



# 2 Programme Coordinators Guide



THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORT  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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## Preparing, implementing and following up on your BLS Remote learning programme

This guide is for a programme coordinator who will design, manage, monitor and support a BLS Remote programme for adolescents and youth. A “programme coordinator” may be a UNICEF programme specialist or officer, or a staff member of a government agency or NGO. This guide offers programme coordinator recommendations for how to plan and oversee a BLS programme, facilitated digitally and remotely using an interactive video and chat platform that is adapted to the circumstances, needs and priorities of adolescents in their respective country contexts.

The steps offered in this programme coordinator’s guide are based on the format of the BLS Remote programme that UNICEF-Azerbaijan’s Adolescent and Youth Section designed and implemented in April and May 2020. In that programme, two facilitators led six, weekly BLS learning sessions with adolescents (and participants of other ages), using both Zoom and Facebook as interactive video and chat platforms. That format proved effective, efficient and advantageous in many ways. However, these materials could be used and adapted for a differently structured BLS Remote programme, and the box on page [x] offers a few alternate possibilities for consideration.

### 1. Leverage resources

This BLS remote learning package is designed for rapid implementation of a programme that requires minimal funding is feasible with the resources that most UNICEF offices have available for emergency and humanitarian response programmes. Follow this guide to ensure that you have ready and available the specific human, technological, financial and other resources you will need to implement a successful programme.

#### Funds

Depending on the human resources, technologies and equipment, and partnership agreements already available, funds may be required for the following:

- ✓ A consultant, contractor or partnering agency who may adapt revise, or translate of facilitators’ script and/or presentations according to the needs in your programme context
- ✓ Two facilitators who prepare and lead learning sessions with adolescents and youth.

## Human Resources

**Programme coordinator:** A programme coordinator will need to prepare to plan, directly monitor and support implementation of the BLS remote programme, and gather documentation on the reach and impact of a BLS remote programme. Budget time into your own work plan, or into the work plan of someone delegated on your team for these responsibilities.

**Two facilitators:** Engage and support a team of at least two facilitators to lead BLS sessions remotely with adolescents.

Unlike face-to-face learning programmes which require support from multiple facilitators in different schools, centers and other locations, this BLS Remote programme can be led by only two facilitators, who may be communicating a very large number of participants simultaneously. The following section of this guide includes a checklist of suggested qualifications for two expert facilitators.

**Technical support:** An Information and Technology specialist should support the preparation of the interactive video conference, and monitor the interactive video sessions, remaining available and ready to trouble-shoot any technical difficulties that arise.

## Digital technologies, platforms and equipment

As described above, this BLS Remote package was designed for a remote learning programme consisting of six sessions, led by two facilitators, using an interactive digital platform such as Zoom, WebEx or Facebook.

**The platform you choose should:**

- ✓ Inable live video- and audio-streaming by two facilitators (who may be in two different locations),
- ✓ Make it possible to present the animated and visual presentations, which are similar to PowerPoint,
- ✓ Include a “chat” function that all participants can use;
- ✓ Have security features (such as password protection) that enable you to prevent uninvited participants and intruders from “zoom-bombing” your sessions; and
- ✓ Support the number of participants you wish to reach.

The following equipment and services (which are often standard office resources) will be required for broadcasting the sessions:

- ✓ Adequate bandwidth to host and stream a videoconference reaching the targeted number of participants;
- ✓ At least two computers (one for each of the two facilitators), both equipped with video cameras and microphones.

## Funds

Depending on the human resources, technologies and equipment, and partnership agreements already available, some additional funds may be required for:

- ✓ A consultant, contractor or partnering agency who may adapt revise, or translate the facilitators’ script and/or visual presentations according to the needs in your programme context; and/or
- ✓ Two facilitators who prepare and lead learning sessions with adolescents and youth.

## 2. Plan, and adapt materials

Take the following steps to develop plans for a BLS Remote programme that will address the specific needs and priorities of adolescents and youth in your context, adapting the materials in this toolkit as needed:

### **Align the BLS Remote package to your programme goals.**

This BLS Remote toolkit may help you to catalyze a new programme for adolescents as part of humanitarian response strategy. You may also use these resources to adapt an ongoing, face-to-face education, life skills or psychosocial support programme that has been interrupted by stay-at-home orders for implementation remotely via an online platform.

