



ENDLINE REPORT BANGLADESH

The impact on the socio-economic situation of youth participating in the Empower Youth for Work programme in Bangladesh

EMPOWER
YOUTH
FOR WORK



OXFAM

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SUMMARY

Empower Youth for Work (EYW) is a five-year programme (2016-2021) funded by the IKEA Foundation. The programme focuses on enabling young people (especially young women, 15-29 years old) in rural climate-affected areas of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Ethiopia to seek and obtain economic independence. To realize these goals, the programme applies a holistic approach to effectively drive young people's economic and overall empowerment through 1) working on agency, capacity and skills, 2) linking young people to existing and new economic opportunities, including access to finance, and 3) the creation of an enabling environment by influencing social norms and policies that facilitate young men and women's economic and overall empowerment.

This report focuses on the impact achieved by the EYW project in Bangladesh by comparing the results of the endline study (2021) with the baseline (2017) and midline (2019) studies. The main objective of this impact evaluation was to determine the impact of the EYW programme using the key performance indicators (KPIs) for the three pillars: 1) young people's agency and skills, 2) improving young people's economic opportunities, and 3) creating an enabling environment for young people. This endline study comprises both quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative impact assessment focused predominantly on progress made with respect to the KPIs for each of the three pillars, while the qualitative impact assessment focused more on how change in employment happened and how change was related to the effectiveness and relevance of the EYW project. A two-day online reflection workshop ensured results were put into context and perspective.

EYW in Bangladesh had a positive impact on the social and economic empowerment of youth participants, which was possible because of the project's holistic approach. In particular, it had a positive impact on the agency, skills and economic opportunities of young people, and contributed to an enabling environment where youth perceived facing relatively fewer age and gender restrictions to participation in economic activities. Youth participants felt more capable of changing things in their youth group, community and for themselves and their families, which most likely played an important role in the increased employment and business ownership for EYW participants. These positive results, in turn, led to a positive impact on youth's income and economic empowerment. Despite the negative impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, EYW achieved positive impacts for pillar 2, indicating that the project contributed to building economic resilience among EYW participants.

EYW also contributed to greater gender equality. Social norms, according to the youth and community members, were now more supportive of young women's participation in employment than at the baseline. These improvements in the social context for youth were supported by a reduction in the social sanctions against youth employment in project areas. Additionally, EYW had a positive impact on the awareness among young women of what represented a threat of gender-based violence, on the ability to speak up and take action against GBV, and on increased gender-equal attitudes. The positive results for social norms and gender equality were likely the combined result of EYW's community conversations on social norms around youth employment, the division of unpaid care work, and positive

impacts on youth employment, the entrepreneurship of young women, and the agency and skills of young women.

Despite these positive impacts, social norms around youth employment continued to be more supportive of young men's employment than young women's employment. Social sanctions against young women's employment were still very common at the endline. Furthermore, unequal division of unpaid care work was still present in project areas. These remaining challenges partly explain the gender gap in youth employment, income and socio-economic empowerment.

Additionally, it is also important to consider the social and emotional contributions of the programme, which are not easily measured. By connecting youth for skills development, for instance, youth also had the chance to engage with peers, express their struggles and concerns, exchange ideas, learn from each other and make connections beyond their work life. These unmeasured impacts and outcomes should also be considered while looking at the overall impact of the programme.

Based on the insights, experiences and results presented in this report and discussed with project staff and partners, the following recommendations for future programmes have been formulated:

- **A holistic approach with a long-term vision:** Future programmes can adapt the holistic approach of EYW to their specific context and improve the social and economic empowerment of youth. Furthermore, future programmes should be implemented with a long-term vision because many of EYW's positive impacts were only reached towards the end of the project.
- **Agency:** Future programmes should continue with the organization of youth groups that guarantee gender-equal participation. The organization of youth groups was effective for increasing the agency of youth, especially for young women.
- **Skills training:** Youth employment programmes should include at least training on soft skills, technical skills and entrepreneurship skills. Also, future programmes should attempt to achieve impact on all the aspects of soft skills. additional areas for future training could include trading skills, value-chain market development skills, e-commerce skills, agricultural skills and the use of modern technology for agricultural businesses.
- **Access to finance to reduce unemployment:** Future programmes should address the barriers that young people face in accessing financial capital. Inclusion must be one of the primary elements when planning and designing access to finance-related activities in future programmes: youth from rural areas should be accorded high priority in accessing finance capital.
- **Decent work standards:** Future programmes need to continue working on improved policies and practices to achieve decent work standards. This requires the involvement of workers, employers, and government. For youth who were salaried workers, we found that their working conditions were still below decent work standards.
- **Gender equality:** Future programmes should continue addressing the gender inequalities that limit the social and economic empowerment of young women. Key areas where future programmes should continue to reduce gender inequalities are agency and skills, labour force participation, social norms around youth employment, the distribution of unpaid care work,

gender-equal attitudes, SRHR, and the creation of safe spaces where young women can organize themselves to speak up and take action against GBV.

- **Youth National Budget:** Partners and other stakeholders feel that the current allocation towards socio-economic empowerment of youth as part of the national budget is insufficient. For continuous enhancement of the socio-economic empowerment of youth, future programmes must include advocacy activities focusing on increasing this allocation.
- **Climate action and disaster risk management (DRM) activation:** Many areas in Bangladesh, including those where EYW was implemented, are prone to adverse climate events. It is, therefore, deemed important for youth to possess climate adaptation skills so that they build and maintain resilience, especially in terms of their livelihoods and self-employment activities. Furthermore, there are opportunities to engage with local government agencies that focus on DRM and to renew and revitalise their activities, where youth can play an active role.
- **Create youth-centric product collection and selling points:** To enhance both backward and forward linkages in a value chain, partners and other stakeholders of EYW believe that youth-centric collection and selling points could be established. These points will help connect the youth involved in producing and selling agriculture, dairy or handicraft products with a wider range of buyers and get a fair price for their produce.
- **Linkages with the private sector:** Oxfam Bangladesh's Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) provides opportunities to youth by linking them with the private sector on enterprise development and employment. This approach can also be adopted in future programmes that work empowerment of youth.

1 INTRODUCTION

Empower Youth for Work (EYW) is a five-year programme (2016-2021) funded by the IKEA Foundation. The programme focuses on enabling young people (especially young women, 15-29 years old) in rural climate-affected areas of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Ethiopia to seek and obtain economic independence. To realize these goals, the programme applies a holistic approach to effectively drive young people's economic and overall empowerment through 1) working on agency, capacity and skills, 2) linking young people to existing and new economic opportunities, including access to finance, and 3) the creation of an enabling environment by influencing social norms and policies that facilitate young men and women's economic and overall empowerment.

The Impact Measurement and Knowledge (IMK) team of Oxfam Novib conducted an impact evaluation of the EYW project in Bangladesh, together with Oxfam in Bangladesh and its partners Community Development Centre (CODEC), Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Services (RDRS), Wave Foundation and Underprivileged Children Education Programme (UCEP). This report focuses on the impact achieved by the EYW project in Bangladesh by comparing the results of the endline study (July-September 2021) with the baseline (2017) and midline (2019) studies.

The main objective of this impact evaluation was to determine to what extent impact of the EYW programme can be found on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to the three pillars: 1) young people's agency and skills, 2) improving young people's economic opportunities, and 3) creating an enabling environment for young people.

This endline study comprises quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative impact assessment focused predominantly on progress made with respect to the KPIs for each of the three building blocks, while the qualitative impact assessment focused more on how the change in employment happened and how change was related to the effectiveness and relevance of the EYW project.

During programme implementation and at the time of writing this report, the world, including Bangladesh, was hit by the coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19). Covid-19 has put further pressure on the job market and has disproportionately affected young people¹, especially young women². Globally, one in six young people have stopped working due to Covid-19, and working hours have fallen significantly among those still in employment (ILO, 2020). Therefore, the findings of this study need to be understood within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

¹ ILO (2020a). ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Fourth edition.

² ILO (2020b). Youth and Covid-19: Impacts on Jobs, Education, Rights and Mental Well-being. Survey Report 2020.

2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The EYW programme aimed to improve economic and social empowerment for young women and men living in rural, climate-change affected areas in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Ethiopia. The Theory of Change consisted of three pillars – improving young people's agency and skills (pillar 1), improving their economic opportunities (pillar 2), and creating an enabling environment for youth (pillar 3) – to ultimately increase their social and economic empowerment.

In Bangladesh, the EYW project was implemented in the northern districts of Rajshahi and Rangpur and the southern districts of Barishal and Khulna. These districts have a high rate of poverty and unemployment, and are also vulnerable to adverse climate events. The following partners were involved in the implementation: Agriculture Sustainable and Socio-Economic Development Organization (ASSED0 - discontinued in year 3), Community Development Centre (CODEC), Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Services (RDRS), Wave Foundation and Underprivileged Children Education Programme (UCEP).

In both regions, EYW's pillar 1 activities included establishing and strengthening youth groups and training on technical, entrepreneurship and life skills for EYW participants. EYW's pillar 2 activities focused on linkages with financial institutions to create opportunities to access financial services and linkages with the private sector on apprenticeship schemes.

EYW's pillar 3 activities consisted of community conversation groups to discuss social norms around youth employment and how to address them. Also, EYW implemented activities to promote youth-focused policies and supported youth in taking the lead in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and in leading campaigns around female security and mobility. EYW also supported youth in taking the lead on influencing work around GBV, unpaid care work, sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) and climate change issues.

Additionally, in 2020 and 2021, EYW implemented Covid-19 response activities such as sensitization and awareness-raising training about Covid-19, provision of sanitation and hygiene materials for Covid-19, door-to-door public awareness-raising about Covid-19 and campaigns on Covid-19 transmission and prevention measures.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, partners shifted face-to-face activities to online platforms. While permitting activities to continue, this shift meant that activities took longer to roll out and put young people with no or limited access to the internet at risk of missing out. Furthermore, the topic of many activities post-Covid has shifted to Covid-19 awareness – instead of the original curriculum.

3 EVALUATION DESIGN

3.1 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The main objective of this endline study was to determine to what extent EYW programme had an impact on KPIs related to the three pillars. The report also explores the gendered and regional differences for the outcomes and contextualizes the findings with respect to Covid-19. Furthermore, reflections from youth, community members and stakeholders on how change happened are included throughout the report. The main evaluation questions are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1: Overview of evaluation questions

Main evaluation question: To what extent have activities implemented by the EYW programme contributed to changes on KPIs related to the three pillars?

Sub-questions:

- To what extent have activities implemented by the EYW programme contributed to changes on young people's agency and skills?
- To what extent have activities implemented by the EYW programme contributed to changes on young people's economic opportunities?
- To what extent have activities implemented by the EYW programme contributed to changes on the enabling environment of young people?

The quantitative impact assessment focused predominantly on progress made on the KPIs and the qualitative impact assessment focused more on how change in employment happened and how change is related to the effectiveness and relevance of the EYW project.

3.2 EVALUATION DESIGN

This is a mixed-methods evaluation, which means that the quantitative impact assessment was complemented with qualitative research and reflection workshops with youth and partners.

3.2.1 QUANTITATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The quantitative component of this evaluation is a quasi-experimental impact assessment, meaning that it benefits from data collected from a target group of programme participants as well as a comparison group. The comparison group includes respondents who are living in villages that are not targeted by EYW project activities and have a similar demographic profile as the target group. The selection of respondents and their assignment to the target and comparison groups is not random, which is what makes this study "quasi-experimental", in contrast to a fully randomized control trial (RCT). Still, comparing data from these two groups allows us to look not only at *trends* in outcomes over time for the target group, but also whether any changes over time may be attributable to programme activities (the *impact* of the EYW programme so far). The study compares baseline data (2017) to midline (2019) and endline (2021).

Please refer to 7.1 for more details on the methodology used for the quantitative impact assessment.

3.2.2 QUALITATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Apart from the quantitative component, the evaluation also involved a qualitative component, the intent of which was to answer the following broad questions: a) How does change in employment happen for EYW youth participants? and b) How is change related to the effectiveness and relevance of the EYW Project? At the beginning of the evaluation process, the method of choice was focused group discussions (FGDs) and the in-house data collection team (Oxfam representatives themselves carried out the data collection) were briefed on the tool through a 2-day training of trainers session. Subsequently, however, in the light of mobility and access challenges because of Covid-19 in Bangladesh, it was mutually decided that the required information be collected through in-depth-interviews (IDIs). The questions and the facilitation approach in the FGD tool were adjusted to suit the IDI format.

Overall, the interviews with male and female EYW participants focused on the changes experienced by them in their professional lives, and the changes they have observed at the household and community level because of EYW. The interactions with community members focused on the community's awareness and opinion about EYW activities, and how the activities led to changes in the employment, entrepreneurship and economic circumstances of youth in their communities.

3.2.3 REFLECTION WORKSHOP

A reflection workshop was held in Bangladesh to reflect on the preliminary results of the impact evaluation. The reflection workshop was on 12th and 13th of October 2021 in Khulna district. In total, 30 participants attended the workshops, of which 13 were youth involved in the EYW programme and the remaining were implementing partners, community representatives, stakeholders and Oxfam in Bangladesh staff. In two interactive days, participants reflected on the results presented with the main objective to validate and interpret the findings. The reflection workshops were facilitated by Oxfam in Bangladesh staff, who ensured meaningful youth participation³. Reflections and suggestions from participants are incorporated throughout this report and are clearly identified where they appear in the text.

3.3 OVERVIEW OF THE SAMPLE

3.3.1 QUANTITATIVE SAMPLE

The quantitative sample for this endline study was designed to be representative of the EYW participants by the type of activity the youth engaged in, to be representative of the EYW population distribution by district and union council and to reflect the distribution of women and men participating in EYW. Target group respondents were selected randomly from the administrative records of project participants for the five years of the project implementation.

Comparison group respondents were selected randomly using random walks in union councils not exposed to EYW. This should minimize spill-over effects. In the design of the comparison group sample,

³ 12 participants out of 30 were youth.

the distribution by gender, district and union council was set to replicate the distribution of the EYW project participants.

In addition to a youth survey, we also interviewed community respondents who were older than 29 years old. Community respondents were selected randomly by random walks in union councils where EYW activities were implemented.

The samples for the target group, comparison group and community members were chosen to achieve maximum comparability between the baseline, midline and endline samples.

Data collection for the endline survey was conducted face-to-face during July-September 2021. Enumerators made an outstanding effort to collect the data during the pandemic, and health security protocols were implemented to avoid health risks associated with Covid-19. Other challenges faced during the fieldwork were the scattered locations of the selected target group respondents within the union councils and the selected target group respondents who had migrated to other union councils.

Please refer to Annex 0 for a detailed overview of the baseline, midline and endline samples.

3.3.2 QUALITATIVE SAMPLE

A total of 20 IDIs were conducted with youth (women and men) and community members in the Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Rangpur districts of Bangladesh. These included eight interviews with community members, four interviews with young women and eight interviews with young men. Two more interviews with young women conducted but these could not be transcribed. Overall, 35% of the participants in the interviews were women.

At the beginning of the data collection process, the target number was 30 interviews in total. However, owing to communication and access challenges, this target could not be met. Furthermore, selection criteria for the potential participants also included the type of training and the number of participants in each of the three provinces. However, these criteria were not fully met during the data collection process. These limitations, among others that are detailed later, must be kept in mind when considering the findings of the qualitative analysis.

3.4 LIMITATIONS

In general, we selected target respondents from the full records of youth participants held by local partners. This could also mean that we included youth in the sample who no longer participated in EYW and hence who might not remember all aspects of the training they received. However, EYW envisions sustainable, long-term impact, so even though project activities might no longer be fresh in the mind of some respondents, this should not matter much because we aimed to measure impact over time.

Furthermore, there might be a possibility of underestimating progress, especially for the employment outcomes, as youth who had found employment elsewhere and migrated were not available anymore to participate in the endline study. Consequently, the design of the endline survey meant that we missed some youth who had migrated to find employment elsewhere. Nevertheless, implementing partners made every effort to contact some of the youth who had migrated to other union councils.

There was also a limitation related to the way KPIs were formulated. First, there was the translation of global KPIs into local contexts, which comes with trade-offs in standardization vs the local context (for example, on skills and an enabling environment). Secondly, many of the skills indicators were based on self-assessments by the youth instead of an external assessment of the application of skills.

The qualitative interviews were conducted by the Oxfam team in Bangladesh. It was agreed with the team that they would conduct the interviews in an objective manner. However, it is inevitable that biases make their way into discussions, and the interactions were influenced by the position of the interviewer as a representative of Oxfam. This limitation should be kept in mind when considering the report and the analyses.

3.5 EXPLANATORY NOTE ON THE FINDINGS, FIGURES AND TABLES

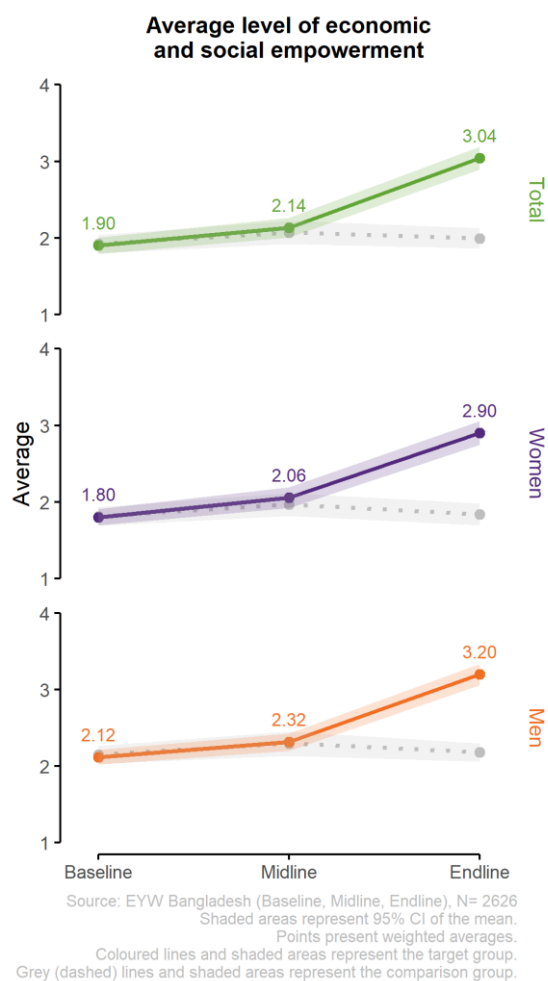
The next chapter presents the main findings⁴ of the endline study. The EYW programme was judged to have made a *significant impact* on an outcome indicator if the change observed among the programme participants (target group), from the baseline to the endline, was of a higher magnitude than the changes observed among non-participants (comparison group). Generally, positive impact means that programme participants experienced a higher increase in a certain indicator, e.g. level of soft skills, than non-participants. Negative impact means that the change for non-participants was larger than the change for participants. A negative impact is often, but not always, associated with a decrease in the level of a certain indicator. It could also indicate that a positive change is higher for non-participants, resulting in a negative impact for participants.

When the report mentions a *significant impact*, it means that the difference between programme participants and non-participants in that outcome indicator (between the baseline and the endline) was statistically significant at a confidence level of 95%. This means that if the survey were re-run 20 times, we would find that the project had an impact for 19 of those 20 times. **In short, a *significant impact* means that we have enough statistical evidence to believe that a change in an outcome indicator was entirely due to EYW programme activities⁵.** If we did not find impact, it means that we did not find a statistically significant change at a confidence level of 95%.

⁴ Please note that the sample size for each outcome indicator can be different from the sample size mentioned in annex 7.2. This could be due to one or more of the following reasons: respondents preferred not to answer the question(s) related to that outcome indicator, respondents answered 'I don't know', and/or there was missing information in any of the covariates included in the impact evaluation model.

⁵ It is worth noting that in some cases, the outcome indicator might not have changed among project participants, but we still may find a significant impact. This can be the case when we observed a negative change in the group of non-participants, but the project helped to maintain an outcome indicator at the same level or helped to reduce a negative trend in the political and socio-economic context.

Figure 1



Most figures in this report visualize the findings as line graphs that show the average response to a given question by respondents in the baseline, midline and endline studies (Figure 1).

Because the data is based on responses from a sample of the people in the baseline, midline and endline studies, the results were subject to a degree of sampling error. These errors are visualized with a confidence interval, representing the range of the estimate at a confidence level of 95%. In graphs such as Figure 1, the confidence interval is depicted as the shaded area under and above the straight lines. Coloured lines and coloured shaded areas represent the target group. Grey dashed lines and grey shaded areas represent the comparison group.

As a rule of thumb, if the confidence intervals of two estimates overlap, then it is likely that there is no statistically significant difference between the estimates. If the confidence intervals do not overlap, then there is likely to be a statistically significant difference between the estimates. However, there are exceptions to this general rule, as the impact evaluation model -and hence the conclusions on significance- rely on many interacting factors (such as the influence of matching weights, covariates, and sample size). Therefore, readers are encouraged to rely on the report text and summary tables for definitive results regarding which comparisons or associations were statistically significant and which were not⁶.

In the following chapter, summary tables are presented for each section. These tables present the results of each KPI and subscales used to estimate the KPIs. Hence, the tables provide an overview of

⁶ Note that the values on the graphs of women and men were based on predicted values of the general impact evaluation model. The general impact evaluation model used the sample of women and men together for the estimation. This means that the values on the graph with the label "Women" are the average predicted values for women based on the general impact evaluation model. Similarly for men. However, conclusions in the summary tables and text were based on conditional impact evaluation models specific to gender. This means, impact evaluation models estimated for each gender separately. This may explain some slight deviations in predicted values between tables and graphs. Additionally, the regional results in the tables were based on conditional impact evaluation models specific to region.

all the analyses performed for the section. Most of these results are described in the text. However, results of some subscales or sub-KPIs are not described extensively in the text.

In the summary tables, an equal sign (=) means that there is no significant impact to report. An upward green arrow (↑) indicates there is positive impact; a downward red arrow (↓) indicates there is negative impact. The number of asterisks behind the arrow indicate the level of significance (*, **, *** for $p < 0.1$, $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$ respectively).

4 PROJECT IMPACT

This chapter presents the findings from the endline study using both quantitative survey data (2017, 2019, 2021) and qualitative data (2021). In this chapter, we aim to understand whether the lives of young people have changed due to participation in the EYW programme and how these changes occurred.

