



# Impact Assessment of a Life Skills Intervention to Enhance a Government Cash Transfer Scheme for Vulnerable Children in Dungarpur, India

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents findings from an impact assessment of Save the Children's (SC) life skills program, which was held in the Dungarpur district of Rajasthan from April to December of 2019. One hundred children between the ages of 12-14 participated in the program. To assess the program's impact, baseline and endline surveys were administered to measure changes in self-esteem, resilience, and social and psychological wellbeing. In addition, child interviews and focus group discussions were also conducted at the post-stage to assess knowledge acquisition and understanding of the content presented throughout the life skills curriculum. Findings from the survey and qualitative interviews support the conclusion that SC's life skills program had a significant positive impact on children.

Throughout the interviews and focus group discussion, children demonstrated strong knowledge acquisition and comprehension of the curriculum's content areas, which include character strengths, understanding emotions, group problem solving, and communication skills. Children tended to have greater recall of lessons and activities that were more "hands-on" or experiential in nature. Many children expressed appreciation for the program as being their first or only opportunity to discuss aspects of their social and mental wellbeing. Surveys, which were administered at baseline and endline, revealed improvement along various psychometric scales. While the survey sample was small, these findings are an encouraging sign as SC continues to explore new ways to strengthen and expand the life skills program.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Save the Children's (SC's) life skills program in Dungarpur seeks to build personal resilience through a curriculum developed by CorStone, designed to strengthen the social and emotional wellbeing of vulnerable children. CorStone is an internationally recognized organization with the mission to provide evidence-based personal resilience.<sup>1</sup>

Children were selected to participate in the life skills program based on their enrollment in the government's *Palanbar Yojana* (caregiver scheme) – a monthly cash transfer to the parents or caregivers of vulnerable children.<sup>2</sup> Save the Children's *Palanbar Plus* program, which is comprised of a life skills program for children and a parenting program for parents and caregivers, strives to enhance the impact of these monthly cash transfers by empowering families and children with the knowledge and skills necessary to address the unique developmental needs of these children. The *Palanbar Plus* program is one of the components of Save the Children's Child Sensitive Social Protection (CSSP) project in Dungarpur district focusing on improving access to government social protection schemes and ensuring that such schemes are designed using a child-sensitive approach.

One hundred children, spread across ten panchayats, were selected to participate in the life skills program in 2019 based on their family's enrollment in the *Palanbar Yojana*. A trained SC facilitator led each group and delivered the life skills curriculum. The SC facilitators were selected based on their experience and familiarity with local customs and language (i.e. *Wagdi*), as well as their ability to establish a rapport with the children. All SC facilitators underwent training to ensure their competency with the CorStone curriculum. (See appendix for an outline of the full curriculum.)

### Objectives of the Impact Assessment

This assessment aimed to understand the outcomes for children of the life skills program. This can be divided into two parts:

1. Primary outcomes: To assess children's' knowledge, acquisition and understanding of the following main content areas of the life skills curriculum:
  - Character Strengths
  - Understanding Emotions
  - Communication Skills
  - Group Problem Solving

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<sup>1</sup> CorStone is headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland, US, and conducts programs in India and Kenya, and Rwanda. [www.corstone.org](http://www.corstone.org)

<sup>2</sup> The scheme is eligible for the following categories: children of an abandoned, divorced or widowed mother; children whose both parents have passed away; children whose mother has gone for 'nata' (a local custom which means that a woman [mother] starts living with a new man without marriage, often as a result of her husband passing away. Her children are left with the paternal kin.) Other eligible categories are; father is imprisoned for life and parents suffering from HIV/AIDS, leprosy or disability.

2. Secondary outcomes: To assess changes in children’s self-esteem, resilience, and social skills stemming from their participation in the life skills program.

## Methodology

To assess primary outcomes, a focus group discussion with 11 children and 10 semi-structured individual child interviews were conducted over a 4-day period in November of 2019. The focus group discussion was conducted with children from the Savgadh panchayat. Individual child interviews were conducted with children from the following panchayats: Vasua, Mahudi, Venja, Mal Chowki, and Chak Mahudi. Michael Kim (independent consultant) conducted interviews with the assistance of interpreters, who performed on-the-spot translations of children’s responses from Wagdi (local language) into English. Responses were recorded with the child’s consent. Coding and analysis were performed using Microsoft Excel to identify emergent themes. A focus group discussion with the program’s facilitators was also conducted to identify strategies to strengthen content delivery and program design.

