



Adolescent Girls Agency Survey (AGAS)

User Manual – East Africa

The What, Where, When, Why, and How of the AGAS Measure

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1. What: Overview of the AGAS

1.2 What is agency?

Agency is the ability a person has to act to make change in their own life or in their community. Our work is based on the idea that in order to have agency a girl must have both belief in her own ability and the skills she needs to do the change-making (Sidle 2019). This is a definition that was synthesized from the literature in human development, educational psychology and international women's empowerment research by Dr. Aubry Sidle.¹ To put this definition into practical terms: a girl taking action to affect the direction of her own life is an example of her exercising her 'agency.' Agency is the observable action a girl takes.

1.3 What is the difference between agency and agentic capacity?

Agency is slightly different from 'agentic capacity' which is the underlying ability that makes it possible for a girl to use her agency. By knowing if a girl has agentic capacity we can know if she's likely to act. Agentic capacity is measurable across people and contexts because it

¹ Sidle, A. A. (2019). Action on Agency: A Theoretical Framework for Defining and Operationalizing Agency in Girls' Life Skills Programs. *Gendered Perspectives in Development Working Paper Series, Paper #313*(University of Michigan).



relates to a person's psychology and underlying abilities—what she believes and knows about herself and the world and what she can *do*.

On the other hand, how a girl acts to affect change in her life, is entirely dependent on her context and what specific opportunities and constraints exist in the community where she lives. For example, in some communities, a young girl from a severely impoverished background may temporarily work to save money for school fees, enabling her to join school. This is different from a young girl who takes action to hold her parents responsible for her school fees because she knows they are capable but negligent.

1.4 What is the Adolescent Girls Agency Survey (AGAS)?

The **AGAS** is an assessment that measures the development of *agentic capacity* within girls. Specifically it is designed as a *program evaluation measure* that can show the impact of an organization's program on the development of girls' agentic capacity. By measuring agentic capacity we can see change over time, and capture agency across different contexts. Although it is true that the skills a girl needs to exercise her agency might vary somewhat depending on place and contextual constraints, it's also true that the Agentic capacity is a much more universal construct, which is why the AGAS measure works for girls across multiple countries.

Originally, the AGAS was developed by the leaders of 18 member organizations of Amplify Girls in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. The development process was led by two researchers Dr. Brenda Oulo (from Kenya) and Dr. Aubryn Sidle (from the US).

1.5 How does the AGAS measure agentic capacity?

To measure agentic capacity, we need to break the idea of agency down into all of its components. The AGAS breaks down girls' agency into **four domains** that were developed based on research, practitioner feedback, and 4 years of pilot evidence, from adolescent girls in East Africa. You can read more about the development of the AGAS and its early psychometric properties in two papers footnoted below.^{2 3}

The image below captures the four domains of agency and their names. In accordance with our definition, the AGAS breaks down agency into the skills and beliefs that girls need to affect

² Sidle, A., & Oulo, B. (2023). Assessment of a Practitioner-Derived Framework for Measuring Girl's Agency in East Africa. *Comparative Education Review*, 67(2), 000–000.

³ Sidle, A. A., Ahigika, D., Aszed, W., Bashuna, S., Belle, S., Bideri, D., Bohart, E., Butler, M., Fortunate, K. H., Fowler, Z., Kamau, L., Littman, J., Makumayenzi, V., Mariki, E., Mirisho, A., Musumba, P., Omare, M., Omondi, D., Oyugi, D., Sarakikya, E., Wolf, K. and Oulo, B. (2019). *Measuring Girls' Agency in East Africa—Co-Creating Contextually Specific Tools for Evaluation* (AMPLIFY White Paper). AMPLIFY Girls.

change, and divides these skills and beliefs into those that are internally-facing (about the self) and externally-facing (about the environment).

In the AGAS, two domains are specific to what girls believe about themselves (self-beliefs) and their environment (environmental beliefs) and two domains focus on what skills girls have to make change in terms of coordinating their own action (self-governance skills), and influencing others (leadership skills).

Figure 1: AGAS Framework for Measuring Girls' Agency



There are 33 questions on the AGAS, with between 5-9 questions (also called 'items') assigned to each of these four domains of agency. The AGAS has been translated into multiple local languages in East Africa, including Kiswahili (Kenya and Tanzania versions), Kinyarwanda, and Chichewa.

1.6 Definitions of agency domains and examples

As mentioned in the previous section, the AGAS measures agency as four domains of internally and externally facing skills and beliefs. We define these domains below and give examples of items (questions) from the AGAS measuring each.

1. **Self-beliefs.** A positive belief in yourself and your abilities. This is measured on the AGAS as a combination of self-esteem (self-worth) and self-efficacy (belief in your abilities, also sometimes understood as 'self-confidence').⁴
 - a. Examples of self-beliefs items on the AGAS

⁴ Items (questions) in this sub-domain were originally taken from Rosenberg Self-esteem scale (1965), and the Schwarzer & Jerusalem self-efficacy scale (1995) and revised by East African stakeholders over many courses of survey revision.

1. (SB_1) I am satisfied with who I am (as a person).	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2. (SB_4) I am a person of worth.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. **Environmental Beliefs.** A belief that the gendered constraints of your environment can be overcome, at least in part, through your own actions. The AGAS measures gendered constraints to girls' agency in the family, community, and society as a whole related to girls' current opportunities, as well as future selves.⁵

a. Examples of environmental beliefs items on the AGAS:

28. (EB_5) A man should make most decisions in the community.	Agree	I'm not sure	Disagree
29. (EB_6) When the family cannot afford to educate all children, only boys should go to school.	Agree	I'm not sure	Disagree

3. **Self-Governance Skills.** The ability of girls to organize and coordinate their own abilities into strategic action. The AGAS measures self-governance skills primarily as a combination of goal-setting, decision-making, and problem-solving and includes at least one question related to perseverance.⁶

a. Example of self-governance items on the AGAS

	Always	Sometimes	Never
9. (SG_3) When solving a problem, I try to determine what caused the problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. (SG_4) When solving a problem in my life, I compare each possible solution with other solutions to find the best one.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. **Leadership Skills:** The ability of a girl to express herself and positively influence others. The AGAS measures leadership skills as effective interpersonal communication, and her view of herself as a leader.⁷

a. Examples of leadership skills items on the AGAS:

⁵ Items on the environmental beliefs subdomain were developed three ways: 1. Through stakeholder consultation, 2. Adapted from the empowerment scale (Torre 1986)—measuring belief about the malleability of one's environment and 3. borrowed from the Gender equitable men's scale (c-change 2011), measuring the gender-normative v. gender-positive attitudes.

⁶ Items in the self-governance sub-domain were originally adapted from the self-awareness scale (Sheier & Carver 1985), goal setting, decision making, (Mincemoyer & Perkins 2005) perseverance of effort (Duckworth & Quinn's "grit" scale), and problem-solving (AMPLIFY defined items).

⁷ Items developed by Amplify Girls stakeholders or adapted from the Mincemoyer & Perkins (2005) measuring interpersonal communication.



	Always	Sometimes	Never
18. (LS_3) I make sure I understand what another person is saying before I respond.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. (LS_4) When I need something, I am able to express my needs to those around me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Use of the AGAS in Evaluation

The AGAS was designed as a pre-post evaluation measure to show change in a girls' agentic capacity over time. Typically pre-post measures are administered before a program starts (or at baseline) and then the same measure is administered again to the same participants at the end of a program (or at endline). Baseline and endline results are then compared to produce program-level scores. When the AGAS is used for program evaluation, it is very important that the baseline should be administered **before** program implementation begins, otherwise it will not show accurate 'baseline' results. Similarly, the 'endline' AGAS should be given at the end of the program or after a predetermined time frame to evaluate progress.

In some cases the AGAS may be used multiple times over the course of project implementation for regular monitoring, evaluating, and learning but we recommend that only in cases where the program is longer than one year in duration (see section 3.4 on "recommended frequency" for more guidance). The AGAS produces an aggregate measure (or combined score) of your program's change in agency from baseline to endline. Measuring average change for an entire cohort is an important program-level outcome that can be used to understand the impact of your program.