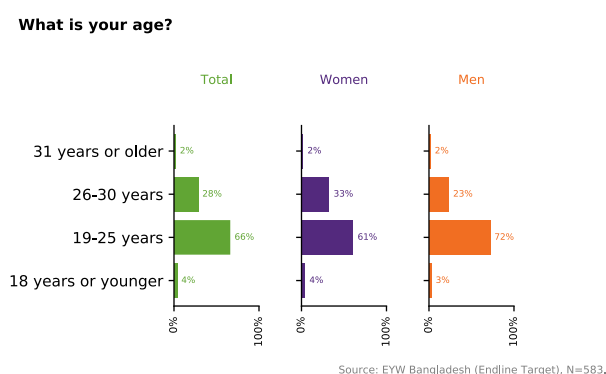
First, we look at the young people and community members targeted by EYW project activities: who are they and what are their characteristics (section 4.1). Second, we explore the results of five years of EYW programme work on the social and economic empowerment of youth (section 4.2), young people's agency and skills (section 4.3), young people's economic opportunities (section 4.4) and their enabling environment (section 4.5). For a description of how KPIs are calculated and the estimated KPI values at the baseline, midline⁷ and endline, please see Annex **Error! Reference source not found.**.

4.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

4.2.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

This section presents some of the key socio-demographic characteristics of EYW participants at the endline. At the endline, we interviewed 600 young people who participated in the EYW project in Bangladesh, of whom more than half were young women (52%).

Figure 2

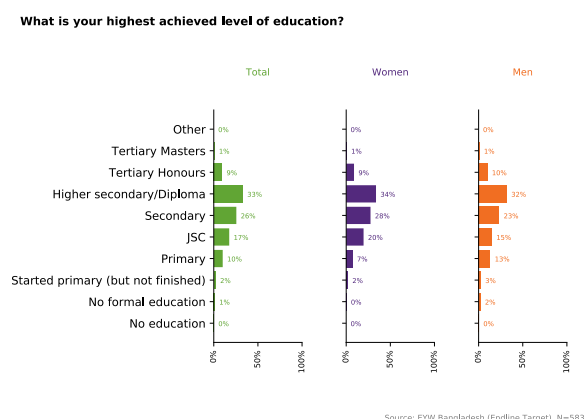


The EYW project targets young people between the ages of 15 and 29 years old. Two out of three EYW participants were between 19 and 25 years old at the time of the endline survey. The women participating in the EYW project were older than the men.

Some respondents were older than 29 years old at the time of the endline survey. This was probably because some participants joined the programme when they were younger.

⁷ Note that the baseline and midline values presented in the graphs were calculated with the impact evaluation model estimated for the endline study. This model used statistical techniques to make the three surveys (baseline, midline and endline) comparable. Therefore, these values might be slightly different from the baseline and midline KPI values in the KPI table, which were the values calculated at the time of the baseline and midline surveys.

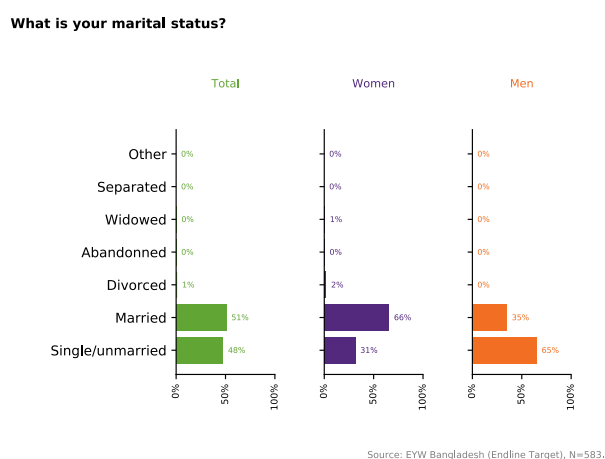
Figure 3



At the endline, most project participants had completed secondary education or higher (69%), and only a small percentage of young people had not completed any level of education (1%). On average, young women achieved a higher level of education than young men.

It is important to mention that the level of education of the project participants was higher at the endline than at the baseline. At the baseline, 59% of young people had completed secondary education or higher.

Figure 4



We found an important difference in the marital status of men and women. Most young women who participated in EYW were married (66%), whereas most young men were unmarried (65%).

The qualitative analysis did not delve deeply into the socio-economic characteristics of the participants except for their age profile. Most youth participants were in the age group 19-30 years. None of the 12 youth who participated in the IDIs was older than 30 years of age. The community members who participated in the

IDIs had a wider age range, with the youngest participant aged 22 and the oldest being 55.

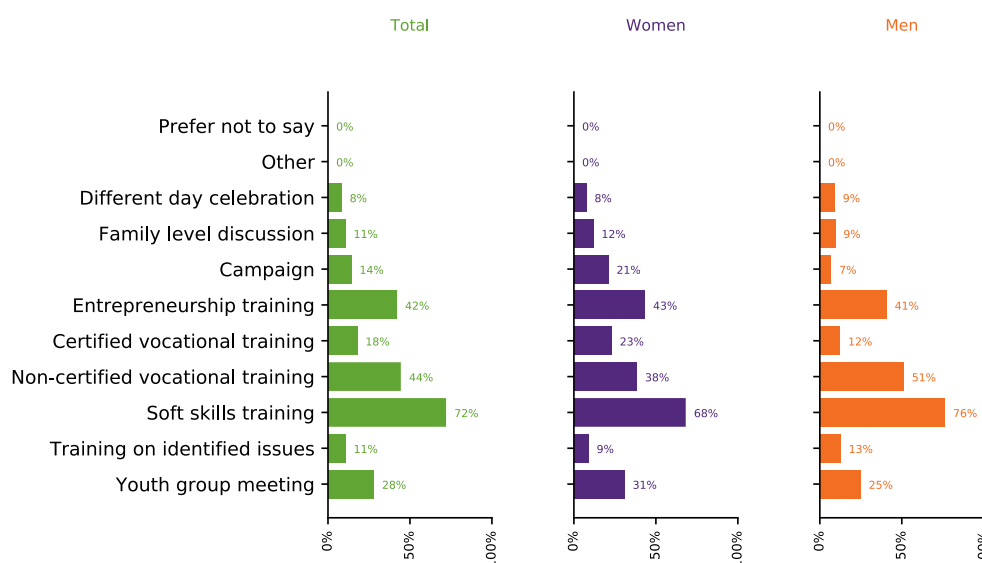
Finally, we want to mention that we recognize the diversity of young people, who may identify with other or additional characteristics than the ones presented in this section.

4.2.2 PARTICIPATION IN EYW ACTIVITIES & COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

In Bangladesh, EYW implemented its project activities around the three pillars of the holistic approach. In pillar 1, the majority of EYW participants in our sample participated in soft skills training (72%), 44% attended non-certified vocational training, 18% received certified vocational training, and 42% participated in entrepreneurship skills training. It is important to mention that youth could participate in multiple trainings. Thus, 88% of our sample said that they participated in at least one type of EYW training.

Figure 5

Have you participated in any of the following activities by Oxfam, Wave Foundation, CODEC, RDRS or UCEP?



Source: EYW Bangladesh (Endline Target), N=583.

There were some gender differences in training participation. Soft skills training reached 76% of young men but only 68% of young women. Among young men, 51% attended non-certified vocational training, and 12% participated in certified vocation training. However, these values were 38% and 23%, respectively, for young women. Entrepreneurship skills training reached 43% of young women and 41% of young men. Overall, skills training reached a higher percentage of young men than young women. In our sample, 93% of young men and 84% of young women attended at least one type of EYW training.

Half of the EYW participants (50%) in our sample were members of youth groups organized by the project. Young women's participation in youth groups was higher than young men's. In our sample, 53% of young women were members of EYW youth groups, but this was 46% for young men. Nevertheless, it was surprising that only 28% of young people said that they participated in a youth group meeting.

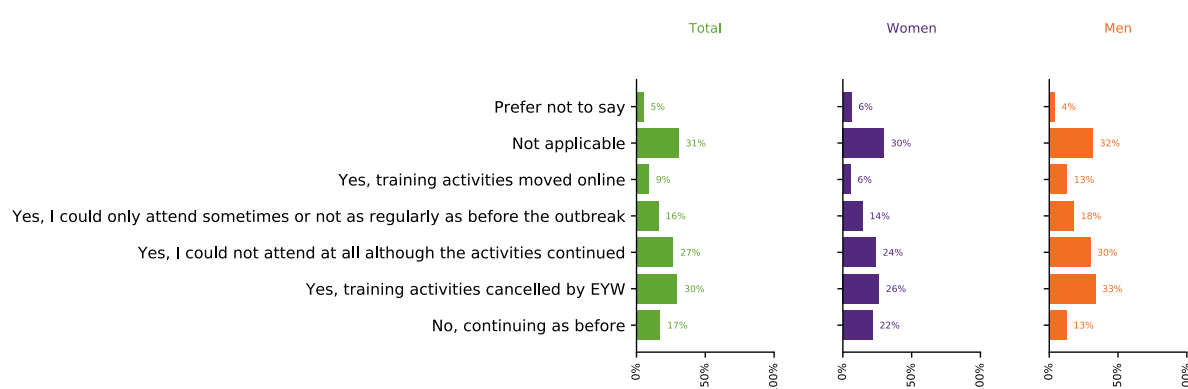
Other activities mentioned by the respondents were campaigns relating to violence against women, SRHR, unpaid care work etc. (14%), family level discussions (11%), other training (11%) and day celebrations (8%). Although only a low percentage of the youth mentioned these activities, we want to point out that these low percentages did not accurately represent the outreach of EYW in Bangladesh. Possibly, some respondents only focused their answers on the most important activities (training), and they did not mention all the activities that they attended during the course of the project. Hence, for an accurate picture of EYW work in Bangladesh, we suggest readers refer to the annual reports.

Mobility restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic affected the organization and implementation of EYW activities. This was also emphasized by participants in the reflection workshop, who mentioned that it was not possible to organize regular training, workshops and meetings during the lockdown. A total of 30% of the respondents in our sample said that EYW training activities were cancelled due to mobility restrictions, 27% said that activities continued but that they could no longer participate, and 16% could only attend EYW activities sometimes (or at least not as regularly has before).

Nonetheless, EYW made efforts to continue with the project implementation to the extent that this was possible. According to the Oxfam Bangladesh representatives, during the initial waves of COVID -19, some activities such soft training, campaigns, mass gathering, family level discussion were cancelled. Alternatively, new activities such as distribution of hygiene kits, livelihood grant support for entrepreneurs who lost business due to the pandemic were undertaken. Moreover, regular activities were stopped for a brief while and were later resumed. Hence, 17% of EYW participants mentioned that their participation in EYW was not interrupted or changed by the Covid-19 outbreak and 9% of EYW participants were able to attend online training. Additionally, only 31% said that the interruption of EYW activities due to the pandemic was 'not applicable' to them. This was the case of respondents who were able to fully participate in in EYW activities, before the Covid-19 outbreak.

Figure 6

Has your participation in EYW activities been interrupted or changed since the Covid-19 outbreak?

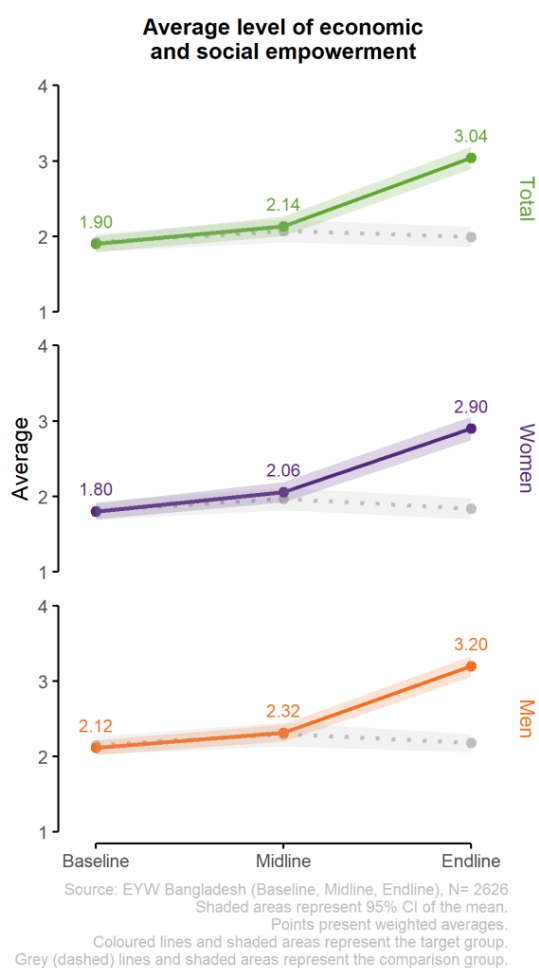


Source: EYW Bangladesh (Endline Target), N=583.

4.3 IMPACT ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

KPI #: Economic and Social Empowerment			Total	Gender	
			Total	Women	Men
Baseline-Endline data			Is there a significant effect for the target group over time? (Impact)		
Im- pact	0	Average level of economic and social empowerment reported by young people	↑	↑	↑
		Average level of economic empowerment reported by young people	↑	↑	↑
		Average level of social empowerment reported by young people	↑	↑	↑
		Average monthly household income reported by <i>community members</i> (in local currency)	=	=	=

Figure 7



The ultimate goal of the EYW programme was to improve the economic and social empowerment of young women and young men. In this study, economic and social empowerment was measured by taking the average scores for two concepts: economic empowerment and social empowerment.

Economic empowerment was the extent to which youth's income covered household needs⁸. Social empowerment was measured by taking the average of two components: 'empowerment' and 'comfort expressing voice'⁹.

The long-term efforts of EYW in Bangladesh had a positive impact on the economic and social empowerment of youth. We see in Figure 7 that youth's average level of economic and social empowerment had a positive trend from the baseline to the endline. Additionally, we found that EYW had a positive impact on both economic empowerment and social empowerment. Another indicator of impact was the average household income (the income of all household members

together). For this indicator, we did not find an increase in the income of households in project areas. We measured this indicator with information from the community survey in project areas.

At the midline, the project had not yet had an impact on the economic and social empowerment of youth. It was only at the endline that the positive impact of the project on the socio-economic empowerment of youth became apparent. This suggests that positive impacts on the socio-economic empowerment of youth are difficult to achieve in the short term. Hence, long-term programmes have better chances of improving the economic and social empowerment of youth.

Gender analysis found that EYW had a positive impact on the economic and social empowerment of young women and young men when we looked at each gender separately. However, a gender gap still existed for economic and social empowerment. We see in Figure 7

⁸ Answer categories were a 1-4 point scale, where 1 was 'not at all' and 4 was 'to a great extent'.

⁹ 'Empowerment' was measured by three statements: 1) adults in my town or city listen to what I have to say, 2) adults in my town or city don't care about young people of my age and 3) in my town or city I feel like I matter to people. 'Comfort expressing voice' was measured by whether respondents felt comfortable doing four types of activities: 1) Suggesting activities to duty bearers or power holders, 2) Sharing my ideas about rules or policies with duty bearers or power holders, 3) Taking a lead role in organizing a program or activity in my community and 4) Expressing my views, needs and aspirations among peers.

found. that socio-economic empowerment was higher for young men than for young women from the baseline to the endline.

The IDI interactions with youth and community members supported the quantitative findings – nearly all participants reported significant changes in empowerment. If we look at economic empowerment, employment and the resultant increase in income were reported as the biggest enablers. Both young women and men stated that the EYW programme helped them to gain the skills and temperament necessary for them to explore new career paths, which contributed to better incomes. Almost all participants stated that their financial circumstances had improved significantly after their participation in the programme. They were now able to better contribute to the household income. Some young men specifically stated that they were able to lift their families out of poverty as they gained new skills – they became employed, and their incomes increased.

If we look at the voice component within economic empowerment, both young women and young men reported increased decision-making power within their households as a result of their economic empowerment. Although the sample of women participants was low, all of these women stated that they had an increased power to make decisions. This can be seen as a significant achievement of the EYW project. Some young men also said that they had been able to create opportunities for others in their communities.

The community members stated that they had witnessed several changes in the overall economic circumstances of their villages since the programme started. Several participants mentioned the different kinds of trainings that were offered to the youth. According to them, they were happy to see that the youth were employed, exploring new career paths and were helping their households. They also said that several youths had created opportunities for other youth and community members. According to them, youth in the communities who did not participate in the activities saw the changes and were keen to explore similar training and opportunities. The community members also stated that the programme had a significant impact on women's ability to earn and be financially independent. These enhanced capacities, along with community activities such as campaigns, courtyard meetings and family level discussions, have helped to enhance the awareness of the need for and importance of women's economic empowerment.

Yes, supported by the project, in our community, youths brought changes in overall economic circumstances. The youths are contributing to family income and creating employment opportunities for the other youths in the communities. Community member, Rangpur

My wife got soft skill training, tailoring training and three days entrepreneurship training from this project. After that, she started her own tailoring business as well as she also received 18000 BDT as a grant. Through this grant support, she supported me to enhance our poultry and cattle farming. This business support also helped my wife to dream bigger. Community member, Rajshahi

Yes, my father is old, he is employed, and we have small pieces of cultivating land. By the lands, it was very difficult to run family expenses like health, food, education etc. However, my employment kicked out poverty from my family. I am the main earning members of my family. My young brother resumed education. Now community is giving value to my family. I have got dignity in the family as well society. Male youth, Barisal

I was involved with EYW programme since 2019 by receiving the three-day soft skills training which had taken place in our community. Then I received three months long non-certified vocational training on graphics designing and freelancing. This course encouraged me to start online training on graphics designing, and I also bought two computers and set up a small training centre at my home to provide this technical skill to other youths. My parents supported me financially. Now I am providing both online and offline training and earning around 30000 BDT monthly. Along with that, sometimes I also worked for different companies for their graphic designs, and in that case, my monthly income ranges between 50000-65000 BDT. – Male youth, Rajshahi

Yes, this EYW programme helped me in bringing changes at my household level. Before joining this project, I used to roam around, gossiping with other youths at tea stalls. Community people also treated us as vagabond. My parents took me for granted before, but when I got involved with EYW programme and received different capacity building training, then I also contributed economically. They prioritized my decisions and opinions. Male Youth, Barisal

EYW programme enables me to support my family financially during this pandemic. Through tailoring and clothing business, I can earn money though it is minimal, but now I am capable to bear my study and other expenses. Female youth, Khulna

Yes, my husband was jobless due to Covid. Our family is dependent on from my income. My dignity and decision-making power in the family been increased significantly compared to 5 years back. Before, I faced mental and physical abuse from my husband. Female you, Barisal

The above are not direct quotes. This is adapted text based on interactions with the participants

For social empowerment, the community members and youth pointed out several activities and changes as a result of EYW. Firstly, several community members stated that previously the lack of employment opportunities resulted in risky behaviours among young men, such as harassment and drug addiction. The focus on employment and other community-focused activities (for example, meetings and campaigns) have, according to the community members, helped to change the mindsets of the youth. Secondly, they reported that the acceptance of women working and earning an income had increased significantly since the programme started in their community. Here again, the mix of income-earning opportunities and community-focused activities contributed to this change. Lastly, they mentioned that youth in their communities had become active in community development and awareness activities such as tree planting, road repairs, Covid-19 awareness and response, organising sports activities, and campaigns to promote awareness on issues such as women empowerment and drug addiction. Some youth were also working with local governmental bodies on community improvement.

The responses from young women and young men were similar to those of the community members. They stated that improved employment opportunities and a sense of economic empowerment had significantly reduced “delinquency” among youth, especially among young men. Young women and men both said they were part of campaigns and initiatives or were organizing campaigns and initiatives themselves in their communities on topics as varied as early marriage, violence against women, recognition of unpaid care work, disaster risk awareness and preparedness and organic cultivation. Specifically, both young women and young men stated that the ability and freedom to earn an income

and contribute to household income had risen significantly among women and community members as a result of the mix of activities undertaken under EYW.

At the reflection workshop, participants stressed the importance of these achievements. They said that they felt very happy with this finding, and they took ownership of it, as this was the result of the hard work of all stakeholders involved in the project.

The youths are contributing to family income and creating employment opportunities for other youths in the communities. Five years ago, the youth faced lack of employment opportunities and were even involved in social delinquency activities like eve-teasing, drug addiction etc.

Due to this project, freedom of young women in the community is also improving gradually. Now they can [earn and spend] their own money. Now their parents don't [stop] them to go out. Now in our community, early marriage, violence against women has been reducing compared to 5 years back. Community member, Rangpur

We motivated and made the community people aware about reducing unpaid care work, gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health rights, early marriage, dowry etc., through organizing courtyard meetings. Moreover, youths are engaged in tree plantation, palm seed plantation for reducing riverbank erosion, spreading awareness messages about the detrimental effects of excessive insecticides and pesticides use in crop production, etc. Formation of groups and youth hubs made all these above tasks easier because we can take all this collective action by discussing in our regular meetings. Male youth, Barisal

Yes, freedom of young women to step out of the house and mobility for doing job and business have been improving gradually compared to 5 years ago. Through soft-skill training and groups intervention, we, young women, have been made aware of our rights and entitlement both economically and socially. Moreover, we organized courtyard meeting, and advocacy campaigning created awareness and sensitized the community people and households on reduction of GBV, early marriage, unpaid care work burden, freedom to spend own income etc. Furthermore, we organized meetings, workshops, dialogues etc. with service providers like local governments... [we]made them accountable to ensure women rights and safety. Before, young women faced barriers on taking job and business due to lack of knowledge and capacity as well as lack of awareness among households and community. Female youth, Rajshahi

The above are not direct quotes. This is adapted text based on interactions with the participants.

