

# MALAWI GIRL GUIDES ASSOCIATION



## Out of school Comprehensive Sexuality Education

## GOOD PRACTICES



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## Preface

# Preface

Girls and young women in Malawi are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection, subjected to harmful cultural practices and are often victims of violence and abuse. Dependency and subordination makes it difficult for girls and young women to demand safer sex or end harmful relationships. Most of the harmful cultural practices affect girls and young women more than they affect anyone. This booklet summaries MAGGAs experience in implementing in and out of school CSE to empower young people especially adolescent girls to protect themselves from HIV, early and forced marriages and increasing access to SRH services. It is based on our work with initiation and marriage counselors, community leaders, adolescent boys and girls, teachers, mother groups and other stakeholders in the health, education, gender and other key sectors.

It is a well-known fact that comprehensive sexuality education provides adolescents with scientifically accu-

rate, age-appropriate, culturally and gender-sensitive and life skills-based knowledge, skills and efficacy to make informed decisions about their sexuality and lifestyle. We believe with CSE, adolescents are in an informed position where they are able to avoid unwanted pregnancies and better equipped to face other challenges in life such as peer pressure as they underwent puberty.

This documentation of good practices is based on the implementation of the Safeguard Young People Program implemented with support from the **United Nations Population Fund**. I would like to thank UNFPA for the continued technical and financial support. Special thanks go to the **Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture -coordinating ministry for the SYP program** - for the technical support and endless commitment in the production of the booklet.

**Mphatso Baluwa Jim**  
**National Coordinator**



## Contents:

The Safeguard Young People Programme	p3
Role of Traditional Authorities in CSE	p6
Initiation and marriage counselors embrace CSE	p8
Holistic, yet focused	p10
Smart capable and bold	p11
Myths busted	p12
Service delivery through competence	p14
Averting EUP	p17
Seeking Synergies	p18
Coordination is key	p20
Ending period poverty	p22
Comfortable to deliver CSE	p24
Back to school after delivery	p26





# The Safeguard Young People Programme

UNFPA, flagship program, Safeguard Young People (SYP) responds to the urgent needs of Millions of young people in Malawi. SYP uses innovative approaches to achieve better sexual and reproductive health outcomes for adolescent and young people.

**S**afeguard young people is a regional youth programme covering eight counties namely; Malawi, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Eswatini, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Programme envisions a healthy, productive and empowered adolescent and young people free from STIs including new HIV infections, unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, child marriages and sexual voice in order for them to realize their full potential.

The goal of the programme is to contribute to improved sexual and reproductive health status of young people aged 10 to 24 with a special focus on HIV prevention in Nkhatabay, Mchinji, Dedza, Mangochi, Chiradzulu and Chikwawa districts of Malawi by the end of 2019.

The programmes has these strategic outcomes;

**OUTCOME 1:** Improved policy and legal environment for addressing young people's issues,

policies and programmes at national and district levels.

**OUTCOME 2:** Increase young people's knowledge and skills towards adoption of protective sexual behaviors

**OUTCOME 3:** Scaled up youth friendly and integrated SRH and HIV Services for adolescents and young people through both static and outreach services

The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture is responsible for coordinating and monitoring of the SYP programme in partnership with UNFPA.

Key implementing partners for the programme include Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Ministry of Gender, Children, Social Welfare and Disability, Malawi Girls Guide Association (MAGGA), Pakachere Institute of Health and Development (PIHD), National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM), and Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM).





# Role of Traditional Authorities in CSE

Traditional input to the Comprehensive Sexuality Education curriculum is one of the key factors to ensure that there is continuity of the CSE programmes that the Malawi Girl Guides under the Safeguarding Young People project is implementing.

**E**mpowered with right sexuality information traditional leaders in Mangochi are now able to understand negative Sexuality Information that has been passed on to initiates at initiation camps.

While the key goal of initiation is to provide those reaching puberty with right information about adulthood, chiefs in Mangochi have with support from safeguard UNFPA's young people programme published a book aimed at providing comprehensive sexuality information.

Chief Katuli of Mangochi said the book sets guidelines on how initiation ceremonies can be responsibly conducted in the wake of the different sexual reproductive health challenges the district and people of Yao tradition are facing.