2.1 Example of program-level outcomes and indicator using the AGAS

Example outcomes and indicators that can be used for the AGAS in program evaluation or M&E plans:

Example outcome:

- Improve girls agency

Example indicator:

- average increase of girls' agency scores on the AGAS baseline to endline

Using the AGAS you can also measure outcomes related to the four domains of agency: self-beliefs, environmental beliefs, self-governance skills, and leadership skills. AGAS provides scores and measures of change for each of the four domains in addition to agency overall. One major advantage of this is that it allows your organization to see where its strengths and weaknesses lie. For more information on how to use domain scores in your organization's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), see the section of this manual on "Use of Results" (Section 5).



2.2 Limitations of the AGAS as a pre-post: two important considerations

Correlate the AGAS with observed measures of girls' agency in context

Although the AGAS will tell you whether or not a girls' agentic capacity has improved, it won't be able to tell you how she exercises her agency. In other words, what actions does she actually take in her life because she's improved her agency over time? These are likely context-specific such as how she navigates post-secondary transitions, earning income, decision-making in her relationships, making decisions about finances or health, etc. An example of a girl exercising her agency might be her taking steps to start a business, or enroll in continuing education, or to refuse a marriage proposal. Accordingly, in program evaluation, we recommend that the AGAS be used alongside direct observations of how girls exercise their agency so an organization knows both that she improves her agentic capacity AND acts.

Improved AGAS scores may not be solely a result of program intervention

Second, using the AGAS as a pre-post evaluation measure doesn't necessarily tell us that the changes in agentic capacity are due to the program under evaluation. A more cautious but useful interpretation would be that the program *contributed* to improvements in girls' agency while acknowledging the limitations of using a single measure to assess program impact.

There could be many other factors that help improve girls' agency unrelated to a program intervention—the school environment, for example, supportive adults outside the program, or simply, that over the course of a healthy adolescence, agency is likely to develop naturally with or without a program intervention. We recommend that, over time, as organizations have the capacity and resources, they undertake deeper impact evaluations that use advanced research methods to more closely link agency outcomes to the program intervention. Often this is achieved by using a comparison group and statistically comparing a program group to a comparison group

2.3 What type of programs does the AGAS best evaluate?

Any program can use the AGAS measure in evaluation. However, the AGAS was designed to evaluate **girl-focused life skills** programs. Life skills programs are programs that have a dedicated curriculum focused on teaching at least some of the skills and beliefs that matter to agency. Often, life skills programs include a combination of self-belief education (often referred to as social emotional learning), sexual reproductive health awareness, alongside practical skills for communicating with others, managing time, and life and career planning.

In 2019-2021, Amplify Girls conducted an evaluation on the effectiveness of various types of programs for improving girls' agency. The full report "Tracking Girls' Agency: An Outcome Evaluation of Diverse Programming" (Sidle, Oulo & Osano 2022) is publicly available and is referenced below.⁸

⁸ Sidle, A. A., Oulo, B., & Osano, N. (2022). *Tracking Girls' Agency: An Outcome Evaluation of Diverse Programming Amongst Community-Driven Organizations in East Africa* [AMPLIFY Girls Research Brief]. Amplify Girls.



Recommendations stemming from that report in addition to new learning from AGAS implementation efforts since 2022 have produced the following recommendations for program type.

2.3.1 Program Focus

Most importantly, programs that use the AGAS as an evaluation measure should have a substantive focus on improving girls' agency or its domains. Programs with a dedicated life skills or social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum can be particularly effective in improving girls' agency. While the AGAS is most useful for evaluating such programs, organizations with a broader program focus can still utilize the AGAS, but may not see the same level of results as a life skills focused curriculum, and therefore should plan to interpret the AGAS results while taking into account the program's specific objectives.

2.3.2 Program Structure (duration & dosage)⁹

Program duration refers to time, or the full length of the program cycle. "Dosage" refers to the intensity and frequency at which a program meets (e.g. once a week for one hour, once a month for 6 hours, etc.). Programs of all types of structure use the AGAS. Previous research on the use of the AGAS in different program structures found that programs that met with consistent frequency (weekly or biweekly) for at least 45 minutes had the highest impact on girls' agency outcomes compared to programs meeting more intensively than that (Sidle, Oulo & Osano 2022). The same study also found that each additional month of programming above 3 months, and up to 12 months, yielded higher agency outcomes (ibid).

2.3.3 Cohort & Cohort Size

Currently there are no studies using a similar multidimensional tool to the AGAS that can provide effect sizes that can be used in estimating sample size. Thus, there is no formal recommendation for a set minimum or maximum number of participants for administering the AGAS. However, from evidence on the use of measures similar to the AGAS for assessing group-level impact, we know that cohort size considerations can help optimize the interpretation of group-level change.

For small cohorts; Interpretations on group-level change over time can be challenging with small cohort sizes. In order for the AGAS to detect change over time in a small cohort, the size of that change (e.g. the level of improvement in agentic capacity) would have to be relatively large. Hence for programs with very few participants, results that do not display statistical significance (typically set at a 5% level of significance) shouldn't be automatically interpreted as a lack of program impact.

For large cohorts; To ease the logistical burden, large programs may want to consider 'sampling' rather than giving the survey to every participant. Random sampling is the recommended process- it

⁹ All information about duration and dosage is taken from the 2022 Amplify Research Brief: Sidle, A. A., Oulo, B., & Osano, N. (2022). *Tracking Girls' Agency: An Outcome Evaluation of Diverse Programming Amongst Community-Driven Organizations in East Africa* [AMPLIFY Girls Research Brief]. AMPLIFY Girls.



involves randomly selecting participants to take the AGAS rather than giving the survey to all participants. For organizations considering this approach we recommend you consult an evaluation specialist or statistician to perform sampling well. Amplify Girls (AG) can be contacted for support in developing sampling strategies for AG partner organizations. The appropriate time to contact AG for support in developing sampling strategies would be when preparing to administer the baseline AGAS

3. Who, Where & When:

3.1 Recommended Age range: 13-24 years

The AGAS was tested for reliability and the validity of use for girls aged 10-24 years in five countries within East and Southern Africa namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Malawi. According to findings from this validation study, it was most appropriate for girls ages 13 to age 24. If girls are younger than 13 (age 10-12) but are already enrolled in secondary school (Form 1 or higher), then they can be included in the AGAS.

3.1.1 Younger girls: 10-12¹⁰

Because the AGAS deals with challenging concepts and has vocabulary that may be challenging for girls below secondary school level, we have found that understanding of the survey was limited in those below age 13 years. The limited understanding can be related to a variety of factors including their level of comfort with reading the language of the AGAS, developmental maturity, level of schooling and context (e.g. school quality, exposure, etc). Given this variability, there may be cases where giving the survey to girls younger than 13 is appropriate but these must be considered on a case by case basis. For example, we have seen that in countries such as Rwanda where the language of instruction and the language spoken at home are the same, then more girls will have an easier time understanding the survey at a younger age.

The AGAS **should not be given to girls younger than age 10**, as it has never been tested or used with girls younger than 10. Given the documented issues with understandability for girls aged 10-12 from cognitive interviewing, we are confident that the AGAS would need to be adapted in order to work well for a younger age group.

3.1.2 Older girls (young women): 25+

The AGAS may be given to girls/women ages 25 and up, but again, we do not know if the measure works well for that age group. The survey has never been tested with girls and young women older

¹⁰ Recommendations synthesized from a combination of 22 cognitive interviews with girls of multiple ages in Kenya, Rwanda, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda, in addition to the feedback of 55 practitioners and AGAS implementers who attended the Girls' Agency Research Symposium in May 2024.



than the age of 25 so we do not know if the AGAS works for an older age group or not. Literature suggests that agentic capacity could be more malleable over the course of adolescence.

3.2 Girls with disabilities¹¹

We recommend that the AGAS be used with suitable accessibility accommodations for girls with disabilities.¹² However, depending on disability type and severity, the AGAS may not accurately capture agency for this population. This is explained in more detail below.