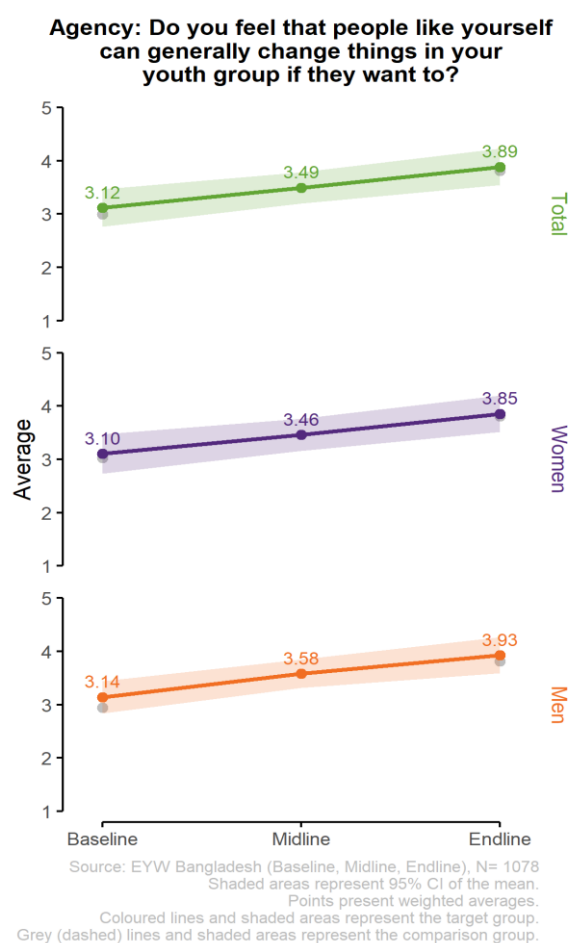
4.4 IMPACT ON AGENCY AND SKILLS

4.4.1 AGENCY

KPI #: Agency			Total	Gender	
			Total	Women	Men
Baseline-Endline data (target group only)			Is there a significant effect for the target group over time? (Impact)		
LT OM	1	Do you feel that people like yourself can generally change things in your youth group if they want to? (NB: only asked to youth who are part of a youth	↑	↑	↑

		group. Not many comparison youth are part of a youth group, hence we can only compare this indicator for the target group over time)			
Midline-Endline data			Is there a significant effect for the target group over time? (Impact)		
LT OM	1	In the past year, do you agree that you have made changes for yourself and your family ?	↑	↑	↑
		Do you feel that people like yourself can generally change things in your community if you want to?	↑	↑	↑

Figure 8



The project understands agency as a person's capability to act independently and to make their own free choices. In this evaluation, a person's agency was assessed for three aspects of youth life that were important to EYW: the youth group, the community, and their personal and family life. The study operationalized youth's agency with three survey questions¹⁰: 1) the first focused on a person's capability to change things in their own youth group, 2) the second was about young people's capability to change things in the community, and 3) the third looked at changes made by young people for themselves and their families.

We found that EYW had a positive impact on the three aspects of agency studied for this evaluation. We also found a positive impact on the three types of agency when we analysed young women and young men separately. This was a remarkable result for the project because it showed that EYW participants felt

more capable of changing things in their youth groups, in their community and in their personal lives because of the project implementation.

We also want to mention some differences in the types of agency that we evaluated in this report. EYW participants found it easier to make changes for themselves and their families than to change things in their youth group or in their community during the project. At the midline and the endline, youth's

¹⁰ Indicators for young people's capability to change things for themselves and their families, and in their community were only included in the surveys at the midline and the endline.

capability to make changes for themselves and their families was higher than young people's capability to change things in their youth group or in their community.

Finally, EYW's efforts to guarantee gender equality were successful for the outcome area of agency. At the endline, we found that young women and young men had similar perceptions of their capabilities to change things in the three types of youth agency¹¹.

The qualitative findings also showed that EYW participants felt confident about enabling change in their personal lives and in their community. They attributed this ability and confidence to the programme. At the personal level, several participants expressed confidence that the skills that they had gained would continue to be beneficial and that they hoped to improve their opportunities and income-earning capacities in the future. Some stated that they had found a sense of dignity from their ability to contribute to the household income – for example, one young woman said she was able to build a house because of the increase in income. There were also references to how the youth were able to create job opportunities for other youth in the communities and how they encouraged youth in their circles to participate in training. At the level of the community, participants talked about how they organized campaigns and events in the community to create awareness of several topics. The responses from the youth indicated a sense of accomplishment as they witnessed changes in their communities as a result of their initiatives.

I can imagine myself as a successful entrepreneur ten years later. Because I will enhance my knowledge and skills by various capacity building training in near future, too, so that in the long run, I can nurture my learning from EYW programme properly. I will open my own tailoring shop at the marketplace. I also have desire to expand my vermicomposting business at a broader scale later on. Recently, I received block-batik training, and advanced level tailoring training from Department of Women and Children Affairs referred by CODEC. Hopefully few years later, I will buy 2/3 sewing machines and will employ other young women of community to support my tailoring business. Female youth, Khulna

During this pandemic, we did several awareness-raising campaign at schools, colleges, community and distributed mask, soap along with spraying insecticides. Our youth organization also brings positive aspirations among young girls and their parents. Young women are now more interested to do businesses. Male youth, Barisal

The above are not direct quotes. This is adapted text based on interactions with the participants.

At the reflection workshop, youth participants mentioned some examples of their improved agency. For instance, they said that youth had developed their agency through participation in ward, union and district level groups. They also became registered for apex bodies and membership positions at upazila and union level committees. They actively participated in youth-centric business platforms (Youth Hubs), and they formed saving groups for future investments. Furthermore, some youth worked as

¹¹ We did not find statistical differences when we compared youth agency between young women and young men. Although the values in the graphs were different, such differences were not statistically significant.

trainers for other young people. Overall, they said that they felt more united, and they were more aware of their rights since the project started.

Figure 9

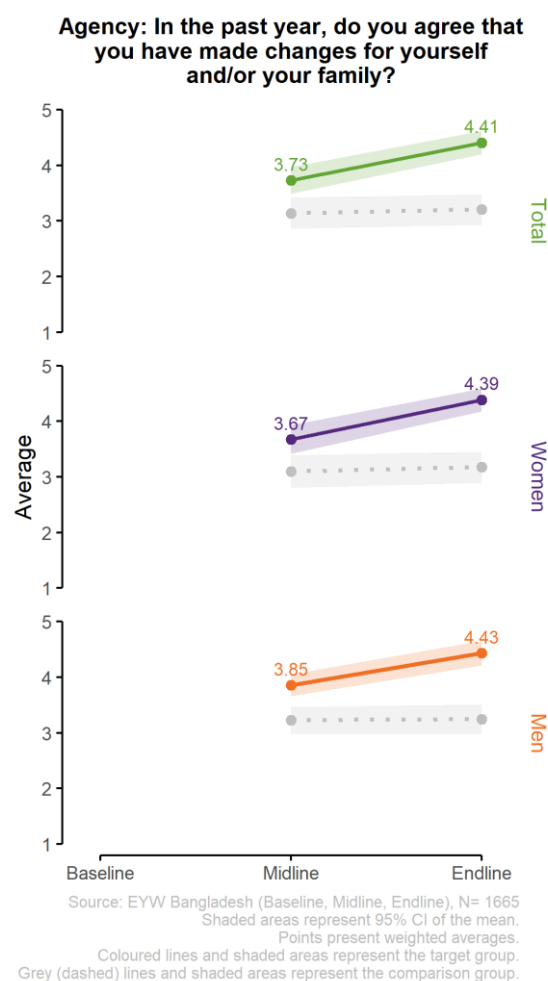
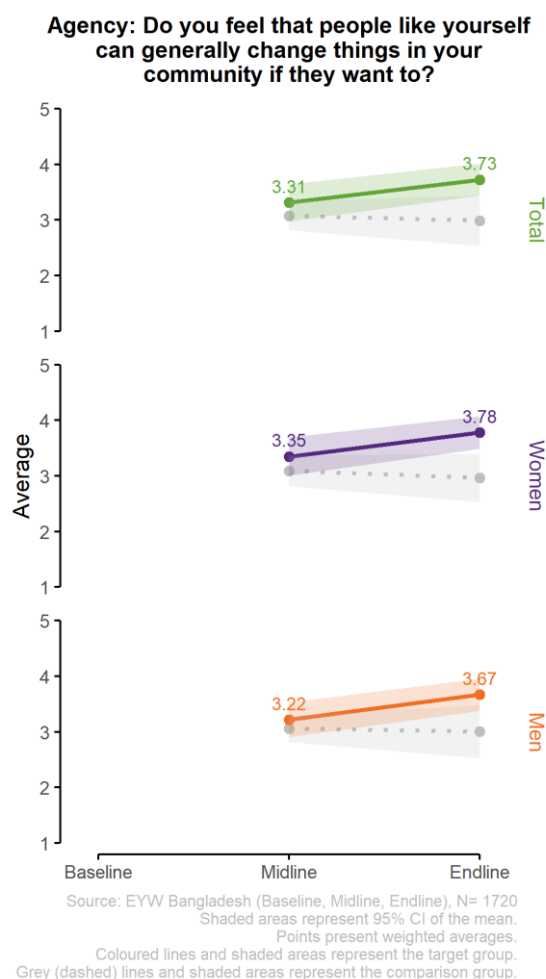


Figure 10



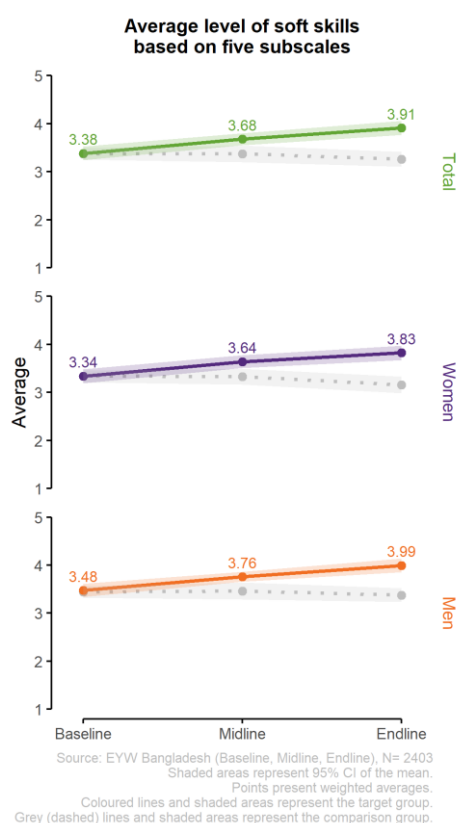
4.4.2 SOFT SKILLS

KPI #: Soft skills			Total	Gender	
			Total	Women	Men
Baseline-Endline data			Is there a significant effect for the target group ¹² over time? (Impact)		
LT OM	1	Average level of soft skills scale, based on five subscales (see below)	↑	↑	↑
		Problem-solving (subscale value)	↑	↑	↑
		Personal control (subscale value)	↑	↑	↑
		Leadership (subscale value)	↑	↑	↑
		Functional autonomy (subscale value)	↑	↑	=

¹² Here, the target group was limited to those EYW participants who had done soft skills training.

		Attitudinal autonomy (subscale value)	↑	↑	↑
Midline-Endline data			Is there a significant effect for the target group¹³ over time? (Impact)		
LT OM	1	To what extent do you agree that these skills are useful for you in finding a job or starting a business?	=	=	=
		In the past year, to what extent do you agree that have you made use of these skills in your daily life?	=	=	=

Figure 11



Soft skills are personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people. These skills were measured for EYW by using five core capabilities: problem-solving, personal control, leadership, functional autonomy and attitudinal autonomy. These capabilities give insights into the individual ability to take on an employment opportunity or start up a business.

EYW had a positive impact on the five core capabilities of soft skills. But we also found a positive impact with a soft skills scale that averaged these five core capabilities. Moreover, we found similar results when we looked at young women and young men separately – the only exception was the functional autonomy of young men.

Overall, in Bangladesh, soft skills training improved young people's capabilities to view a situation from different perspectives and to recognize opportunities (problem-solving skills); young people's feeling that they can determine their future, have an influence on their success and have equal opportunities in employment (personal control); young people's feeling that they can support people

in working well together, persuade people, and trust their own instinct (leadership skills); young people's personal independence in new situations (feeling at ease in new situations) and easiness to adapt to something new (functional autonomy); and young people's capabilities regarding goal-setting and decision-making (attitudinal autonomy).

Nevertheless, at the endline, our gender analysis revealed that the five capabilities of soft skills were slightly higher for young men than for young women. Additionally, at the midline and the endline, young people were asked to what extent soft skills were useful in finding a job or starting a business and to what extent they made use of soft skills in their daily life. EYW participants scored both of these questions higher at the endline than at the midline. However, non-participants also gave higher scores

¹³ Idem.

for both questions at the endline than at the midline. Therefore, we did not find any impact for these two indicators.

Nonetheless, at the endline, young EYW participants who participated in soft skills training rated the usefulness of soft skills in finding a job or starting a business as 4.60 (1-5 scale). They also rated the use of soft skills in daily life as 4.48 (1-5 scale). For both of these questions, the scores of EYW participants were higher than those of non-participants. In general, these high scores indicated that young people appreciated the importance of soft skills.

The responses relating to soft skills for the IDIs with youth focused on what they learned from the soft skills training and how this learning led to changes within themselves. Youth, both women and men, said that they had learned about communication and advocacy, organizational management, self-motivation, and responsibilities for social work from the training on soft skills. Firstly, this training helped them to gain confidence in their ability to pursue an economic activity of their choice. Several examples were shared of how the youth were able to start a business or find a job because of improved soft skills. Secondly, the training also helped the youth become aware of social issues in their communities. It could be said that this awareness enabled a sense of responsibility among the youth and their improved confidence triggered them to act. There were several references to how youth organised meetings in their communities and, in some cases, with local officials, which indicated how improved awareness and soft skills together helped the youth to become more active in the community.

Soft skill training helped to change lives. I am involved in EYW group activities like Ward Group, Apex body and Rural Hub. Knowledge and ideas from soft skill training helped me with doing youth group activities. For example, soft skill training learning helped me to organize meetings and make relationships among the group and external services providers because of which we got registration of apex body. Female youth, Rajshahi

Soft skill and graphic designing course showed me to dream bigger, and till then, I am continuing my learning through online and other sources which sharpen my knowledge and get me updated with new technologies and skills. I am also spreading this knowledge to the fellow youths who are receiving mentorship support from me. Male youth, Rajshahi

Soft skill training learning have changed the mindset of youths for doing social activities for changing [old] norms and practices... Youths are doing awareness-raising activities for the community. Male youth, Khulna

From soft skill training, I trained on organizational management, leadership, communication, advocacy, self-motivation, responsibilities etc. Soft skill training helped to get a job, and the knowledge I gained, I am applying in my job. Moreover, soft skill knowledge is helping me with social development activities. Female youth, Barisal

The above are not direct quotes. This is adapted text based on interactions with the participants.

Youth participants at the reflection workshop said that soft skills training helped them to communicate with both governmental and non-governmental organizations. They learned how to influence people, and leadership skills helped them to have the courage to demand their rights from government officials. However, before the project, they had very little knowledge of soft skills. Also, at the reflection workshop, youth participants mentioned an example of youth reporters who presented the success stories of EYW

participants. They said that the soft skills learned in the training helped the youth reporters to perform with confidence, to make an effective presentation and to communicate effectively.

Figure 12

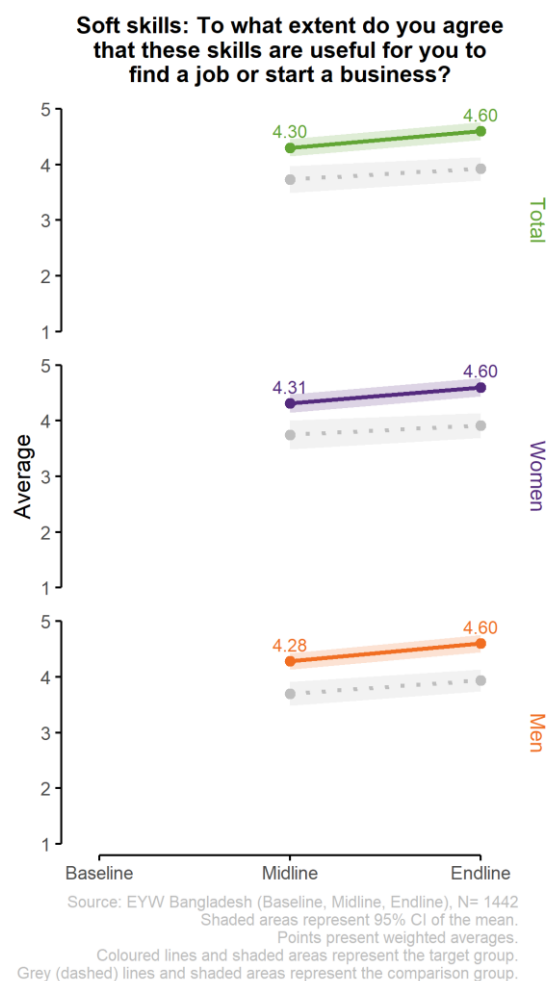
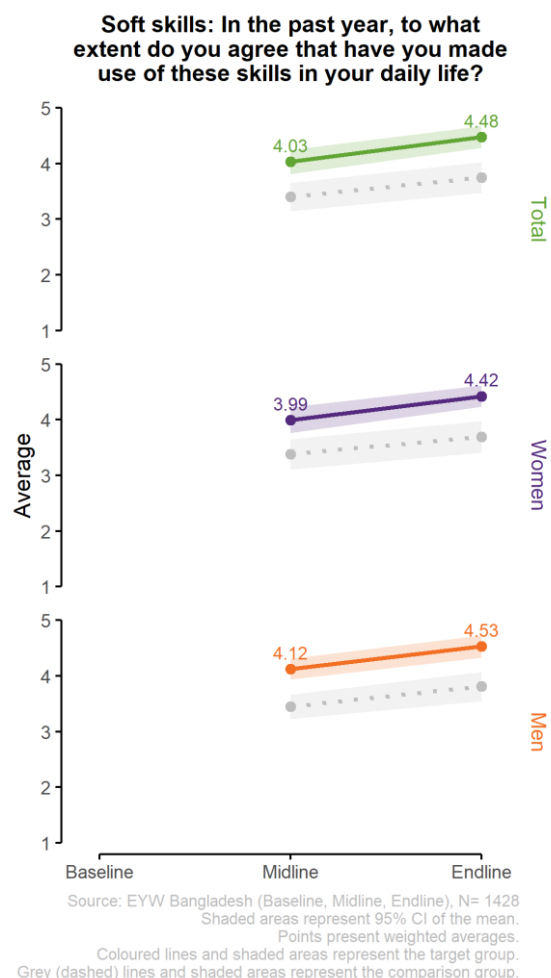


Figure 13



4.4.3 TECHNICAL SKILLS

KPI #: Market-led technical skills			Total	Gender	
			Total	Women	Men
Baseline-Endline data			Is there a significant effect for the target group ¹⁴ over time? (Impact)		
LT OM	1	% of young people who reported having one or more technical skills	↑	↑	↑

¹⁴ Here, the target group was limited to those EYW participants who had done technical skills training.

Midline-Endline data			Is there a significant effect for the target group ¹⁵ over time? (Impact)		
LT OM	1	To what extent do you agree that these skills are useful for you in finding a job or starting a business?	↑	=	=
		In the past year, to what extent do you agree that have you made use of these skills in your daily life?	↑	↑	↑

EYW increased the technical skills of many young people through certified and non-certified vocational training. For this indicator, we asked youth whether they had a list of market-led or professional skills, such as sewing, plumbing, decorations, painting, IT support¹⁶.

At the endline, we found that EYW had a large positive impact on the percentage of young people with one or more technical skills in the project areas. It is remarkable that the percentage of youth with technical skills increased from 19% at the baseline to 95% at the endline among EYW participants (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Moreover, at the endline, we did not find gender differences in the percentage of youth with technical skills.

Furthermore, at the midline and the endline, young people were asked to what extent technical skills were useful in finding a job or starting a business, and to what extent they made use of technical skills in their daily life. For both indicators¹⁷, we found a positive impact for EYW. EYW participants gave higher scores at the endline than at the midline for both questions about their use of technical skills. Their scores were also higher than the scores of non-participants.

Overall, young people appreciated the importance of technical skills. At the endline, young EYW participants who participated in technical skills training scored the usefulness of technical skills in finding a job or starting a business as 4.63 (1-5 scale). They also scored the use of soft skills in daily life as 4.56 (1-5 scale).

The responses from participants in the IDIs were consistent with the scores the participants gave for technical training in the quantitative survey. All youth and community members stated that the technical skills training was beneficial. Community members thought the exposure to different skills helped the youth gain exposure to alternative livelihood options – something that was not available prior to the implementation of the programme. Youth participants said that several training sessions such as sewing, electrical repair, IT support, mobile repair, construction work, livestock and poultry rearing and climate-resilient farming, both individually and together, helped them with employment (including self-employment) and income-earning opportunities. The skills that young men gained through training and which helped them with employment and income were diverse. In contrast, the women participants

¹⁵ Idem.

¹⁶ The full list of market-led technical skills includes electrical installation maintenance, welder, sewing, machine operation, motorcycle service mechanics, plumbing, solar electrical service, tailoring and dress making, refrigeration and air conditioning, woodworking, cooking, food and beverage service, mason, IT support, mobile phone servicing, baking, lacquer polishing, beauty parlour, medical, decorations, tile setting, paint worker, construction, poultry raising, and tyre maintenance.

¹⁷ It is important to mention that the positive impact on the usefulness of technical skills in finding a job or starting a business was significant only at the 10% significance level.

mentioned sewing, poultry and livestock rearing and climate-resilient farming. The more technical skills, such as IT support, electrical and mobile repair and construction work, were not mentioned by women. It is important to note that the sample of women participants was small.

Interestingly the responses revealed that soft skills, technical skills and entrepreneurship skills seemed to operate in tandem. Several participants reported that they began with soft skills training, where they got to know about the technical skills training being offered by EYW. Depending on their interest and activity of choice, the youth pursued one or more technical skills training. Subsequently, the entrepreneurship skills training helped them with understanding how self-employment and business operations work, how they could manage their income and expenses, and ensure profitability in their chosen economic activity. It could be said that the vocational training provided the skills, the soft skills training enabled confidence and the correct temperament, and entrepreneurship skills training facilitated a change in mindset towards self-employment.

Similarly, participants in the reflection workshop said that before the project, many youths were not interested in technical skills – their priority was to study and find a job as an employee. Before EYW, the youth did not know that they could learn technical skills and become entrepreneurs.