To assess secondary outcomes, CorStone’s survey assessment tools, which have been used extensively with child populations in Bihar and Uthrakhand, were implemented to measure self-esteem, resilience, and social skills. Components were customized and adapted to align with the life skills curriculum in Dungarpur. A baseline assessment was conducted in April of 2019 and a follow-up assessment was conducted in November 2019. CorStone performed the analysis of survey data.

## 2. FINDINGS

### Primary outcomes

Note: The following qualitative data is presented according to the curriculum’s content areas, each of which was the focus of multiple sessions throughout the program.

Content Area: Character Strengths (Sessions 3, 4, and 7)	
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To understand all children – girls and boys - have strengths</li> <li>• To be able to identify strengths within themselves and others</li> </ul>

### Qualitative Findings

Individual Child Interviews: A majority of children demonstrated a clear understanding of the concept of character strengths and were able to recall specific sessions and activities from the program that focused on strength finding. All respondents were able to identify strengths and qualities they liked within themselves, including honesty, bravery, perseverance, kindness, ability to listen, concentration, creativity, and hope. A majority of children were also able to identify strengths they observed in other people and used specific individuals as examples: e.g. favorite teachers, friends, Mahatma Gandhi. Many children expressed appreciation for one of the story-based activities in which they learned about “Lakshmi” – a young girl who overcomes disability and adversity to achieve her goals. A majority of respondents stated the resilience based life skills program helped them identify their own strengths; a few children said it was the first time they had thought about their own strengths.

Focus Group Discussion: FGD participants were able to identify specific character strengths, including confidence, self-control, mindfulness, and communication. Children were able to identify specific strengths and qualities that they liked about themselves, such as kindness, honesty, bravery, and optimism. Children discussed examples of times in their own lives when they used these strengths: e.g. using kindness when preparing food for their families, showing hope and determination by wanting to become a teacher, and bravery while intervening during a fight among friends in school. Many children expressed appreciation for the life skills program for helping them understand and identify their own strengths. Children also recalled Lakshmi’s story and were able to discuss how that story was relevant to their own lives.

Content Area: Understanding Emotions (Sessions 5, 6, and 8)	
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To understand the broad range of human emotions and to identify and understand their own emotions and the emotions of others</li> <li>• To identify positive events in their lives</li> </ul>

Qualitative Findings

Individual Child Interviews: A majority of children were able to identify instances in the previous month when they had experienced various emotions, such as sadness, anger, and joy. Children identified the various sources of negative emotions, as well as coping strategies they used to overcome them, such as socializing and seeking positivity from peers. A majority of children reported that the life skills program influenced or changed the way they cope with their emotions. Many children stated that they had not talked about emotions in school or at home and the life skills program provided a unique space for them to discuss and explore their emotions. A few children stated the program helped them realize they were not alone in feeling negative emotions and discussed the importance of sharing their feelings with others as a coping strategy.

Focus Group Discussion: Children were able to identify and discuss specific emotions that they experienced in the preceding month, such as anger, joy, loneliness, and sadness. Children discussed their unique coping strategies used to manage these emotions. For example, multiple children said they would seek out friends or family to help them cope during challenging times. Other children discussed specific activities they like to engage in, such as playing cricket or going for a walk with friends. Many children stated that the life skills program helped them to identify and express their emotions.

Content Area: Group Problem Solving (Sessions 11, 12, and 13)	
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To help children identify the challenges and benefits of collaborative problem-solving</li> <li>• To learn simple and effective problem-solving techniques to help solve difficult problems</li> </ul>

Qualitative Findings

Individual Child Interviews: A majority of children were able to articulate the challenges associated with working in a group setting: e.g. “people will talk too much and we’ll never finish the task”, “everyone has different ideas on how to solve the problem”. A majority of children were also able to articulate the benefits of working with others to solve a problem: e.g. “Teamwork means we can divide the task into roles and complete it on time”, “We can work together and help each other.” Multiple children stated that they enjoyed the elephant making activity, in which children were divided into

small groups and tasked with constructing an elephant using paper and classroom supplies. Children stated that the activity helped them to understand the need to help each other, work together, and communicate when completing a group task.