In order for us to know if the AGAS is appropriate for use within a particular population of girls with disabilities, we have to be confident that agency is developed and assessed in a similar way for girls with disabilities as it is for their non-disabled peers. In other words, do girls with disabilities develop agentic skills and beliefs in the same way as girls without disabilities? Are the skills needed to take action to make change the same for girls with disabilities? For some girls with some types of disabilities such as intellectual impairments, the AGAS will need to be *modified*¹³ completely in order to be an accurate measure of agency, but for other girls with disabilities the AGAS is ok. Below is a formal set of recommendations by disability type.

It is important to note that all disabilities fall on a spectrum of severity. While girls may fall into a particular category, they may not 'fit' into the particular recommendation. It is always important to consider a girl's individual strengths prior to determining participation in the AGAS.

3.2.1 Learning disabilities

A learning disability can be defined as a neurological condition affecting reading, writing, and mathematics comprehension. Relevant examples include but are not limited to, difficulty reading words or numbers (e.g. dyslexia), difficulty comprehending reading passages, or difficulties with listening comprehension. Some girls who have difficulties reading may not have any difficulties with listening comprehension and some girls who have difficulties with listening comprehension may not have any difficulties with reading comprehension.

¹¹ Recommendations for girls with disabilities (GWD) are based on several sources of evidence—all have limitations and more research is needed, but we share them here. First, we conducted 5 cognitive interviews on the AGAS with girls with disabilities in Uganda and Tanzania. Second, we have data sharing insight from practitioners from five countries who work with girls with disabilities at the Girls Agency Research Symposium held in Nairobi in May 2024. Last, we analyzed 3 focus group discussions (FGDs) of girls with disabilities about what agency means to them, and 1 FGD with practitioners who work with girls with disabilities about how best to adapt the AGAS.

¹² *Accommodation*: An accommodation is an adaptation of the survey that increases accessibility without changing the meaning of the survey (and individual questions). Using accommodations maintains reliability and validity.

¹³ *Modifications*: are changes to the survey that alter the meaning of the survey (and individual questions) and change how it measures agency. Modifying the survey requires additional testing since any changes to the AGAS can alter its reliability and validity.



With the right accessibility accommodations, the AGAS is appropriate for girls with learning disabilities. Please see the section “Recommendations for Accessible Accommodations” (Section 6) for specific guidance on accommodations that your organization can offer.

3.2.2 Physical disabilities (including hearing and visual impairment)

Physical disabilities can be defined as any physical impairment that limits an individual's physical functioning, mobility, and/or dexterity. A physical disability alone does not impact a girl's cognitive skills; however, if girls also experience limited access to education and isolation because of their physical impairment, this can slow educational and cognitive growth and development. Some girls with physical disabilities may have a secondary disability that impacts comprehension.

Girls with physical disabilities, who do not also have a developmental delay, should be able to **understand** the AGAS the same as others when provided with the AGAS in an accessible format. We have included suggestions for accessible formats for girls with physical disabilities in the “Recommendations for Accessible Accommodations” (Section 6).

However, evidence from focus group discussions conducted at the Action Foundation with girls with disabilities suggests that challenges with mobility, and communication may shape the way that girls with physical disabilities experience and exercise their agency in ways that are very different from their non-disabled peers. **For this reason, we are not sure that the AGAS is an accurate measure of agency for girls with physical disabilities**, and recommend that the AGAS be modified and fully adapted for this population in the long-run although this adaptation is not yet available.

For now, we cautiously recommend that girls with physical disabilities can be included in the administration of the AGAS with appropriate accommodations, but specify that learning from the AGAS for this population should not be considered conclusive. Also, due to the wide range of conditions that fall under the category of physical disabilities, the AGAS may be appropriate for some of these girls and not for others. More research is needed to establish this more conclusively.

3.2.3 Development delays and cognitive disabilities

Developmental delays and cognitive disabilities are umbrella terms for a large number of disabilities that affect cognitive development, such as children not reaching their developmental milestones or multiple areas of development (cognition, hearing, speech, motor, and behavior). Examples of these include, but are not limited to spina bifida, Down syndrome, expressive language disorder, and level 3 autism.

We do not recommend the current version of the AGAS be used with girls who have developmental delays. Girls in this population have unique experiences of agency that are fundamentally different from other girls and are also likely to experience similar challenges to understandability as younger girls. They may also struggle with question vocabulary and concept comprehension. Therefore, we recommend that the AGAS be fully modified for this population, and therefore, not be included in the evaluation data set.



3.3 Country

The survey was co-developed as a collaboration between locally based practitioners in East Africa and researchers. To date, it has been validated for use in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Malawi.

The AGAS is a valuable tool, but it's important to consider its validity for your specific context. While the AGAS can be used in any country, its accuracy is strongest in countries where it has been formally validated. Validation involves testing the instrument to ensure it accurately measures what it's intended to. While we're aware of organizations using the AGAS in Zambia and Zimbabwe, validation findings have not yet been made public. This means we can't be certain if the AGAS captures agency in the same way for girls in those contexts, however similarity of cultural and social context is a supporting factor.

3.4 Recommended frequency of data collection

As discussed, we recommend that the AGAS be given as a pre-post evaluation measure at baseline and then again at endline. If your program is longer than one year, you may want to give the AGAS more frequently so you can understand how girls are progressing. However, keep in mind that each additional time you administer the AGAS to a student, you are less likely to obtain accurate results because students will remember the survey and learn how they are supposed to answer. To avoid this type of bias, it's a good idea to leave a large gap of time between when girls take the AGAS.

We recommend that additional administrations of the AGAS beyond baseline and endline, be conducted at least one year apart. .

4. How: Implementation Guidance¹⁴

4.1 Confidentiality & Consent in Evaluation

For the purposes of administering the AGAS, consent and confidentiality in program evaluation is the same as consent and confidentiality in research. The only difference is that in evaluation there is no formal governing body (such as an ethical review board or research permitting office) that oversees the procedures and protocols. This eliminates a layer of formality to the process of obtaining consent and maintaining confidentiality but does not negate the importance of these principles.

Consent (or assent) must be obtained for all participants.

¹⁴ The guidance in this section was developed based on 5 years of collective experience implementing the AGAS from amongst the Amplify Girls partners. Much of it was synthesized from data collected at the Girls Agency Research Symposium in Nairobi in May 2024.



It is crucial to keep participants' data **confidential and protected at all times**. The AGAS collects personal information about an individual's underlying psychosocial beliefs and traits—this data should be protected similarly to any other kind of personal information.

If you plan to use your AGAS results as publishable research in peer-reviewed academic and research journals, you will need to pursue formal government and ethical permissions and will submit your consenting procedures and scripts in advance to relevant authorities for approval.

4.1.1 Protecting data - anonymizing data.

A large part of confidentiality is ensuring that data is protected. Whether or not you seek consent to share data with specific individuals in your program, data should always be kept in an anonymized format for confidentiality. The way to accomplish this is to assign a unique identifier (usually an alpha-numeric code) to identify each participant instead of their name. Data linkage to the participant's name is done using a master key, which is kept separate and secure from their AGAS answers. Procedures for anonymizing data are described below in the “Data Collection Process” (Section 4.4) of this manual. Anonymizing data ensures that no one without authorization as listed in the consenting procedures can link survey scores to an individual with any unintended consequences.

4.1.2 What is consent?

It is important before collecting data for any purpose to obtain consent or assent. Since minors can't legally agree to things without their guardian's permission, consent for minors is also called 'assent.'

There are four aspects of consent that need to be explained to all participants:

1. How their data will be used if it will be shared (and with whom)
2. How their anonymity will be protected.
3. Participation is voluntary with no consequences for declining to participate
4. Any benefits or risks

Parental permission. For minors, parents or legal guardians should be informed and have the opportunity to give their permission for any data collection that takes place in your program, including the AGAS. Some organizations seek this permission when enrolling participants in their program, some organizations will need to seek this permission separately when administering the AGAS if parents have not already consented to data collection.

Consent/Accent can be obtained in writing or orally. For evaluations that are intended to be published, written consent is necessary. For purely internal evaluations, oral consent may be appropriate. In both types of consent, the information given to participants is the same. The primary difference is the way you document a participants' agreement or disagreement to take the AGAS.