Yes, I have an electronics business. From EYW I have received three months training on electronics under a local mentor and got certified training from UCEF. I also motivated myself from soft skill training. From the project, I have got LAG support 15000 BDT and along with my family investment, I have started a business. Now I am earning on average 20000 BDT Monthly. Through my business, I have created job opportunity for one youth in my business. Male youth, Barisal

I was involved with EYW programme since 2019 by receiving the three days soft skills training which had taken place in our community. Then I received three months long non-certified vocational training on graphics designing and freelancing. This course encouraged me to start online training on graphics designing, and I also bought two computers and set up a small training centre at my home to provide this technical skill to other youths. Male youth, Rajshahi

During soft skill training, I was informed about the tailoring training provided by EYW programme. I thought a lot then decided to enrol in it because after getting this skill, I can easily apply my learning from home, which eventually would not hamper my study in near future. My local mentor and other staff from CODEC also encouraged me to sell cloths along with tailoring business. Now, I am sewing clothes for my neighbours and relatives. Due to COVID pandemic, they are more comfortable to buy clothes from me because other shops/markets are far away from our village. Female youth, Khulna

Recently I got training on Vermi-Compost. This organic fertilizer can be used for crop production, vegetable farming, fish farming, etc. It can prevent excessive use of insecticides in fruit and vegetable farming. I earned 5000 BDT/month by selling worms and vermi-compost to other farmers. I got a small fund from EYW worth 10000 BDT, which I also invested as my capital for clothing business. I also contributed my small deposits in this business. Female youth, Khulna

The above are not direct quotes. This is adapted text based on interactions with the participants.

Figure 14

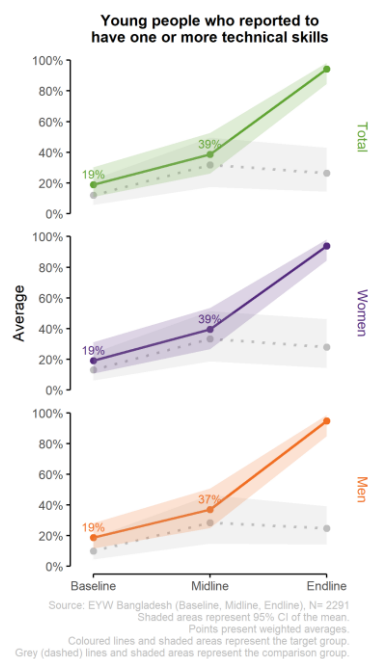


Figure 15

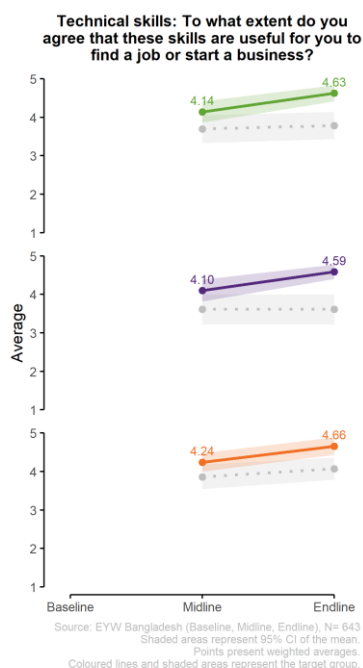
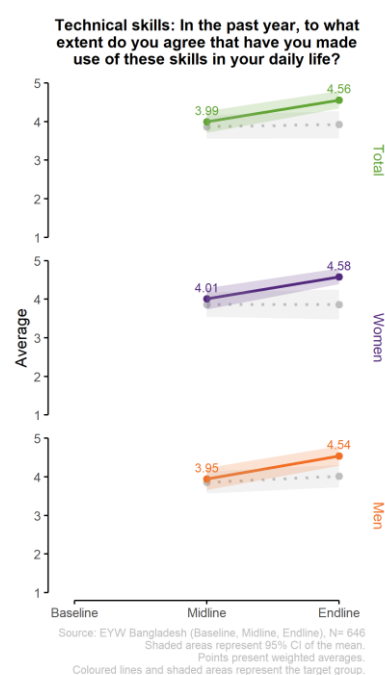


Figure 16



4.4.4 ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS

KPI #: Entrepreneurial skills			Total	Gender	
			Total	Women	Men
Baseline-Endline data			Is there a significant effect for the target group¹⁸ over time? (Impact)		
-	-	Average level of entrepreneurial skills (NB: only asked to youth who did an entrepreneurship training or youth who are self-employed).	↑	↑	↑
Midline-Endline data			Is there a significant effect for the target group¹⁹ over time? (Impact)		
-	-	To what extent do you agree that these skills are useful for you in finding a job or starting a business?	=	=	=
-	-	In the past year, to what extent do you agree that have you made use of these skills in your daily life?	↑	↑	=

To measure the impact of EYW entrepreneurship training, we asked participants taking part in the training a set of questions to assess their skills to run a business²⁰. We found that EYW

¹⁸ Here, the target group was limited to those EYW participants who had done entrepreneurship skills training.

¹⁹ Idem.

²⁰ We asked participants in entrepreneurship training how well they were able to perform the following activities: 1) find information about business opportunities, 2) save in order to invest in future business opportunities, 2)

entrepreneurship training had a positive impact on the entrepreneurship skills of young people²¹. This meant that participants in entrepreneurship training were better equipped to run a business than non-participants.

Furthermore, we want to highlight the EYW contribution to closing the gender gap in youth entrepreneurship skills. At the baseline, young men's entrepreneurship skills were higher than young women's. However, at the endline, we did not find a gender difference in entrepreneurship skills.

At the endline, EYW participants scored the usefulness of entrepreneurial skills in finding a job or starting a business and the use of entrepreneurial skills in daily life more highly than at the midline. However, this increase was only significant enough for the impact of EYW on the use of entrepreneurial skills in daily life to be identified.

Overall, EYW participants appreciated the importance of entrepreneurial skills. At the endline, young EYW participants who attended entrepreneurship skills training scored the usefulness of entrepreneurial skills in finding a job or starting a business as 4.64 (1-5 scale). Moreover, the extent to which they made use of entrepreneurial skills in their daily life was scored as 4.51 (1-5 scale).

The usefulness of entrepreneurship skills was strongly emphasised by community members and the youth during the IDIs. Community members stated that many youth in their communities were introduced to the idea of owning a business through EYW. There were several references to how youth and families they knew had started their businesses and improved their financial circumstances. Youth participants talked about how they learnt about business management, monthly planning, record keeping and managing income and expenditure from the entrepreneurship training. Some participants also mentioned receiving grants from the programme, which helped them to expand their new and existing ventures. As mentioned before, the entrepreneurship training worked in tandem with soft skills and technical skills. The latter two developed the skills and the temperament, and the entrepreneurship skills helped to put the skills, mindset and plans into action.

I used to run a small shop for mobile balance recharge through flexi load before joining the three-month-long mobile servicing course through EYW project. At first, I received soft skills training which motivated me to expand my business. Then the entrepreneurship training also supported me to stay in the right direction. Male youth, Khulna

I started my own business by opening a local shop where I provided mobile phone servicing and sound system repairing. I also appointed two staff - among them one is computer operator, and another one is the support staff. After training completion, I received 13000 BDT from EYW project to invest within my existing business. Now I earn approximately 12000-15000 BDT each month. Male youth, Rangpur

manage business finances effectively, 4) bargain with a supplier to obtain good prices when purchasing, 5) collect money from someone who owes money for purchases but is not paying on time, 6) positive attitude and presentation, 7) new ideas to start or include in their business, 8) networking capacity, and 9) marketing skills.

²¹ It is important to mention that the positive impact on entrepreneurship training for young men was significant only at the 10% significance level.

Along with soft skill and tailoring training, I also received entrepreneurship training from EYW. This training helped me to learn about business management, monthly planning, record keeping and managing profits/losses and so on. Throughout tailoring training, I learnt to operate the machine, cutting clothes and sewing. So, combining the learning from both tailoring and entrepreneurship training, I started my tailoring business at home, and it runs successfully. Female youth, Khulna

My wife got soft skill training, tailoring training and three days entrepreneurship training from this project. After that, she started her own tailoring business as well as she also received 18000 BDT as a grant. Through this grant support she supported me to enhance our poultry and cattle farming. This business support also helped my wife to dream bigger. Community member, Rajshahi

The above are not direct quotes. This is adapted text based on interactions with the participants.

At the reflection workshop, youth mentioned that entrepreneurship skills training helped them to be financially independent. They were able to start up businesses. Similar to what the participants in the IDIs stated, the workshop participants also stated that youth did not know that they could participate in economic activities by learning entrepreneurship skills.

Figure 17

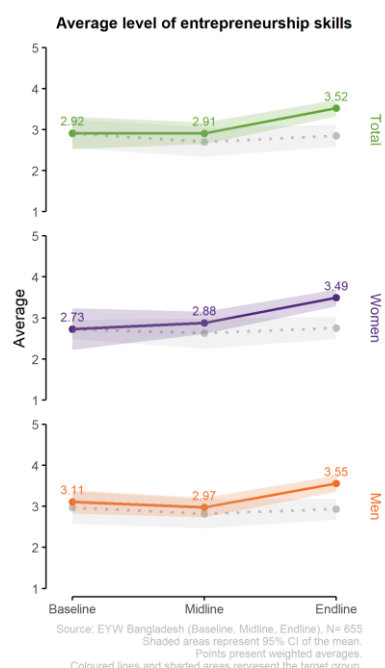


Figure 18

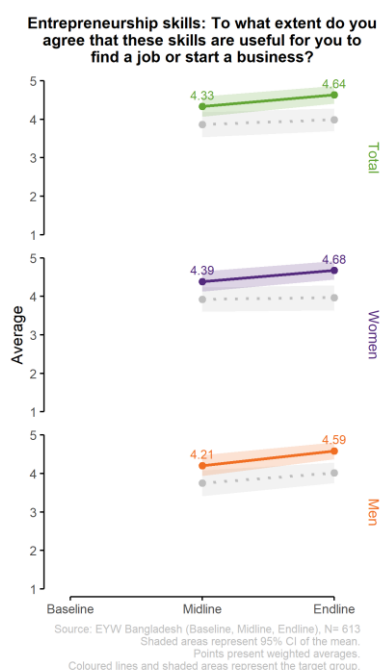
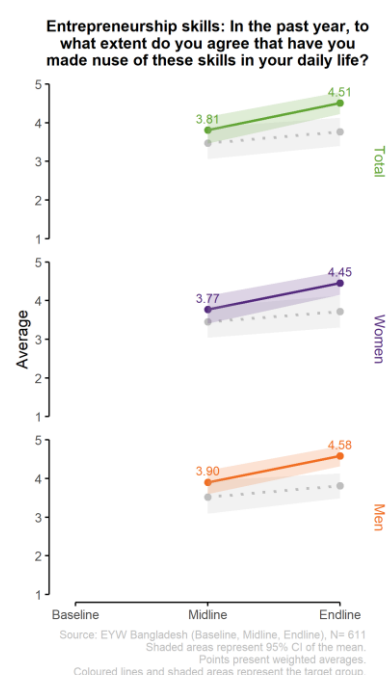


Figure 19



4.5 IMPACT ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

4.5.1 EMPLOYMENT RATE, DECENT WORK AND INCOME

KPI #: Improved economic opportunities	Total	Gender	
	Total	Women	Men

Baseline-Endline data			Is there a significant effect for the target group over time? (Impact)		
LT OM	1	% of young people who are employed (= employed by someone else or self-employed/entrepreneur)	↑	↑	↑
		% of young people who are employed (= employed by someone else or self-employed/entrepreneur; excl. young people whose main occupation is student)	↑	↑	↑
		Average level of decent working conditions	=	=	=
		Average level of youth income (only youth with paid employment)	=	=	=

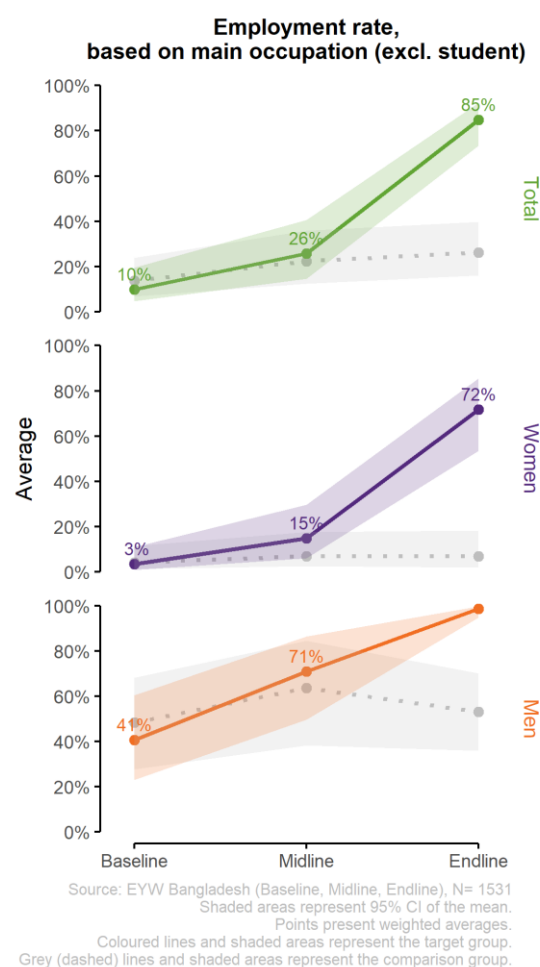
4.5.1.1 EMPLOYMENT RATE

In this study, we considered respondents to be **Figure 20**

‘employed’ if their main occupation was farming or fishing, daily agricultural labourer, daily wage labourer, entrepreneur or business owner, self-employed (working on their own account), or employed by someone else with a salary. Respondents were considered to be unemployed if they were unemployed, employed in unpaid domestic or care work, or had ‘other’ as an occupation. Also, students (53% at the baseline, 51% at the midline and 19% at the endline) were excluded from the analysis²².

EYW had a positive impact on the employment rate. The employment rate increased among EYW participants from 10% at the baseline to 85% at the endline (Figure 20). This was a major achievement by the project and highly appreciated by the participants at the reflection workshop. Youths at the reflection workshop said that they saw increased job opportunities for many EYW participants.

Here, we want to highlight the connection between EYW training and employment. At the midline, the project had implemented mostly soft skills training. However, vocational and technical training and entrepreneurial skills training did not have a high outreach at that moment.



²² We estimated the employment rate only for the Economically Active Population of young people. This means, only youth who were available for work at the time of the survey. We excluded the students from the indicator because most of them said that their priority was to study and they were not available for work at the time of the survey.

After the midline, the project reached out to more youth with vocational and entrepreneurship skills training, which contributed to the positive impact on youth employment.

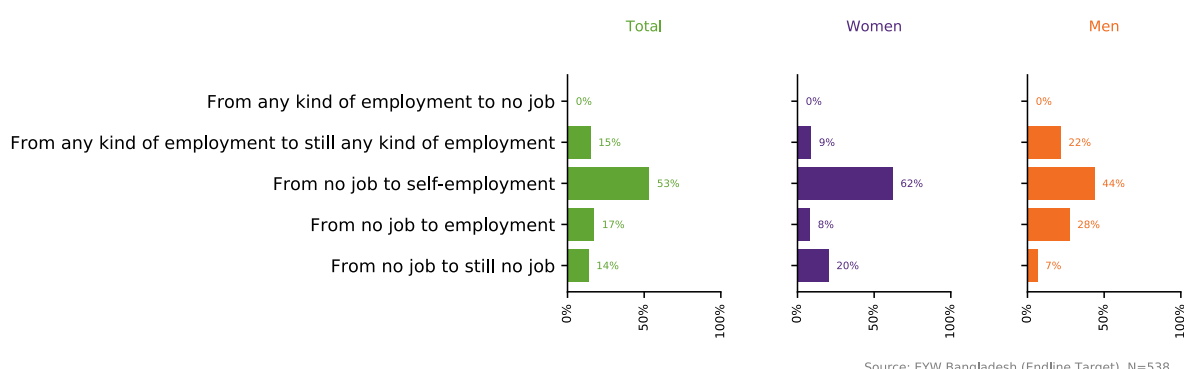
Respondents at the endline were asked to think back to their main occupation in 2015, and we compared it with their main occupation in 2021 (Figure 21). Respondents could move from no job to still no job, no job to employment²³, no job to self-employment²⁴, any kind of employment²⁵ to still any kind of employment, and any kind of employment to no job. As with the employment rate, we excluded from the analysis young people whose main occupation in 2021 was student.

We found that EYW promoted youth entrepreneurship to a large extent, especially for young women. More than half of EYW participants (53%) who were unemployed in 2015 transitioned to self-employment in 2021. For young women EYW participants, 62% who did not have a job in 2015 were entrepreneurs in 2021, while for young men EYW participants, the figure was 44%. Reflection workshop participants agreed with this finding. They said that entrepreneurship was particularly beneficial for young women.

At the baseline, 19% of employed EYW participants were entrepreneurs, business owners or self-employed working on their own account). At the endline, this percentage increased to 74%. More details on the impact of EYW on youth entrepreneurship can be found in section 4.5.1.2.

Figure 21

Employment transitions from baseline to endline (excl. student)



Some EYW participants who were unemployed in 2015 transitioned to non-entrepreneurial employment in 2021 (17%). This transition was more common among young men (28%) than among young women (8%).

At the endline, non-entrepreneurial employment was mainly formed by salaried work (non-agricultural) (55%), followed by non-agricultural daily wage work (38%), daily agricultural work (3%) and agricultural

²³ We aggregated in the category of employment the following occupations: farming/fishing, daily agricultural labourer, daily wage labourer or employed by someone else with a salary.

²⁴ We aggregated in the category of self-employment the following occupations: entrepreneurs, business owners or self-employed (working on their own account).

²⁵ Any kind of employment was an aggregation of the employment and self-employment categories: farming/fishing, daily agricultural labourer, daily wage labourer, employed by someone else with a salary, entrepreneur or business owner, or self-employed (working on their own account).

workers (4%). Moreover, young men and young women were in similar types of non-entrepreneurial occupations.

EYW contributed to keeping some EYW participants in employment who were already employed before the project implementation. We found that 15% of EYW participants who had a job in 2015 still had a job in 2021. On the other hand, none of the EYW participants interviewed who had a job in 2015 had lost their job in 2021.

Nevertheless, some youth still faced challenges in finding a job or starting up a business. We found that 14% of young people who were unemployed in 2015 were still unemployed in 2021. Hence, we asked unemployed EYW participants what the main reasons were for why they did not have a job.

The three reasons mentioned most frequently were a lack of available jobs (45%), a lack of access to financial capital (36%) and the lack of a work certificate (24%). These same three reasons were given by both young men and young women.

Additionally, we asked about the effect of Covid-19 on the job market. We found that 11% of EYW participants employed at the start of the Covid-19 outbreak lost their job temporarily, and only 2% lost it permanently. The three main reasons for the loss of employment (temporarily or permanently) were the business closing down (47%), getting fired/laid-off/furloughed (22%), and the job not being renewed (19%).

The search for employment during the Covid-19 pandemic was difficult for those who were unemployed when the pandemic started in April 2020. Nearly eight out of ten (77%) EYW participants who were unemployed in April 2020 said that the search for employment or opportunities to start a business became more difficult. According to the respondents who said that the search for economic opportunities became more difficult, the main reasons given were fewer customers, closing down of markets and shops (to access inputs and to sell products and services) and more difficulties in accessing credit to start up a business.

Finally, we wanted to investigate the gender gap in employment opportunities. Although EYW had a positive impact on the employment rate of young men and young women, at the endline, the employment rate among young men (99%) was higher than among young women (72%). This indicated that access to economic opportunities was more limited for young women than for young men.

During the IDIs, youth and community members both stated that prior to EYW, the employment opportunities available to youth were quite limited. According to community members, the lack of employment opportunities resulted in risky behaviour (“delinquency”) among youth. The programme helped youth become employed and has gradually helped them to stay away from delinquent behaviour and activities. Similarly, several youths stated that previously they were unemployed or earned meagre incomes from wage employment. The diverse training exposed them to alternative career paths, and the package of training (soft, technical and entrepreneurship skills) helped them to either start their own ventures or be employed in jobs that were dignified and paid more than they had earned before.

Yes, in my community, youth received certified, non-certified and entrepreneurship training. They have linked with the job market, created employment opportunities including self-employment and wages employment... 5

<i>years ago, the youth had no link with employment resulting our community economy was in bad condition. Community member, Rangpur</i>
<i>EYW programme helped community youth to start their professional lives. Through the project intervention, youth received different types of livelihood skill development training and received livelihood grant support. Community member, Rajshahi</i>
<i>I can share some remarkable example of our youth: 'From our youth organization, six female youth received job opportunities in various NGOs. All of them were soft skills trainers, and this skill knowledge helped them to get union-based jobs such as youth organizer, child facilitator and so on.' Male youth, Barisal</i>
<i>I think participation in EYW program like soft skill training, vocational training and other business support increased interest of the youth to develop in new career paths. Other youths in my community who didn't receive any training have been interested to be employed. Male youth, Khulna</i>
<i>I was doing nothing before joining this EYW programme. But all the above training inspired me to start my small initiatives and also realized that becoming an entrepreneur is far better than doing a clerical job. Female youth, Khulna</i>
<i>I think participation in EYW program, the youth have seen hope to develop in new career paths. I have seen other youths who received skill training on different trades like farming, computer etc., except tailoring, have booming businesses. I have seen other youths in my community, who didn't participate EYW program, have been interested in involving in the economic opportunity. Female youth, Rajshahi</i>
<i>The above are not direct quotes. This is adapted text based on interactions with the participants.</i>

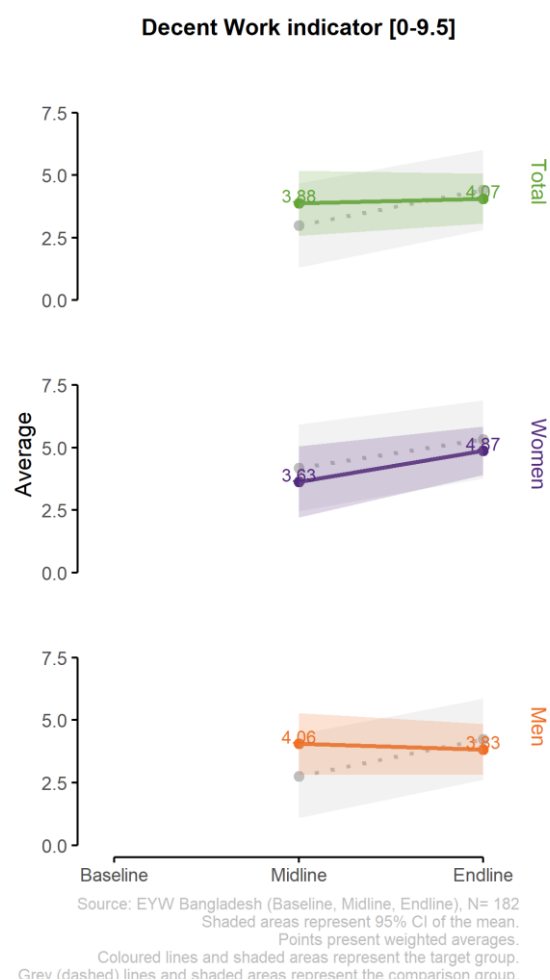
4.5.1.2 DECENT WORK

Improved employment was measured with a series of questions on decent work, which ranged from a person's perceived eligibility for decent work standards to policies on decent work implemented by employers. Then, we created an indicator to measure decent work conditions, which had a 0-9.5 scale²⁶. We only asked the set of questions on decent work to young people who were employed by someone else with a salary. These questions were only asked at the midline and the endline. Only some EYW participants worked as salaried workers – there were 20 respondents at the midline and 66 respondents at the endline.