As a first step, review this toolkit to consider how a BLS Remote programme will be harmonized with your ongoing programmes and/or your initiatives to respond to an emerging situation.

BLS Remote programmes: Alternative channels, schedules and facilitation approaches

This BLS Remote Programme Coordinator's guide outlines steps to plan and lead a BLS Remote programme structured similarly to the original programme conducted by UNICEF-Azerbaijan in April and May 2020. In that programme, two facilitators led six, weekly interactive video sessions on Zoom and Facebook with more than 5,000 participants.

### **BLS Remote Programmes: Alternative programme structures**

Depending on your goals and the resources available to you, you may wish to consider other ways to structure your programme. A few possibilities are as follows:

Hire more facilitators, and organize youth participants into smaller groups, aiming to keeping group membership consistent throughout the programme. With a ratio of 1 facilitator to no more than 20 young people, participants may have more opportunities to get to know their peers, to share their ideas, and to receive feedback and support from the facilitator.

Use the radio or television to facilitate sessions if young people do not have access to the internet. Although digital platforms offer more possibilities for interaction, in some cases other media channels may be the best way to reach young people, especially the most marginalized and vulnerable groups.

Use WhatsApp or other messaging apps to facilitate sessions and/or share information with young people. Again, this platform may be the most accessible channel in some settings.

Consider a "hybrid" approach to facilitating sessions if it is safe and feasible for some (but not all) young people to participate in face-to-face sessions. For example, facilitators could lead in-person sessions with a few youth participants, simultaneously broadcasting those sessions to others who participate remotely via interactive platforms.



## Review the original BLS Facilitators' Manual and Student Workbook.

This BLS Remote toolkit was initially developed by adapting teaching and learning materials from a Basic Life Skills package used for face-to-face learning programmes in Azerbaijan.

Develop your understanding of the BLS terms, teaching approaches, and goals addressed in this toolkit by reviewing the original BLS Facilitator's Manual and Student Workbook from that package. Taking this step should help you to consider and imagine further possibilities for adapting a BLS Remote curriculum to your context. Familiarizing yourself with those materials will also prepare you to shift to a face-to-face BLS learning programme when stay-at-home orders end and it is safe to do so.

## Identify the target beneficiaries of your programme.

Decide which adolescents you and youth you will aim to reach and engage with a BLS Remote learning programme. A few recommendations are as follows:

- ✓ **Age:** The BLS curriculum (both the original and remote versions) is designed for adolescents and youth ages 15-24. In Azerbaijan, the BLS Remote programme was developed to reach adolescents and youth ages 15-19, with direct outreach efforts addressed to young people (primarily secondary school and VET students) in that age range. However, participation in the programme was made open to people of any age, and an interesting finding was that approximately 45% of participants were adults ages 20 and older. Identify the age group you aim to reach. Decide whether your programme will also be kept open to interested of other ages.
- ✓ **Total enrollment:** If you are planning one, centralized "broadcast" of the programme by one or two facilitators, you may have the capacity to reach a very large number of participants. The number of participants who can participate in a given "broadcast" of the programme will also be determined by the parameters of the videostreaming platform you may use, and wifi strength in your context.
- ✓ **Specific groups of young people:** Consider whether there are specific groups of young people that your programme should include, such as those from marginalized or vulnerable groups who are hard to reach.

## Appraise your target beneficiary group's digital access.

To better understand what devices they use, and possibilities and restrictions for their access to cellular data and/or wifi, and choose the interactive video platform or other app you will use accordingly.

- ✓ Consider using a platform that youth in your context already access and use regularly (as long as it has the essential functions and features, including options for video and audiostreaming and chatting).
- ✓ Appraise specific privacy concerns and security risks in your context, especially those that may be associated with specific platforms. For example:
  - ✓ Choose a platform that will not put participants at risk of having their personal information compromised or used by a third party.
  - ✓ Identify and use platforms that are not vulnerable to "zoombombing" or other intrusion from outsiders, and/or that you can protect with security measures such as passwords.

## Appraise young people's daily schedules, and select and plan a time frame for BLS Remote learning sessions when young people will be available and ready to participate.