4.1.3 Sample participant consent script.

"Today you are going to fill out a short survey called the Adolescent Girls Agency Survey. You've been invited to participate in this survey because you have been a part of the [insert name of your program]. This survey will help us learn how well we, as an organization, are doing to meet our goals of helping you grow as young women. Your answers from the survey will help us know what we are doing well and what we need to improve. The surveys will remain completely confidential, which means your personal answers will not be shared with your name attached, which is why we are assigning everyone an anonymous unique ID. Your answers (without your name) may be entered into a database for other organizations to learn from. There are no wrong answers on this survey, so please answer honestly. Also, if at, anytime, you do not want to finish the survey you may stop. Remember, your answers on the survey and whether or not you complete the survey will not affect your participation in [insert name of program]. Do you have any questions?"

4.2 Language Versions

The table below provides recommendations for the appropriate AGAS language version in each country. These recommendations are based on the findings from our validation study, combined with practical insights from program staff who have experience administering the survey. In all countries, we recommend that girls be given the choice of which language version they take at baseline. It is important that once a girl chooses a language version, subsequent AGAS surveys should be taken in the *same* language.

Overall, practitioners recommended that the AGAS be administered in one of the languages of instruction in each country. In countries where the language of instruction switches from a local language to English, girls should have a choice between the two. In Uganda, it was determined by practitioners that the regional diversity of local languages, differences in dialects of the same local language, and the oral nature of local languages, means that the AGAS should only be administered in English. Further research is needed to determine and refine suitable local language versions to offer an update to this guidance.

In the table below we have indicated the available language versions and the language version most commonly preferred by country.

Country	Primary Suggested Language	Other Language Version Available
Kenya	English	Kiswahili (Kenyan version)
Tanzania	Kiswahili (Tanzania version)	English
Rwanda	Kinyarwanda	English
Malawi	Chichewa	English

Uganda	English	N/A
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4.3 Site Selection for Survey Administration

There are two important considerations when setting the environment for survey administration, **comfort and informality**. Girls should feel free, comfortable, and safe in the environment where they take the AGAS and should feel confident the information they provide on the AGAS will be kept private. It is very important that **the environment where girls take the AGAS is informal, relaxed and does not make the girls feel like they are taking a test**.

Tests are high-pressure situations where girls feel scrutinized and evaluated. This often leads to anxiety and stress, causing them to either not perform to the best of their ability or to answer in ways they believe are expected rather than according to their true feelings. Additionally, if girls feel that their answers might not be kept confidential, they may not respond truthfully to AGAS questions. These circumstances can lead to a common limitation in survey measures like the AGAS, known as social desirability bias. Ensuring that the location where AGAS is administered is as comfortable as possible for the girls will help reduce this bias and improve the survey's accuracy.

Only the organization implementing the AGAS can know what types of environment will feel comfortable and secure for your participants. We offer some general guidelines below that may or may not apply to your specific setting but are hopefully useful examples to help you think about what might work for your setting.

General guidance for location:

- **Ensure there are no adults present who girls would view as 'authority figures'** when the survey is being administered. Example: In a school setting this would include teachers or school administrators.
- **Make sure the setting feels different from a classroom test-taking environment.** If you have to administer the AGAS in a classroom, think of ways to rearrange the room or the desks or to make the environment feel more informal. If you will administer the AGAS at a school, consider choosing another location instead of a classroom, such as outside under a tree in an open field or another part of the schoolyard.

4.4 Data Collection Preparation

This section offers important considerations and guidance for the actual process and preparations to administer the AGAS. Step-by-step instructions for enumerators are included.

4.4.1 Enumerator Selection

The person responsible for administering the AGAS to participants is called an 'enumerator.' Part of ensuring a comfortable environment for the AGAS is making sure you select the right person to administer the survey. The enumerator bears a huge responsibility for ensuring the environment is



comfortable and informal and for ensuring the data collected is accurate. This person could be a part of the organization's staff or someone outside your organization. Regardless of organizational association, the enumerator must be trained following the guidance in section 4.4.2. Below are some general guidelines synthesized from past experiences on enumerator selection.

The enumerators of the AGAS should be people who are:

- Are not authority figures.
- Can put girls at ease.
- Are familiar with the community setting.
- Speakers of the local language, and people who are comfortable offering instructions in a local vernacular.
- Experienced in working with girls, and trained on issues of safeguarding and sensitivity.
- Trained on the concept of agency, the AGAS, its use, and administration protocol, including consent.

4.4.2 Enumerator Training

Anyone administering the AGAS should receive specific and dedicated training. This will help reduce bias, avoid implementation challenges, and ensure that results are accurate. This manual can be used as a guide to develop good training for enumerators. These are specific priority areas required for enumerator training:

1. The AGAS and AGAS Glossary;
2. consent and confidentiality;
3. enumerator's role in establishing rapport and an appropriate environment for the survey;
4. appropriate survey administration techniques; and
5. data collection protocols and procedures (see Section 4.5).

1. Training on AGAS & AGAS Glossary:

Enumerators should have a basic understanding of agency, and how the AGAS measures agency in terms of domains. These topics are primarily covered in section 1 of this user manual. Additionally, the enumerator should familiarize themselves with the AGAS itself by reading all of the instructions and questions on the AGAS and reviewing the glossary of 'difficult terms and concepts' at the end of this manual. Enumerators need to be prepared to explain to girls in their local language the definitions and examples given in the glossary of these terms and concepts. We recommend enumerators rehearse these explanations in advance of survey administration.

2. Consent and confidentiality:

All enumerators should have a basic understanding of the importance of consent and confidentiality in evaluation and research. We highly recommend that all enumerators (and staff) working on the



AGAS participate in ethics training on human subjects protection in social science research where possible. These are offered by many research institutes, universities and research ethics boards.¹⁵

3. Enumerator's role in establishing rapport and appropriate environment:

First, enumerators should have prior experience in facilitation with girls and know how to break the ice and put girls at ease by making instructions and learning feel fun. The enumerators should practice, with peers, how to give girls instructions on the AGAS and explaining consent in an easy way. Any opportunity to make the instruction-giving informal will be helpful!

Second, it is the enumerator's role to ensure that the environment is comfortable and informal. The enumerator should read section 4.3 carefully and come up with a plan for how to achieve comfort and informality of the environment in a way that is specific to the enumerator's setting. The enumerator will also need to develop a plan for how to ensure girls are separate from authority figures during AGAS administration.

4. Appropriate survey administration techniques:

Even though it shouldn't appear this way to girls, enumerators are 'test-givers' and need to follow very strict protocols and procedures to ensure your organization gets good information from the AGAS. **Most importantly, enumerators may not give answers or explain questions beyond what is offered in the glossary.** The instructions enumerators give to girls on how to take the survey should be the same every time girls take the AGAS and should follow a standard procedure. Changing instructions and testing protocol can bias the results of the AGAS.

If you expect the population taking the AGAS to include girls with disabilities, the enumerator should also be trained in Section 3.2 and Section 6 of this manual, which cover different types of disabilities and how to implement all of the possible accommodations that girls with disabilities might need.

5. Data collection protocols and procedures

The enumerator is the implementer of all data collection protocols and procedures and as such needs to be extremely well-versed in all aspects of Section 4 of this manual, especially section 4.5.

Importantly, enumerators should also be trained in consent for evaluation, appropriate site selection, and section 3 of the manual which describes the appropriate population for the AGAS.

4.4.3 Planning Checklist

We recommend that your organization's staff have at least one if not multiple planning meetings to consider all aspects of AGAS administration. This planning checklist is compiled from 35 organizations' experiences with administering the survey. It is a *recommended set of guidelines* to help your organization prepare.

