p> <p>Do you agree to have your answers recorded?</p> <p>Thank you very much.</p> <p>[If participants agree] I will now start the recording.</p>	
Delivery		
1	How well aligned were the actual costs of implementation with the budget?	

2	What were some of the unexpected expenses incurred during implementation?	
3	What were some of the unexpected challenges that arose during program implementation? And how do you manage them?	Probe, for challenges related to operational, financial, technical etc.
4	What are your thoughts about the quality of the facilitation of the LSEP sessions?	
5	How effective was the staffing approach (staffing recruitment and staffing management)? Was the staffing structure appropriate?	
6	In which ways would you improve the current staffing approach? (Prompt: characteristics of people filling key roles, enough people to fulfill duties, etc.)	
Support		
7	In which ways do you think that Room to Read could have support for teachers and facilities?	Please explain (Prompt: Frequency of support, materials, additional training, etc.)
Scaling up		
8	How scalable do we expect the program to be as currently designed?	
9	In your opinion, which parts of the curriculum are best aligned with government priorities?	
10	What changes may be needed to improve scalability?	
11	Which technology could be used to enhance the impact of the LSEP as it currently stands?	
12	How do you think that this program could work in informal settings? What challenge would we need to consider?	

FGD/KII Guides with Students

#	Questions/Prompts	Enumerator Notes
Introduction		

	<p>My name is _____, and I work for Room to Read. We are holding this discussion to better understand your experience with the Life Skills for Equality Project (LSEP) and your thoughts on gender-related topics and issues. You have been selected to participate in this focus group discussion since you participated in the LSEP program/sessions.</p> <p>Rest assured; your responses will be kept anonymous. This means that outside of the research team, your responses will not be shared with anyone that can be traced back to you, such as your teachers/facilitators, parents, or schools. We request that you please do not share the discussions outside of this group.</p> <p>We are here to learn from you, and your honest answers will help us learn best. There are no right or wrong answers to our questions. The goal is to understand your opinions and experiences.</p> <p>For us to document this conversation, we will be taking notes throughout the discussion. In addition, we would also like to record your responses. You can choose not to answer any or all questions, to stop the recording at any time, or to stop the discussion at any time. You can also request to be removed from this study, and we will delete any information you provided us with. This discussion should last 1 hour.</p> <p>Does anyone have any questions?</p> <p>Do you all agree to participate in this discussion?</p> <p>Do you all agree to have your answers recorded?</p> <p>Thank you very much.</p> <p>[If participants agree] I will now start the recording.</p>	<p>Encourage participants to openly discuss broad questions. Ensure to probe for specific points listed in enumerator notes if they don't come up in conversation naturally.</p>
Icebreaker		
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many of you remember LSEP sessions? Can we go around the group and have everyone share how many sessions you've had so far? 	<p>The objective of these questions is to ease the respondents to participate in the discussion. No need to prove here; a lot at most 3 minutes for this section.</p> <p>If necessary, you can include more questions to warm up the students and have them relax more. The enumerator can also share themselves and participate to ease the respondents and ensure they all participate</p> <p>Enquire about their.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age Interests etc.
Content		
		<p>Share a flip chart of each session as well as the session objectives, and the thematic areas they addressed. Students may not be able to recall the sessions by their title, but rather by their contents. If students can recall the</p>

		sessions by titles, please use the flip chart to help them remember some of the specific LSEP lessons or topics.
2	Which topics and sessions did you enjoy the most? Please describe	Probe to get details.
3	Which topics and sessions did you enjoy the least? Please describe	
4	Which topics and sessions did you find more difficult? Please describe	
5	Overall, what did you learn from your participation in the LSEP? Please share your key learnings in a few sentences only.	Try to get each student's responses.
Delivery		
6	Were you happy with the way the sessions were taught/facilitated? Why or why not? If not, what could have been done differently?	
7	If you had to participate in the LSEP again, would you prefer to have a male or female facilitator? Why? In which ways would the experience be different?	
8	Throughout the program, there were some sessions where both boys and girls were present, and there were some sessions where only boys were present. What were the main differences between these sessions	
9	Do you have a preference of only boys/girls or co-educational?	
10	Were there topics that were harder to discuss during the joint sessions? Which topics and why?	
Enabling Environment		
11	In which ways have your families and communities provided you with opportunities to practice the content and skills that you learned in the LSEP?	
12	In which ways have your families and communities prevented you from practicing the content and skills that you learned in the LSEP?	
Outcomes		
13	In what ways do you think the LSEP program has helped you in school?	