A few specific recommendations are:

- ✓ Conduct BLS learning sessions at a specific day and time each week, to make it easier for participants to know and remember when to join.
- ✓ Conduct only one or two (maximum) learning sessions per week, so participants have an opportunity to reflect on and practice new skills they have learned between sessions.

## Recruit expert facilitators, and collaborate with them in the planning stage.

A recommendation is to recruit two facilitators who are expert and experienced teachers, professors or trainers. If your facilitators have such expertise and experience, they will require minimal additional training, and this will save you time and resources when you are preparing to implement a programme quickly. They may also have valuable recommendations for how to adapt and enhance the learning strategies offered in the scripts and sessions to make them more relevant for young people in your context.

### Recommended qualifications for facilitators

Advanced degree in youth development, education (especially in areas related to adolescent and youth development and/or life skills education), or psychology

- ✓ Professional experience as a teacher, professor or facilitator working with youth, and/or as a trainer of teachers or facilitators
- ✓ Training and experience using student- or youth- centered teaching methods
- ✓ Experience leading classes or sessions remotely on digital platforms (if possible)
- ✓ Flexibility, adaptability and interest in using new digital technologies and approaches for remote education

In Azerbaijan, the programme was implemented by only two facilitators who co-led the remote sessions for all participants. One served in the role "lead" facilitator, reading the talking points in the scripts, and adding questions and comments. The second facilitator served as a moderator, monitoring participants' inputs via chat, highlighting comments or contributions of interest for the lead facilitator, reminding participants to contribute, or participating in role plays with the lead facilitator. This programme structure of two co- facilitators was reviewed positively in Azerbaijan's programme appraisal, and is a recommended format you wish to follow. A further suggestion from that appraisal was for two facilitators to take turns, alternating in these two roles, to add variety and balance in the sessions.



## Prepare facilitators.

### A few specific recommendations are:

Provide facilitators with session scripts and presentation materials in advance, so they may review and rehearse, adding their own notes as they see fit. Encourage (or require) facilitators to read the original BLS manual, as well as the glossary, to strengthen their knowledge of key concepts and to ensure that they are using key terms consistently and accurately. This step is especially important even for facilitators with expertise in topics related to Life Skills Education (such as psychology or socioemotional learning), who may have encountered the same terms framed or translated somewhat differently in other contexts.

Meet with facilitators to review programme plans in detail. Highly experienced facilitators may not need preparatory training per se, but a collaborative, preparatory meeting or workshop will give you an opportunity to agree to any adaptations of approaches or materials, and to finalize plans. If convenient with your schedule, combine this meeting with the **rehearsal** recommended below.

## Reach out and inform young people and the adults who support them about your upcoming BLS Remote learning programme.

### A few specific recommendations are:

- ✓ Use youth-friendly language appropriate to your context to explain the purpose of the programme and how it may benefit them, emphasizing that it is intended to be enjoyable, helpful, and provide a break from their daily stress.
- ✓ Provide information about when and how they can join online sessions.
- ✓ Welcome participants who may join after the first session, and/or those who are older and younger.
- ✓ Use the platforms and apps they already use (which may include WhatsApp, Instagram and others) to disseminate information about the programme.
- ✓ Use and adapt the [Participants' information and guide](#), and the [Parents' information and guide](#) as appropriate to your context. Note that those two resources are intended as templates, and you should add and change information and other language

## Rehearse

Before your first, scheduled BLS Remote Learning program, organize a rehearsal session with the two facilitators, and (ideally) support from your IT specialist, and one or two volunteer colleagues who may play the role of participants. Take time for facilitators to practice and feel confident and ready to use the video camera, microphone and online platform, and navigate the scripts and presentations, and monitor and respond to chats as they will during the session.

### 3. Support and monitor the programme.

**When your BLS Remote learning programme begins, take the following steps to coordinate, monitor, support and trouble shoot:**

**Observe each BLS Remote learning session in full.**

A few specific suggestions as you do so are:

- ✓ Be prepared to adapt and adjust your programme plans in collaboration with facilitators if you feel adjustments are indicated. Based on your experiences in the first sessions, you may feel that changes and adjustments will make subsequent sessions more engaging and effective.
- ✓ Troubleshoot as necessary.
- ✓ Enjoy the opportunity learn about young people's situations and needs as they participate in learning activities and contribute comments in chat during the sessions. A BLS Remote programme offers you the opportunity to hear directly from young people in your context about the issues that affect them, their concerns, hopes and priorities.