The book entitled "Misyungu jakwiganya lunda ni ndyamo syambone" also provides general information regarding Yao tradition and improved ways of livelihood.

"What was wrong with the previous arrangement was that we emphasized on negative customs during the initiation ceremonies and the publication of the book gives a duty to traditional leaders to remove the negative values that were added to the initiation ceremonies," said Katuli.

The publication of the book follows a UNFPA's 2015 Cultural Study initiative under the safeguard young people

program which among other things recommended deliberate targeting of initiation counselors in specific ethnicities to adopt comprehensive sexuality education in their curriculums so as to provide age appropriate information and reduce the various forms of abuse associated with rights of passage.

Katuli said that the book that has been circulated to all the chiefs recommends traditional leaders to avoid using vulgar language during initiation ceremonies and he added that chiefs that are failing to comply with the set practices are fined.

"The book has given us insights on what ought to be taught and what we don't need to tell our initiates during the camps," said Yusuf James a counselor at a boy's initiation camp.

According to the UNFPA cultural practices study observes that in general youth that have gone through initiation were satisfied with their own initiation experience because of the new knowledge gained, including tangible ways to show respect.

However the study reported that sexual information was shared too early and that was promoting risky sexual activities among adolescent youth.

And while many female initiates are reported to appreciate the knowledge on their body development such knowledge on menstruation and sexual health, the publication of a book on CSE means that all the negative customs that were passed to the younger generation are to be avoided.

The Chiyao book will provide a single source information for initiation counselors. The book encourages initiation counselors to work with health workers and adopt health protective measures in their work. They are also guided to avoid physical abuse on the young people.





## Initiation and marriage counselors embrace CSE

**Annie Anusa** a counselor at the traditional Nsondo ‘an initiation ceremony for girls’ said that as counselors they ensure that they give age appropriate education to the children that are being initiated.

“For girls below the age of twelve we advise them on how they have to politely behave in society while at the initiation camps for girls that have started menstruation we advise them on how they can lead sexually healthy lives as young adults,” she said.

She said the girls that have started menstruation are advised on the different stages of their sexual maturity to avoid unplanned pregnancies.

She added that the emphasis of the Nsondo initiation rites was specifical-

ly to equip the young girls with cultural values.

“We ensure that we give girls information that is appropriate to their age because we avoid encouraging them to get involved in sexual activities,” she said.

She explained that on sexuality the counselors advise the girls to abstain from engaging in sexual activity to prevent contracting STIs and HIV and AIDS.

“We currently don’t sing obscene songs anymore as we noticed that these songs were fueling sex among the youth. The practice was stopped following the intervention of Malawi Girls Guides,” she said.

She said the information shared is tailor made in a way that girls get knowledge depending to their age.

“We advise young people to follow cultural values”

**Yusuf James (Gwebede)** a ‘Nakanga’ a counselor at a boy’s initiation camp said the initiation process mostly focuses on empowering young people with cultural values that can make them responsible citizens in their society.

“We teach the initiates to respect their elders in society. We specially target boys that are over 10 years,” he said.

He added that for the older boys they are advised to avoid engaging in sexual activity to avoid contracting sexually transmitted infections.

“Previously we used to advise the young people to engage in sexual activity so that they can prove their masculinity,” he said.





# Holistic, yet focused

**George Ngaiyaye District Education Manager for Dedza said sexuality education is very important among learners as it has helped retain learners in school.**

“Sexuality education is very important to our learners in both primary and secondary education in the way that it gives the right information which the learners can use in their lives and what we have seen is that the number of girls that are dropping out because of pregnancies has significantly been reduced,” said Ngaiyaye.

Mateyu Nyondo Youth Friendly Services coordinator for Dedza said since the beginning of the Joint Programme on Girls Education and

Safeguard Young People there has been a rise in the uptake of sexual reproductive health services.

“We have a lot of interventions in as far as safe guarding young people is concerned, our target is both in school and out of school young people. Since we started these programs there has been a huge rise in the service seeking behavior by young people,” said Nyondo.

He said many young people are accessing sexual reproductive health services because they were given with the right information.

“The way young people are attending to youth friendly health service clinics is another indicator that there is a rise in the service uptake behavior by young people,” he said.



