



Pathways to Wellbeing, Empowerment, and Resilience for Adolescents and Youth

POWER 4 AY APPROACH



Background

The POWER 4 AY approach stems from Save the Children Italy's 2019-2021 Strategic Initiative on Adolescents Skills for Successful Transition (ASST) built on the five-year *Youth Empowerment Bulgari (YEB) Programme* implemented since 2016 in four countries: Albania, Bolivia, Nepal, and Uganda.

With the ambition to design an improved and globally recognized approach on adolescent empowerment, this strategic initiative fostered collaboration and exchange among the four countries within the YEB framework; created space to share best practices and discuss challenges in implementation; and provided the ground to answer learning questions to more deeply explore the project experience.

These questions shaped the YEB Learning Agenda, which explored different dimensions: adaptation and scalability, gender and inclusion; and cost efficiency among others.

Evidence was gathered through a research on the YEB programme in the four countries, *an experimental impact evaluation in Bolivia*, and Mid-Term and *Final Evaluations* in each country. Country programme experts met on several occasions, both in presence and remotely, to share the learning and together design an improved approach for Adolescents and Youth, which also saw the contribution of various thematic experts in SCI.

The results of these processes contributed to inform the *Adolescent Wellbeing Framework*, of which the POWER 4 AY approach constitutes a first interpretation and application in a programme. The POWER 4 AY, designed and implemented by the same four YEB countries through 2021-2026, has its roots in the evidence and learning generated from the YEB, and its branches in the recommendations and guiding principles of the Adolescent Wellbeing Framework.

The context and challenges the POWER 4 AY aims to address

The POWER 4 AY approach was born and grows during the COVID 19 pandemic, a time in history where personal, educational, health, social, economic and environmental assets have all been challenged and sometimes wiped off.

Children and adolescents have demonstrated remarkable resilience and agency to face these challenges, however the pandemic has had a devastating impact on their wellbeing. For instance, due to the economic crisis, households are likely to engage in negative coping strategies such as forcing girls into early marriage and into transactional sex for money and food, particularly for out-of-school girls.

COVID 19 pushes many children and adolescents into child labour, or forces households

to adopt unsustainable environmental practices, as crises push families to use every available mean to overcome their livelihoods loss and food insecurity. With schools closed and no supportive health services, adolescents have felt isolated and anxious about their future.

The pandemic has severely weakened the support adolescents need from their family and community to feel safe and be protected. It is estimated that, purely as a result of the economic effects of Covid-19, at least 10-16 million children are at risk of not returning to school.

These numbers are also getting higher among adolescent girls of upper secondary school age than among younger cohorts, affecting their chances for life-long learning and social-emotional development.

The POWER 4 AY approach aims to be intentional and explicit in addressing the following **challenges**



Promoting an integrated, cross-thematic and holistic approach in consideration of the multi-faced needs adolescents and youth face.



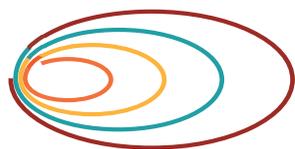
Promoting a broader focus that targets both Very Young Adolescents (VYAs) and Older Adolescents, tailoring interventions to their specific age needs.



Adopting a gender transformative approach - with more emphasis on challenging and impacting social and cultural norms at family and community level.



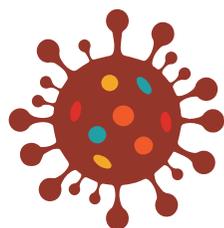
Embracing an inclusive approach, by targeting and engaging Adolescent and Youth with different abilities through adapted activities and services. With the support of selected Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) the intervention will ensure inclusiveness in all the outcomes with specific efforts on supporting behavioural change of parents' and communities' attitudes, beliefs which discriminate the young people, especially those with disability to enjoy positive life trajectories. The project will also strengthen OPDs to effectively engage in the community and advocate for AYs with disability rights.



Applying the socio-ecological model to call for and generate a systemic response from each level surrounding AYs that has the capacity to affect their wellbeing.



Fostering a strong hygiene component, through the WASH programmatic area.



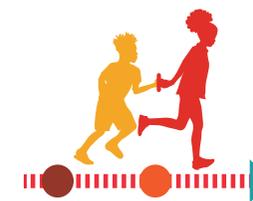
Considering all the health restrictions, but also mitigating the socio-economic impacts of Covid 19.



