



# Supporting Learners at a distance: A learning conversation tool

## Supporting learners at a distance

This tool is intended to support you in thinking about how you can effectively engage and support individual learners at a distance. In addition to this guide, you will be in regular contact with your SAGE learning programme staff.

### Practicalities:

- Contact with your learners will most likely be by phone
- Time with your learners will be limited
- Learners will have other responsibilities in addition to their studies
- A key priority is to keep in touch with learners to support their safety and wellbeing, when the context may lead to increased vulnerabilities.

### CASE STUDY:

During her first week of supporting learners remotely Miss Ncube, a Community Educator in Mutoko contacted Tafadzwa a 15-year-old young mother from her Learning Hub. Miss Ncube asked after Tafadzwa's well-being. Tafadzwa said she was okay but was missing going to the Hub. She explained that she had many responsibilities at home and was worried she would get behind with her learning. Miss Ncube listened carefully and reassured Tafadzwa that the hubs would be open as soon as the health crisis settles down. She used the opportunity to encourage Tafadzwa to create time in her day when she could practise her learning. Miss Ncube asked Tafadzwa what support would help her. She said it would help her to know when she was expected to practise. Miss Ncube asked Tafadzwa to create a study planner by allocating time each day for study. She also suggested Tafadzwa look through her Learner Workbook and put a tick next to things she found easy and a cross next to things she found hard. Miss Ncube said in the next phone call she would ask about the study planner. Miss Ncube also asked if Tafadzwa had shared any songs or games from SAGE with her young baby.

## Six principles for effective learning conversations

- **Strike up a rapport!**  
A 'rapport' is a conversation that flows easily in both directions. A rapport is more easily established where we understand and share the interests of the other person. Taking time to listen and engage in your learner's hopes and concerns will provide the basis for an ongoing working relationship.
- **Start where learners are at!**  
Working one-to-one allows a unique opportunity to gauge how girls are progressing. Establishing 'where learners are at' allows you to guide and support their small steps of learning progress.
- **Listen and respond to each learner's needs**  
As you will be aware individual learners will each be experiencing their own challenges and circumstances. It is important to recognise and acknowledge the girls as individuals to talk and listen with them about the challenges they are facing.
- **Use the unit story**  
The unit story is an excellent resource for engaging learners. Use the unit story pictures to help the learners (and you) before sharing the story content.
- **Seek other learning opportunities**  
Think about activities that take place in and around the home that can support girls' learning. For example, telling stories, weighing cooking items or counting money.
- **Work at the learner's pace**  
Learners are more likely to remain engaged and progress if you can find a pace of learning that is realistic and suits their circumstance.

### Top tips to give to the learners:

- Find a regular time and space for study.
- A little study each day is better than one big lump of time every week.
- Work your way through the activities and come back to tasks you find difficult.
- Use the pictures in the unit story to help you understand the story.
- Practise the activities you can do. Try to share some of the activities with other people in your family.