



# **Introduction to Adolescent Empowerment Toolbox**

**Reference for UNICEF partners and civil  
society organizations**

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**Product 1 in Adolescent Empowerment Toolbox provides an overview of the toolbox with a brief on key products for UNICEF partners and civil society organizations on adolescent empowerment.**

## **Acknowledgement**

Adolescent Empowerment Toolbox has been created by Breakthrough [www.breakthrough.tv](http://www.breakthrough.tv) for UNICEF [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org).

It has benefited from the efforts and voices of many people and organizations. This includes many research study participants, workshop participants and stakeholders such as academics, local elected representatives, front line workers, non-governmental and community-based organisations, and activists. Our heart-felt thanks to all of them and also the people mentioned below whose insights, experience and hard work helped bring out this toolbox.

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This toolbox has also drawn on numerous resources available both online and offline. I am grateful to the team which has created such an excellent body of research and work. The organizations and sites whose publications and articles were extensively referred to were: UNICEF, Breakthrough, Harvard University, Baylor University; Mindtools; Advocates of Youth; Save the Children, Centre for Social Research and Pop Council.

I hope that this toolbox will inspire a generation of new leaders in their community who take charge of their life and halt violence and exploitation in their homes, neighbourhoods and community.

## **Introduction:**

### **About UNICEF:**

The organisation began its work in India in 1949 with three staff members and established an office in Delhi three years later. Currently, it advocates for the rights of India's children in 16 states.

UNICEF's goal is to advance the rights of children, adolescents and women to survival, growth, development, participation and protection by reducing inequities based on caste, ethnicity, gender, poverty, region or religion.

UNICEF utilises a multi-pronged approach to addressing pressing issues of health, nutrition, sanitation, education and child protection. It aims to involve families and community members in understanding their contribution to ensure their children thrive while providing a platform for

young community champions to emerge and inspire.

UNICEF uses community level knowledge and quality research to comprehend issues, create and introduce easily implementable innovative interventions that address the situation of children, and works with partners to create ground level change.

With its unique system of 13 state offices, partnerships with sister UN agencies, NGOs, self-help groups and array of celebrity campaigners, UNICEF has been able to provide focussed attention to the poorest and most disadvantaged communities, while working alongside at the national level.

UNICEF is working alongside the Government of India in its efforts to prevent child marriage, and adolescent empowerment including the implementation of the convergent national strategy, which includes:

- **Law enforcement:** Capacity-building on laws, support mechanisms such as a child marriage telephone hotline.
- **Girls' empowerment:** Life skills, protection skills.
- **Community mobilization:** Working with influential leaders, oaths and pledges, counselling, folk and traditional media.
- **Promoting convergence** of sectors at all levels, in particular with education and social protection schemes and programmes.

UNICEF is also working with different and new sectors to ensure a comprehensive approach since child marriage is entrenched in structural problems such as poverty and limited education and vocational opportunities. Partnerships with civil society organizations and communities are key to supporting community mobilization efforts and mindset changes and partnerships with the media are very important for raising awareness of child marriage.

#### **UNICEF India's work on adolescents:**

UNICEF India's work on adolescents has fallen into two broad categories of: (a) adolescent health and nutrition: adolescent pregnancy prevention, focused anti-natal care for those who are pregnant, anaemia control among adolescent girls, menstrual hygiene, water and sanitation etc. (b) adolescent empowerment and protection: child marriage reduction, creation of adolescent groups, life skills education, access to elementary and secondary education for adolescent girls, etc.).

UNICEF is working on increasingly strengthening an integrated and comprehensive approach to adolescents. In so doing it also aims to promoting effective and scalable solutions that can reach millions of girls, as well as adolescent boys.

The overall aims of the interventions with and for adolescents are to enhance the value of girls, to increase the degree of autonomy adolescents have over decisions affecting their lives, reduce child marriage and teenage pregnancy and improve access to services and entitlements for adolescents.

UNICEF has reached more than 200,000 adolescent girls, organised in 20,000 adolescent girl groups in more than ten states in India. The Deepshikha programme in Maharashtra is the best known UNICEF initiative for adolescent girls in the country.

There has been a strong focus on girls. Girls in India are being discriminated against. Their lack of status and value in society manifests itself in declining sex ratio, high rates of malnutrition, low school enrolment and completion ratios, low labour force participation rates and high rates of child marriage and violence against girls. In order to enhance the value of girls requires empowerment of girls through school and life skills education, mobilisation of parents and communities to support girls, and work with service providers to ensure girls have access to health, education and other social services without suffering discrimination and exclusion.