**Record each BLS Remote learning session.**

The recordings you create will serve as a useful record of your programme activities that you may use to review and improve your BLS programme as it is underway, make changes for future iterations of the programme, and/or use as a resource for reporting purposes.

- ✓ Inform participants that sessions will be recorded, and how recordings may be used
- ✓ Maintain any session recordings as confidential records, to preserve the privacy and security of participants.

**Gather and data on participants and their participation in each session.**

Record and keep information about the ages, genders, geographic locations, and any other information about participants that may be relevant and informative (e.g. in school/out-of-school, ethnicity, religion).

If possible, analyze the data in "real time" while your programme is underway. You may find it useful to assess patterns, such as increases or decreases in participation, or different patterns of participation, among different groups of young people.

**Invite education officials and other education and protection specialists from governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations to observe and participate in BLS Remote sessions online.**

Use the ease and convenience of inviting others to observe your programmes as an opportunity to collaborate with them, and to advocate for their support. Review the sessions you have observed with partners, and consider and future programming possibilities to on your remote programme's success, and the positive learning and psychosocial outcomes for adolescents who have participated in it. You may wish to plan further remote activities if stay-at-home orders will continue in your context, or to prepare plans for future face-to-face BLS programmes.



## 4. Follow up.

### Review, appraise and/or evaluate your programme.

An overarching recommendation is to conduct a review, appraisal and/or evaluation of your BLS Learning programme once it ends. The format of your programme review or appraisal, the information you gather, and the type of assessment you conduct should be aligned address your long-term programme goals.

Begin by gathering feedback especially from the young people who participated, as well as others who contributed or observed. A few possibilities for steps you may take are as follows:

- ✓ Gather feedback directly from participants. Adapt and/or use questions from the survey questionnaire that is part of this toolkit to create an online survey, using an online platform such as Survey Monkey or Survey Gizmo.
- ✓ Consult directly with a range of stakeholders in your programme via individual interviews, focus group discussions, or a collaborative workshop. Stakeholder consultations may also involve participants, as well as facilitators, programme staff and partners, and parents. Again, the survey questionnaire document offers questions you may use or adapt for those consultations.

### Plan your next programme steps to extend, build on and/or institutionalize a BLS remote (or in person) learning programme.

The next steps you take should depend on the findings of your programme review and appraisal, as well as your assessment of your immediate situation and future possibilities for the situation in your context.

If a humanitarian crisis requiring young people to stay at home will continue, you may wish to consider further possibilities to continue a remote learning programme for adolescents.

#### A few possibilities are as follows:

- ✓ Repeat the programme to reach more young people. Target outreach efforts to engage those from groups that were underrepresented in the first round of your programme. Engage participants from the first round as advocates and champions who promote the next round of your programme. Involve them directly in peer-to-peer outreach efforts if feasible.
- ✓ If schools or nonformal education programmes are still operating remotely in your context, consult with local or national officials, especially those who are your partners, to discuss incorporating the BLS Remote programme into curriculum offerings.

If it appears that stay-at-home protocols will soon be lifted in your context, consider how you may use your experiences and resources to prepare for future emergencies, and prepare for face-to-face learning programmes.

### A few possibilities are as follows:

- ✓ Integrate the BLS Remote programme materials into emergency preparedness plans for schools, or education or other systems.
- ✓ Plan face-to-face BLS programmes in formal schools or nonformal learning contexts, such as youth centers. One of the most important recommendations offered in this toolkit is to prepare for and invest in face-to-face learning programmes whenever necessary. In-person learning programmes offer young people the opportunity to take a break from stress and isolation, and to build healthy, supportive connections with peers – experiences that young people often say are the most valuable benefits of their participation in life skills and similar learning programmes. In-person learning settings are also especially conducive for adolescent-centered facilitation and teaching approaches that are reliably effective for life skills education. Consult the original BLS Facilitator Manual and Student Workbook for more information and guidance for use in face-to-face programmes.

## Share your experiences and achievements!

Don't forget to share your experiences with your BLS Remote programme with other UNICEF offices and partners! Your achievements, materials and lessons learned can inform and inspire future programmes.