Adopting environment-friendly lens to face the challenges related to climate change



Leveraging on AY protagonism at all levels: from beneficiaries to co-authors, partners, leaders, ambassadors, etc. In this new approach adolescents and youth are empowered to become agents of their wellbeing.



Building sustainability in the project design and implementation.



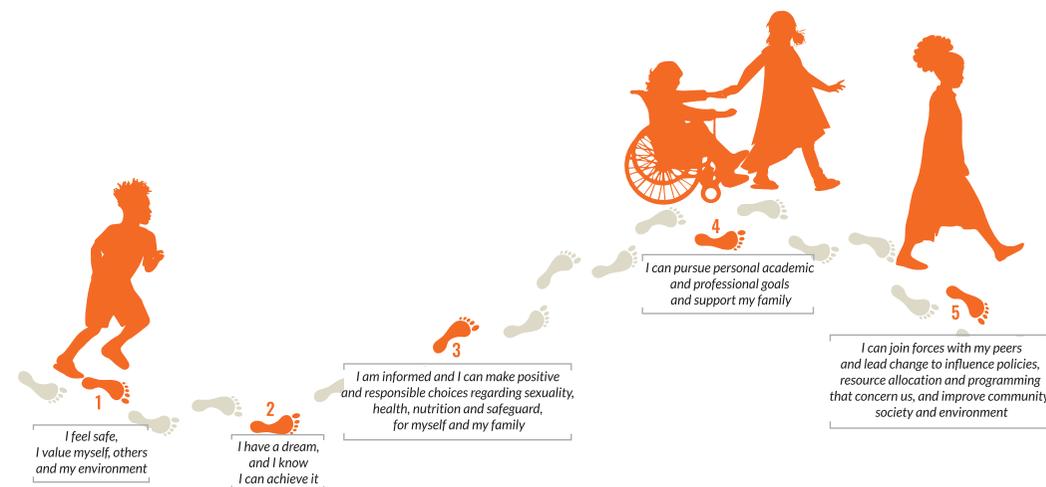
Adopting a common MEAL framework including a Learning Agenda, Indicators Framework, and Evaluation component.

Adolescent and Youth wellbeing from the perspective of AYs

In the POWER 4 AY approach, the holistic dimension of AY wellbeing is interpreted as the result of changes brought about in different spheres of AY lives.

These are captured under four results: the first is around improving the choices on sexual reproductive health, the second focuses on supporting educational pathways, the third links to the original Adolescent Skills for Successful Transition (ASST) focus on economic empowerment and transition to decent work, and the last brings into play AY agency and protagonism in improving their environment.

From a programmatic approach, this means to accompany AYs in a way that they feel empowered to become the agents of their own wellbeing, which they can see materialize step by step as they progress through the proposed pathways.



AY cannot achieve this on their own. The YEB programme already attributed a key role to the so called “enabling environment”, namely all the groups of actors that can have an influence on the program, on which however the YEB lacked a clear understanding of the mechanisms through which each actor influences and is influenced by others.

In POWER 4 AY the YEB experience recognized that the enabling environment impacts on and is both underpinning and catalytic for all the components of the approach, and called for more explicitly defining the intricacies that involve each level in the achievement of every outcome pursued by AYs.

Integrating one of the core guiding principles of the Adolescent Wellbeing Framework, the POWER 4 AY approach promises to catalyse change with and for adolescents working with all levels of the socio-ecological model – including adolescents, families, peers, communities, services, systems, laws and policies. This is why the Socio-Ecological model is fully integrated in the POWER 4 AY approach and its theory of change.