Approaches to adolescent empowerment commonly use an **“asset-based” approach**. Rather than investing just in one sector, such as nutrition, education, health or vocational skills, the adolescent asset approach considers a range of assets that adolescents (girls and boys) need in order to develop, be empowered and protected. This does not mean that all assets have to be “provided”, but it means that adolescent development and empowerment require investments in a few critical priority areas, which depend on the context (...).

At the heart of the adolescent empowerment programme is the support for adolescents to become agents of change in their own lives, their families and their communities. The programme aims to trigger and unleash the transformative potential of adolescent girls and boys.

#### **About Breakthrough:**

Breakthrough is a global human rights organization working to make violence and discrimination against women and girls unacceptable. Our cutting-edge multimedia campaigns, community mobilization, agenda-setting, and leadership training equip men and women worldwide to challenge the status quo and take bold action for the dignity, equality, and justice of all.

Our mission is to prevent violence against women and girls by transforming the norms and cultures that enable it. We carry out this mission by building a critical mass of change agents worldwide — the Breakthrough Generation — whose bold collective action will deliver irreversible impact on the issue of our time.

Working out of our centers in India and the United States of America, we create innovative, relevant multimedia campaigns, tools and programs that reach individuals and institutions where they are, inspiring and equipping them to build a world in which values of equality, dignity and justice are upheld.

#### **Breakthrough’s Adolescent and Youth Intervention Program:**

Breakthrough is igniting the next generation of young leaders who will help make violence against women unacceptable, in India and far beyond. Breakthrough's innovative “Rights Advocates Program” has built leadership in 100,000 young people across India, inspiring and enabling them to stand for change in their homes, communities, schools, and more.

- Educated 100,000 people across India about critical issues, including women's rights and healthy sexuality

- Prevailed upon 5,000 public servants to adopt a rights-based and gender-sensitive response to gender-based violence
- Educated 50,000 adolescent girls in Karnataka about gender, reproductive health, hygiene, and sexual harassment, not only providing facts but also inspiring several girls to report -- and trigger disciplinary action against -- teachers who had harassed them
- Educated 18000 adolescent boys and girls in 150 schools in Haryana on gender based discrimination and life skills.
- Supported over 250 men aged 18-30, from 14 villages, in bringing human rights into their homes and beyond: the boys now participate in domestic chores and run community programs addressing maternal mortality and domestic violence
- Opened youth centers in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, where Rights Advocates can learn, share, organize, and forge bonds to strengthen community action
- Collaborated on a pilot program (through the Parivaritan Project) to work through the culture of cricket, India's biggest sport, challenging male coaches to become anti-violence mentors and male players to respect girls, stop violence, and promote gender equality
- Initiatives have resulted in a 49% increase in awareness of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act in India, and a 15% increase in certain areas for services for women survivors and increasing demand for better implementation of the Act

### **Adolescence and Empowerment – Why create this toolbox?**

Adolescence, defined as life stage signifying young people ageing between 10 and 18 years, is a critical period that determine the trajectory of individual lives. It is a stage at which key investments and support can set adolescence on a path towards empowerment set against a backdrop where discrimination, recurrent constraints, harmful practices and violence can send them down a negative spiral with lifelong consequences, not just for themselves, but for societies and future generations.

The ability of adolescents - both girls and boys to make decisions about matters that effect their lives is a critical aspect of empowerment, but socialisation that starts early in life and during the adolescent period with the influence of gender, religion and caste often poses a barrier for adolescents to make their decisions. For both boys and girls adolescence is a crucial stage - creating identity crisis, gender pressure, discrimination and violence, affecting the safe and healthy transition from childhood to adulthood.

The Adolescent Empowerment Toolbox will provide civil society organizations working with young adolescents, theoretical understanding as well as effective practical tools to implement an adolescent intervention program. It will facilitate an adolescent intervention program which promotes a smoother transition from adolescence to adulthood by promoting the creation of safe platforms and facilitative environment where adolescents can participate in decision making issues affecting their lives. With effective use of the adolescent empowerment toolbox CSO's can build adolescents knowledge, facilitate positive practices, promote access to preventive, curative, protective services and enhance adolescents skills and participation in local governance.