We found that working conditions among salaried workers participating in EYW were below decent work standards at both the midline (3.88) and the endline (4.07). Although there was a slight increase, we did not find any impact on this indicator by the project overall. During the reflection workshop, the participants disagreed with this finding, especially with the increase that they observed in non-project areas (Figure 27). In their opinion, if this indicator did not improve considerably for EYW participants, then the increase should also be minimal for non-participants.

²⁶ The indicator included working hours, employment contract, sick leave, maternity/paternity leave, insurance in case of a work-related accident, pension scheme, safety measures, facilities, and incidence of harassment in the workplace.

Figure 22



We want to point out three nuances of this analysis. First, work conditions improved for young women EYW participants in salaried work at the endline compared with at the midline. However, we observed a similar trend among young women non-participants. As a result, we did not find any impact for the project on young women.

Second, work conditions decreased for young men EYW participants in salaried work between the midline and the endline. In contrast, work conditions seemed to improve for young men who were non-participants. However, both EYW participants and non-participants in salaried work had similar work conditions at the endline. Therefore, we did not find any impact for the project on young men either.

Third, for the indicator of decent work, our sample size was narrowed to salaried workers, which was relatively small. For instance, the sample of non-participants who were salaried workers was very small. If they were able to find a job without participating in EYW activities, it was possible that they were workers with a socio-economic

background that allowed them to find relatively good jobs. This made it more difficult to find a positive impact for EYW participants.

Considering that many participants experienced improvements in their socio-economic empowerment and their job opportunities, it was reasonable that participants in the reflection workshop disagreed with this finding. However, most of the job opportunities created through participation in EYW were self-employment, which was not part of the decent work indicator.

Finally, work conditions being below decent work standards illustrated the challenges that young employees still face at their workplace. It was difficult to achieve improved policies and practices oriented to decent work merely with the implementation of EYW. According to the ILO²⁷, this requires social dialogues with the participation of three key stakeholders: workers, employers and government.

²⁷ [Social dialogue and tripartism \(Social dialogue and tripartism\) \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org/publications/newpublications/social-dialogue-and-tripartism)

4.5.1.3 INCOME

Youth (labour) income was measured in local currency as the average income of youth in paid employment. For the measurement, we included income from first, second, and other occupations. Hence, it excluded from the analysis any respondents who did not have paid employment.

The labour income of EYW participants with a job increased from the baseline to the endline for both young women and young men. This reflected the contribution of EYW to the employment opportunities and economic empowerment of youth.

However, we did not find a positive impact because the labour income also increased from the baseline to the endline for non-participants. On this point, we want to discuss two reflections inspired by reflection workshop participants. One related to earnings from employment, and the other was linked to employment creation.

First, the findings showed that the earnings from employment were similar for both EYW participants and non-participants. This suggested that other factors, such as the economic context, played a stronger role in determining how much a young worker could earn. In other words, after EYW supported youth in finding employment or starting up a business, the project did not have a big influence on the level of income of the young workers.

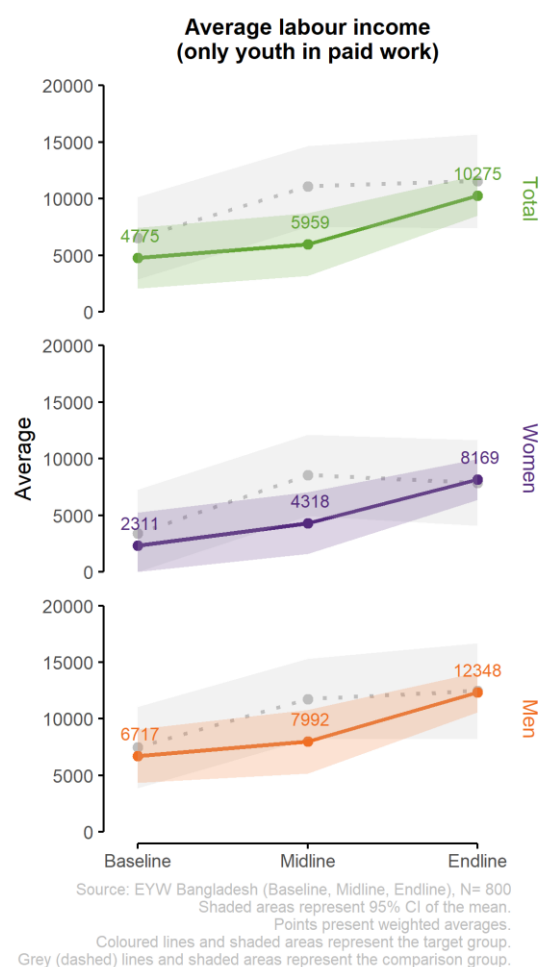
Second, the indicator only compared youth with a job. However, we saw in section 4.5.1.1 that EYW had a positive impact on employment generation, and many EYW participants found a job. Hence, it was fairer to compare the average income of EYW participants and non-participants, regardless of their employment status. To investigate this point, we estimated an alternative indicator where the labour income of youth who did not have paid employment was equal to zero. In this way, we accounted for the positive impact of EYW on jobs creation.

With this alternative measurement, we found that EYW had a positive impact on the income of youth for both young women and young men. This result was consistent with the positive impact on economic empowerment (section 4.3).

Finally, our gender analysis showed a persistent labour income gap between young men and young women. For both labour income indicators analysed in this section, we found that young men earned more than young women.

These qualitative findings indicated that the ability to earn an income and the general increase in income-earning capacity was perceived as the biggest enabler of economic empowerment. This

Figure 23



increase in income helped the participants to manage their expenses (if they were previously dependent on their families), contribute to the household income, buy assets for their families and as a result, gain a sense of dignity and pride within the community. Several participants mentioned the amount they were able to earn from their businesses or employment, indicating pride in their work and what they earned.

While young women did indicate that their incomes had risen and that they were contributing to their households – and as a result, gaining dignity and decision-making power in the household – it was young men who talked about being able to bring their families out of poverty and being able to buy assets for their households. This difference in impact on the household could be indicative of an income gap between young women and men. However, since the sample of women participants in the qualitative component of this study was small, it was difficult to fully verify this conclusion.

EYW programme enables me to support my family financially during this pandemic. Through tailoring and clothing business, I can earn money though it is minimal, but now I am capable to bear my study and other expenses. Female youth, Khulna

We have seven family members. We were in extreme poverty, my sister and brother dropped out of education. We have no house, that's why we had to live in a relative's house. My employment has made my family happy. I have purchased land to build house - hope within two months I will start building the house. Through my income, our family has come out of extreme poverty. My younger brothers and sister have resumed their education. Male youth, Rajshahi

As a member of a low-income family, I couldn't provide any financial support to my parents earlier. I had very limited income through the online seasonal fruit business by which I could bear only my personal expenses. But when I received the entrepreneur training along with the loan facility from EYW programme, then gradually, my income level increased by selling fish twice in a year. Now I can support my parents. Recently I bought a fridge for my family. For my mother's treatment, I also contributed with my father. Male youth, Rajshahi

The above are not direct quotes. This is adapted text based on interactions with the participants.

4.5.2 BUSINESS OWNERSHIP AND ACCESS TO FINANCE

KPI #: Improved economic opportunities			Total	Gender	
			Total	Women	Men
Baseline-Endline data			Is there a significant effect for the target group over time? (Impact)		
ST OM	2.2	% of young people owning a business	↑	↑	↑
		% of young people owning a business (excl. students)	↑	↑	↑
		% of young self-employed people who successfully applied for a loan to start up a business	=	=	=

4.5.2.1 BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

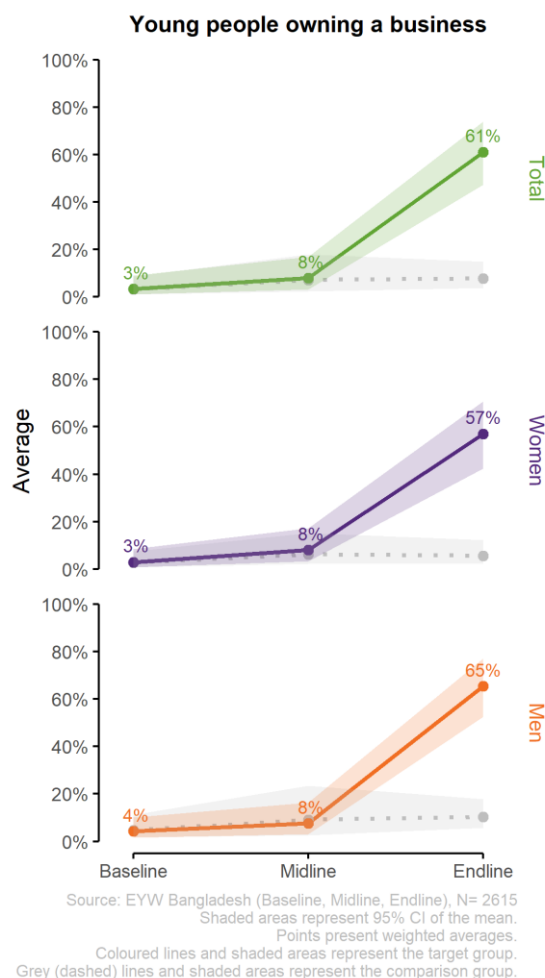
One of EYW strategies was to provide entrepreneurship training and facilitate links between young people and credit institutions. With the combination of these two activities, it was expected that youth would create more businesses. Hence, we measured the impact of EYW on this outcome area by the percentage of youth business owners.

Figure 24

We found a positive impact for EYW on business ownership from the baseline to the endline. It was a highlight of the project that only 3% of EYW participants were business owners at the baseline, but at the endline, this had increased to 61% (Figure 24). In contrast, the percentage of non-participants who were business owners remained very low from the baseline to the endline.

This finding showed that EYW was successful in facilitating an entrepreneurial skillset for youth and supporting financial linkages to start up businesses. Additionally, the reflection workshop participants said that entrepreneurship was very important in achieving financial independence for many young women.

It is also important to showcase the positive impact of EYW despite the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic for many business owners. One in four (26%) EYW participants who were self-employed just before the pandemic²⁸ had to stop their operations at least temporarily, and most of them (66%) experienced a reduction in the number of clients or customers. However, only 14% of business owners who were employing other workers before the pandemic²⁹ had to reduce their workforce when the pandemic started.



4.5.2.2 ACCESS TO FINANCE TO START UP A BUSINESS

EYW aimed to influence financial institutions so that they would support young entrepreneurs. This support was especially important for young women, as it was crucial for them to focus on home-based businesses. Young people who were self-employed were asked whether they had successfully applied for a loan (formal or informal) and what they had used this loan for. Then, we measured access to finance to start up a business with the young people who successfully applied for a formal loan or who

²⁸ 154 EYW participants were self-employed in April 2021. Self-employment included business owners regardless of whether they employed other workers or not.

²⁹ 56 EYW participants were business owners who employed other workers in April 2021.

successfully borrowed money from an informal source and used this to start up a business. Therefore, the indicator measured the success rate of loan applicants³⁰.

At first glance, the success rate for accessing finance to start up a business decreased for EYW participants from the baseline to the endline. At the baseline, 100% of loan applicants obtained access to finance. This decreased to 86% at the midline and to 76% at the endline. We did not find important differences between young men and young women. However, the sample size for this indicator should be taken into consideration when considering these results.

The number of EYW loan applicants in the sample increased from three at baseline to 19 at the midline and to 162 at the endline. Overall, this indicated that EYW had a positive influence on youth EYW participants through the dissemination of information about how to access finance and the facilitation of linkages between youth and credit institutions. During the reflection workshop, youth participants said that many young people got the opportunity to take loans from banks through the youth groups formed by EYW. However, young people still faced some challenges in accessing finance to start up a business. In section 4.5.1.1, we pointed out that the lack of financial capital was one of the main reasons for unemployment.

Finally, we only provided estimates for EYW participants because the sample size of non-participants was not big enough to make valid comparisons between EYW participants and non-participants for this indicator.

4.5.3 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND APPRENTICESHIPS

KPI #: Improved economic opportunities			Total	Gender	
			Total	Women	Men
Baseline-Endline data			Is there a significant effect for the target group over time? (Impact)		
ST OM	2.2	% of young people that already have had access to information on job opportunities	↑	↑	↑
		% of respondents involved in internship, apprenticeships or on-the-job training	=	=	=

³⁰ The reference group of this indicator was the young people who applied for a formal loan or borrowed money from an informal source.

Figure 25

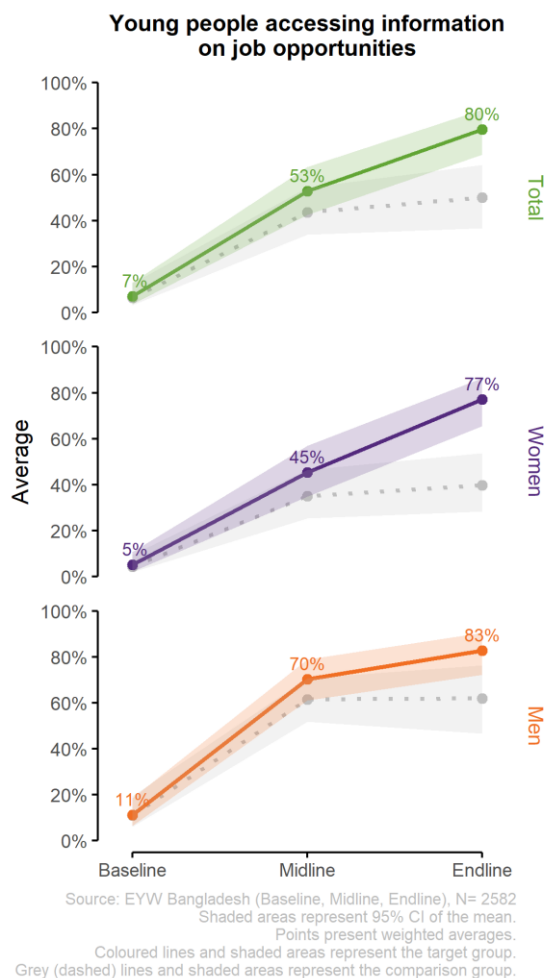
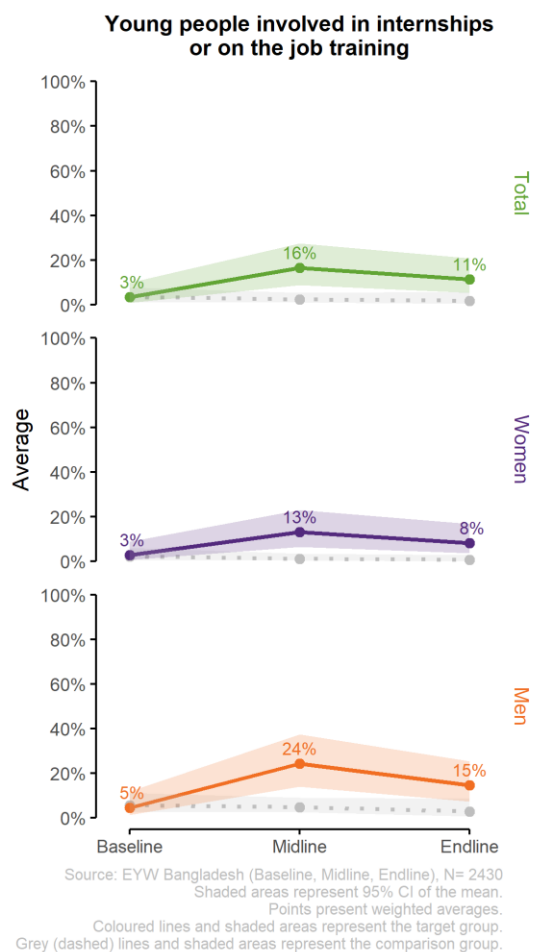


Figure 26



Many EYW participants had access to information on

job opportunities, and the outreach increased throughout the project implementation. At the baseline, only 7% of EYW participants said that they had had access to information on job opportunities. This increased to 53% at the midline and to 80% at the endline. Non-participants had less access to information on job opportunities than EYW participants. Hence, EYW had a positive impact on this area.

Additionally, EYW sponsored apprenticeship programmes and linked youth with apprenticeships in the private sector to improve the economic opportunities of the project participants. Youth involved in EYW increased their participation in apprenticeship programmes between the baseline and the endline for both young women and young men. On the other hand, we found that enrolment of non-participants in apprenticeship programmes remained very low. This showed that EYW facilitated work experience and on-the-job learning for some young people.

However, the increase in enrolment of EYW participants in apprenticeship programmes was not large enough to find any impact. This is primarily because of the impact of Covid-19 on the availability of internship and on-the-job training opportunities for young people. In turn, this could also explain the rise in the percentage of young people involved in internships and on-the-job trainings from the baseline to midline i.e before Covid-19, but a decline in this percentage at the endline (figure 26).

4.6 IMPACT ON THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

4.6.1 SOCIAL RESTRICTIONS TO EMPLOYMENT

KPI #: Social restrictions to employment			Total	Gender	
			Total	Women	Men
Baseline-Endline data (Youth)			Is there a significant effect for the target group over time? (Impact)		
LT OM	3	Average level of perceived restrictions to labour market access by <i>young men</i>	↓	na	↓
		Average level of perceived restrictions to labour market access by <i>young women</i>	↓	↓	na
Baseline-Endline data (Only target group - Community)			Is there a significant effect for the target group over time? (Contribution)		
LT OM	3	Personal attitude: Imagine you had a <i>son between the ages 18 and 29</i> , would you agree to him 1) opening a business outside the house; 2) earning a wage working for someone else?	=	↑	↓
		Personal attitude: Imagine you had a <i>daughter between the ages 18 and 29</i> , would you agree to her 1) opening a business outside the house; 2) earning a wage working for someone else?	=	=	=
		Empirical expectation: How common is it for <i>young men</i> to participate in the labour market?	=	=	=
		Empirical expectation: How common is it for <i>young women</i> to participate in the labour market?	=	=	=
		Normative expectation: What would other people in the community think if <i>young men</i> 1) open up a business outside their house; or 2) earn a wage while working for someone else?	=	=	=
		Normative expectation: What would other people in the community think if <i>young women</i> 1) open up a business outside their house; or 2) earn a wage while working for someone else?	=	=	=
Midline-Endline data (Only target group - Community)			Is there a significant effect for the target group over time? (Contribution)		
LT OM	3	Counterfactual beliefs: What would be the negative consequences if <i>your son</i> would 1) open up a business outside their house; or 2) earn a wage while working for someone else?	=	=	=
		Counterfactual beliefs: What would be the negative consequences if <i>your daughter</i> would 1) open up a business outside their house; or 2) earn a wage while working for someone else?	=	↓	=
It is to be noted that a downward trend on some of the above indicators is to be considered a positive contribution of EYW					

4.6.1.1 PERCEIVED RESTRICTIONS TO EMPLOYMENT

EYW acknowledged that the social and cultural environment has a major influence on the socio-economic opportunities for young people, especially young women. The project found the enabling environment a crucial element because it is essential that society accepts youth employment as something beneficial to both the youth's personal development and the community at large. It was expected that an enabling environment would increase the youth's chances of securing decent jobs or sustainable self-employment. Hence, EYW attempted to reduce the social barriers associated with youth employment, GBV and unpaid care work and to improve knowledge of SRHR.

We asked young people how much harder they thought it was to find a paid job or to start up a business because of their gender and age. From the baseline to the endline, EYW participants perceived a reduction in labour market restrictions because of age and gender. Furthermore, we found that non-participants did not perceive changes in labour market restrictions to youth employment. Therefore, EYW had a positive impact because EYW participants believed there were fewer barriers to finding a job because of their age and gender than non-participants.

The positive impacts on agency and skills training may have contributed to the youth feeling more capable of finding a job or starting up a business. Hence, they perceived fewer restrictions to their economic empowerment at the endline than at the baseline. Additionally, EYW's work with the community to discuss social norms around youth employment may have contributed to this result.

Finally, we found that the perceived restrictions on the labour market were quite low for young women and young men who participated in EYW. The scores were 0.57 for young men and 0.62 for young women (0-3 scale), which meant that youth believed that their age and gender made their employment opportunities between 'a little bit hard' and 'not at all hard'.