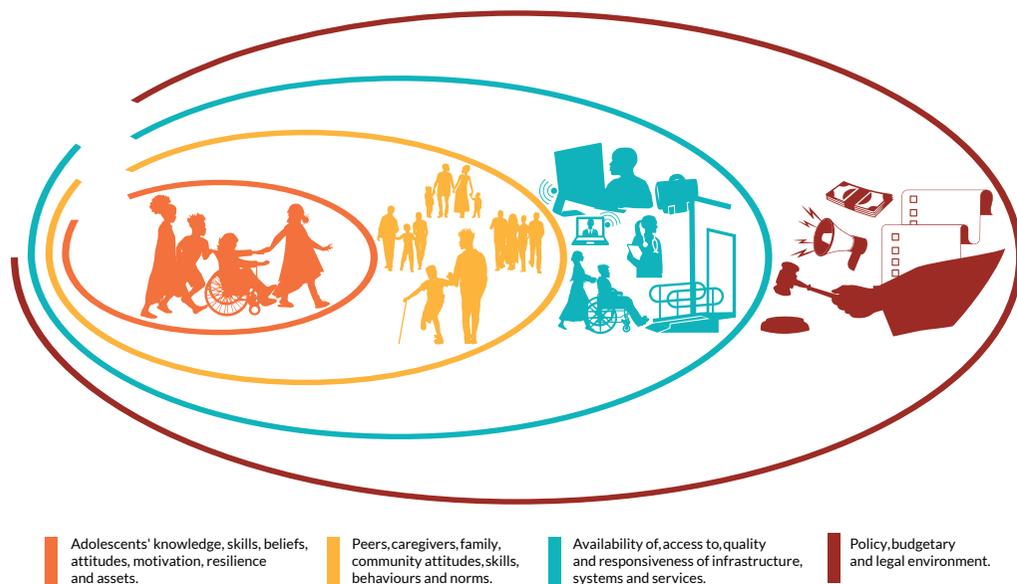
Structuring the Theory of Change

In line with the considerations expressed above, the POWER 4 AY approach places the AY wellbeing at the goal of the theory of change, followed by the four outcomes below:

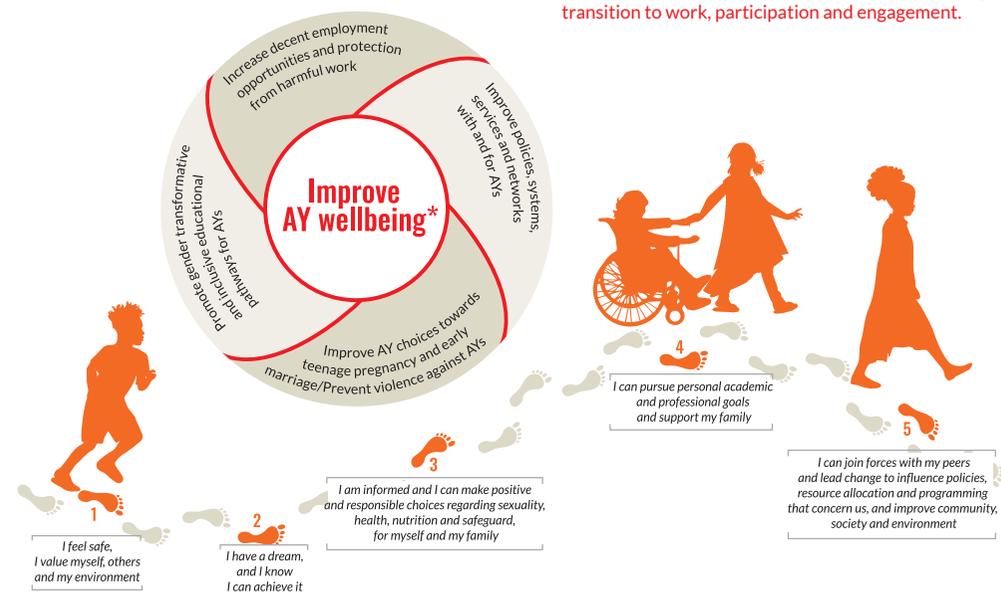
1. Improve AY choices towards teenage pregnancy and early marriage / Prevent violence against AYs.
2. Promote gender transformative and inclusive educational pathways for AYs.
3. Increase decent employment opportunities and protection from harmful work.
4. Improve policies, systems, services, and networks with and for AYs.

Moving to the level below, for each outcome the approach identified catalysers: these are the changes necessary and capable to explain how the intervention can bring about the desired change. To fully consider the critical role and interrelations of the different stakeholders influencing and being influenced by the approach, these catalysers are articulated for each level of the socio-ecological model.

The Socio Ecological Model



Power 4 AY Approach



* Attitude, protection, health, education and learning, transition to work, participation and engagement.

Similarly, acknowledging that to achieve AY wellbeing, the approach needs to explicitly and intentionally activate the response needed from each actor involved, also the outputs are expressed for each level of the socio-ecological model.

The Theory of Change presented in the next pages includes all elements mentioned earlier, such as the focus on disability, WASH, climate, among others.

Next to the four outcomes, with specific catalysers and outputs outlined, there is also an extra column with catalysers and outputs which are considered foundational to and therefore shared by all.