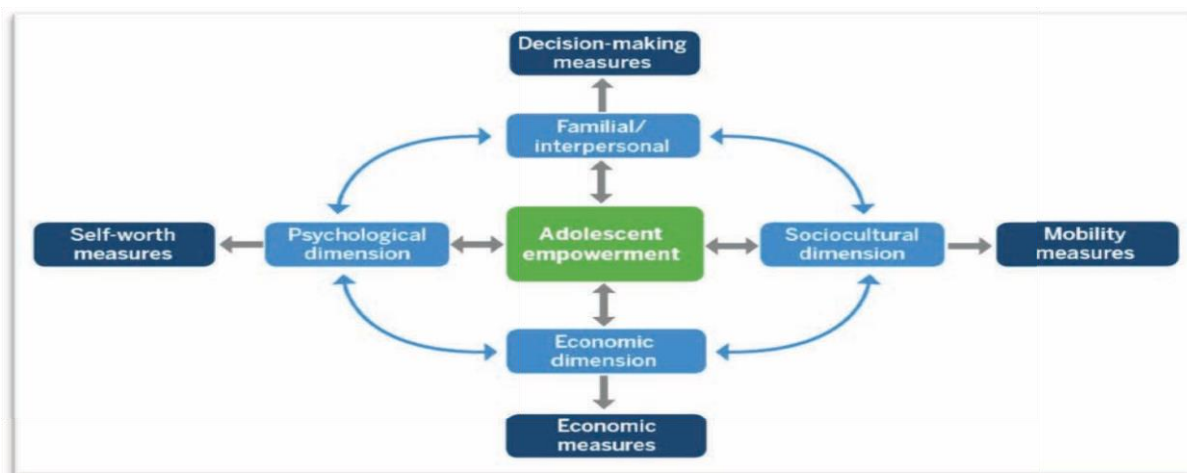
## How is adolescent empowerment interpreted in the Adolescent Empowerment Toolbox?

The Adolescent Empowerment Toolbox has been influenced by the **UNICEF supported Population Council Study – Understanding Adolescent Empowerment: A Qualitative Exploration**.

In the study, empowerment as defined by Kabeer (1994) is “the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them”. Taking this definition a step further, Malhotra et.al (2002) suggest that empowerment contains two important elements that distinguish it from the general concept of “power”, the idea of process or change from a condition of disempowerment and the concept of human agency<sup>2</sup>. Thus, adolescent empowerment is conceptualised as an increase in agency over time and through various programs girls and boys are given the confidence to assert themselves, making them aware of their rights, and training them in health and gender issues and reproductive health<sup>1</sup>.

Kabeer’s understanding and using the Malhotra et al (2002) framework, a useful and overarching framework has been developed looking on all four dimensions:

- i. Socio-cultural
- ii. Familial/interpersonal
- iii. Psychological
- iv. Economic



## Objectives of the Adolescent Empowerment Toolkit:

The adolescent empowerment toolbox has been conceptualised as a tool for civil society organizations working with young people. The toolbox will help organizations and stakeholders to build a program on adolescent intervention. It will enable them to facilitate a process where adolescents experience and demonstrate an increase in agency over time. The various programs designed on the basis on adolescent empowerment framework will ensure girls and boys are given the confidence to assert themselves, making them aware of their rights, and empower them to take action. The three broad objectives covered by the adolescent empowerment toolbox are:-

1. Adolescent boys and girls have knowledge, skills and peer group support to take action to protect themselves from violence, exploitation and child marriage and to make their community safer.
2. Parents and community members support adolescents in seeking information, accessing services and encourage decision making. They play an active role in creating a protective and supportive environment to protect adolescents from violence, exploitation and child marriage.
3. Community is aware and are able to access the government service providers, laws, schemes, and programs for adolescents and to prevent violence and exploitation.

### How has the Adolescent Empowerment Toolbox been created?

Adolescent Empowerment Toolbox has been created by Breakthrough [www.breakthrough.tv](http://www.breakthrough.tv) for UNICEF [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org).