Figure 26

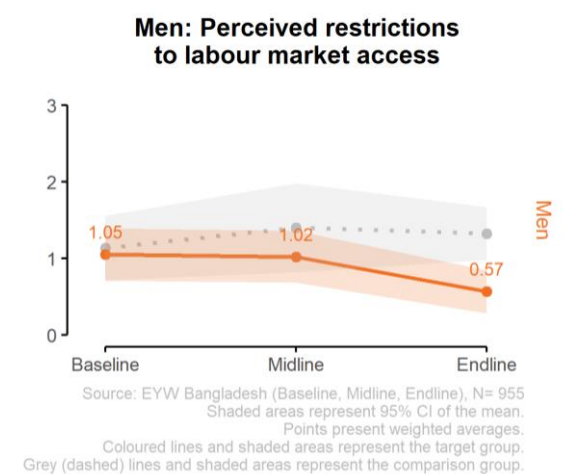
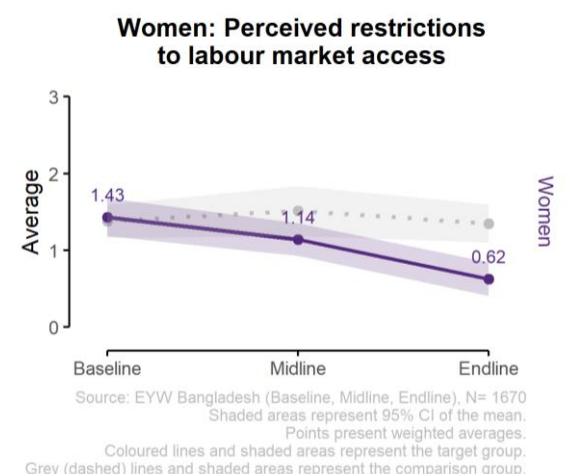


Figure 27



4.6.1.2 SOCIAL NORMS AROUND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Community members were asked a set of questions on social norms around youth employment. A social norm is a shared expectation or informal rule to which individuals prefer to conform if they believe two things: that most people in their reference group conform to it (empirical expectation) and that most

people in their reference group approve of conforming to it (normative expectation)³¹. Social norms are kept in place by sanctions – counterfactual actions that follow confirmation or breaking of a social norm. Social norms interact with personal attitudes to influence personal behaviour.

We measured the personal attitudes for two aspects of social norms: if people in a group approve of the norm (normative expectation) and if people in the group find it typical behaviour in their community (empirical expectation). We also explored the sanctions that community members would inflict when a social norm is broken (counterfactual belief).

With regards to personal attitudes, community members were asked if they would agree on their son/daughter 1) opening a business outside the house or 2) earning a wage working for someone else. For empirical expectation, community members were asked how common it is for young men or young women to participate in the labour market. For normative expectation, community members were asked about what people in the community would think if young men/young women would 1) open up a business outside their house or 2) earn a wage while working for someone else.

We want to highlight four main findings from the analysis of the social norms. First, young men's employment seemed to receive broad support from the community. Personal attitudes and normative expectations (approval of other community members) towards young men's employment were already high at the baseline, and we did not see a big change over time in these two aspects.

Second, community members' support for young women's employment increased between the baseline and the endline. We found an increase in personal attitudes and the normative expectation (approval of other community members) towards young women's employment. This showed that young women's employment became more acceptable in EYW communities. Also, this change was the result of community conversation groups discussing social norms around youth employment and influencing work with community authorities.

Third, community members changed their empirical expectations towards youth employment. This meant that community members believed that youth employment became more common in project areas during the project implementation. This finding was aligned with the positive impact of EYW on the employment rate and business ownership of EYW participants.

Fourth, the three aspects of social norms studied were higher for young men than for young women, particularly the empirical expectation. This indicated that for community members, young men's employment had more support, was more acceptable and was more common than young women's employment.

We also asked youth the same questions on the normative expectations and empirical expectations around youth employment³². We found very similar patterns and drew similar conclusions to the normative expectations and empirical expectations of community members.

³¹ Researchers use the term 'reference group' or 'reference persons' to refer to the people whose opinions matter (Alexander-Scott, Bell and Holden 2016: 8). A person's reference group can consist of individuals in their own lives and public figures.

³² We did not ask youth the questions on personal attitudes.

Figure 28

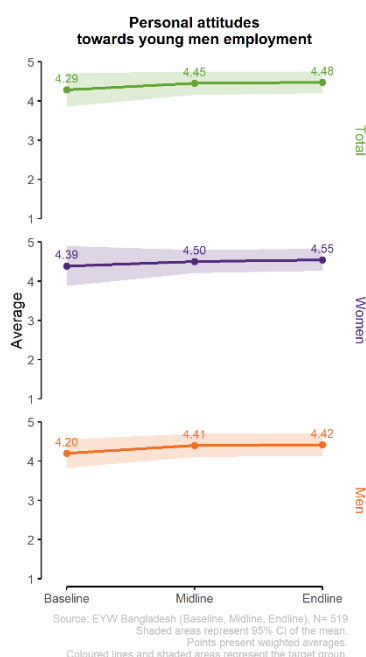


Figure 29

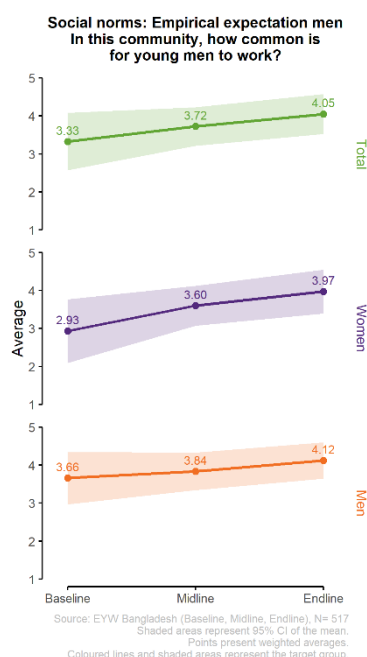


Figure 30

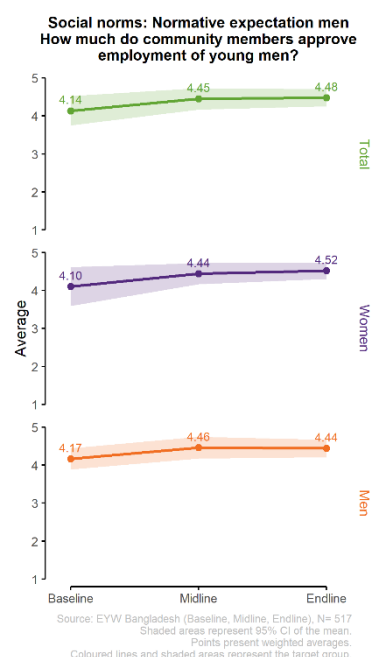


Figure 31

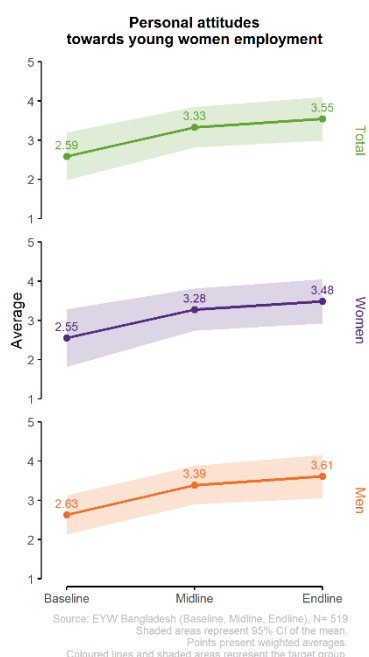


Figure 32

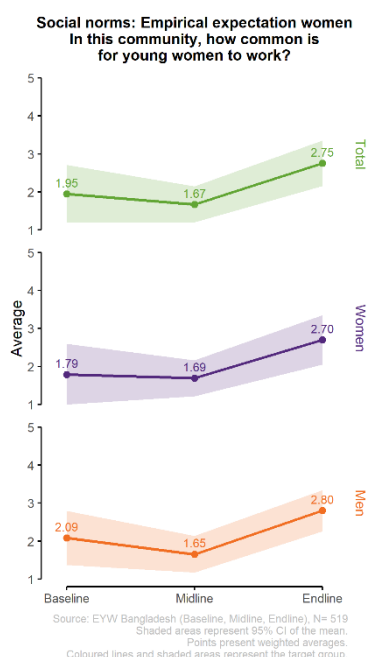
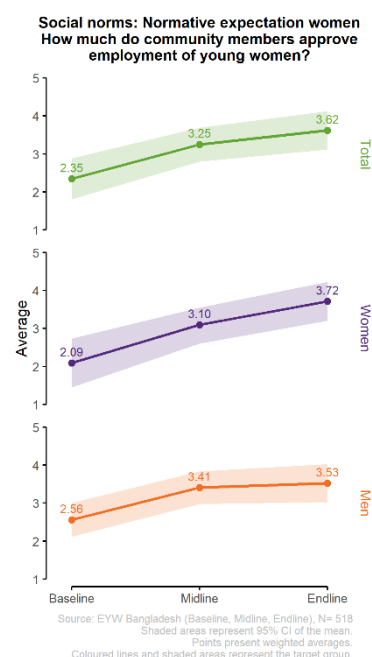


Figure 33



Lastly, we asked community members and youth what consequences they would expect if they diverged from established social norms. Specifically, we asked if community members would consent to a daughter or a son opening a business or taking a wage-earning job outside the home. We asked the youth what consequences might follow another young person doing either of these things. Examples of sanctions given included gossip (about the individual's action, about their character or about the

capability of parents to control their children), consequences for marriage opportunities (both positive and negative) and whether respondents felt it could be justified to harass women “of bad character”. Then, we measured the percentage of community members and youth who mentioned one or more negative consequences.

Overall, sanctions against youth employment decreased between the midline and the endline³³. For instance, according to community respondents, counterfactual actions against young men’s employment decreased from 53% at the midline to 42% at the endline. Similarly, the youth said that such counterfactual actions decreased from 57% at the midline to 41% at the endline.

Also, sanctions against young women’s employment became less frequent in the community. According to community members, counterfactual actions decreased from 97% at the midline to 77% at the endline. According to youth, sanctions against young women’s employment decreased from 97% at the midline to 82% at the endline.

The reduction in sanctions to maintain social norms against youth employment indicated the positive results arising from EYW by promoting an enabling environment for youth’s economic and social empowerment. At the reflection workshop, youth participants said that they had experienced some of these positive changes. They said that since the project started, they had seen a reduction in social and economic restrictions from society and family. They said that before the project, many young women kept themselves restricted, were trapped in their houses, did not participate in economic life and did not participate in community work (for example, youth groups and meetings with government).

The discussions in the IDIs around social norms and the empirical and normative expectations relating to the economic participation of youth were mostly limited to women’s participation in economic activities. According to participants, the acceptance of women being employed and earning an income had improved significantly over the past few years. Most of the youth and community members stated that the community was now open to women’s participation in economic activities – unlike a few years ago, this was no longer seen as unacceptable or unwanted. They mentioned community awareness and sensitisation activities and campaigns under EYW as key contributors to this change in perception. Another reason for this change came from a few responses that indicated that there could also be a need for additional income to run the households. According to some respondents, it was difficult to run a household with only one person or only male members earning an income. The acceptance of women’s economic participation was, therefore, being driven by both awareness and necessity.

For example, my neighbour: her husband didn’t allow her for involvement in economic activities. Through our project intervention, her husband was sensitized and allowed her to do income generating activities. Female youth, Rajshahi

Mobility of women was also less five years ago because parents didn’t allow their young girls to take part in any training or meeting... they discouraged higher education of women [that required going] outside of their villages. Male youth, Barisal

³³ Questions on counterfactual sanctions were asked only at the midline and the endline.

Yes, the perceptions of people in the community towards young women to start their business or take up a job has improved compared to before. Now community people realize that it is difficult to manage family expenses by only the male (husband). Now the situation has been changing dramatically for women's economic and social empowerment. Community member, Rajshahi

Yes, EYW organized community awareness activities like campaign, courtyard meeting, family level discussion, etc. with community people, household level, and local government. As a result, community people and family have been made aware of women economic empowerment to improve women freedom and economic independence... as a result, they can step out the house for business and job as well as engage in social activities. I think five years back, family as well as community would rarely give permission to young women to step out the house for business or job as well as engaging in social activities due to social and religious taboo and customs. Community member, Barisal

The above are not direct quotes. This is adapted text based on interactions with the participants.

Finally, we want to emphasize that gender inequalities in social norms around youth employment were still present in the project areas. Despite the reduction in the frequency of sanctions against young women's employment, at the endline, the social sanctions emerged more often for young women's employment than for young men's employment. Furthermore, social sanctions against young women's employment were still very common in project areas.

4.6.1.3 SOCIAL NORMS AROUND DIVISION OF CARE WORK

It is important to consider the burden of unpaid care work when working on employment, especially for women. For men and women to both develop economic activities, a shared burden of unpaid care work is important. Therefore, we investigated the social norms around the division of paid and unpaid care work.

Community respondents were asked to react to three stories that illustrated scenarios for the distribution of unpaid care work between wife and husband. The first story³⁴ illustrated a gendered division of labour, where women do all the unpaid care work and men the paid work. They both spent about the same time on these responsibilities. The second story³⁵ depicted shared responsibilities for paid and unpaid work between men and women. In the third story³⁶, women did most of the work (both paid and unpaid),

³⁴ Story 1: My husband works as a carpenter, he leaves the house early and comes back in the evening. After preparing breakfast for my family, I work in the field in the mornings. I return to prepare lunch for my children. I fetch water when it is near my pond and firewood, make sure the house and compound are clean. When my husband comes back from work, he is very tired. I bring him water to wash his hands and serve him food. I do the dishes and prepare the beds for all of us.

³⁵ Story 2: Ever since we got together, my husband and me have shared responsibilities. We get up around the same time, prepare breakfast, clean the house and help the children. We work on our farm together. When we come home from the field, he carries the vegetables and I carry some firewood. We both go and fetch water whenever we need it. I take the lead on cooking, but my husband helps me chopping vegetables and cleaning the kitchen and compound.

³⁶ Story 3: I do a lot of work. I work on the farm and do all the housework, bathing the children, collecting water and fuel, cleaning, cooking, making sure the house is okay. My husband does some agricultural work and some

while men did some paid work and hung out with friends. Then, we enquired about personal attitudes, the normative expectations (approval of other community members) and the empirical expectations (typical behaviour in the community) of community members around the three stories.

The social norms analysis of the division of care work had four main findings. First, gender-equal distribution of paid and unpaid work received more support (personal attitudes), more approval (normative expectation) and became more common (empirical expectation) at the endline than at the baseline. Second, gendered division of labour received less support (personal attitudes), less approval (normative expectation) and became less common (empirical expectation) at the endline than at the baseline. Third, the scenario where a woman was exploited by her husband was more supported (personal attitudes), received more approval (normative expectation) and became more common (empirical expectation) at the endline than at the baseline in project areas. This seemed to contradict the expectations of EYW around the division of care work in project areas.

Fourth, it is important to note that a gender-equal distribution of paid and unpaid work was the situation that was most supported, most approved of and most common in project areas. Hence, this demonstrated the success of EYW's efforts to promote gender-equal distributions of care work in project areas.

Figure 34

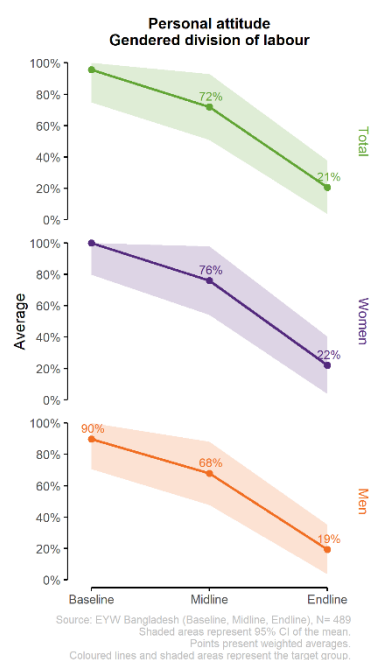


Figure 35

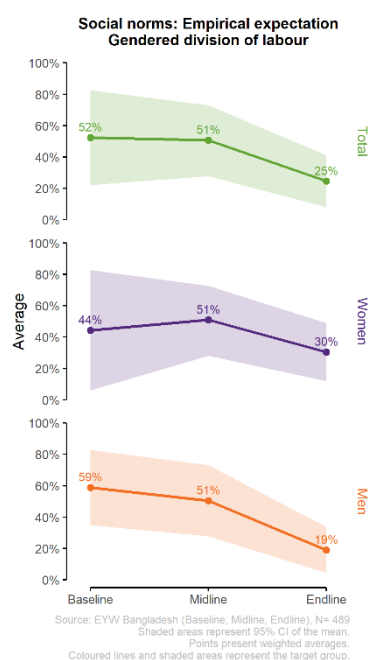
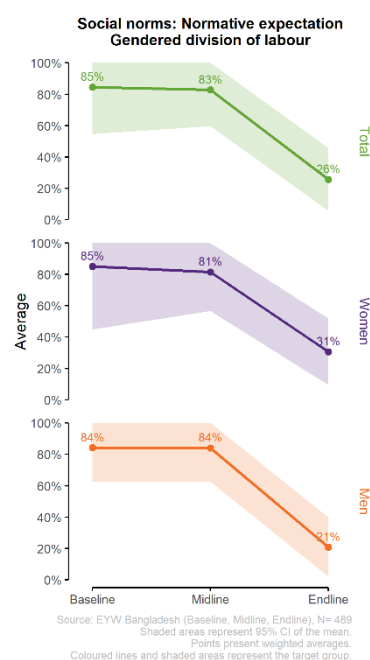


Figure 36



casual labour. He often meets up with friends to chat or relax. Usually, he does not help me with my work. But sometimes he might get water or cook if I am sick or not at home.

Figure 37

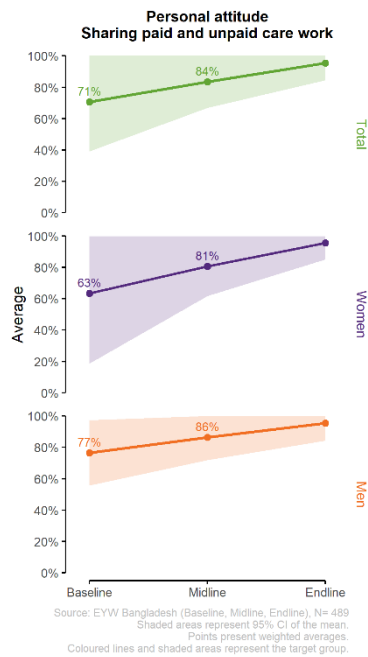


Figure 38

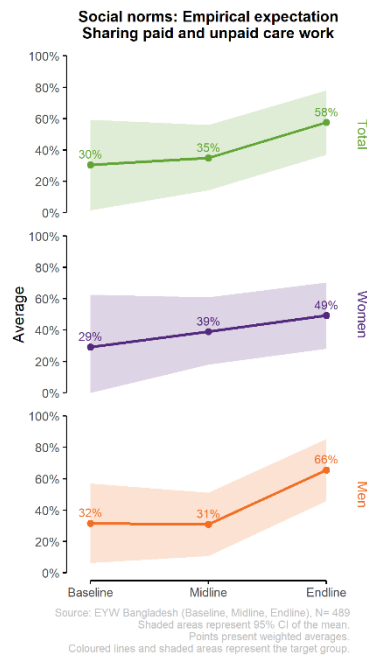


Figure 39

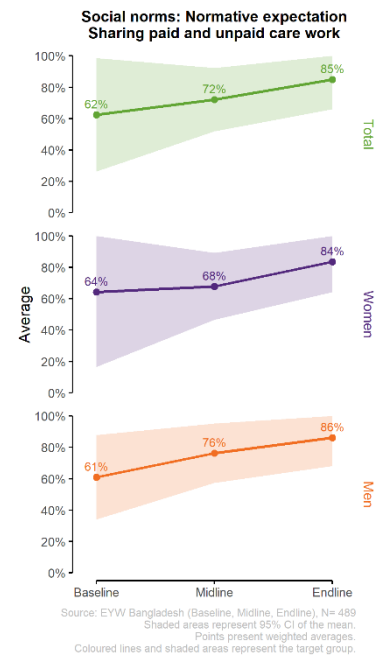


Figure 40

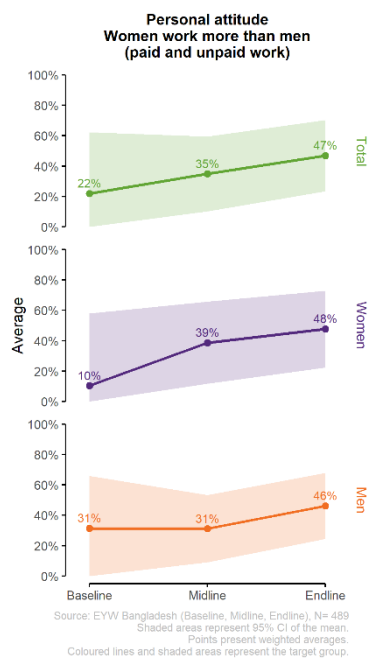


Figure 41

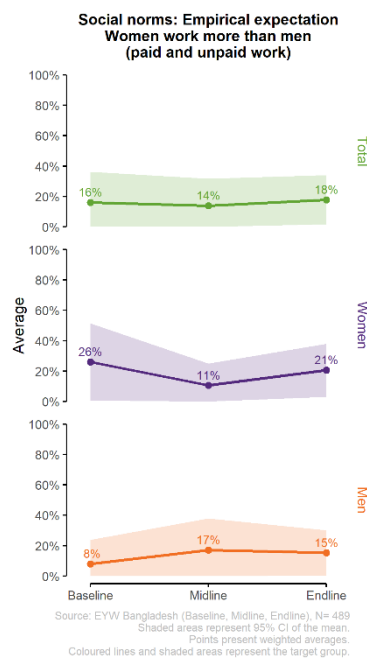
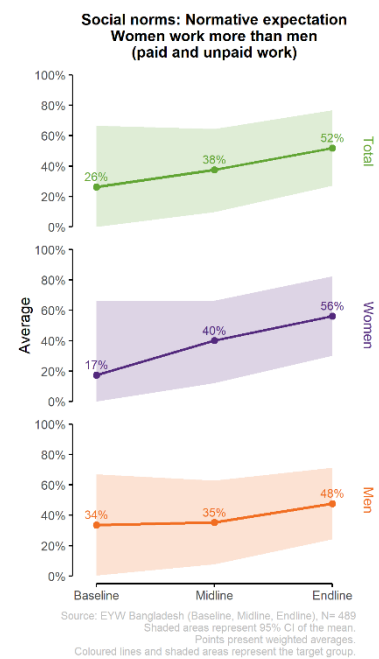


Figure 42



4.6.2 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND GENDER EQUALITY

KPI #: Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and gender equality	Total		Gender	
	Total		Women	Men
Baseline-Endline data	Is there a significant effect for the target group over time? (Impact)			

ST OM	3.1	% of young women who feel their daily lives are limited by the threat of gender-based violence	↓	↓	na
Midline-Endline data			Is there a significant effect for the target group over time? (Impact)		
ST OM	3.1	% of young women with improved knowledge of GBV and who are taking action against GBV	↑	↑	na
		Average value of Gender Equality Index of young people	↑	↑	=

Figure 43

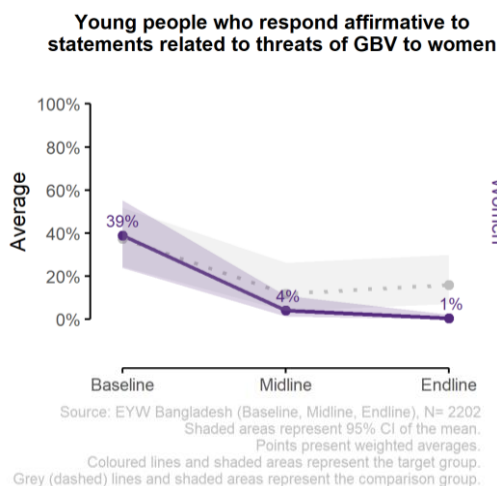
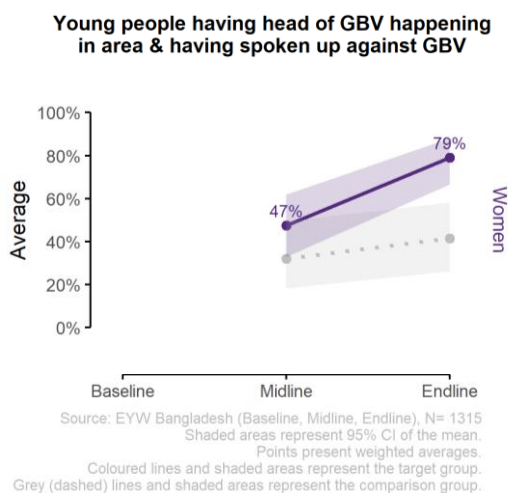


Figure 44



Gender equality plays an important role in the social and economic development of youth. For instance, threats of GBV impose restrictions on mobility, economic independence, and the physical and mental health of young women.