Focus Group Discussion: Children were able to articulate the challenges and benefits associated with group collaboration. Multiple children cited the “elephant-making activity” as a particularly memorable aspect of the program. Various program content areas, including communication skills and understanding emotions were seen as integral to the success of group problem solving – an observation that reaffirms the scaffolded and cumulative nature of the life skills curriculum.

Content Area: Communication Skills (Sessions 2 and 14)	
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To introduce the concept of “good listening” skills and understand what good listening skills entail</li> <li>• To help children identify 3 types of communication: passive, aggressive, and assertive</li> <li>• To help children understand the benefits of assertive communication</li> </ul>

Qualitative Findings:

Individual Child Interviews: A majority of children recalled learning about “good listening” skills and a few children were able to recall specifics of how to be an active and engaged listener: e.g. “I can show I’m listening with my eyes, with what I say, with what I think and observe.” Children were able to differentiate between the different types of communication and recalled specific instances when they communicated assertively with friends, family, and schoolteachers. One child described an instance in school when he did not understand his teacher’s instruction during a lesson and used assertive communication to seek clarification for himself and his classmates. He stated this was uncharacteristic of him but that the life skills program had given him more confidence to speak up. Multiple children stated that the life skills program taught them the importance of using assertive and respectful communication when speaking with others, particularly adults and schoolteachers.

Focus Group Discussion: Children were able to discuss the importance of communication skills in various contexts, including school, home, and with friends. A few children were able to discuss the benefits of assertive communication, particularly when speaking with adults. Communication with adults was seen as a common challenge among FGD participants. However, multiple children saw these interactions with adults as opportunities to utilize the communication strategies discussed throughout the life skills program.

**Secondary Outcomes**

Table 1 below presents the overall findings of changes from baselines to follow-up in children’s responses to scales assessing resilience and wellbeing dimensions. Each scale is uniquely constructed and Table 1 provides the number of items in each scale, as well as the range of possible values for the scale. The number of items and range also aids in interpreting nominal change: bigger scales have more room for demonstrating greater nominal change, while percentage differences show relative change more useful for interpreting smaller movement in smaller scales. Both nominal and percent changes are presented, with statistically significant differences shown with an asterisk beside scale

labels in Table 1. Caution should be exercised when interpreting the statistical significance for these results, however, considering the small number of program participants. A positive percent change denotes positive improvement along a particular scale.

Table 1 – Change in Resilience and Wellbeing dimensions, by scale

N=97			Baseline	Follow-up	Nominal change (mean)	Percent change
Scales	(Number of items)	Range (-,+)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		
Emotional Resilience*	(10)	0-40	9.9 (5.7)	23.0 (6.6)	13.1	132.3
General Self-Efficacy*	(10)	10-40	19.4 (5.3)	29.3 (5.9)	9.9	51.0
Generalized Anxiety	(7)	0-27	14.3 (3.9)	14.5 (2.5)	0.2	1.4
Child & Youth Resilience*	(13)	0-52	28.7 (7.3)	37.7 (5.6)	9.0	31.4
Psychological Wellbeing*	(6)	0-24	12.1 (4.9)	16.9 (3.9)	4.8	39.7
Social Wellbeing*	(6)	0-24	8.1 (4.4)	12.3 (3.7)	4.2	51.9
Gender Equity series* [not scale]	(8)	0-32	23.5 (5.4)	26.5 (3.6)	2.9	12.3

These results suggest positive outcomes for children participating in the life skills program. Children demonstrated improvement along all dimensions with the exception of Generalized Anxiety, where the change was not statistically significant. Children demonstrated the most improvement along the Emotional Resilience scale.