For example, life skills are now explicitly appearing as a foundational pillar of AY wellbeing, vital for every sphere of their life and not only as traditionally considered for the Economic Empowerment.

Elements for a MEAL framework

The POWER 4 AY approach includes a MEAL framework, developed to provide a common ground for evidence and learning generation. In line with the Theory of Change, the approach includes an indicators framework and learning agenda, which have been adopted by the implementing COs.

The **indicators framework** provides a list of indicators that relate to the changes produced at goal and outcome level for the different actors of the socioecological model, also with the aim to detect changes related to catalysers that are crucial to the achievement of the outcomes for AYs.

Implementing COs have been encouraged to adopt indicators of particular importance, where in line with their intervention strategies.

For these indicators COs are expected to use a common definition, and coherent approach in measurement and reporting defined under the guidance of SC Italy. This effort is oriented towards producing aggregated reports on progress registered by the four COs. The indicators framework is included at the bottom of the document.

Similarly, the POWER 4 AY approach promotes a coherent approach to **evaluation**.

With the idea to gather evidence on the soundness of the Theory of Change, relevance, effectiveness, together with its efficiency and sustainability, the implementing COs are accompanied to share common objectives, research questions, and produce evidence on both the changes achieved by the programme, as well as an understanding of the factors and mechanisms leading to those changes, including the realization of the changes expected at the catalyser level.

Throughout the five-year intervention, a baseline, mid-term and final evaluations are foreseen in each country. To guide the conduct of these studies, a **learning agenda** has also been developed to address common issues tackled in the POWER 4 AY approach. These include the elements described under the challenges, such as gender, inclusiveness, COVID-19, climate, etc. The learning questions are expected to be addressed through the mentioned studies, as well as through the learning promoted through continuous exchange and dedicated activities among COs.

Contact

Alessandra Confalonieri

Senior Advisor, Adolescents and Youth Empowerment
alessandra.confalonieri@savethechildren.org

Manuela Marin

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Manager
manuela.marin@savethechildren.org

The Indicators Framework

OUTPUTS	What can/should we measure? CORE dimensions in BOLD + <i>setting expectations*</i>	Indicators (in bold those for aggregated reporting)	CORE / Catalyser	Socio-Ecological Model level		
 <p>GOAL: Improve AY wellbeing</p>	<p>Early marriage, early pregnancy/parenting (protection), education attainment, transition to decent work, agency, barriers to equitable participation, and access to services</p> <p><i>*The GOAL level is aspirational - at this level we do not expect our programme to bring about a direct change, but to rather align and contribute to. For this reason, we should not collect primary data on these indicators, but report secondary data as available in the country</i></p>	<p>Proportion of women aged 20-24 year who were married or in union before age 15, and before age - GRF 3.1.4 (<i>Protection from violence</i>) - MICS - SDG 5.3.1</p> <p>Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years; aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group - SDG 3.7.2</p> <p>Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities - SDG 8.5.2 or Youth employment rate - GRF 4.3</p> <p>Proportion of youth aged 15-24 years not in education, employment or training (NEET) - GRF 4.3.1, ILO/ SDG 8.6.1</p> <p>Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education) - SDG 4.1.2</p> <p>Proportion of schools with access to adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities, by education level (%) - <i>adapted from SDG 4.a.1</i></p> <p>Proportion of schools with access to (a) basic drinking water; (b) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (c) basic handwashing facilities - GRF 2.2.4/ SDG 4.a.1</p>	<p>CORE</p> <p>CORE</p> <p>CORE</p> <p>CORE</p> <p>CORE</p> <p>Catalyser</p> <p>CORE</p>	<p>AY</p> <p>AY</p> <p>AY</p> <p>AY</p> <p>AY</p> <p>Services</p> <p>AY</p>		
		<p>OUTCOME 1: Improve AY choices towards teenage pregnancy and early marriage / Reduce incidence of violence among Ays</p>	<p>Change in Ays behaviour regarding pregnancy/early marriage; incidence of violence among Ays; change in community attitudes & behaviour, service availability and utilization, mechanisms set up/ implemented by local authorities</p> <p><i>*At outcome level, we expect to be able to bring about a change for our beneficiaries / partners. These indicators should be measured by the project on our target population. A full MEAL plan with definitions, data collection frequency, responsibility etc should be developed by each CO with support from SC Italy who will aim to ensure coherence among all CORE indicators measurement and reporting. SC Italy will also provide support to developing data collection tools as needed.</i></p>	<p>Proportion of women aged 15-49 who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care - GRF 1.1.2/ SDG 5.6.1</p> <p>Minimum age AY indicate as appropriate to get married</p> <p>% of female and male adolescents aged 13-17 years who experienced sexual / emotional / physical violence in the past 12 months, by sex and age - GRF 3.1.3 - milestones</p> <p>Proportion of girls and boys who report an increase to their safety and wellbeing as a result of their needs being addressed through SC or its partner interventions - milestones</p> <p>Proportion of female and male adolescents aged 13-17 who ever received services for childhood sexual / physical violence, among those who ever experienced sexual / physical violence, by sex and by type of service received - GRF 3.3.2, 3.3.3</p> <p>Parents' / caregivers' / community members' attitude towards their children's / AY intention to delay marriage / pregnancy</p> <p>Proportion of targeted adolescent Ays who know where to access health services and information - milestones</p> <p>Proportion of AY who use SRH services</p>	<p>CORE</p> <p>CORE</p> <p>CORE</p> <p>CORE</p> <p>Catalyser</p> <p>Catalyser</p> <p>Catalyser</p> <p>Catalyser</p>	<p>AY</p> <p>AY</p> <p>AY</p> <p>AY</p> <p>AY</p> <p>Community</p> <p>AY</p> <p>AY</p>