**Ida Dyton who participates at weekly youth club meetings at Golomoti in Dedza, says she and her friends have been equipped with knowledge on how they can protect themselves from contracting sexually transmitted infections including HIV.**

“In my case I protect myself from HIV infection or unplanned pregnancy I use condoms,” she said.

Merciana Ignacio from Rail Way Youth Club at Golomoti said that at the club they also discuss about abstinence which is the key to preventing oneself from contracting sexually transmitted infections.

She said her participation at the club meetings had made her to know that she can easily access sexual reproductive health services at the health facility.

# Smart capable and bold





A young woman with short dark hair, wearing a bright red short-sleeved button-down shirt and a yellow skirt with a colorful patterned border, is smiling and looking towards the camera. She is standing in front of a wall with some green and white painted patterns.

# Myths busted

Diana Andrew one of the young ladies accessing CSE lessons in Dedza said that the information that they were getting was empowering the young people with the right information that was making them to make right decisions with their sexual lives.

“For instance previously the youths believed that a girl that was just starting to develop breasts needed to have boys touching the breasts so that they could fully grow. There was another misinformation that indicated that an HIV positive young person got cleansed if he had intercourse with a person with albinism,” said Diana.



## Free from STIs

Simon Asafu said the Comprehensive Sexuality Education has empowered him with the right information which has enabled him to make informed sexual reproductive health decisions.

Dorothy Paundi a member of the Zathu Youth club said the information had empowered the young people with the right knowledge that made them to effectively protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections and early unplanned pregnancies.

“In CSE we learn about family planning including HIV and AIDS. Through these sessions, we have

been empowered to access sexual reproductive health services from the clinic and we have also been able to reach out to our fellow young people with the same information,” she said.

Samuel Grey who also participates in the CSE groups at Golomoti said that the CSE information that the youths were accessing had greatly impacted on the sexual reproductive health rights amongst young people in the area.

“Before we started accessing this information, most of us were engaged in risky behaviors that were a threat to our health, but since when we started accessing this comprehensive sexuality education we are able to make the right sexual health decisions,” he said.



## Service delivery through competence

Edna Kasunga a hospital attendant at Golomoti health center has seen the rise in sexual reproductive health service uptake behavior among young people within her hospitals catchment area.

Before the commencement of the CSE programs in the district, Kasunga had observed that many young people were failing to access SRH services because they had little knowledge on their sexual reproductive rights.

“We meet every Thursday and have access to different sexual reproductive health information like contraception, HIV testing this also includes different sexuality related counseling,” said Kasunga.

She added that since the introduction of CSE the different youth sexuality programs like the Safeguarding Young People there has been a rise in the access of youth friendly health services.

“Previously these youths were shy to be accessing the youth friendly reproductive health services, but we have now witnessed a rise in the uptake of the services. This health center covers over 27 villages and we have seen some youth coming from as far as Nthumbo in Ntcheu and Khaga in Mangochi,” she said.

She said during the youth friendly meetings, the youth are taught on how they can effectively use different forms of contraceptive methods including condoms.

Chimwenwe Banda one of the young people accessing youth friendly health services at Golomoti Health



Centre said that since the beginning of the comprehensive Sexuality Education, the youth were freely accessing sexual health services at the facility.

Similarly, Mary Solibala one of the young people accessing sexual health services at the clinic said despite being a lady she accesses male condoms which she shares with her partner so that they can practice safer sex.

“I get these condoms that I give to my boyfriend. Since we were equipped with sexuality education we have been freely accessing these health services from the clinic and this has protected me from contracting unplanned pregnancy as well as STIs,” she said.



## Out rights, our choices

**Under a shade of a tree, Lyness Jack of Tiyesa Youth Club in the area of Kankhwani Village, Group Village Headman Chikololere in Traditional Authority Kachindamoto in Dedza takes a group of her fellow youth through a sexuality education program.**

This afternoon the youth are discussing the different contraception methods that are available at the health facility. This was not the case a few years ago.

The club that holds such meetings every Wednesday of the week has been a game changer in as far as the sexual reproductive health knowledge is concerned among the young people.

“Since the beginning of comprehensive sexuality education many young people have started to understand their sexual reproductive health rights and they are now accessing the services from the health facility,” said Lyness.

She said since the young people started meeting, they have been discussing many things ranging from how they can prevent contracting sexually transmitted infections as well as human rights.