¹⁵ A popular online course available in any country is linked here. <https://about.citiprogram.org/course/human-subjects-research-2/>



- **Conduct Planning Meeting(s):** with all staff and enumerators who will be involved in AGAS administration. Ensure all staff involved are familiar with AGAS purpose, confidentiality, and data collection procedures (section 4.5) and planning logistics.
- Planning logistics:
 - *Population considerations:* e.g. number of girls, age range, disability status, barriers to participation. If the age range of girls is wide, it is recommended to break them up into groups by age cohort or grade level in school for test administration, whenever possible. See data collection procedures (Section 4.5).
 - *Identify what accessibility accommodations will be needed:* In order to appropriately accommodate girls with disabilities your organization will need to prepare for accessible accommodations in advance. Find out what accommodations might be needed in your context. If applicable, see section 6. Preparing for accommodations may mean preparing additional AGAS materials, securing interpreters, making recordings, etc.
 - *Plan timing of the survey:* AGAS can take as little as 30 minutes and up to 2 hours. Select a time that is convenient for girls and when they will not feel rushed. How much time you need depends on age, disability status, and comfort with the language version being utilized. It is advisable to plan the AGAS during regularly scheduled program time.
 - *Refreshments:* we do not recommend offering 'gifts' for participants to take the AGAS but we recommend small snacks or refreshments if appropriate for your context and the timing/site of the AGAS administration.
 - *Communication:* communicate all administration details in advance with AGAS administration sites and any stakeholders.
 - *Printing or connectivity:* how will girls take the AGAS? On paper or online, you will need different materials for each. We recommend you provide all AGAS-taking materials including pens if needed.
 - *AGAS Materials:* determine your language version(s) and how many copies are needed (plan for extras), copies of master key, consent script, instruction script, copies of procedures, etc.
 - *Determine consenting procedure:* Will your organization use an oral or written consenting procedure? (see Section 4.1 for more information)
 - *Unique IDs:* ensure you have a plan for (and understand the process) of printing a MasterKey from the online portal, and know how to assign Unique IDs to participants prior to survey administration. To plan for this, review section 4.5.5 "Distributing the AGAS" and the appendix "Master Key."
- **Obtain Parental permission:** If your organization works with minors, you will need to have the permission of guardians in advance of administering the AGAS.
- **Site selection:** Consider conducting a site visit before the day of AGAS administration to identify the appropriate AGAS site, and to brief stakeholders at the location about the AGAS, its purpose, and any administration needs.



- **Conduct a training session for enumerators.** Ensure all staff engaging with the AGAS administration are well trained, versed in the data collection procedures, and potential accommodations.
- **Engage Stakeholders:** It is important to engage relevant stakeholders in advance of survey administration if needed. Which stakeholders need to be engaged is dependent on your context - e.g. School, teachers, community leaders, ministry officials, or other government entities.
- **Ensure Safeguarding Procedures:** your organization should consider what potential risks there may be to girls taking the survey and take steps in advance to 'do no harm.' This should be considered in selecting enumerators, time and site of data collection, etc. Some organizations involve a trained counselor or social worker in AGAS administration. This ensures that if girls feel distressed while taking the survey, they can be referred for support.

4.5 Data Collection Procedures (protocol)

The following section provides detailed guidance step-by-step on procedures to follow on the day of AGAS administration. All training, stakeholder engagement, parental permission, site selection and preparation should have been done in advance. The enumerator should follow the following steps to administer the AGAS on the day of data collection.

BEFORE girls arrive to take the AGAS:

4.5.1 Step 1: Arrange the site & materials.

Will you need multiple AGAS-taking sites? We recommend that girls take the AGAS in groups that are close in age. Try to avoid giving the AGAS to groups of girls that span a wide age-range, this can make the younger girls feel less confident.

Make sure the site is arranged in a girl-friendly way, that you have a master key, consent scripts, materials for survey-takers (e.g. pens, writing surfaces or computers/tablets), accommodations (if applicable), refreshments (if applicable).

Materials checklist:

- Masterkey, with unique IDs
- List of all participant names.
- AGAS - enough copies for all participants, and multiple language versions (if needed).
- Consent forms
- pens/writing surfaces.
- Printed glossary (for accommodations)
- Printed instructions for enumerator (if desired)



4.5.2 Step 2: Cross check parental permission.

It is good practice to cross-check that you have parental consent for all participants planning to take the AGAS. This should be done in advance of administration and ideally before you have participants gathered. It is especially important if your organization plans to publish the results of the AGAS in a journal.

AFTER Girls arrive to take the AGAS:

4.5.3 Step 3: Welcome participants & Explanation of the AGAS

Welcome girls as they enter the room. Introduce yourself and where you come from to put them at ease. Be positive and energetic in your demeanor, to make the girls feel comfortable and like they are engaged in something exciting!

Second, you should explain (in brief) why you've gathered everyone together and what will happen next. You can use your own words and ideas to do this. We've offered an example to help get your thinking. You do not need to read a script word for word, you can be informal and just talk to the girls about your plan for the day.

Sample introduction script: "We are here today to learn from you about your beliefs and skills and to help our organization learn about how we can improve in our work to better support you. I have a questionnaire we'd like you all to take that will help us do this learning. I'll explain the questionnaire in a moment, give you an opportunity to ask questions, and then ask if you are willing to take the questionnaire. This is supposed to be a voluntary and fun activity so you can always refuse if you don't want. For those of you who agree, we'll give you the survey and give you plenty of time to answer the questions. After all of us are finished, we'll all enjoy some refreshments together (whether or not you take the questionnaire). Is that ok with everyone? Shall I proceed?"

4.5.4 Step 4: Obtain girls' consent/assent

Next you should obtain participants' consent/assent (agreement) to take the AGAS and give everyone an opportunity to ask questions and to opt out. There are two procedures for obtaining consent (written and oral). Follow the procedure decided upon by your organizations.

Written Consent:

The consent form (or a similar version developed by your organization) should be printed in written form with a signature line for participants to leave their mark. **The form should be written in the language that is most comfortable and easy for participants to read and understand.**

1. The enumerator should distribute the consent/assent form to all girls.
2. When every participant has a written copy, the enumerator should read the form (or summarize if the form is longer than the example given in this manual).



3. Pause that end to ask if there are any questions.
4. Answer any and all questions.
5. Collect the forms and note if there are any blank forms indicating that girls do not consent/assent.
6. Allow anyone who does not consent/assent to leave or to wait somewhere nearby (if refreshments will be served afterwards).

Oral Consent:

The oral consent script (or a similar version developed by your organization) should be printed for the enumerator to read. **The script should be written in the language that is most comfortable and easy for participants to understand and should be read by the enumerator in that same language.**

1. The enumerator should ensure that she/he has the written oral consent script and a list of all participants who are in the room. It is often helpful if the oral consent script and participant lists are printed on the same form, for easy note taking.
2. The enumerator should read the oral consent script exactly as written.
3. Pause at the end to ask if there are any questions.
4. Answer any and all questions.
5. Ask for a show of hands: "If you understand and agree to proceed to with the survey, please raise your hand"
6. Enumerator should note down, but not call out anyone who has not raised their hand.
7. Ask for 'opt-outs:' "If anyone would prefer to not take the survey, you are welcome to leave now."
8. Enumerators should note on the oral consent script, if anyone has 'opted out' next to the participants' name.
9. Allow anyone who does not consent to leave or to wait somewhere nearby (if refreshments will be served afterwards).

Sample Consent Script/Form:

"Today you are going to fill out a short survey called the Adolescent Girls Agency Survey. You've been invited to participate in this survey because you have been a part of the [insert name of your program]. This survey will help us learn how well we, as an organization, are doing to meet our goals of helping you grow as young women.

Your answers from the survey will help us know what we are doing well and what we need to improve. The surveys will remain completely confidential, which means your personal answers will not be shared with your name attached, which is why we are assigning everyone an anonymous unique ID. Your answers (without your name) may be entered into a database for other organizations and researchers to learn about girls' agency.

There are no wrong answers on this survey, so please answer honestly. Also, if at, anytime, you do not want to finish the survey you may stop. Remember, your answers on the survey



and whether or not you complete the survey will not affect your participation in [insert name of program]. Do you have any questions?"

If you agree to participate in the survey please sign your name below. If you do not agree to participate in the survey, do not sign and return this form without your signature."

4.5.5 Step 5: Distribute the AGAS

Next the enumerator should move to administering the AGAS.