OUTPUTS	What can/should we measure? CORE dimensions in BOLD + <i>setting expectations*</i>	Indicators (in bold those for aggregated reporting)	CORE / Catalyser	Socio-Ecological Model level
OUTCOME 2: Improve gender transformative and inclusive educational pathways for AYs	AYs equal access to, enrolment + attendance in learning opportunities; literacy rates; parents' awareness + supportive attitudes + access to financial support; community attitudes towards gender learning; services availability and inclusiveness; public investment in accessible and AYs inclusive gender friendly learning spaces	Proportion of AY enrolled in the education system	CORE	AY
		Proportion of AY students who regularly attend school	CORE	AY
		Proportion of AY who re-enrol in the education system	CORE	AY
		Parents' / caregivers' / community members' attitude towards their AY children participation to education	Catalyser	Community
		Proportion of AY families who access to financial support to allow their AY children participate in formal education	Catalyser	Community
		% change in government revenues available to invest in AYs accessible and gender friendly learning spaces at national / subnational / local level (milestones)	Catalyser	Policy
OUTCOME 3: Increase	Employment rate, incl. considerations of "decent" work, i.e. duration, contract type, # working hours, contract rights; livelihoods also including adaptation/resilience, reservation wage, income + saving capacity. <i>AYs competencies aligned with market needs; AY facilitated access to financial capital; Parents positive attitude towards decent employment; VT accessible to all and improved; employers willing to hire AYs + receiving recognition for doing so; protection systems to monitor decent work conditions</i>	Proportion of AY who are employed, including apprenticeships, or internships	CORE	AY
		Proportion of employments that provide for decent working conditions (duration, contract type (written/verbal/informal), # working hours per week; contract rights (leave, social scheme, etc)	CORE	AY
		Proportion of AYs whose income is equal to or higher than the national minimum wage	CORE	AY
		Proportion of AYs who report increase or diversification of targeted assets	Optional	AY
		Proportion of AYs who report they can save money on a regular basis	CORE	AY
		Proportion of AYs with strengthened basic functional literacy and numeracy skills	CORE	AY
		# of AYs who complete VT training in line with market assessment	Catalyser	AY
		Proportion of A&Y (m/f) making use of informal (e.g. VSLAs) or formal financial services (e.g. banks, cooperatives, mobile money, etc.) to take out loans, make payments at facilitated conditions	Catalyser	AY
		Parents / caregivers' / community members' attitude towards decent employment for AY	Catalyser	Community
		Proportion of employers reporting willingness to hire AYs	Catalyser	Services
		Proportion of VT centres engaged with the project with adequate infrastructures for girls and PLWD	Catalyser	Services
		List of recognition mechanisms for employers promoting decent job opportunities for AYs	Catalyser	Policy
		% change in government revenues available to invest in AYs accessible and gender friendly learning spaces at national / subnational / local level (milestones)	Catalyser	Policy
Existence of any public mechanism to monitor decent work conditions for AYs	Catalyser	Policy		