14	In what ways do you think the LSEP program has helped you in your relationship with peers? Please describe how different this is in your relationship with boys than with girls.	
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KII Guide School Director

#	Questions/Prompts	Enumerator Notes
Introduction		
	<p>My name is _____, and I work for Room to Read. We are holding this discussion to better understand your experience with the Life Skills for Equality Project (LSEP) and your thoughts on gender-related topics and issues. You have been selected to participate in this key informant interview since your school participated in the LSEP piloting program.</p> <p>Rest assured; your responses will be kept anonymous. This means that outside of the research team, your responses will not be shared with anyone that can be traced back to you.</p> <p>We are here to learn from you, and your honest answers will help us learn best. There are no right or wrong answers to our questions. The goal is to understand your opinions and experiences.</p> <p>For us to document this conversation, we will be taking notes throughout the interview. In addition, we would also like to record your responses. You can choose not to answer any or all questions, to stop the recording at any time, or to stop the interview at any time. You can also request to be removed from this study, and we will delete any information you provided us with. This interview should last 1 hour.</p> <p>Do you have any questions?</p> <p>Do you agree to participate in this discussion?</p> <p>Do you agree to have your answers recorded?</p> <p>Thank you very much.</p> <p>[If participants agree] I will now start the recording.</p>	Double-check and take note of the respondent's age and sex.
Icebreaker questions		
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you tell me a bit about yourself? Are you from Banteay Meanchey province? For how many years have you been the school director? 	The objective of these questions is to ease the respondents participating in the discussion and get their background information. No need to probe here; at most 3 minutes for this section.
Program Implementation		
2	Are you aware of the Life Skills for Equality Project (LSEP) that was piloted in your school?	Depending on the response, either explain the project or enquire the

	Follow-up: Can you explain which activities of the LSEP project were piloted in your school?	several components of the project
3	<p>Have you ever participated in the LSEP training conducted for teachers or facilitators?</p> <p>Do you think the training has been beneficial for teachers?</p> <p>What did you like or dislike about the training?</p> <p>Do you have any suggestions for improving the training?</p> <p>Have you observed any changes in teachers' knowledge or pedagogy?</p>	
4	<p>Have you ever observed or facilitated an LSEP session?</p> <p>Follow-up:</p> <p>Do you feel that teachers were adequately supported to implement the curriculum as expected? Why or why not?</p> <p>What content or type of support would have been more helpful?</p> <p>Have you received any feedback from teachers or facilitators on how the LSEP session was conducted? If so, could you please provide detailed feedback?</p>	
Content		
5	<p>Do you think that the content of the LSEP is relevant to adolescent boys and girls?</p> <p>Why and why not?</p>	
6	<p>Are you aware of the curriculum/themes of LSEP?</p> <p>If yes,</p> <p>Which areas of the curriculum felt irrelevant? And why?</p>	
7	<p>Do you believe Room to Read has provided sufficient support to teachers and facilitators during the implementation program?</p> <p>What improvements could be made to enhance the support provided to teachers and facilitators?</p>	
Outcome		
8	What changes in attitude or knowledge do you notice in your teacher, because of teaching this program?	
9	What changes do you notice in boys' behavior toward girls and in general and vice versa, because of participating in this program?	<p>Probe for behavioral change in school such as.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being more disciplined? • Academically focused etc. • if boys are helping more in school? • Gendered roles

		such as boys doing work that are deemed as “girl’s” work
10	What changes do you notice in boys' relationships with girls, and vice versa, because of participating in this program?	
11	Which part of the program would you say made the biggest difference in students' knowledge and attitudes? This can be anything related to the content, the teaching methodologies or the setting in which the program took place. Please explain.	
12	Have you received any feedback about this program from parents or community leaders? If so, could you provide detailed explanations for their feedback? What concerns, if any, have parents expressed regarding this program?	
13	Do you believe this program should be introduced in more schools? What recommendations do you have for expanding this program? Are there any changes you would suggest to the program design before scaling it up?	

Thank you for participating