1. Ask participants which language version they would like to take (if you have multiple).
2. Distribute the survey by hand in the correct language version (if using paper copies) or give each participant access to the survey link (if using the online version).
3. **As surveys are being distributed, the enumerator needs to write:**
 - a. **On the MasterKey - participant name, date of birth, and any accommodations used alongside each Unique ID.**
 - b. **On the AGAS - the Unique ID that is given to each participant from the MasterKey.**
 - i. **NOTE:** This is extremely important, if you forget this step your data may not be usable. Also note if accommodations are being used by the participant on the MasterKey and on the AGAS. See appendix for more information on the Master Key procedure.
4. Give instructions. Once the AGAS is distributed, with unique ID numbers are noted down next to the participant's name in the masterkey AND on the AGAS, you can give the following instructions to participants:

"To complete the survey, read the questions carefully. Some questions may have confusing words or ideas, if you have any questions I will do my best to answer them. Some questions I may not be able to answer completely because doing so will change the meaning of the question. Once you read the question, answer it according to how much you agree or how often you do something. [Give examples of the response options here. Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers and there is no grade at the end of this. Do not worry about how others may answer the question, just answer honestly. When you are finished, you may hand the paper to me/close the device.

Remember, this survey is private so don't discuss your answers with your peers, and keep your own answers private."

4.5.6 Step 6: Administering the AGAS

While girls are taking the AGAS, the enumerator:

1. **Should answer questions about the meaning of a word or concept.** We are not testing girls' ability to understand the survey. What we actually want is their truthful responses to the questions themselves, hence explaining words or concepts she doesn't understand is a good idea.
 - i. You may offer her an explanation of that word, or concept in english or in her local language. Either is ok. Please use the glossary in this manual to



explain specific words and concepts we anticipate might be challenging for students.

2. **Should offer short breaks or energizers** (5 min) if the enumerator notices that girls are getting tired, stressed or overwhelmed. Have a few energizers planned in advance in case this is needed.
3. **Should ensure the environment remains free** from interruptions and especially the presence of authority figures.
4. **Should NOT answer questions about how a girl should respond to a particular item on the AGAS.** The enumerator should not give any explanation that might encourage the participant to answer the question in a particular way. It's very important that she gives her own answers.
5. **Should NOT make the girls feel rushed.** Make sure the girls have as much time as they need.

4.5.7 Step 7: Collecting Surveys (if using printed surveys)

When participants are finished, you may collect their surveys (or as they finish they can bring you their surveys). As you collect surveys make sure you check:

- **That the Unique ID is written on the survey form, and that the SAME Unique ID is written next to the participant's name and date of birth on the masterkey.**
- Any accessibility accommodations have been noted.
- All questions have been answered. (Do not pressure a girl to retake the AGAS, but if it seems that she may have missed an entire page, for example, you may ask if she would like to complete the survey in full).
- That you have the participants' consent form (or have noted that she has consented in your oral consent form).

Once everyone is finished with the survey you may offer participants refreshments.

4.6 Data Storage

Master keys of the AGAS need to be kept separate from surveys and any digital data. Master Keys should be kept under lock and key and should be digitized and kept on password protected computers.

Hard Copy surveys, once entered into a digital format, should be kept under lock and key, and then destroyed after the evaluation period.

It is recommended that consent forms should be kept for 5 years after the evaluation is complete.

4.7 Data Entry & Scoring

Description of data entry process

The need for data entry depends on how you administered the survey:



- **Online Surveys:** No data entry is required. The platform will capture the responses electronically.
- **Hard Copy Surveys:** You'll need to enter the data from the paper forms. This will be done through an online form that mirrors the hard copy questions. Just enter the participants' responses directly into the corresponding online fields.

How is the AGAS scored –why can't you just add the scores?

The AGAS is a special kind of survey tool called a psychometric tool designed to measure agentic capacity in girls. We, the creators of the AGAS, have developed a scoring system that makes sure every question counts fairly in producing the overall agency scores as some questions might be easier to answer than others. For example, "I am satisfied with who I am as a person" might be easier than "When solving a problem in my life, I compare each possible solution with other solutions to find the best one."

Our scoring system, based on something called "Item Response Theory," takes these differences into account. This way, no matter which questions a girl gets, her overall score accurately reflects her level of agency.

5. Use of Results

5.1 Using the AGAS for MEL, Research & Program Design

When your organization receives AGAS results, you will get results for Agency overall, as well as scores for each of the four domains. This allows your organization to know how skills and beliefs are developing in relationship to girls' agentic capacity overall.

Program Planning: The AGAS can be used to gather baseline data when developing programmatic goals and activities. Information from the AGAS can provide guidance into the overall agentic strength and needs of a particular community or cohort of girls.

For example: A group of girls takes the AGAS and overall results indicate that the girls struggle with self-governance skills and taking steps towards meeting their goals. The organization can develop goals and activities around training and mentoring girls on self-governance skills.

Program Monitoring Evaluation & Learning (MEL): Most importantly, the AGAS can be used for organizations' MEL and to adjust inputs and activities.

For example: An organization may have a goal of training girls in secondary school on small business skills. Along with a tool to measure business knowledge and concrete business skills, the AGAS can be used as a pre-and post-survey to evaluate the effect of the training on girls' internal and external beliefs that drive them to success.



Formal research: The AGAS measures agency, but what if you want to see how it impacts other areas like education or health? The AGAS becomes a launchpad for further research if your organization has the resources and opportunity to conduct broader impact evaluations for all your programmatic outcomes. Use agency scores alongside data on these outcomes to see if there's a link. Essentially, the AGAS helps measure the engine (agency) that might drive positive outcomes (better education, health, economic potential) in girls' lives. This research can be powerful, revealing how programs that boost agency can create a chain reaction of positive change.

5.2 Fit Statistics - Validity

To determine if the AGAS is a *valid* measure of girls' agency overall and in each of the five countries, we conducted a multi-group confirmatory factor analysis. This model supposes the four-factor structure listed previously is accurate, and attempts to determine to which extent this structure applies equally to scores from two different time points, and from each of the different countries.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA): Overall model

We began by assessing the fit of the four factor structure to the entire data set to determine whether this structure is appropriate. Below is a table of TLI, CFI, and RMSEA values, which are indicators of the fit of the model. TLI and CFI values above 0.9 or 0.95 are considered to be quite strong.¹⁶ RMSEA values below 0.06 are also considered to be a sign of a good fit.

Country	TLI	CFI	RMSA
All countries combined	0.949	0.953	0.043
Kenya	0.943	0.948	0.043
Tanzania	0.947	0.951	0.047
Uganda	0.951	0.956	0.046
Malawi	0.950	0.954	0.049
Rwanda	0.947	0.951	0.044

As can be seen in the table, these values indicate that the model is a good fit for the data as a whole, as well as for each country. This, however, is not sufficient to say that the instrument is performing similarly when comparing baseline and endline or comparing countries to each other. To determine this, we need to investigate the invariance of the instrument.

¹⁶ Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6(1), 1–55.



5.3 Comparisons - Invariance

To determine if AGAS results can be compared within or between countries we ran a series of statistical tests. First we looked at the validity of comparing baseline to endline versions of the AGAS. Next we looked at the validity of comparing AGAS scores between countries. Invariance was investigated using multigroup confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

In each of these cases, we determined to what extent scores can be compared by looking at whether constraining values in the models significantly affect the fit of the model. The first invariance to consider is configural invariance, which estimates the parameters of the model for each group (either baseline/endline or each country) to determine whether the four-factor structure proposed fits well to each group. If this is satisfied, we can investigate metric invariance. In this model, the factor loadings are constrained to be equal for each of the groups, suggesting that relationships between scores can be compared between groups. If this is also satisfied, we can investigate scalar invariance, which also requires the intercepts to be equal between groups. If this is satisfied, means can be compared between groups. In the context of baseline/endline, scalar invariance would allow for comparisons between scores at the beginning and end of a program. In the context of country, scalar invariance would allow for scores of groups in different countries to be compared.