“These meetings have proven worthwhile as the youth are now able to make right decisions with their lives as opposed to what used to happen before we were encouraged to have these gatherings through initiatives by the UNFPA and their partners,” she said.





## Leaving noone behind with CSE

**Vulnerable people are usually victims of different forms of violence. Often times, orphans, people with disabilities, the poor and widows suffer in silence because of little or no knowledge of institutions that protect their rights.**

**C**hild labor, property grabbing, being beaten, sexual abuse and being forced into marriages are some of the common violations that such vulnerable persons face.

Frank Banda, a student of Kat-

sekaminga CDSS explains that the situation is now changing following the Sexual Reproductive Health - SRH lessons which are equipping the young people with different information on how they can avoid getting engaged in negative peer pressure.

"In SRH lessons we are taught on where we can go if we are vulnerable people and we are also taught on human growth on what changes take in their bodies. Through these lessons we are able to understand what we have to do when we start to experience these changes," he said.

# Averting EUP

**Sakina Belekina, another young person accessing services from Golomoti health center, said the Comprehensive Sexuality Education - CSE that the young people were accessing has improved the working relationship between the health care workers and the young people.**

“These programmes have reduced incidents of Early Unintended Pregnancies, EUP among the youth as we can now easily access health services at health facilities, we now have the youth friendly sexual reproductive health services at the health facility which have promoted SRH uptake among young people,” she said.

For Nefa John another member of Tiyese Club at Golomoti her participation at the youth club has assisted

many youth to avoid underage pregnancies including HIV infection.

“We are mostly encouraged to abstain from sex, but we are further advised that if we can’t abstain we have to assess prevention measures such as condoms and other forms of contraception,” she said.

Nefa said these initiatives had witnessed a drop in child marriages following the decrease in Early Unintended Pregnancies.

“Currently we easily access condoms at the health center and the positive side of these initiatives has been that many girls are continuing with their education,” she said.

Elson Mwachande from Unity Youth Club said that the youth in the area were now understanding their responsibility to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS.







# Seeking Synergies

Rose Khonje- UNFPA County office focal person for the SYP programme- says the programme is a success and has achieve living results. She said the programme is managed and implemented within the Adolescents and Youth Cluster with resources leveraged from other UNFPA programmes and projects like the EU-funded linkages Project, UN Joint Programme on Girls Education and regular UNFPA programmes.

programmes. A Malawi UN Youth Technical Working Group (with UNFPA as a secretariat) is in place which also provides technical guidance to the programme.

The message of ABC (abstain, be faithful, use condom) sounds simple but many youths have never had such a luxury of such a choice. CSE through the SYP programme offers such a choice.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education encourages adolescents to practice protective sexual behaviours such as decreased frequency of sex, fewer partners, and increased use of condoms and other forms of contraception.

While abstinence is an important method of preventing pregnancy, CSE recognizes that abstinence is not a permanent condition in the lives of many adolescents. There is diversity in the way young people manage their sexual expression at various ages. CSE offers freedom and choice and this choice includes the right to abstain, to delay, or to engage in sexual relationships after careful decision-making- Says Rose.

Through the program, we also work with music artist and we produced an album on CSE to better reach the youth and other quarters with messages. The aim is to ensure rights and choices of all.

Partnerships have already been established with other UN agencies (UNICEF, UNESCO, UNWOMEN and UNAIDS) and existing UNFPA implementing partners that are already focusing on youth





## Coordination is key

To ensure sanity within the programme, all partners need to be coordinated. The SYP program responds to 3 outcomes which several partners contribute to. Our role as a coordinating ministry is to tirelessly work with all implementing partners to ensure quality implementation. These is an SYP technical working group (TWG) where all partners belong to. The TWG manages the whole implementation of the programme. Deus Lupenga, Chief Youth Officer.