Common research practice when using psychometric scales, such as those incorporated in CorStone assessment instruments, includes checking for reliable “fit” for the population or sample being surveyed. Cronbach’s Alpha is a standard calculation to assess the extent to which the scale is working as a reliable assessment of targeted constructs (i.e., resilience, self-efficacy, etc.). Values for each component scale in the instrument are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Cronbach’s alpha for each scale

	Baseline
CD-RISC, Emotional Resilience	.88
General Self-Efficacy	.89
Generalized Anxiety	.78
Psychological Wellbeing	.87
Child & Youth Resilience	.82
Social Wellbeing	.82

Table 2 indicates that the scales in this assessment are generally a good fit for understanding the resilience attributes and wellbeing of these children. Cronbach’s alpha values between 0.80-0.95 are typically considered to indicate optimal fit. Values below 0.80 may indicate that some items, or questions, in the scale do not align well with the targeted construct for these respondents. Values higher than 0.95 are also questionable, as extreme internal consistency in responses may mean the items or questions comprising the scale are understood by these respondents as redundant or overly repetitive. The range of alphas shown in Table 2 from 0.78 to 0.94, indicates reliability.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Qualitative and quantitative results support the conclusion that the life skills program had a significant positive impact on participants. Throughout the qualitative interviews, students demonstrated a strong

understanding and recollection of the main content areas of the curriculum. Qualitative findings also suggest that story-based and experiential activities, such as “Lakshmi’s story” and the elephant making activity, had the most enduring impact on children. Moreover, the life skills curriculum’s intentional reinforcement of themes throughout the program has allowed children to achieve a high level of understanding, as demonstrated by their ability to discuss the interconnection among various content areas: e.g. the importance of communication during group problem solving or understanding emotional coping strategies as a strength. These findings are corroborated by the survey data, which suggest improvement across the psychometric scales.

### **Recommendations to further strengthen the program.**

**1. Develop ways to build parents’ and caregivers’ awareness of the content covered in the life skills program.** Building parents’ and caregivers’ awareness can help to ensure that children’s social and emotional development continues in a nurturing home environment that will allow children to apply the lessons learned throughout the life skills program.

**2. Develop an organized system of home visits to ensure knowledge and skills acquired during the life skills program are being put into practice at home.** While home visits were being conducted by SC staff on an informal basis, an organized system would help to ensure that all children in the program are being given the appropriate attention.

**3. Explore new training opportunities for life skills facilitators.** Life skills facilitators expressed a desire for continued training opportunities to improve their facilitation skills, particularly around working with the most vulnerable children. In general, facilitators found double-orphaned children to be the least vocal during sessions. Trainings on inclusivity and working with vulnerable youth would be highly relevant given the unique developmental needs of the children.

## **4. BACKGROUND**

### **The Life Skills Program**

The Government of Rajasthan’s *Palanbar Yojana* is a monthly cash transfer scheme that aims to nurture, educate, and provide healthcare to the families of vulnerable children. After a series of internal assessments by Save the Children (SC), it was discovered that these cash transfers alone were an inadequate measure to meaningfully improve the lives of children, who required a more holistic approach to address their unique developmental needs. SC’s *Palanbar Plus* approach seeks to bridge this gap by ensuring families are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to create a nurturing and healthy environment for these vulnerable children. The *Palanbar Plus* approach is comprised of two programs: A life skills/ personal resilience program for children (referred to as life skills program in the project) and a separate program for the parents or caregivers receiving the *Palanbar* scheme.

The life skills program utilizes a 15-session curriculum developed by CorStone. CorStone is a US-based organization that develops and implements personal resilience programs to improve the social and emotional well-being of youth around the world. CorStone has been working in various parts of India since 2013 with a large presence in Bihar where the program is currently in the process of being scaled up in collaboration with the state government. Prior to SC’s working with CorStone, the life skills program in Dungarpur utilized its own curriculum consisting of a range of topics targeting the

social and emotional well-being of its participants. However, SC staff found this method of instruction to be ineffective, since, typically, only one session would be devoted to any given topic. In contrast, CorStone’s curriculum strives to reinforce concepts, such as characters strengths or understanding emotions, through multiple sessions throughout the program using research-based pedagogical methods. CorStone’s evidence-based interactive and experiential curriculum has provided the life skills program in Dungarpur with greater structure and focus and SC staff have reported greater child engagement in the program as a result. The SC facilitators were extensively trained by CorStone’s country director and training manager on the concepts and facilitation of the program. CorStone also worked closely with the team on adaptation and culturalization of the curriculum before it was launched.

## Overview of 2019 Program Year

Table 3 below presents children’s demographics, as reported in the follow-up survey.