5.3.1 Baseline to Endline Invariance

Configural invariance is reasonable to assert when comparing baseline and endline measurements on the AGAS. TLI, CFI, and RMSEA values of 0.950, 0.954, and 0.043 respectively from a multi-group confirmatory factor analysis suggest that the factor structure holds up well for both baseline and endline measurements. Testing the impact of constraining factor loadings reveals that metric invariance is also established ($\chi^2(66) = 64.631$, $p = 0.525$). Furthermore, testing the restriction of equal intercepts also indicates that scalar invariance is achieved ($\chi^2(29) = 40.141$, $p = 0.082$). This indicates that comparisons from baseline to endline are appropriate.

5.3.2 Country Invariance

TLI, CFI, and RMSEA values of 0.948, 0.952, and 0.046 from a multi-group CFA by country suggest that configural invariance is achieved. Metric invariance, however, is not achieved ($\chi^2(264) = 1064.1$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that neither mean scores nor values such as correlations between factor scores are appropriate between different countries. It may be the case that certain countries or certain settings would warrant comparisons, but at this time we can not recommend comparing AGAS scores person-to-person or group-to-group between countries, only **within** the same country.

5.4 Suggested Citation

When using results of the AGAS you may use the following citation to cite this manual:



Sidle, A.A., Oulo, B., & Reisman, S. (July 2024) "Adolescent Girls Agency Survey (AGAS) User Manual - the what, where, when, why & how of the AGAS measure." Girls Agency Lab Consulting LLC. [LINK](#).

6. Recommendations for Accessible Accommodations¹⁷

In this section, we make recommendations for how the AGAS should be accommodated or made accessible for girls with disabilities. Before using these accommodations, please read the "Girls with Disabilities" (Section 3.2) of this manual which offers overall guidance on who should take the AGAS.

Important Definitions:

Accommodation: An accommodation is an adaptation of the survey that increases accessibility without changing the meaning of the survey (and individual questions). Using accommodations maintains reliability and validity.

Modifications: Modifications are changes to the survey that alter the meaning of the survey (and individual questions). Making modifications can alter the reliability and validity of the AGAS.

When using the AGAS, only surveys that have used the allowable accommodations can be kept as part of the data set. A girl may use one or multiple accommodations. For example, a girl may use a human reader, glossary, and scribe. Or, a girl may use enlarged print and recording. **Surveys that have been modified must be removed from the data set. All accommodations should be noted on the survey or in the Master Key.**

Accommodations ¹⁸	Instructions
Use of glossary	<p>Some girls may not understand all the concepts or words in the questions. Based on statistical analysis the glossary below has a list of commonly misunderstood words and definitions that can be used without affecting the validity and reliability of the AGAS.</p> <p>With an explanation in the local language vernacular.</p>
Checking for understanding w/o explaining	To check for understanding as an accommodation, ask a girl if she understands. If she does not:

¹⁷ Accommodations in this section are adapted from: Lazarus, S., Goldstone, L., Wheeler, T., Paul, J., Prestridge, S., Sharp, T., Hochstetter, A., and Warren, S. (2021). CCSSO Accessibility Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment of All Students. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

¹⁸ (ibid - same as above)

	<p>Recommend that she re-reads the question several times.</p> <p>Remind her that she can take her time, there is no rush.</p> <p>Clarify any words that are listed in the attached glossary</p> <p>Ask if it would be easier to take the AGAS in one of the translated languages</p> <p>Ask if she would prefer a human reader/recording</p> <p>If a girl does not understand multiple questions, remember that girls may stop taking the AGAS at any time. You may also look at the modifications listed below.</p>
Large Print	<p>Large print editions of the AGAS are required for some girls with visual impairments. It is recommended that print materials be manipulated to enlarge the font as needed to at least 18-point type for girls who need large print. This includes all text.</p> <p>The text needs to be clear, with high contrast between the print color and the background color.</p>
Magnification Devices	<p>Some girls with visual impairments may enlarge the print themselves by using magnification devices. These include eyeglass-mounted magnifiers and free-standing or handheld magnifiers.</p> <p>When using a screen, girls with visual impairments should be taught and encouraged to use the 'zoom' feature available on all devices.</p>
Sign Language	<p>Girls who are deaf or hard of hearing use sign language regularly, need this accommodation for all instructions, explanations of the AGAS during administration, and questions that she might ask while taking the AGAS. A sign interpreter should be trained like enumerators and well-versed in the AGAS and the glossary.</p> <p>Some girls who are hard of hearing may be able to listen to information when presented orally—as long as they are provided with appropriate amplification devices and the test setting does not have any extraneous sounds that interfere with the</p>



	presentation.
Braille	<p>Girls who are blind or have low vision may read the AGAS via Braille but will still require a scribe to take note of her responses. Braille translations may also be quite long (many pages of paper).</p> <p>Girls with visual impairments may also access the survey through a human reader, audio recording, or screen reader, of the AGAS.</p>
Human Reader ¹⁹	<p>If a human reader is selected, that person must comply with the following directions:</p> <p>Read the AGAS word for word only what is printed without changing, emphasizing, or adding words.</p> <p>Do not clarify questions (unless using the attached glossary or clarifying directions), provide additional information, or influence the girl's selection of a response in any way.</p> <p>Speak in a clear and consistent voice throughout, using clear pronunciation, and without vocal inflections that may influence a girl's choice when answering</p> <p>Have provided a copy of the AGAS at least two days prior, in order to become familiar with the questions</p> <p>Emphasize only the words printed in boldface, italics, or capital letters and inform the girl that the words are printed that way.</p> <p>Repeat questions as requested by the girls.</p> <p>Do not rush through and ask the girl if they are ready to move to the next item.</p> <p>Do not attempt to influence the "correct" answer to</p>

¹⁹ EDITION, F. (2014). PARCC ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES & ACCOMMODATIONS MANUAL. Appendix B https://www.neoga.k12.il.us/vimages/shared/vnews/stories/58764fce008b3/AF%26A%20Manual_%2807%20Appendix%20B_%20Test%20Administration%20Protocol%20for%20the%20Human%20Reader%20Accommodation%20for%20English%20Language%20Arts_Literacy%20%28ELA_L%29%20Assesments%2C%20and%20the%20Human%20Reader%20Accessibility%20Feature%20for%20Mathematics%20Asses.pdf

	<p>a question while reading</p> <p>Maintain a neutral facial expression, neither smiling nor frowning, which may be interpreted by the girl as approval or disapproval of her answers.</p> <p>When reading the selected response choice, be careful to give equal stress to each response option and to read all of them before waiting for a response.</p> <p>If the girl chooses an answer before the reader has read all the answer choices, ask if the girl wants the other response options to be read.</p> <p>After finishing reading a question and all response options, allow the girl to pause before responding. If the pause has been lengthy, ask: "Do you want me to read the question or any part of it again?" When rereading questions, follow the same guidelines listed above.</p>
Audio Recording	<p>When recording the AGAS follow the guidelines below:</p> <p>Read the AGAS word for word only what is printed without changing, emphasizing, or adding words.</p> <p>Speak in a clear and consistent voice throughout, using clear pronunciation, and without vocal inflections that may influence a girl's choice when answering.</p> <p>Emphasize only the words printed in boldface, italics, or capital letters and explain that the words are printed that way.</p> <p>When giving a recording to a girl follow the guidelines:</p> <p>Walk through the use of the device on which she will listen to the recording.</p> <p>Allow her to listen to the recording at a speed that is comfortable for her.</p> <p>Encourage her to pause after each question to allow</p>

	<p>for thinking and response time.</p> <p>Encourage her to repeat each question as many times as necessary to fully understand the meaning of the question.</p>
Screen reader	<p>A screen reader is a computer application that converts text to synthesized speech. Screen reading software allows girls to listen to the AGAS as it is displayed on a computer screen. They can choose to listen to any question multiple times.</p> <p>Girls who use text-to-speech supports will need headphones unless they are taking the AGAS individually in a separate setting.</p>
Visual cues	<p>Girls who are deaf or hard of hearing need visual cues in the classroom.</p> <p>AGAS administrators should keep their faces visible to the girls when speaking, and point to question items and directions as needed.</p>
Scribe	<p>Girls who have significant motor difficulties, or who have had a recent injury (such as a broken hand or arm) that makes it difficult to circle their responses may need to dictate their responses to a human, who then circles the girl's choice, either in the test platform or on paper. A scribe must follow the guidelines below:</p> <p>Circle exactly the response the girl says.</p> <p>Do not attempt to influence the "correct" answer.</p> <p>Maintain a neutral facial expression, neither smiling nor frowning, which may be interpreted by the girl as approval or disapproval of her answers.</p>