It has benefited from the efforts and voices of many people and organizations. This includes many research study participants, workshop participants and stakeholders such as academics, local elected representatives, and frontline workers, non-governmental and community-based organisations. Government programs like *Sabla's* training module as well as schemes booklets by *National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development* were also referred. Breakthrough also conducted field visits to study adolescent intervention programs of UNICEF partners like *Shaishav, Bangla Natak and Bal Sansar*. \* **A detailed bibliography of all other resources referred is attached at the end of this book.**

In addition, a desk review of key literature as well as tools on adolescent intervention from world over was conducted. A lot of these tools were created and supported by UNICEF on adolescent intervention and it has influenced the content and outlook of the toolbox. Some of the key literature and tools studies of UNICEF were:-

S. No	Title	Type of material	Author/Organization
1	Positive Growing ....The Way Ahead – Adolescents and HIV	Report	Prayas/UNICEF
2	Understanding Adolescent Empowerment: A Qualitative Exploration.	Desk Review	Population Council/UNICEF
3	Delaying Marriage for Girls in India	Formative Research	European commission/ICRW/UNICEF
4	Empowering Adolescent Girls Using Critical Dialogue Videos	Project Report	Study Hall Educational Foundation/UNICEF
5	Module for TOT-Life Skills for adolescent girls	Deepshikha Module 1 to 3	UNICEF
6	Working with adolescent girls- addressing gender, child protection & education	Handbook for Prerikas	UNICEF
7	Life skill education through Drama	Module	Dept of Social Justice- Gujarat/UNICEF
8	Influencing girls life- Using drama based LS	Report	UNICEF

9	Adolescent girls' life skill program Gender & development part1/2/3	TOT Module	UNICEF/ Barclays/Maharashtra Govt.
10	Marriage not now	Picture book	UNICEF
11	Parivarik dekhbhal	Brochures	UNICEF
12	Partek bacche ko Hinsa aur shoshan se sanrakshan pradan kare	Brochures	UNICEF
13	Bal Vivah Kupratha	Brochures	UNICEF
14	End Child Marriage	Brochures	UNICEF
15	Bacchon ko school bheje	Brochures	UNICEF
16	Kyon' and 'Kya' brochures	Brochures	UNICEF
17	Navjyoti role models	Book	UNICEF
18	Child marriage	Media kit/research studies/training. Tool kit	UNICEF
19	Baap Waali Baat	Poster, Hoarding, Flyer, Wall Painting, TV and Radio spots	UNICEF
20	UNICEF state office workshop	Report	Breakthrough
21	Communication Strategy Document	Report	UNICEF
22	Deepshikha- Lighting lamps for better tomorrow	Photo essay	UNICEF/ Government of Maharashtra/ Barclays
23	Deepshikha – Lifeskills Project – Experiences of empowering adolescent girls in Maharashtra.	Report	UNICEF
24	Building Brighter Futures	Brochure	UNICEF

### How can Civil Society Organizations and other stakeholders use the Adolescent Empowerment Toolbox?

A simple reference has been created below for Civil Society Organizations and other stakeholders to get a quick reference the toolbox with its different products, how to use it and the dimension of adolescent empowerment it is covering.

Product No.	Title and Short Description	CSO's to use the products to achieve the following results.	Covering dimensions of adolescent empowerment framework
Product 1	<b>Introduction to Adolescent Empowerment Toolbox</b>	To have a quick overview of the adolescent empowerment toolbox and to use the right product according to relevant context.	-
Product 2	<b>Theory of change on adolescent empowerment framework</b>	To strategize program planning , ensure that the program is results oriented and to design the	Socio-cultural Familial/interpersonal Psychological Economic



		sequencing of adolescent intervention	
Product 3	<p><b>Adolescent Empowerment – Why, What, How?</b></p> <p>Resource book for civil society organization’s on adolescent empowerment</p> <p>Section I provides a comprehensive listing of various approaches used to work with adolescents and its key highlights;</p> <p>Section II provides critical inputs on working with adolescents using an intersectional approach which combines needs and vulnerabilities of adolescents;</p> <p>Section III provides useful and practical information on how communities and service providers can be mobilized to work to meet the needs of adolescents</p> <p>Section IV as the concluding section provides useful tips and recommendations on how adolescent programming can be made more effective.</p>	<p>To provide civil society actors with key information on various approaches used to work with adolescents; which besides providing conceptual clarity also gives useful insight into how and why certain programmes work well and why an empowerment approach to adolescents is critical.</p> <p>The resource book also provides useful information on how the support of the community, service providers and key gatekeepers can be enlisted for successful programming.</p> <p>The utility of the resource book lies in its synthesis of various approaches used for working with adolescents, its key highlights and how programmes can work towards meeting the multiple needs of adolescents.</p>	<p>Socio-cultural Familial/interpersonal Psychological Economic</p>
Product 4	<p><b>Community Mobilization Tools on engaging stakeholders.</b></p>	<p>To equip community workers and adolescents in mobilizing the community through tools like brochures, mobile video vans, street plays, fairs in addressing gender based violence and child marriage.</p>	<p>Socio-cultural Familial/interpersonal Psychological</p>