Therefore, we asked young women 11 statements to identify their personal attitudes towards GBV³⁷. Then, we measured the percentage of young women who would approve of or agree with threats of GBV.

At the endline, young women EYW participants were less supportive of threats of GBV than at the baseline (Figure 43). Also, at the endline, we found that young women EYW participants were less sympathetic to threats of GBV than non-participants. Therefore, we found a positive impact on this outcome indicator. This finding shows the positive results of EYW's work in improving attitudes against GBV.

At the midline and the endline, we asked young women if they had heard of GBV happening in their

³⁷ The GBV indicator equalled one if seven out of 11 statements on GBV threats to women were affirmed:

- Disapprove of women working outside the house to earn a wage
- Disapprove of women owning a business outside the house
- Disapprove of women going to the market without male permission
- Approve of husbands having the right to verbally discipline their wives
- Approve of husbands having the right to physically discipline their wives
- Approve of girls marrying before turning 16
- Agree that women should do housework and carework and men should earn money
- Agree that wives should give their income to their husbands
- Agree that giving a dowry is traditional
- Agree that young women on their own may be verbally harassed when going out on the streets
- Agree that young women on their own may be physically harassed when going out on the streets

area and what forms³⁸ of GBV were common in their communities. If young women mentioned forms of GBV happening in their area, we asked them if they had ever spoken up or acted against it. We calculated the percentage of young women who had heard of forms of GBV and who had spoken up or acted against it.

EYW had a positive impact on young women speaking up and acting against forms of GBV. This was a very important achievement for the project. However, at the endline, some young women still did not feel safe speaking up or taking action against GBV.

The responses from the IDIs did not comprehensively suggest that the incidence of GBV had decreased in the areas where the IDIs were held or whether participants were now confident of acting if they became aware of GBV incidents around them. What did come out prominently was the high level of participation in and exposure to activities and events relating to the awareness of and sensitisation to GBV. It should also be noted that most of these activities were organised and implemented by the youth themselves.

Many youth participants stated that the soft-skills training helped them to get a better understanding of issues that affected women – especially GBV. This awareness triggered some of them to become involved in activities and events that focused on improving awareness of GBV and its impact on women. They talked about either organising or attending campaigns and events that focused on GBV, among other themes, such as SRHR, unpaid care work, women's empowerment, and early marriage. Most of the participants – both community members and youth – stated that the awareness of GBV had improved significantly in their communities. Some believed that the incidence of GBV in their communities had reduced significantly because of these activities. However, these statements were difficult to verify. At the reflection workshop, participants were very proud of the positive results for GBV. They were very happy to see that young women improved their knowledge of this issue.

Five years back in our community, women had less knowledge on SRHR, intensity of women violence and early marriage, no recognition of unpaid care work. The EYW project increased awareness level on SRHR, enabling environment for women and bad impact of early marriage, recognition of unpaid care work among our community people. Female youth, Barisal

Now women are considered safe in public spaces and within their households. Yes, at the workplace, gender-based violence has been reducing than before. Yes, the overall incidence of violence against women has been reduced significantly compared to before. The project organized advocacy campaigns with the employers, service providers, government officials and the community, resulting in decent working condition that has been improving than before. And, also gender-based violence in the community is also reducing. Community member, Rangpur

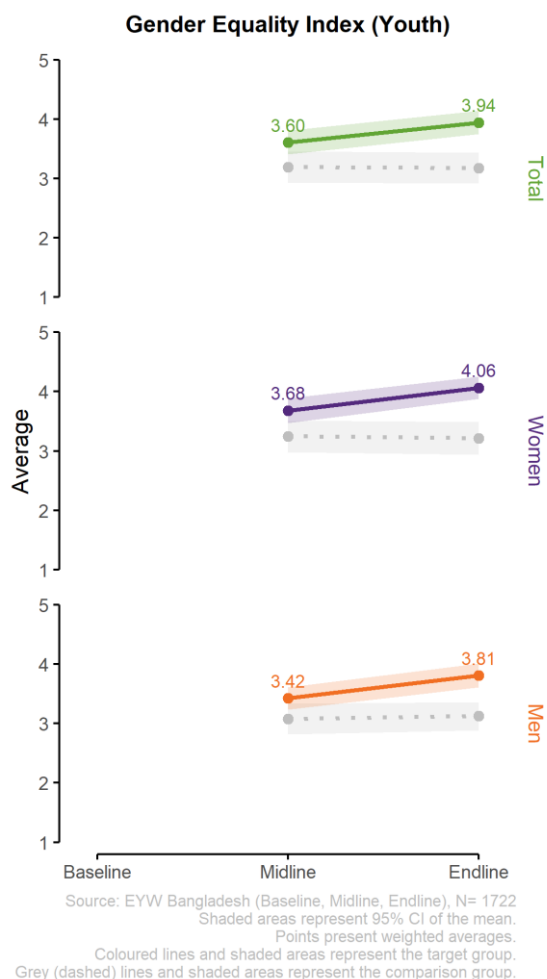
Supported from EYW project, we organize different type of campaigns, meetings, seminars for reducing GBV like eve-teasing, sexual abuse, physical abuse, early marriage, unpaid care work etc . Moreover, so far as I know, project organizes meetings, seminars with employers for ensuring decent working condition. I think now

³⁸ Domestic violence, harassment in the public sphere, harassment in the workplace, economic violence (for example, denial of work, lower pay, denial of employment), child marriage, or any other form of GBV.

safety of women in public spaces, their house, at work and commuting to their workplace has been increasing almost 60% compared to five years back. Community member, Barisal

The above are not direct quotes. This is adapted text based on interactions with the participants.

Figure 45



Additionally, a Gender-Equality Index was calculated for youth. This index looked at positive attitudes towards gender equality by using seven statements³⁹ at the midline and the endline. On a 1-5 scale, a high index meant a highly gender-equal attitude.

We found that the gender-equal attitudes of EYW participants increased between the midline and the endline. Overall, the EYW project in Bangladesh had a positive impact on promoting gender-equal attitudes among young people.

When we looked at young men and young women separately, we only found an impact for young women EYW participants. However, we want to mention that the young men who were EYW participants improved their attitudes to gender equality, but the change over time was not large enough to be regarded as an impact.

Discussions on gender equality during IDIs focused on two aspects: 1) freedom for women to participate in economic activities and the resultant impact on women's mobility and household decision-making,

and 2) improved awareness of issues relating to gender equality, such as unpaid care work, GBV, SRHR and early marriage. Most of the participants stated that women now had more freedom to participate in economic activities, earn an income, and spend the income according to their wishes. As a result of this, the restrictions on women's mobility had also reduced, and they now had a say in how their income and the household income was spent. Beyond the economic aspect, respondents stated

³⁹ The seven statements were:

- Disagree that it is much better for everyone concerned if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family
- Disagree that there is some work that is men's and some that is women's, and they should not be doing each other's
- Disagree that in our culture, a woman's place is in the home, not in the office or shop
- Disagree that a wife who carries out her full family responsibilities doesn't have time for outside employment
- Disagree that a wife should not expect her husband to help around the house after he comes home from a hard day's work
- Agree that if a wife works full-time outside their home, the husband should help with housework
- Agree that men should share the work around the house with women, such as doing dishes, cleaning, etc.

that youth and community members were now much more aware of issues relating to gender equality. However, how changes in the communities had happened were not discussed during the IDIs. This could indicate that awareness is the first step towards progress and that change requires more time and effort.

Yes, women are more independent now to earn and spend by themselves. I can give my wife's example: By involving this programme, her leadership capacities, business development skills increased, which enables her to become economically solvent through tailoring, vermicompost, poultry farming, etc. Besides, she is also working as a part-time health worker of BRAC, a reputed Non-Government Organization of Bangladesh. So, during any vaccination programme, she used to travel alone in nearby Upazilla (Puthia) and sometimes went to Rajshahi town to buy insecticides and feed for cattle and poultry. Community member, Rajshahi

As like others, I also believe this programme not only ensured income opportunity for youth, but it also created awareness among the community on reducing unpaid care work, women violence, sexual reproductive health, early marriage, dowry etc., through organizing courtyard meetings. Male youth, Rajshahi

Yes, there are some changes that happened as compared to five years back. But those are still minimal because women are deprived of getting their rights and entitlements in community and at their home as well. Female youth, Khulna

Through the project intervention, I see that young women taking up jobs or being inclined towards starting their own business have been increasing. And freedom for women to step out of the house in our community has increased significantly compared to five years back due to creating awareness among the community as well as family on women rights and on the effectiveness of women economic empowerment. Now, we have got the freedom to spend our income. Female youth, Khulna

The above are not direct quotes. This is adapted text based on interactions with the participants.

4.6.3 SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

KPI #: Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR)			Total	Gender	
			Total	Women	Men
Baseline-Endline data			Is there a significant effect for the target group over time? (Impact)		
ST OM	3.1	% of young people with knowledge about family planning methods.	↑	↑	↑
		% of young people with access to SRHR services	↑	↑	↑
Midline-Endline data			Is there a significant effect for the target group over time? (Impact)		
ST OM	3.1	% of young people who know when girls are more likely to get pregnant	=	=	=
		% of young people who have heard about diseases that can be caught through sex	↑	↑	↑

The last set of indicators in pillar 3 is related to SRHR. We assessed the influence of EYW on knowledge of family planning methods, perceptions of access to SRHR services, knowledge of when girls are more likely to get pregnant and knowledge of diseases that can be caught through sex. Overall, EYW had positive results for this outcome area.

We found that EYW had a positive impact on young people's knowledge of family planning methods, perceptions of access to SRHR services, and knowledge of diseases that can be caught through sex. The percentage of EYW participants with knowledge of family planning methods and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) increased between the baseline and the endline. Also, the percentage of EYW participants who thought there was sufficient access to SRHR services increased between the baseline and the endline. However, there were no major changes for these three indicators between the baseline and the endline for non-participants.

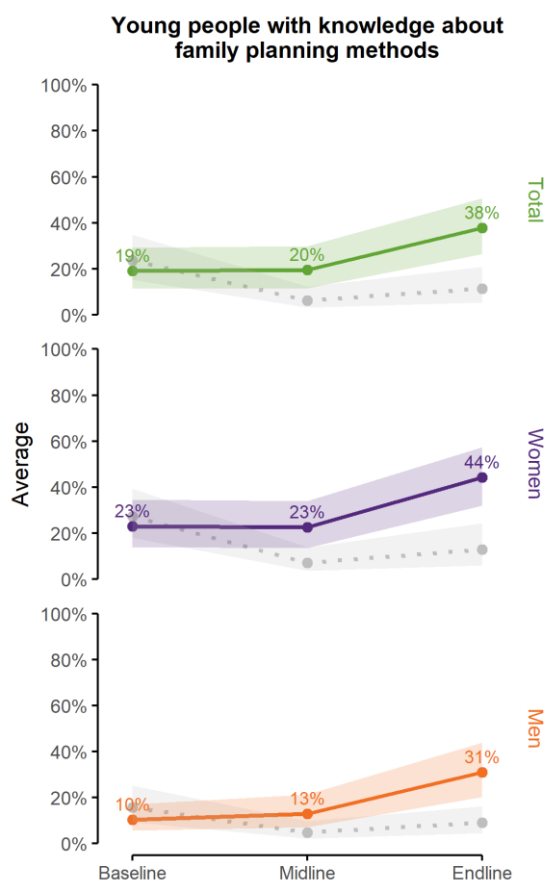
Another positive contribution of EYW was the increase in the percentage of EYW participants with correct knowledge of when girls are more likely to get pregnant between the midline and the endline⁴⁰. However, we found that this indicator also increased over time for non-participants. Hence, we did not find any impact on this indicator.

At the reflection workshop, participants agreed that more women were aware of SRHR issues. They said that EYW helped them to gain knowledge of this area.

Despite the progress mentioned in this section, some challenges remained in the area of SRHR. For instance, at the endline, only 44% of young women and 31% of young men who were EYW participants knew about family planning methods. Also, 29% of EYW participants still did not have sufficient access to SRHR services. Moreover, 51% of EYW participants still did not have correct knowledge of when girls are more likely to get pregnant

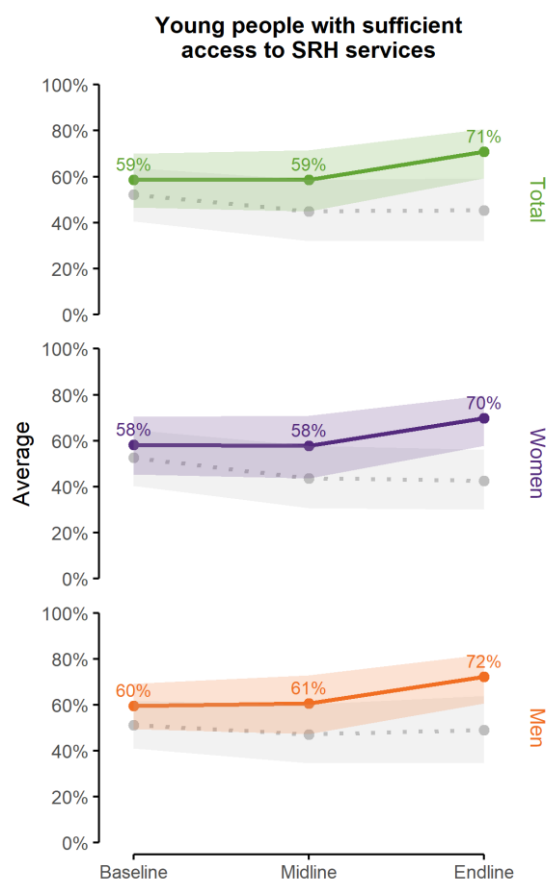
⁴⁰ The question for this indicator was only asked at the midline and the endline.

Figure 46



Source: EYW Bangladesh (Baseline, Midline, Endline), N= 2394
 Shaded areas represent 95% CI of the mean.
 Points present weighted averages.
 Coloured lines and shaded areas represent the target group.
 Grey (dashed) lines and shaded areas represent the comparison group.

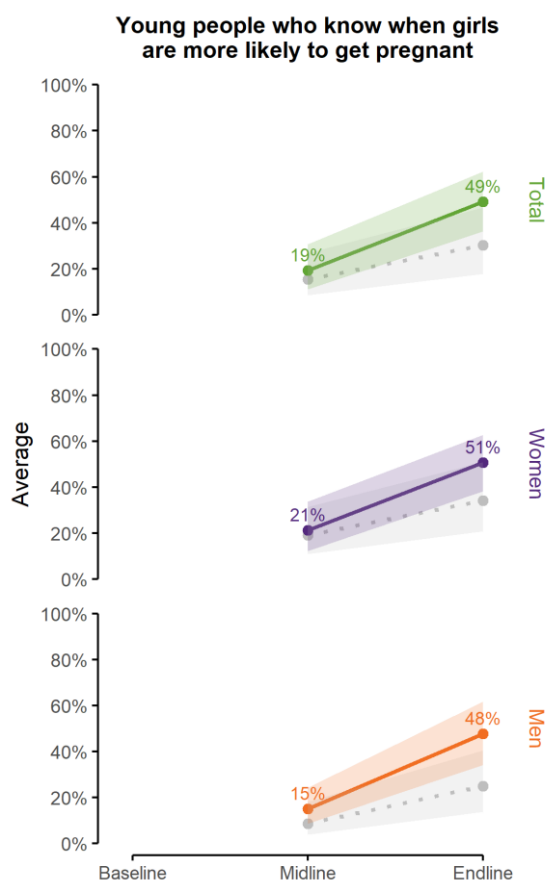
Figure 47



Source: EYW Bangladesh (Baseline, Midline, Endline), N= 2396
 Shaded areas represent 95% CI of the mean.
 Points present weighted averages.
 Coloured lines and shaded areas represent the target group.
 Grey (dashed) lines and shaded areas represent the comparison group.

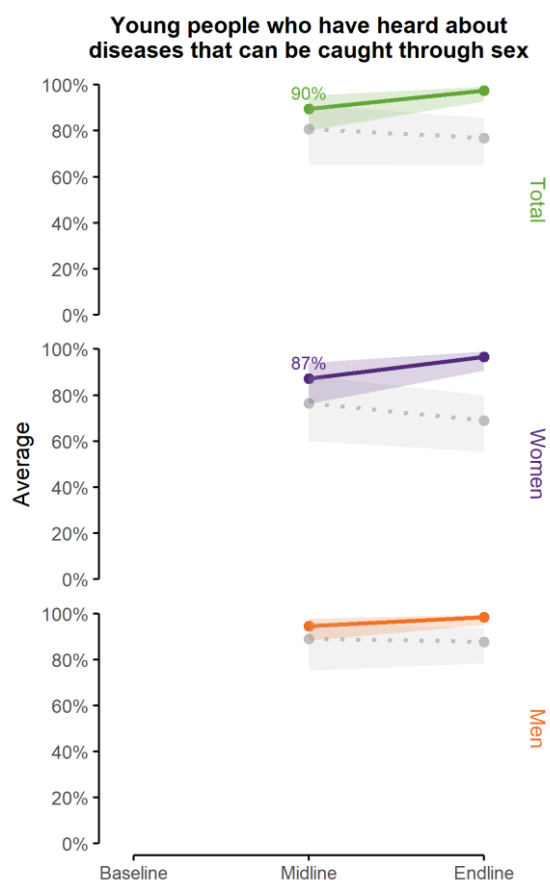


Figure 48



Source: EYW Bangladesh (Baseline, Midline, Endline), N= 1498
 Shaded areas represent 95% CI of the mean.
 Points present weighted averages.
 Coloured lines and shaded areas represent the target group.
 Grey (dashed) lines and shaded areas represent the comparison group.

Figure 49



Source: EYW Bangladesh (Baseline, Midline, Endline), N= 1491
 Shaded areas represent 95% CI of the mean.
 Points present weighted averages.
 Coloured lines and shaded areas represent the target group.
 Grey (dashed) lines and shaded areas represent the comparison group.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the conclusions of the endline study of the EYW project in Bangladesh. The programme applied a holistic approach to effectively drive young people's economic and overall empowerment through 1) working on agency, capacity and skills, 2) linking young people to existing and new economic opportunities, including access to finance, and 3) the creation of an enabling environment by influencing social norms and policies that facilitate young men and women's economic and overall empowerment. In this evaluation, we assessed progress for each of these pillars.

In this chapter, we first answer each of the three sub-evaluation questions related to each of the three pillars. We close with an overall conclusion.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS TO EVALUATION QUESTIONS

5.2.1 TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY THE EYW PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTED TO CHANGES IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S AGENCY AND SKILLS?

EYW in Bangladesh had a positive impact on the agency and skills of young people. Youth participants felt more capable of changing things in their youth group, their community and for themselves and their families between the baseline and the endline. Additionally, EYW contributed to greater gender equality for the three types of agency evaluated in this report.

Furthermore, all EYW training had a positive impact on youth's skills. Most likely, this played an important role in the increased employment and business ownership for EYW participants. Also, it was remarkable that EYW contributed to closing the gender gap for the entrepreneurship skills of the youth participants.

Despite these positive impacts, young women still had slightly lower levels of soft skills than young men.

5.2.2 TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY THE EYW PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTED TO CHANGES IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES?

In Bangladesh, EYW achieved a positive impact on the economic opportunities of young people. Employment, especially youth entrepreneurship, increased to a large extent in the project areas. Increased business ownership for young people was possible because, over time, more EYW participants applied for and obtained access to finance to start up businesses. These positive results led to a positive impact on youth's income and economic empowerment. EYW also had a positive impact on the dissemination of information about job opportunities among project participants.

The Covid-19 pandemic undoubtedly had a negative effect on the employment and economic opportunities of many young people. Therefore, it was remarkable that EYW achieved positive impacts for pillar 2, despite the harsh economic conditions derived from the pandemic. This suggested that the project contributed to building economic resilience among EYW participants.

Nevertheless, some challenges need further work to fully achieve youth's economic empowerment. For instance, unemployment was still high for young women. Moreover, the gender income gap persisted

in project areas, which affected young women's economic empowerment. Also, many youths who applied for a loan to start up a business were not able to get it, and a lack of access to finance was one of the main barriers to employment. Furthermore, youth's enrolment in apprenticeship programmes increased through the course of the project but was still very low. Finally, for the few who were employees of someone else, their working conditions were below decent work standards.