**Table 3: Age and Grade**

	All	Girls	Boys
<b>N</b>	97	59	38
<b>Average Age (range)</b>	12.9 years (12-14)	12.8 years (12-14)	13.0 years (12-14)
<b>Current Grade</b>	%	%	%
Standard V	4.1	3.4	5.3
Standard VI	25.8	23.7	28.9
Standard VII	35.0	37.3	31.6
Standard VIII	25.8	28.8	21.0
Standard IX	8.3	5.1	13.2
Standard X	1.0	1.7	

Table 4 presents parents’ or caregivers’ occupations as reported by children in the follow-up survey. Note that parents’ occupational questions are non-exclusive, meaning a child could provide more than one response to the series of questions about occupations. The most common response for father’s occupation was that the child did not have a father (68%), followed by farming their own land (20%). The most common response for mother’s occupation was farming their own land (50%), followed by casual labor for daily wages (30%).

**Table 4: Parent occupations reported by children, non-exclusive**

Father’s Occupation	%	Mother’s Occupation	%
Farmer, own land	20	Farmer, own land	50
Farmer, another’s land	5	Farmer, another’s land	5
Business Owner	2	Business owner	1
Laborer, daily worker	15	Laborer, daily worker	30
Other	3	Other	3
I don’t have a father	68	I don’t have a mother	9

## Appendices

### Appendix A – Individual Child Interview Guide

#### Individual Child Interviews

##### Child Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/caregiver: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1) Introductions

- a. Purpose of interview (to know about your experiences, your life, and your experience with the Youth First program)
- b. Confidentiality and her willingness to be interviewed and recorded
- c. Provide outline of process
- d. There are no wrong answers and your honest thoughts are very valuable to us

#### 2) Getting to Know You:

- a. Where is your house? How far is it from your school? How do you generally travel home?
- b. Tell me about your family - (probe: about family structure, what family members do ? source of income )
- c. Do you have a favorite subject in school? Are you involved in any other activities in school? Do you play any sports?

*Note to Interviewer: If the child is very shy and reluctant to speak, continue the interview by starting with the following questions.*

- Alt 1: Can you tell me some things you remember talking about in the program? Things you learned? What were some of the topics you discussed?

*Using chart paper to write down the responses could be a helpful visualization for the child. Based on the child's responses, probe further and try to seek additional details about what they learned. Return to the standard interview questions if those topics weren't addressed.*

#### 3) Character Strengths

*Introduction: During the program, you had discussed the importance of recognizing strengths in yourself and others.*

- a. What are the qualities in yourself that you like? qualities that will help you be successful in the future?... build good relationships? Did you always know you had these qualities? what made you recognize these?
- b. (If YF not mentioned in 4a response) Did the YF program help you recognize your strengths and qualities in any way? If so, can you give me an example of how it helped you?

#### 4) Understanding Emotions

- a. In the last few months what has made you feel really sad or angry? Any incidents that you remember? What did you do when you felt sad? Or angry? When you get angry or sad, how do you make yourself feel better?
- b. Have you always coped with these emotions in the same way? If not, how have you changed over time?
- c. Is there anything that you have learnt from the YF program that has helped you cope with difficult situations that make you feel very sad or angry or scared? What skills have helped you deal with difficult situations? Can you provide an example of when you used these skills?

#### 5) Relationships and Handling Conflict

*Introduction to this section: We all value our relationship with family, friends, teachers yet sometimes we disagree and quarrel ...In this section I will ask you a few questions about your relationships , about conflicts that happen and how you handle them*

- a. Do you ever have differences or conflicts with your family members? (probe: what do you quarrel about? Have you had a quarrel recently with a family member? What was it about?)
- b. Do you ever have conflicts with friends or classmates? (probe: what do you quarrel about? Recent example?)
- c. How do you resolve these conflicts? do you talk through them? Do you or does the other person apologize? how are disagreements/conflicts resolved?
- d. Have you noticed anything different about the way you handle these conflicts now that you've completed the YF program? Can you give an example?

#### 6) Communication and Assertiveness

*Introduction: During the program, we talked about different ways to communicate with others.*

- a. Can you describe what you learned about communication in the YF program?
- b. Having completed the YF program, do you notice any changes in the way you communicate with family? How about with teachers or classmates? If so, can you provide an example?
- c. (If not addressed in response to 6a) What do you think are the benefits of assertive communication? (probe: Can you describe a recent example in which you were communicating assertively?)