<p>Product 5</p>	<p><b>Life skills curriculum for empowering adolescent boys and girls.</b></p> <p>Section 1 - Focus on heart – Self exploration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My Strengths</li> <li>• Goal Setting</li> <li>• Taking a stance on gender</li> </ul> <p>Section 2 - Focus on mind- Interpersonal and critical thinking skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidence and self - esteem</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Assertiveness</li> <li>• Trust building</li> <li>• Conflict resolution</li> <li>• Team building</li> <li>• Leadership building</li> <li>• Decision making</li> <li>• Financial Planning</li> </ul> <p>Section 3 - Focus on hand- group activities and events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inter-generational dialogue</li> <li>• Power of groups and networks</li> <li>• Action-Campaigning and Advocacy with stakeholders</li> </ul> <p>Section 4 - Focus on health and preventing violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition, Health and Hygiene</li> <li>• Menstrual Hygiene</li> <li>• Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights</li> <li>• Dynamics of sexual violence, abuse and trauma</li> <li>• HIV and AIDS risk behaviours among adolescents</li> </ul>	<p>To enable CSO's to facilitate - Life skills workshops with adolescent boys and girls taking them through a journey of self-awareness, building the critical thinking and interpersonal skills and providing them with tools to mobilize media and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>Socio-cultural  Familial/Interpersonal  Psychological  Economic</p>
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	Reference List		
Product 6	<p><b>Gender Based Violence- Why does it matter to adolescents?</b></p> <p>Ready reckoner on gender based violence and intersectional approach to child marriage, violence, livelihood, education, health, and rights which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 1 - Facts, figures and data</li> <li>• Section 2 - Issue analysis</li> <li>• Section 3 - Causes and impact factors</li> <li>• Section 4 - Possible entry points</li> <li>• Section 5 -Information on what to do and where to seek services when facing violence</li> </ul>	<p>To use the document as a ready reference in understanding the context of gender based violence and adolescents in India.</p> <p>To identify entry points for working with adolescents.</p> <p>To have ready reference to resources and services for support mechanism.</p>	Socio-cultural Familial/interpersonal
Product 7	<p><b>Child Marriage: The Issue and Possible Redressal.</b></p> <p>A Ready Reckoner for Child Marriage field interventions by partnering CSOs, which includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facts, Figures and Data</li> <li>2. Issue Analysis</li> <li>3. Causes and Impact Factors</li> <li>4. Possible Entry Points</li> </ol>	<p>To use the document as a ready reference in understanding the context of child marriage in India.</p> <p>To identify entry points for addressing the issue of child marriage.</p>	Socio-cultural Familial/interpersonal
Product 8	<p><b>Training Module for adolescent boys on adolescent empowerment to address child marriage and violence.</b></p>	<p>To build leadership capacity of adolescent boys in addressing child marriage and violence.</p>	Socio-cultural Familial/interpersonal Psychological
Product 9	<p><b>Training Module for adolescent girls on adolescent empowerment to</b></p>	<p>To build leadership capacity of adolescent girls in addressing child marriage and violence.</p>	Socio-cultural Familial/interpersonal Psychological

	address child marriage and violence.		
Product 10	<b>Training Module for adolescent boys and girls</b> on adolescent empowerment to address child marriage and violence.	To build leadership capacity of adolescent girls and boys to work together in addressing child marriage and violence.	Socio-cultural Familial/interpersonal Psychological
Product 11	<b>Risk Mitigation Strategies –</b> Talking points for stakeholders to address child marriage and gender based violence.	To equip trainers and community workers with talking points and arguments to convince different stakeholders in addressing child marriage and gender based violence issues.	Socio-cultural Familial/interpersonal
Product 12	<b>Law and policy support for adolescent empowerment.</b>	To equip community workers and adolescents on laws and schemes by Government of India.	Socio-cultural Familial/interpersonal Economic
Product 13	<b>Audio Visual Aids</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public social advertisements;</li> <li>• Best practices and success stories</li> <li>• Comic booklets on Basics of financial planning.</li> </ul>	To screen audio visuals in the community to generate a discussion in the community.  To share success stories of adolescents and community members who have collectively addressed child marriage, HIV.	Socio-cultural Familial/interpersonal Psychological Economic

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