**J**oint monitoring to programme sites strengthens the programme. The Ministry developed several tools for the programme. The county now has an out of school comprehensive sexuality education package which all partners use when conducting their interventions. Thus all partners use these package which provides a single source of information and ensure uniformity. The out of school CSE

package include:

1. CSE Programming Guide (also known as CSE Framework)
2. Out of School CSE Manual (Facilitator's Manual and Participant's Workbook)
3. CSE TOT Facilitation Guide
4. 4 Pamphlets (Social Media Safety, YFHS, Human Rights and HIV testing)
5. Male & Female Condom Demonstration kits
6. iCAN Package (Manual & Workbook for YPLWHIV)
7. SYP Edutainment Music Album and Music Videos
8. TuneMe Mobisite <http://mw.tuneme.org>
9. Amaze Videos

The ministry is also working with UNFPA to have a CSE Manual for Young People with Disabilities, a Parent-Child Communication Manual and to produce Short Videos to facilitate leaning. He indicated that good in country coordination will ensure the sustainability of the programme.

*SYP leverages resources from other UNFPA programs and these programs borrow the inovative SYP approaches. These include: The UN Joint Program on Girls Education implemented in 3 districts of Dedza, Salima and Mangochi*

## Role of teachers in CSE

**Febbie Mhango Sankhani Primary Education Advisor for Lifidzi education zone in Salima said the UN-JPGE project is producing positive impacts at the seven schools where the project is being implemented.**

we have a decline in the absenteeism rates, this is because the mother groups have skills on how to handle the girls when they are experiencing menstruation periods while in school," she said.

Additionally, Mhango Sankhani said the availability of washrooms has made girls hygiene during menstruation manageable.

She said besides MAGGA the joint program on girls' education has other partners such as the World Food Programme that is providing food and UNICEF which is offering bursaries to vulnerable girls while Salima District Health Office is training teachers and mother groups on comprehensive Sexuality Education.

“As part of the project there is a component of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Most of the times the learners are taken for workshops where they receive training on where they receive training on issues about sexuality education,” she said.

Muhango Sankhani said the project has resulted in an improvement in the learners behavior resulting in reduced learner dropout.

“These days most of the girls are not dropping out of school because they are receiving counselling from teachers and in some schools the annual student pregnancy rate has dropped to zero. We are only having a problem with one school Namogoda where the community is resisting change and we are still having high pregnancy and forced marriage rates”, she said.

She added that as a result of the project there has been a great impact of the girl child retention rate in class. Girl enrolment in schools is improving highly she said.

“This time we don't have a challenge of more girl drop outs and







## Ending period poverty

**Patricia Chabuka a teacher at Mikute Primary School in Salima has witnessed the impact of Comprehensive Sexual Education among young people.**

**B**efore schools started providing CSE to female learners, she had seen some girls miss out of class because they were going through their menstruation periods.

But now it is a different story. Chabuka said as part of the CSE Programme, schools were providing sanitary pads to female learners that were going through their menstrua-

tion circles.

"We make these sanitary pads right here at school, these sanitary pads are part of the joint UNFPA/MAG-GA project where they are providing us with cloth as well as water proof thread to be used in the manufacture of these sanitary pads," she said.

She said the schools stock sanitary pads which are given to the girls when they start their periods while in school.

"When a girl starts her menstruation periods whilst at school we give her the pads so that she cleans up and continues with her day's studies," she said.

## Safe spaces for life

**For Evelyn Kawaza the Life Skills lessons girls are getting at school are empowering them with different skills that are enabling them face different growth challenges.**

“In life skills we are taught about where we can go to report if we have suffered different forms of abuse so that there can be redress to the violations,” she said.

She said the life skills lessons were also equipping the young people with knowledge on how to prepare for the different challenges one encounters as they reach puberty where a girl starts menstruation and boys start having wet dreams.

“On growth we are taught on how to prepare for the challenges that come with the development of our bodies, for instance we are taught about how to be hygienic when we are undergoing our monthly periods for girls

while boys are taught about how they have to behave when they have started experiencing wet dreams,” she said.

Evelyn said that the life skills lessons had equipped the youth with valuable knowledge where they are able to make meaningful decisions in life.

Michael Kamanga a life skills teacher at Katsekaminga community Day Secondary School said the in CSE

the students are taught different topics ranging from cultural practice s and sexually transmitted infections and early marriages which can lead to girls dropping out of school.

“Since the introduction of CSE we have seen a drop in early unplanned pregnancies among girls a development that has seen many girls continuing with their education,” he said.





# Comfortable to deliver CSE

In a Life Skills lesson Pempho Chirwa, a standard seven teacher at Elia Chintengo Primary School in Dedza recaps with learners the last Comprehensive Sexuality Education topic which covered on the different sources of sex and sexuality information.