OUTPUTS	What can/should we measure? CORE dimensions in BOLD + <i>setting expectations*</i>	Indicators (in bold those for aggregated reporting)	CORE / Catalyser	Socio-Ecological Model level
OUTCOME 4: Improve policies, frameworks, strategies, systems, services, networks with and for AYs	AY agency and organized participation to inform policies, frameworks, etc; inclusive and participatory policies/frameworks / strategies for AY; financial allocation to AY friendly programmes.	# of AY networks/clubs active on promoting AY rights "Spaces" available for AY participation # of policies / programmes / plans advocated for with AY participation youth friendly policies / programmes / plans endorsed/implemented by local gvts w + w/o AYs engagement % increase of budget allocated to AYs friendly policies / programmes by stakeholder (govt, private sector, etc) Proportion of AYs reporting improved satisfaction in access or quality of community / private / public services (milestones) Parents' / caregivers' / community members' attitude towards their AY children's needs Proportion of service providers who report availability of age, gender and disability sensitive services	CORE Catalyser CORE CORE Catalyser CORE Catalyser Catalyser	       
	AY perception of their power to contribute to change in their society; life skills ; AYs being models for their peers	Proportion of AY who feel they have the will and means to lead change in their community/society Proportion of AYs (m/f) who demonstrate life skills in their everyday life i.e. at home, in school, in the work place, in the community # of AYs who receive mentoring support by their peers, community members, service providers, etc	CORE Catalyser Catalyser	  

The Learning Agenda – an extract

AREA	Research Question
	<p>Disability / Agile and Inclusive (Enabler) / 3rd Guiding Principle (GP)</p> <p>What is the prevalence of disability among our target population? What type of disability do they have?</p> <p>What are the key barriers children with disabilities experience that they feel hold them back from developing, growing and transitioning successfully into adulthood?</p> <p>To what extent are programme activities increasing confidence and opportunities for children with disabilities compared to those without?</p>
	<p>Gender transformative / 3rd GP</p> <p>What approaches have been adopted to challenge gender norms and roles at household and community level?</p> <p>Are they being effectively triggering a change in opportunities for young girls (including on early pregnancy and early marriage)? Through what mechanisms?</p>
	<p>COVID</p> <p>What is the extent to which child labour is being used in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic at family level? How is the programme able to mitigate these negative responses?</p>
	<p>WASH</p> <p>What is the level of sensitivity and capacity of schools / Learning Centres to promote awareness + good practice in menstrual hygiene / SRH? Are schools / learning centres able to meet AY needs in these areas? Is the programme able to satisfy the AY's demands and needs in these areas?</p> <p>Are AY participating to improving menstrual hygiene/SRH services in their community (at schools/LC, health facilities, youth clubs, etc)?</p>
	<p>Climate Change</p> <p>Is the life skills training an appropriate "place" to create Climate Change awareness in AY?</p> <p>What is the concrete potential of AY to contribute / lead a change to climate change adaptation / mitigation (including on WASH) in their specific contexts? How is the programme leveraging on this potential?</p>
	<p>AY agency /Shift the power (Enabler) / Participation / 2nd GP</p> <p>What areas are AY networks / groups (live /online) active on?</p> <p>In what areas and at what level of the socio-ecological model and through what channels/actions are AY most successful in bringing about a change?</p> <p>What would they need to be more empowered to become agents of change?</p>
	<p>Socio-Ecological Model (SEM) / 5th GP</p> <p>Is the programme able to activate a synergic response of the different levels of the SEM towards AY wellbeing? Where are the gaps and are we able to fill them?</p>
<p>Life Skills Measurement</p>	<p>Can the EAT be considered a reliable measure of life skills, considered as foundational pillar of AY wellbeing, and not just limited to "employability"?</p> <p>Are there other tools available to meet the needs of very young adolescents / what are the best available options to measure life skills for very young adolescents?</p> <p>What can the programme do to improve them?</p>

At Save the Children, we want every child to have a future. We work every day with passion, determination and professionalism in Italy and around the world to give children the opportunity to be born and grow up healthy, receive an education and be protected.

When an emergency breaks out, we are among the first to arrive and the last to leave.

We work with local realities and partners to create a network that helps us to meet the needs of children, guarantee their rights and listen to their voice. We concretely improve the lives of millions of children, including those most difficult to reach.

Save the Children, since over 100 years, fights to save children at risk and guarantee them a future.



Save the Children