Below are examples of modifications. For purposes of inclusive practices and ensuring that girls with disabilities feel a sense of belonging, you may choose to allow a girl to engage in the AGAS with modifications. **If a girl needs the AGAS modified the data is no longer reliable or valid and cannot be used as a part of a data set.**

Modifications	Explanation
Simplified language	<p>Some girls under the age of 13 or those with significant learning disabilities, and/or developmental delays /cognitive disabilities may not understand some or all of those questions as they are written. They may require additional simplification.</p> <p>If a girl requires the questions to be simplified, the results of her survey cannot be used as part of the data set.</p>
Reducing the number of items	<p>As per the consent script, all girls may stop taking the AGAS at any point.</p> <p>At other times, agency workers may know a girl well enough to understand that she will not understand some questions in advance, or that she may not have the attention span to answer all questions in each domain. In these cases, the survey is shortened to meet a girl's needs.</p> <p>Surveys that have been shortened may not be used as a part of the data set.</p>
Checking for understanding with an explanation	<p>Some girls may need more words than those available in the glossary explained to them.</p> <p>In these cases, the survey is completed as a conversation explaining each confusing question to meet a girl's needs.</p> <p>Surveys that have been explained to this extent may not be used as a part of the data set.</p>

Appendix

Glossary

Word/Phrase	Definition	Question (if applicable)
Agency	Agency means the power you have to take action and make	

	changes in your own life or in your community. It also means having the confidence and skills to influence or improve situations around you.	
Agentic capacity	Agentic capacity means understanding whether a girl has the necessary beliefs, knowledge, and skills to take initiative and make things happen. Agentic capacity can be measured across different people and situations, giving ideas about how likely someone is to take steps and make change.	
conquer	In this question, to 'conquer' is to successfully overcome or achieve something difficult. In other words, you dealt with obstacles to successfully achieve something that matters to you.	I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.
Determine	In this question, 'determine' means to find out or figure out what made the problem happen; or, what made the problem happen. This question is asking you about the steps you take when solving a problem, not what happens after you try a solution.	When solving a problem, I try to determine what caused the problem. (Sg_3)
Important challenge	In this question, an 'important challenge' is a difficult task or situation that is or was very important to you.	I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.
Personal goal & stages	In this question, a 'personal goal' is something specific you want to achieve for yourself. A personal goal can be big or small. It can be as small as waking up 30 minutes earlier every day to have alone time	After setting a personal goal, I break it down into steps so I can achieve it in stages. (Sg_14)

	<p>or finish school. In other words, you decide on something big or small that you want to achieve and then plan out smaller steps needed to reach that goal.</p> <p>'Stages' in this question means 'steps' or breaking down the goal into smaller steps.</p>	
Role model	<p>In this question, a 'role model' means that other girls look up to you and want to follow your example because of the good things you do and the way you conduct yourself. A role model is a 'good example.'</p>	I am a role model for other girls in my community. (Ls_10)
Setbacks	<p>In this question, 'setbacks' means problems or difficulties that make it harder to achieve something.</p>	I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.
Worth	<p>In this question 'worth' means that you are important and valuable just because you are you. It is not about what other people think about you or how other people value you. It is about believing in yourself and knowing that you deserve respect and love. Ask yourself if you believe that you have importance and value regardless of things such as achievements, social status, or others' opinions.</p>	I am a person of worth. (Sb_1)



Master key

Master Keys should be printed from the portal. When creating a master key in the online portal:

1. You will be asked to create a cohort (the group of girls taking the AGAS at that point and time) and enter the names of all girls taking the survey in that cohort
2. The Master Key will automatically generate Unique IDs, a string of random numbers and letters, for each name entered, allowing each girl to have an anonymous identifying label instead of her name
3. You will be asked to download and print two copies of the Master Key with the names and Unique IDs that you have created.
4. One copy of the Master Key will serve as a reference for the enumerator, and should be kept in a safe and private place after the AGAS administration. The other copy can be cut into horizontal strips so that each girl can receive a piece of paper with her name and her assigned Unique ID. This will allow each girl to write their Unique ID on her paper copy of the survey or to enter her Unique ID in the online version of the survey.

It is **absolutely required**, if using printed copies of the AGAS, that the enumerator checks to make sure that the correct Unique ID for each girl is written on the survey she completes.

Enumerators should confirm, when collecting a completed survey from a girl:

- That the girl's survey has a Unique ID written or printed on it (ex: Ke_GG_b_001)
- That the Unique ID also appears in the Master Key document (in the second column)
- That the girl handing in the survey has her correct name next to the correct Unique ID on the Master Key (name in the first column, ID in the second)
- That the girl's name is **not** written on the survey itself

Example Master Key to be Printed:



Participant name (entered in portal)	Unique ID (automatically generated on portal)
Baraka Tema	Ke_GG_b_0001
Mary Atieno	Ke_GG_b_0002
Elizabeth Otieno	Ke_GG_b_0003
Sarah Lucy	Ke_GG_b_0004
Ruth Nawire	Ke_GG_b_0005

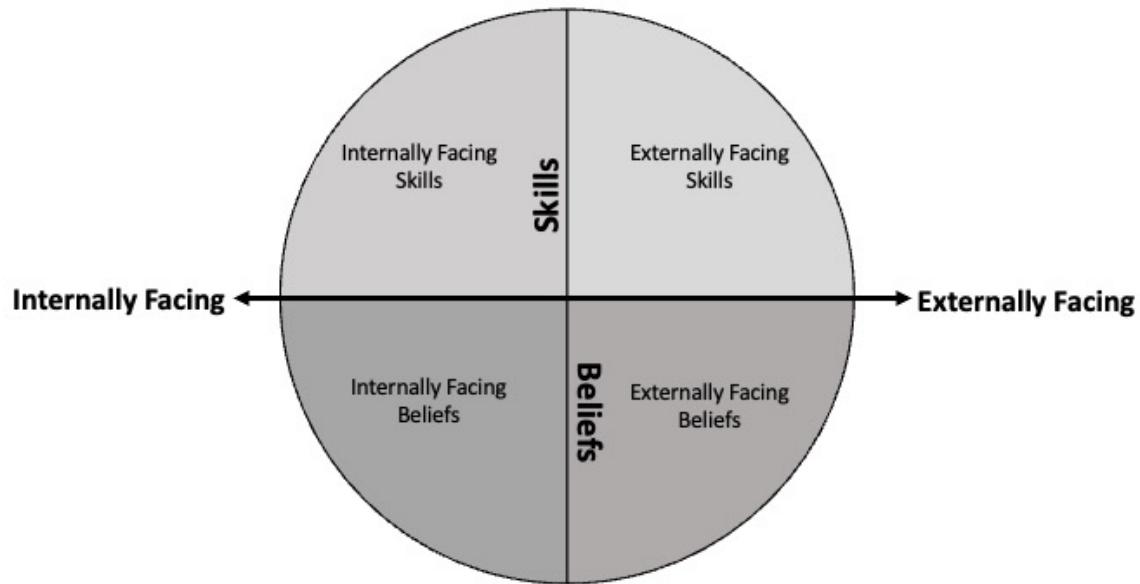
Example Cut strip that should be handed to each girl taking the survey:

Beth Kipchoge	Ke_GG_b_0007
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Additional Figures:

Another way to understand the AGAS' framework for measuring agency in a more general way is as a four-dimensional construct of externally and externally facing skills and beliefs. This can be a useful way to explain agency to funders or other external audiences.

Figure 2: Four Dimensions of Agency



Sidle & Oulo (2023) "Assessment of a Practitioner Derived Tool for Measuring ADolescent Girls' Agency" *Comparative Education Review*.