As they recap the topic, the learners identify the different sources of sex and sexuality information that include parents, community, religion, mass media and peers.

Introducing his next topic which revolves around the consequences of misinformation on sex and sexuality, he organises the learners into four groups where they identify the consequences of misinformation on sex and sexuality.

The students that have already been provoked by the recap of the last lesson quickly make the four groups and later present what they have discussed. In this interactive CSE class, the learners identify abortion, dropping out of school, stress and anxiety, contracting HIV and unplanned pregnancies as some of the consequences of misinformation on sex and sexuality.

And according to Chirwa the CSE lessons in life skills are very important as they empower the learners with knowledge of how their bodies develop and what they are expected to face in the transition stage of adolescence.

“During adolescence there are many things that our children face, however it is the girl child that faces many challenges with what they face during this transition period. For instance when a girl starts menstruation they can miss classes because they are in periods but through the CSE lessons we teach them that they should not get surprised with these developments as they are part of their growing process,” said Chirwa.

He said the CSE lessons have benefited learners particularly female learners on how they can protect their sexuality rights by demanding protected sex at times when their male partners demand sexual intercourse. He said since the introduction of the CSE lessons in Life Skills many students have continued with their education.

Students able to understand sexuality misinformation

Stivelia Arnold one of the standard seven learners at Eliya Chintengo primary school is now able to



identify common misinformation on sex and sexuality that indicates that a girl's breasts grows bigger when they are touched by men.

This misinformation she recognizes would result into unprotected sex which would likely result into unplanned pregnancies or the contraction of HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Infections.

Stivelia understands that these CSE lessons are very important as they have empowered her with knowledge of how her body is developing and how she can avoid getting involved in behaviors that can threaten her education.

“In life skills we learn a lot of things to do with the development

of our bodies and sexuality. Among other lessons we are taught that development of breasts as well as the starting of menstruation are some of the natural things a girl has to expect as she is growing,” said Stivelia.

Stivelia who is in standard seven says that the CSE education are very important as they help adolescents to continue with education. They are able to make mature decisions on their sexual lives.

“For instance we are taught that if a boy forces to have sex with you without protection we are supposed to refuse and we are further advised to report attempted cases of incest where a father tries to have sex with you,” she said.





## Back to school after delivery

**Hadidja Ajasi of Kasanga village in Mangochi has seen the benefits of going back to school after having once dropped out of school.**

**H**adidja who has just sat for the Primary School Leaving Certificate examination dropped out of school in standard seven when she

“I now see the importance of going back to school after having stayed at home without attending classes,” said Hadidja.

Habidja recalls how she made a decision to go ahead with her education. She was encouraged by the mother group at the school to go ahead with her education so that she has a

brighter future.

“The mother groups gave us all forms of advice, our female class teachers also played a role in this process, they taught us on how to avoid peer pressure like going into sexual relations or child marriages,” she said.

She said through the sexuality education she understands the dangers of child pregnancies such as developing obstetric fistula.

She said when she went back to school her mother was supporting her with child care including supporting her with her daily basic needs.

“When my child needed breastfeeding whilst I am at school my mother brought her so that I breast feed her and never miss classes,” she said.

## “Life skills training benefitted me”



**For 16-year-old Debora Chaula a learner at Parachute Community Day Secondary is one of the student that has benefited from Comprehensive Sexuality Education.**

“When I was in Primary School our class teacher madame Patricia Chabuka taught us on how we can maintain our hygiene when we are undergoing our menstruation periods so that we can remain in class as our male colleagues,” she said.

She said the Comprehensive Sexuality Education that she acquired has enabled her to proceed with her education as she was never missing any classes due to the fact that she was

going through her monthly periods.

“Through the CSE lessons we have been encouraged to put more attention on our education and we are now equally competing with them in class,” she said.

Fatima Mohamed another learner at Parachute Community Day Secondary School said the CSE lessons were having a very good impacts in the girls’ right to access to education as girls were not regularly missing classes.

“These life skills lessons have made us never to regularly miss classes just as our male counterparts and most of the girls that miss classes when they are undergoing their periods are those that were missing life skills lessons in primary school,” she said.





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