5.2.3 TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY THE EYW PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTED TO CHANGES IN THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE?

EYW in Bangladesh had a positive impact on youth's perceived social restrictions to their participation in the labour market. Youth participants perceived that they faced fewer age and gender restrictions to employment participation after project implementation.

Also, according to community members, at the endline, social norms in project areas were more supportive of young women's participation in employment than at the baseline. Moreover, community members said that youth employment became more typical behaviour after the project. These improvements in the social context for youth were supported by a reduction in the social sanctions against youth employment in project areas. Furthermore, according to community members, gender-equal distribution of paid and unpaid work was the situation most supported, most approved and most common in project areas.

These positive results for social norms were very likely the combined result of EYW's community conversations on social norms around youth employment, the division of unpaid care work, and positive impacts on youth employment, the entrepreneurship of young women, and the agency and skills of young women.

Additionally, EYW had a positive impact on the percentage of young women who were more aware of what represented a threat of GBV, on the percentage of young women who spoke up or took action against GBV, and on increased gender-equal attitudes. Also, EYW had a positive impact on young people's increased knowledge of family planning methods, improved perceptions of access to SRHR services, and increased knowledge of STDs. Overall, these positive impacts very likely contributed to the socio-economic empowerment of youth.

Nonetheless, some aspects of the social context for youth remained challenging in project areas. Social norms around youth employment continued to be more supportive of young men's employment than young women's employment. Social sanctions against young women's employment were still very common at the endline. Furthermore, unequal division of unpaid care work was still present in project areas. These remaining challenges partly explained the gender gap in youth employment, income and socio-economic empowerment.

Finally, some young women still did not feel safe speaking up or taking action against GBV. More than half of EYW participants still did not have knowledge of family planning methods, one-third of EYW participants thought that access to SRHR services was insufficient, and half of EYW participants still did not know when girls are more likely to get pregnant.

5.3 CONCLUSION

EYW in Bangladesh had a positive impact on the social and economic empowerment of youth participants, which was possible because of the project's holistic approach. Skills training was very effective at increasing the soft, technical, and entrepreneurial skills of youth. The positive impacts of skills training, the financial linkages facilitated by EYW, and the dissemination of job opportunities contributed to the positive impact of EYW on youth employment, and especially on entrepreneurship. Additionally, EYW's positive impacts on the social context for youth played a role in the socio-economic empowerment of the project participants. Overall, EYW in Bangladesh was successful in achieving impact for most outcome areas of the three pillars of the holistic approach.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMES

We formulated recommendations based on the insights, experiences and results presented in this report. These recommendations specifically apply to project areas but could also be relevant for other districts in Bangladesh, for the civil society sector and future programmes working on youth employment:

- **A holistic approach with a long-term vision:** Future programmes can adapt the holistic approach of EYW to their specific context and improve the social and economic empowerment of youth. Overall, this evaluation showed that working on agency and skills, economic opportunities and the promotion of an enabling environment was key to increased socio-economic empowerment. Providing integrated and diversified training that includes life skills, technical skills, climate resilience, value chain assessment is another aspect of the holistic approach. Furthermore, future programmes should be implemented with a long-term vision because many of EYW's positive impacts were only reached towards the end of the project.
- **Agency:** Future programmes should continue with the organization of youth groups that guarantee gender-equal participation. The organization of youth groups was effective for increasing the agency of youth, especially for young women.
- **Skills training:** Youth employment programmes should include at least training on soft skills, technical skills and entrepreneurship skills. Youth participants thought the skills learned in these three types of training were very useful. Also, future programmes should attempt to achieve impact on all the aspects of soft skills. Moreover, reflection workshop participants identified additional areas for future training: trading skills, value-chain market development skills, e-commerce skills, agricultural skills and the use of modern technology for agricultural businesses.
- **Access to finance to reduce unemployment:** Future programmes should address the barriers that young people face in accessing financial capital. In this evaluation, unemployed youth said that one of the main barriers to employment was the lack of access to finance. Also, reflection workshop participants stressed the importance of providing loans to youth from banks in easier ways. Reflection workshop participants recommended further developing communication between banks and youth in order to facilitate youth-friendly loans. Future programmes should have inclusion as one of the primary elements when planning and designing access to finance-related activities: youth from rural areas should be accorded high priority in accessing finance capital.
- **Decent work standards:** Future programmes need to continue working on improved policies and practices to achieve decent work standards. This requires the involvement of workers,

employers, and government. For youth who were salaried workers, we found that their working conditions were still below decent work standards.

- **Enabling environment:** Future programmes should continue dedicating efforts to the creation of an enabling environment for the socio-economic empowerment of youth. This evaluation showed that EYW's work on social norms contributed to improved personal attitudes, normative expectations and empirical expectations towards young women's economic participation. Also, EYW contributed to reducing social sanctions against youth employment and perceived restrictions on young people's employment. Social norms around care work were also improved by the project. Nonetheless, some challenges regarding young women's economic participation remained in project areas. Reflection workshop participants recommended the creation of policy dialogues to continue addressing the social norms challenges.
- **Gender equality:** Future programmes should continue addressing the gender inequalities that limit the social and economic empowerment of young women. Key areas where future programmes should continue to reduce gender inequalities are agency and skills, labour force participation, social norms around youth employment, the distribution of unpaid care work, gender-equal attitudes, SRHR, and the creation of safe spaces where young women can organize themselves to speak up and take action against GBV.
- **Youth National Budget:** Partners and other stakeholders feel that the current allocation towards socio-economic empowerment of youth as part of the national budget is insufficient. For continuous enhancement of the socio-economic empowerment of youth, future programmes must include advocacy activities focusing on increasing this allocation. Reflection workshop participants recommended conducting a media campaign on this issue as the first step in this direction.
- **Climate action and disaster risk management (DRM) activation:** Many areas in Bangladesh, including those where EYW was implemented, are prone to adverse climate events. It is, therefore, deemed important for youth to possess climate adaptation skills so that they build and maintain resilience, especially with respect to their livelihoods and self-employment activities. Furthermore, there are opportunities to engage with local government agencies that focus on DRM and to renew and revitalise their activities, where youth can play an active role. Reflection workshop participants asserted that future programmes should integrate climate issues in every project activity. For example, they suggested that climate action skills need further development among the youth. They also pointed out the necessity of awareness-raising about climate issues among youth and local government bodies.
- **Create youth-centric product collection and selling points:** To enhance both backward and forward linkages in a value chain, partners and other stakeholders of EYW believe that youth-centric collection and selling points could be established as part of future programmes. These points will help connect the youth involved in producing and selling agriculture, dairy or handicraft products with a wider range of buyers. Such an option could help the youth get a fair price for their produce. According to reflection workshop participants, this could be achieved through training for selected group members.

- **Linkages with the private sector:** Oxfam Bangladesh's Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) provides opportunities to youth by linking them with the private sector on enterprise development and employment. This approach can also be adopted in future programmes that work empowerment of youth. According to the reflection workshop participants, the first step in this direction could be mapping of private sector actors – both at the local and national levels – that are open to engaging with youth and are engaged in value chains which are of interest to youth.

7 ANNEX

7.1 STATISTICAL APPROACH

Assessing the impact of the EYW programme: a counterfactual approach

To assess the project's effects on each of the KPIs, we investigate to what extent KPIs have changed over time. We compare the values on the outcomes at the baseline (2017, the start of the project) with those at the endline (2021, the end of the project).

Assessing change in an KPI over time for those who participated in the project is not a robust method to assess the impact of a certain project, as we are only looking at those who actually participated. The outcomes can be affected by a myriad of factors which are not in the project's or program's sphere of influence. In that case, it would thus be inaccurate and 'unfair' to claim all changes that occurred between the baseline and endline as evidence of the impact of the project.

A more reasonable and accurate method would be to ask ourselves the question "*What would have happened in the absence of the project?*", in addition to describing what has happened to the project participants. In order to arrive at a reasonable estimate of the effects of the project on an KPI, one would thus need to compare the change over time among a group of people that participated in the project's activities with the change over time in a situation where the project was not implemented. Both groups operate in the same context but the only difference between them is whether they participated in the project's activities. This is a so-called counterfactual approach; comparing changes over time among a group of people who participated in the project with changes over time in a similar group of people who have not participated in the project.

To create this counterfactual for the target group we incorporated a comparison group in our design. Comparable subdistricts where EYW did not work were selected. Within these subdistricts, the distribution in the beneficiary database was taken into account. We then compare the changes over time in an KPI in the target group with the change over time on the same KPI in the comparison group. We can then assess the project's impact as we have a decent understanding of what would have happened in case the project was not implemented.

Estimating attributable impact: analysing differences over time

Subsequently, our analyses estimate the values of each outcome indicator, for instance, young people's level of empowerment (measured through a set of survey questions). The average level of empowerment is then estimated at the baseline and the endline, for both the comparison and target groups. We can determine the trend or change over time for the target and the comparison group in these four estimates. We can then see whether young people's level of empowerment increased or decreased over time for the target group. Similarly, for the comparison group we can see how young people's level of empowerment has developed over time, without any project activities being implemented.

In this case, the expectation is that young people's level of empowerment would improve over the project duration for the target group. The supposed increase in knowledge, or 'growth', for the target group is calculated by taking the baseline values on this indicator (the point of departure for young people's level of empowerment) and subtracting these from the endline values. This is called the first-order difference.

Similarly, we assess the change among non-participants. Indeed, there might have been changes in level of empowerment, unrelated to the project. Suppose we would also find an increase in level of empowerment in this comparison group. Should that be the case, such changes cannot be attributed to the project itself as there have not been any project activities with young people in the comparison group.

For an accurate judgement of the project's impact we thus compare the change over time in the comparison group, with the change over time in the target group. In case the change over time in the target group, is bigger than the change over time in the comparison group, the project has had attributable impact. So in this example, if the supposed increase in young people's level of empowerment in the target group is bigger than the increase in knowledge observed in the comparison group, one may speak of positive, attributable impact. This technique is called a difference-in-difference estimation⁴¹. An important assumption of difference-in-difference estimation is that project as well as non-project participants are exposed to similar external shocks. This is the so-called parallel trends assumption.

Matching: ensuring the comparability of the target and comparison group

By incorporating a comparison group in our design and using a difference-in-difference technique, we are not there yet. We know that it is likely that the target and comparison groups are not directly comparable. They may differ systematically on a range of characteristics at the baseline. For instance, the targeted communities might be more impoverished, or lower educated than those in the comparison group as projects choose to implement their activities among marginalized groups. Thus, it is likely that some socio-demographic characteristics influence whether the project targets a household or community.

Moreover, socio-demographic characteristics, such as age or one's residential area, might also influence our KPIs. In econometric terms, this means that both the probability of participating in the project's activities and the outcomes may be affected by pre-existing differences between the target and comparison group. The probability of participating in the project activities is called the propensity score. This probability is not equal for all young people (and unknown)⁴².

⁴¹ Athey, S., & Imbens, G. W. (2017). The state of applied econometrics: Causality and policy evaluation. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(2), p. 3-32.

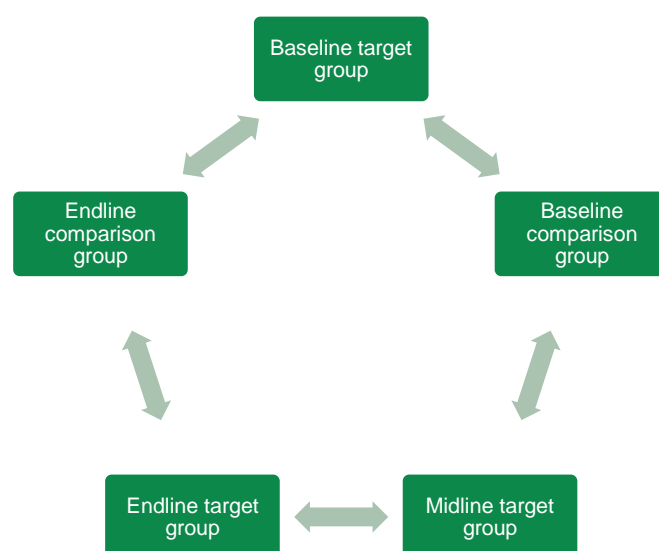
⁴² Compare this to a situation where participation in the project would be determined by a coin toss (a randomized experiment). In this case, participation in the project would be solely determined by chance, not by any pre-existing characteristics of the people that (intend to) participate in the project. In this case the propensity score (the probability of being in the target group) would be known and equal to 0.5

We use this propensity score to reduce incomparability between the target and comparison group in two stages. This technique is called propensity score matching. In the first stage, we calculate the propensity score to select or match a comparison group similar to the target group based on a set of (mostly) demographic determinants. In the second stage, we estimate our impacts using this matched target and comparison group.

Calculating propensity scores

We have implemented propensity score matching using a multinomial logistic regression, where each person is given a weighting based on the characteristics used in the matching model⁴³. This weighting is expressed as a proportion of closeness between a subject in the baseline target group, baseline comparison group, midline target group, endline comparison group, and the endline target group. By estimating a propensity score weight using multinomial logistic regression, we ensured that the target and comparison groups of baseline, midline and endline were comparable and balanced while still employing a large share of the sample that we had collected. This is illustrated in the diagram below.

Figure 50



A range of characteristics was considered to be included in this multinomial logistic regression. Covariates included age, gender and district. Subsequently, when calculating the average values for the outcome indicator, each person was given a weighting, so that closer and better matches, thus more comparable people, had a greater influence on this average compared to worse matches.

Matched differences over time

In the analyses we have combined the propensity score matching with the difference-in-difference approach as outlined in the previous section. In the difference-in-difference model we controlled for age, gender, district, education, marital status and interaction terms between time, and education and

⁴³ Stuart, E.A., Huskamp, H.A., Duckworth, K. *et al.* (2014). Using propensity scores in difference-in-differences models to estimate the effects of a policy change. *Health Services and Outcomes Research Methodology*, 14(4), p. 166–182.

marital status. This is to further reduce any potential influence of other factors than participation in the EYW project.

We have used the statistical software STATA to conduct the data cleaning. We have utilized STATA's MLOGIT package to assess the estimation of propensity scores and STATA's REGRESS and PROBIT packages to estimate the propensity-score-matched-difference-in-difference analyses. STATA's PREDICT command was used to estimate predicated values on the estimation sample. We have used various Python and R packages to visualize these parameters.

7.2 QUALITATIVE ANNEX

The qualitative analysis process broadly involved the following steps:

1. Transcription of the qualitative discussions

The data collection team was provided with a transcription template along with the interview guide. The team was asked to record the interviews, after obtaining due consent from all participants either, verbal (recorded) or written. Post discussions, the data collection team was expected to transcribe the entire interaction verbatim according to the transcription template provided. These verbatim transcripts were shared with the Oxfam Novib team for feedback and clarification. Once all the transcripts were shared, a call was organised with the data collection team to clarify any doubts and to seek further information, wherever deemed necessary.

2. Developing the analytical framework

The analytical framework corresponded to the objective of the evaluation: determining the impact of the EYW programme using the KPIs for the three pillars: 1) young people's agency and skills, 2) improving young people's economic opportunities, and 3) creating an enabling environment for young people. The analysis of the qualitative data - for example, coding of the data - was based on the Global KPIs identified for each of the components within the above three pillars. In that sense, deductive content analysis was the chosen approach for data analysis.

3. Analysis of data collected

The qualitative data was analysed using MAXQDA 2020. This qualitative data analysis software is commonly used in social and human sciences because of the ways in which it helps with interpretative analyses. As mentioned above, the data was analysed with a completely deductive approach. This helped in developing a thematic categorisation and thereafter, thematic analysis. Themes and patterns that emerged from the data were refined and organised into higher-level categories – primarily the Global KPIs – and subsequently, the most relevant themes addressed by the participants were identified.

7.3 DETAILS OF THE SAMPLE

7.3.1 QUANTITATIVE SAMPLE

Table 2: EYW participants' sample (target group)

District	Union Council	Ward	Baseline			Midline			Endline		
			Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Rajshahi	Puthia	1	6	15	21	0	0	0	0	0	0
		3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	6
		6	0	0	0	3	9	12	4	0	4
		7	0	0	0	8	16	24	0	0	0
		9	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	6
	Belpukuria	1	5	14	19	5	10	15	0	0	0
		5	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	2	9
	Baneshore	1	6	14	20	3	13	16	0	0	0
		3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	5
		4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	7
		5	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	8
		6	0	0	0	2	2	4	0	0	0
		7	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	1	9
		8	6	13	19	4	11	15	0	0	0
	Jewpara	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	10	15
		8	6	13	19	6	14	20	6	3	9
	Rajshahi Sadar	0	0	0	0	5	9	14	5	9	14
Rangpur	Pairaband	8	6	12	18	8	18	26	16	10	26
		9	5	14	19	7	17	24	21	13	34
	Latifpur	4	6	10	16	12	26	38	9	12	21
		7	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	9	17
	Ranipukur	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	15	25

		5	4	11	15	12	19	31	6	6	12
	Kafrikhal	2	5	13	18	8	15	23	1	7	8
		3	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	7	12
	Rangpur Sadar	0	0	0	0	2	9	11	9	16	25
	Batiaghata	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	7	16
		7	11	20	31	8	23	31	0	0	0
		8	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	6	16
	Gongarampur	1	9	22	31	10	20	30	9	5	14
		2	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	10
		3	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	10
		4	10	24	34	9	22	31	6	5	11
	Baliadanga	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	5	11
		4	10	22	32	10	21	31	0	0	0
		8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	2	10
	Amirpur	2	12	23	35	10	20	30	5	4	9
		3	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	4	12
	Khulna Sadar	0	0	0	0	1	7	8	21	33	54
Barisal	Vorpasa	1	6	8	14	6	18	24	13	17	30
	Rangosree	3	4	11	15	5	17	22	0	0	0
		4	4	11	15	7	16	23	10	4	14
		6	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	10	21
	Padrishippur	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	10	18
		7	6	13	19	7	18	25	0	0	0
	Koloskathi	6	5	10	15	7	17	24	0	0	0
		7	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	20	32
	Barisal Sadar	0	0	0	0	4	10	14	5	35	40
Total			132	293	425	169	397	566	288	312	600

Table 3: Non-project's sample (comparison group)

District	Union Council	Ward	Baseline			Midline			Endline		
			Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Rajshahi	Vallokrasi	3	12	8	20	9	17	26	13	11	24
		6	16	9	25	9	19	28	13	11	24
	Puthia	1	4	9	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
		3	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Belpukuria	1	4	11	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Baneshore	1	4	10	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
		8	5	13	18	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Jewpara	8	4	11	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rangpur	Vangni	4	7	13	20	17	34	51	15	26	41
		9	6	17	23	11	33	44	19	25	44
	Pairaband	8	5	13	18	0	0	0	0	0	0
		9	6	11	17	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Latifpur	4	3	16	19	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Ranipukur	2	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
		5	4	10	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Kafrikhal	2	5	10	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
		4	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Khulna	Shurkhali	2	9	16	25	13	27	40	0	0	0
		9	4	21	25	13	22	35	0	0	0
	Jolma	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	20	42
		8	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	23	43
	Batiaghata	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
		7	3	6	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Gongarampur	1	1	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
		4	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Baliadanga	4	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barisal	Niyamoti	3	7	17	24	11	22	33	0	0	0
		9	7	16	23	10	20	30	0	0	0
	Kabai	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	15	26
		3	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	14	28
		4	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	16	28
	Vorpasa	1	6	15	21	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Rangosree	3	6	13	19	0	0	0	0	0	0
		4	6	13	19	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Padrishippur	7	3	11	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Koloskathi	6	5	14	19	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total			147	322	469	93	194	287	139	161	300

Note: At baseline survey, there were some overlaps between target and comparison group locations. Nonetheless, this may not influence the findings of this evaluation because none of the respondents had participated in project activities at that moment. At midline and endline survey, once the project activities had started, the data collection did not present any overlaps between target and comparison group locations.

Table 4: Community sample

District	Union Council	Ward	Baseline			Midline			Total		
			Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Rajshahi	Baneshore	1	17	8	25	13	7	20	11	5	16
	Jewpara	5	9	2	11	10	8	18	5	3	8
		8	4	8	12	4	10	14	2	4	6
Rangpur	Latifpur	4	6	12	18	7	13	20	10	16	26
	Ranipukur	5	15	8	23	12	7	19	19	10	29
Khulna	Gongarampur	4	18	8	26	18	9	27	9	5	14
		5	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	5	15
	Baliadanga	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	7	14
		4	12	10	22	8	12	20	7	8	15
Barisal	Vorpasa	1	7	10	17	8	15	23	9	17	26
	Koloskathi	6	6	11	17	10	12	22	0	0	0
		7	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	14	25
Total			94	77	171	90	93	183	100	94	194

7.3.2 QUALITATIVE SAMPLE

The table below presents the sampling criteria for the qualitative data collection.

A total of 30 – 10 each with young women, young men and community members - were suggested for the qualitative processes.

Table 5: Sampling criteria in each of the provinces

Sampling criteria
<p>Selection criteria for IDIs with youth participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All IDI participants (young women and men) should have attended soft skills training • At least 60% of the participants (young women and men) but not all should be employed • At least 40% of the participants (young women and men) but not all should have attended non-certified vocational trainings • At least 40% of the participants (young women and men) but not all should have attended entrepreneurship trainings • At least 20% of the participants (young women and men) but not all should have attended certified vocational trainings <p>Selection criteria for IDIs with community members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential participants for IDIs among community members can include youth's parents or guardians, community leaders, and teachers. • As much as possible, please ensure equal distribution of men and women

In total 12 IDIs were conducted among young women and men. The total number of male and female participants is presented in the table below.

Table 6: Youth IDIs

District	Total	Women	Men
Khulna	3	2	1
Barisal	3	1	2
Rajshahi	4	1	3
Rangpur	2		2
Total	12	4	8

In total eight IDIs were conducted among community members. The total number of community participants is presented in the table below.

Table 7: Community IDIs

Province	Total	Women	Men
Khulna	2	1	1
Barisal	2		2
Rajshahi	2		2
Rangpur	2	2	
Total	8	3	5

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