#### 7) Team Problem Solving

*Introduction: We all have to work with others in different areas of our lives. Whether its in school or at home, working on a team to accomplish a task is something we all have some experience with.*

- a. What do you think are some of the challenges related to working with others in a group?
- b. Are there any benefits with trying to solve a problem as a group as opposed to alone?

- c. Did the YF program teach you anything about working with others in a group to solve a problem? What did you learn?

## 8) Perspective on Life

*Let's transition now to talk a little bit about the future...*

- a. How long do you want to stay in school? How much do you aspire to study? Have you any plans, thoughts about a career? if yes Probe: What plans (If there is a difference between how long they want to stay in school and they think they will, probe for why there is a difference? what are their thoughts on the difference)
- b. Have you thought about what you want to be doing in the next 5 years? Tell me more about what your plans are. Have you thought about how you will see your plans through? Do you see any potential challenges? Do you know how you'll overcome them? If you have thought and planned about your future who and what has helped you do this?
- c. What are some of the major things you look forward to in your life? What do you think you can do to help achieve them?
- d. What are some concerns that you have when you look forward in your life? How do you deal with those concerns? Do you feel you can make any changes so help alleviate these concerns (or change the situation)? If so, how?
- e. Did the YF program influence the way you think about your future in any way?

## 7) Life Skills Program and Closing

- a. Is there a particular session you found to be more interesting than the others? Why was it more interesting? What did you take away from that session?
- b. Were there any aspects of the program that you didn't like? Can you tell me about them?
- c. Have you noticed any changes in yourself—(prompt: in your attitudes, the way you think about problems or the way you go about your daily life?)—that you think came from participating in the Youth First program? What sort of changes?
- d. Are there particular parts of the curriculum that brought about these changes? Or are there parts of the curriculum that helped you cope/better address the changes?
- e. Do you have any final thoughts that you'd like to share about the YF program? Did you enjoy participating in the program? Ways to improve the program or make it more interesting?

## Appendix B – Focus Group Questions

### Palanhar Plus Life Skills Program: Focus Group Guide

#### 1) Introduction

- Introduce yourself; Purpose of the interview (to know about your experiences, your life, and the Youth First Program)
- Talk about confidentiality and students' willingness to be interviewed and recorded
- Emphasize there are no wrong answers, we just want their honest thoughts.
- Remind students to raise their hands if they would like to speak

#### 2) Icebreaker – Getting to know you

- Have students introduce themselves and say one thing they like to do in their free time
- (optional) Play a name game icebreaker if necessary

#### 3) Youth First

*Introduction: Let's begin by getting your general thoughts of the Youth First program.*

- a. What did you think about the program?
- b. Is there a particular session that you found to be more interesting than the others? What did you take away from that session?
- c. Were there any aspects of the program that you didn't like? Can you tell me about them?

#### 4) Self-Reflection

*Introduction: During the program, you had discussed the importance of recognizing strengths in yourself and others.*

- d. What are the qualities in yourself that you like? qualities that will help you be successful in the future?... build good relationships? Did you always know you had these qualities? what made you recognize these?
- e. Did the Youth First program help you recognize your strengths and qualities in any way? If so, can you give me an example of how it helped you?
- f. Let's now talk about emotions. Raise your hand if you felt angry or sad in the past month. How do you typically deal with these emotions? How do you overcome them?
- g. Did the Youth First program help you learn how to cope with these emotions? Can anyone share an example of how the program helped you?

#### 5) Relationships and Handling Conflict

*Introduction to this section: We all value our relationship with family, friends, teachers yet sometimes we disagree and quarrel ...In this section I will ask you a few questions about your relationships , about conflicts that happen and how you handle them*

- e. Do you ever have differences with your friends or classmates ...quarrels? what generally happens? (probe: what do you quarrel about?)
- f. How do you resolve these conflicts? do you talk through them? Do you or does the other person apologize? how are disagreements/conflicts resolved?
- g. Can you describe what the Youth First program taught you about resolving conflicts with friends? Has anyone been able to apply the strategies learned in the Youth First program to their relationships? Can you give an example?
- h. How about conflicts with family members? How do you go about resolving these conflicts? Would anyone like to share an example of a conflict they were able to resolve?

