

# Pathways to Empowerment: Skilling Adolescent Girls



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# Pathways to Empowerment: Skilling Adolescent Girls

## 01 About SENU Project



Fig 1: Project Regions

**Project Regions:** Dholpur (Rajasthan), Chattarpur (Madhya Pradesh), Gadchiroli (Maharashtra), Dhubri (Assam), Ranchi, Giridih, West Singhbhum (Jharkhand), & Bastar (Chhattisgarh).

The India Component of the global development cooperation project 'Securing Nutrition, Enhancing Resilience (SENU)' is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) under its Special Initiative 'Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems (SI AGER)

It is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in cooperation with the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), Government of India.

In India, the project provides technical assistance to the MWCD to improve the nutrition situation of women of reproductive age (15-49 years), adolescent girls (14-18 years) and young children (6-23 months) from vulnerable communities across 10 states in India.



Fig 2: Adolescent Girls in Assam on the day of project launch in Dhubri, Assam.



Fig 3: Young Professionals from KEF (Gandhi Fellow) with community members during mobilisation of adolescent girls in West Singhbhum, Jharkhand.

## 02 About Adolescent Skilling Intervention



Fig 4: Adolescent girls during Basic Electronics and Renewable Energy Systems class in Dholpur, Rajasthan.

### Objective:

The core objective is to equip young women with key skills and connect them to opportunities in emerging markets to support their holistic development.

### Target Group:

This initiative is aimed at adolescent girls of the age from 14 years to 18 years residing in aspirational districts across India.

Nutrition is critical at every stage of life, but its impact is especially profound during key transition periods of childhood, adolescence, pregnancy, and motherhood. The life cycle approach recognises that nutritional status at one stage directly influences outcomes at the next. For adolescent girls, this means that good nutrition not only supports their growth and development but also prepares them for healthy adulthood.

Investing in adolescent nutrition is a strategic intervention to break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition, ensuring that future generations are born healthier, with stronger foundations for learning, productivity, and well-being.

For girls, this period marks a window of opportunity to break the cycle of malnutrition that often spans generations.

Yet, millions of adolescent girls face poor dietary intake, early pregnancy, and limited access to health and education, factors that compromise not only their well-being but also the future of their families and communities.

Empowering girls through targeted skill development can transform this trajectory. When adolescent girls gain life skills, vocational training, and nutrition awareness, they are better equipped to make informed choices, improve their health outcomes, and participate meaningfully in the economy. Through our intervention, we highlight how integrated skilling initiatives can serve as a catalyst for both nutritional resilience and socio-economic empowerment, thereby laying down strong pathways for adolescent girls to thrive.

## 03 Objectives

- To mobilise and engage adolescent girls from 14–18 years of age across 'Aspirational districts' through targeted outreach and enrolment in structured skill development initiatives.
- To facilitate vertical mobility of trained individuals by enabling access to wage employment, on-the-job training, internships, and other work-based learning pathways.

## 04 Approaches

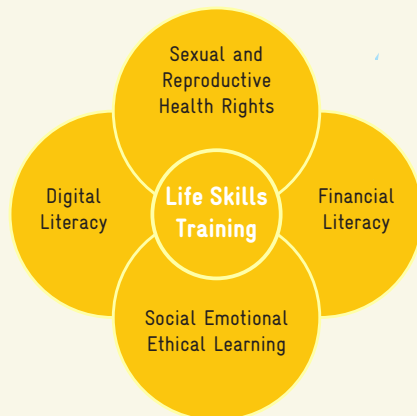
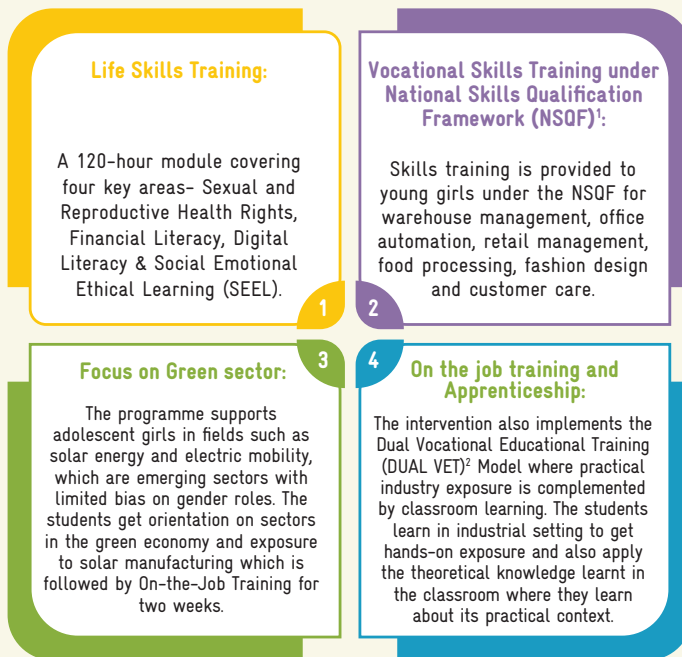


Fig 5: The four modules under Life Skills Training



## 05 Why Does It Matter



Fig 6: An adolescent girl in Dhubri, Assam during practical session of fashion design vocational course.

- Skilling adolescent girls is not just a development imperative but is a strategic investment to end the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition and contribute to India's economic future. Despite India's growing economy, the female labour force participation rate remains alarmingly low at just 24% (Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2022-23)<sup>3</sup>. This is among the lowest in Asia. This reflects a missed opportunity to harness the potential of half the population, particularly in the adolescent and youth segments, who will enter the workforce soon.
- According to the Asian Development Bank Report 2023<sup>4</sup>, integrating women more effectively into the labour market through targeted skilling and entrepreneurship support can add billions to the regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- These efforts align with the key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) SDG3: Good Health & Wellbeing, SDG4: Quality of Education, SDG5: Gender Equality, and SDG8: Decent Work & Economic Growth. Investing in skilling is both timely and essential. Vocational education and skill development have the potential to become powerful engines of economic growth and productivity, especially as India charts its course toward becoming a developed nation or "Viksit Bharat" by 2047<sup>5</sup>.

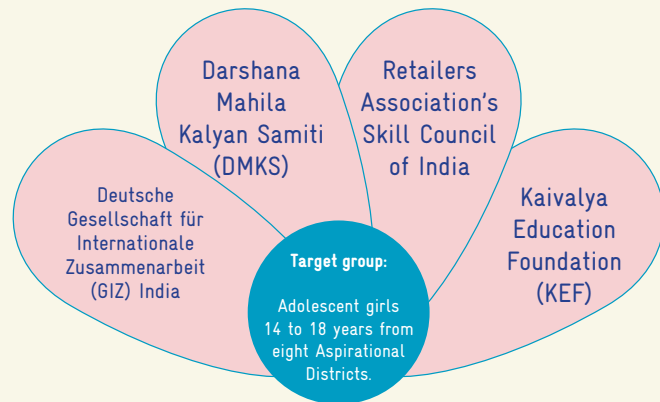




## 06 Who is Involved



Fig 8: Young Professionals from KEF (Karuna Fellow) conducting *Bal Geet* with Adolescent girls in Assam during SEEL session as an ice-breaker activity.



### Partners:

- GIZ India, in partnership with Kaivalya Education Foundation, is providing vocational training and life skills training to adolescent girls in Dhubri (Assam), Dholpur (Rajasthan), Gadchiroli (Maharashtra), Bastar (Chhattisgarh) & West Singhbhum (Jharkhand).
- An On-the-Job Training (OJT) model is being implemented by the Retailers Association's Skill Council of India in Ranchi & Giridih (Jharkhand).
- Additionally, Darshana Mahila Kalyan Samiti (DMKS), an NGO is providing training in Chhatarpur (Madhya Pradesh)



Fig 7: During a WCD Ministry event in Ranchi, 100 adolescent girls from our programme received pre-placement offers from Hon'ble Minister Annapurna Devi, who commended the project's scale and impact, and engaged with the girls on their learnings and future plans.



## 07 How Does It Work?



### 1. Dynamic Awareness Campaign

To enable adolescent girls (AGs) with real choices for their future, we begin with a dynamic awareness campaign in partnership with local partners, building visibility and trust within communities.

Parental and guardian consent is secured early to ensure safe and sustained participation.

### 2. One-on-one Profiling Session

A personalised one-on-one profiling session is provided for every girl to understand her background, interests, and potential.

### 3. Strategical Group Creation

Next, AGs are grouped strategically based on location and proximity to centres for targeted life skills training.

### 4. Individual Counselling & Guidance

Through individual counselling, we uncover each girl's unique career aspirations, guiding her toward meaningful pathways.

### 5. Goal Align Vocational Training

Once life skills training is complete, we transition motivated AGs into vocational training aligned with their goals.

## 08 What difference has it made?



30,000 girls in Life Skills



2,500 girls in vocational skills



Over 500 girls transitioned formal employment

- The intervention involved training 30,000 girls in Life Skills and 2,500 girls in vocational skills across eight districts.
- The 120-hour life skill curriculum was disseminated to batches of 15–20 girls in the local Anganwadi Centres, Panchayat Bhavan and in Community Centres to provide training at their doorstep.
- The training is imparted over a period of 2 months in a phased manner to allow time for reflection and self-learning.