## 6) Perspective on Life

*Let's transition now to talk a little bit about the future...*

- a. Who here is hoping to go to high school? Are you planning on going on to high school? Is your family happy about your plans to go to high school? If not what are they saying? do you anticipate any challenges in continuing in high school? If yes how will you cope? what will you do?
- b. How long do you want to stay in school? How much do you aspire to study? Have you any plans, thoughts about a career? if yes Probe: What plans (If there is a difference between how long they want to stay in school and they think they will, probe for why there is a difference? what are their thoughts on the difference)
- c. What are some concerns that you have when you look forward in your life? How do you deal with those concerns? Do you feel you can make any changes so help alleviate these concerns (or change the situation)? If so, how?

## 7) Closing

- f. Have you noticed any changes in yourself—(prompt: in your attitudes, the way you think about problems or the way you go about your daily life?)—that you think came from participating in the Youth First program? What sort of changes? How do you think the YF curriculum influenced these changes?
- g. Are there particular parts of the curriculum that brought about these changes? Or are there parts of the curriculum that helped you cope/better address the changes?
- h. Do you have any final thoughts that you'd like to share about the YF program? Ways to improve the program or make it more interesting?

## Appendix C – CorStone Curriculum Outline

Session No	Topic	Key focus
Session 0	Introduction to Youth First and Group Formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the Youth First program and break students<sup>3</sup> into their groups</li> </ul>
Session 1	Introductions and Group Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orient students to the program</li> <li>• Create Group Guidelines and “group agreements” for safety in the group</li> <li>• Set the tone of the group</li> <li>• Ensure that students understand that confidentiality is necessary in groups to build trust among group members and to encourage self-disclosure</li> </ul>
Session 2	Listening Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore what is meant by “good listening”</li> <li>• Introduce good listening skills</li> <li>• Create opportunity for students to learn about each other final thoughts</li> </ul>
Session 3	Character Strengths – Part 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To understand that all people have strengths (be it boys or girls)</li> </ul>
Session 4	Character Strengths – Part 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help students identify their own strengths</li> </ul>
Session 5	Recognizing and Understanding Emotions – Part 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To help students become more aware of the broad range of human emotions</li> </ul>
Session 6	Recognizing and Understanding Emotions – Part 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help students identify their own emotions</li> <li>• Help students become more attuned to visual clues that can help them understand other people’s emotions</li> </ul>
Session 7	Character Strengths – Part 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have each student identify character strengths in one of his/her peers (in the group)</li> <li>• Give each student a chance to see his/her own strengths through the eyes of a classmate</li> </ul>
Session 8	Positive Emotions: Noticing the Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students identify recent positive events</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> The Youth First program has been widely implemented in schools by CorStone; therefore, the word student is used.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help students become more aware of positive experiences</li> </ul>
Session 9	Mindfulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase concentration</li> <li>• Develop skills to be more fully present</li> </ul>
Session 10	Assertiveness Skills: Understanding Assertive Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help students to identify 3 types of communication: “weak” (passive), “mean” (aggressive), and “strong” (assertive)</li> <li>• Help students understand the benefits of “strong” (assertive) communication</li> </ul>
Session 11	Team-Based Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help students understand the benefits of collaborative problem-solving</li> <li>• Provide practice in team-based problem solving</li> </ul>
Session 12	Problem-Solving Skills: Group Problem Solving – Part 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help students understand the benefits of group problem-solving</li> <li>• Provide practice in group problem solving</li> </ul>
Session 13	Problem-Solving Skills: Group Problem Solving – Part 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn a really simple, effective problem-solving technique to help us support each other to solve difficult problems</li> </ul>
Session 14	Positive Emotions: Giving and Receiving Compliments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have students practice giving and receiving compliments</li> </ul>
Session 15	Youth First Scrapbook Sharing, Reflections, and Celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students share with others – via the Youth First Scrapbook – what they have learned about themselves over the course of the sessions</li> <li>• Identify key lessons learned/take-away messages</li> <li>• Celebrate the end of the sessions</li> </ul>