The results of this intervention have been as follows:

### Increased Confidence and Self-Awareness:

Girls are now more confident, self-assured, and able to express their aspirations clearly. Many have overcome mobility restrictions and are comfortable travelling to nearby towns or cities independently.

### Practical Skill Application:

Adolescent girls are applying their vocational and life skills in real-life settings—ranging from solar panel installation in professional settings to improved communication and decision-making in their households and communities.

### Access to Livelihood Opportunities:

Over 500 girls have transitioned into formal employment after completing vocational training, gaining financial independence, and becoming role models for their peers.

Under the Vocational Training component, 2000 adolescent girls have been successfully trained across a range of industry-relevant sectors. The job roles in which the girls have received training are: warehouse operations, office automation, financial accounting, digital media, and graphic design, retail management, food processing, solar panel installation and basic electronics, and fashion design.



Fig 9: Adolescent girls in Bastar, Chhattisgarh during Digital literacy class facilitated by young KEF professionals (Karuna fellows).



Fig 10: Adolescent girls during Basic Electronics and Renewable Energy Systems class in Dholpur, Rajasthan

Reena Dumka, from West Singhbhum, Jharkhand who had undergone life skills training, says it has helped her develop emotional maturity and a better understanding of sexual and reproductive health. She added that the training has significantly boosted her self-confidence, enabling her to make informed decisions and communicate more assertively.

Soni Gumla, an adolescent girl from West Singhbhum, Jharkhand who received vocational training on solar panel installation, successfully installed a solar panel at her brother's shop. This way, she helped her family reduce their electricity consumption while promoting sustainable energy solutions.

## 09 How can this be replicated?



Fig 11: Adolescent girls in Assam performing SEEL activity during SEEL life skills training, facilitated by young professionals from KEF (Karuna Fellows) (Master trainers) in Dhubri, Assam.



Fig 12: Hon'ble WCD minister Annapurna Devi handing out Pre-placement offer to Sapna Mundari, an adolescent girl from West Singhbhum Jharkhand, who completed her vocational course in Solar panel technician and secured placement offer from an local solar panel installation company.

To replicate this successful skilling model in other districts, a multi-pronged approach can be adopted.

- Leverage existing government funding streams from the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) to support local skilling initiatives.
- Collaborate with Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to identify and engage female trainees who have already undergone skill training, positioning them as local champions and role models. Sustain and scale the demand for non-traditional skilling by implementing doorstep mobilisation campaigns, supported by AG leaders who can bridge the gap between communities and training opportunities.
- Additionally, build a cadre of skilled adolescent girls and trained volunteers who can lead peer-to-peer skilling efforts, ensuring continued outreach, mentorship and capacity building at the grassroots level.
- For example, a group of girls can be mobilised from the Anganwadi Centres and trained on the life skills curriculum which also introduces the concept of Vocational Training and connected to the nearby Skill Training Center.

## 10 End Notes

1. National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF): The NSQF is a competency-based framework in India that organizes all qualifications according to levels of knowledge, skills, and aptitude. It enables learners to progress through education and skill development in a structured and nationally recognized manner, promoting alignment between vocational training, general education, and industry requirements.
2. The Dual VET Model: The Dual Vocational Education and Training (VET) model combines classroom-based learning with practical, on-the-job training. This approach equips learners with both theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience, enhancing employability and aligning skills with industry needs. Widely used in countries like Germany and adapted globally, the model helps bridge the gap between education and the workforce.
3. Source: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2057970>
4. Source: <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/916051/where-women-work-asia-pacific.pdf>
5. The Viksit Bharat 2047 initiative represents the Indian government's ambitious vision to elevate the nation to developed status by its centennial of independence in 2047. This comprehensive roadmap encompasses a multifaceted approach, integrating economic growth, infrastructure development, social progress, good governance, innovation, environmental sustainability, and enhanced global engagement. The Viksit Bharat 2047 vision is strategically built upon four core pillars, each representing a critical demographic segment: Yuva (Youth), Garib (Poor), Mahilayen (Women), and Annadata (Farmers). These pillars highlight the government's commitment to addressing the specific needs and aspirations of these key populations. Complementing these pillars are five overarching themes that provide a structured framework for the various dimensions of development: Empowered Indians, Thriving and Sustainable Economy, Innovation, Science and Technology, Good Governance and Security, and India in the World. Guiding these efforts is the national motto of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas" (Together with all, Development for all, Trust of all, Effort of all), emphasising the importance of inclusivity, trust, and collective participation in realising the vision.

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