

# I AM MY SISTER'S & BROTHER'S KEEPER

**GIRLS & BOYS EDUCATION MOVEMENT CLUBS**

**A GUIDEBOOK FOR SCHOOLS**



education

Department:  
Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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**I AM MY SISTER'S & BROTHER'S KEEPER**  
**GIRLS & BOYS EDUCATION MOVEMENT CLUBS**  
**A GUIDEBOOK FOR SCHOOLS**

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"I had to learn very early in life not to limit myself due to others' limited imagination. I have learned these days never to limit anyone else due to my limited imagination"—*Dr. Mae C. Jemison: Astronaut and first Black woman in space (NASA, 1992).*





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## INTRODUCTION

This guidebook is for learners who want to start a Girls and Boys Education Movement (GEM/BEM) club in their schools, and educators, parents, businesses in communities and community members who want to support the GEM/BEM clubs, and Government officials who are responsible for supporting the creation of child-friendly schools in their provinces or districts.

The guidebook is intended to give you a better understanding of what the GEM/BEM clubs are, where they come from and what they are trying to achieve, as well as the benefits of belonging to and supporting a GEM/BEM club. It also provides guidance on how to start a GEM/BEM club in your school, including ideas about possible activities that a club can engage in.

Overall, the guidebook aims to encourage girls and boys to start GEM/BEM clubs in their schools, as well as encourage educators, parents, community members, business in communities and other partners in Government to support the setting up and successful running of the GEM/BEM clubs.

The main objective of the Girls and Boys Education Movement clubs is for boys and girls to work together to promote girls' enrolment and to successfully complete studies in the maths, science and technology fields, since girls have historically been disadvantaged in these fields. The clubs are also intended to empower girls and boys with reliable information and knowledge, to guide them in discussing and addressing issues that are of concern to them in their schools and communities, and to act together to bring about positive changes in their lives and those of their peers.

## GIRLS AND BOYS EDUCATION MOVEMENT: BOOK 1

### IN THIS SECTION OF THE GUIDEBOOK YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT:

- ✓ **What is a Girls/Boys Education Movement (GEM/BEM) club?**
- ✓ **The history of the GEM/BEM clubs in Africa**
- ✓ **What do the GEM/BEM clubs aim to achieve?**
- ✓ **The benefits of belonging to and supporting a BEM/GEM club.**



# W

## WHAT IS A GIRLS/BOYS EDUCATION MOVEMENT CLUB?

The girls/boys education movement (GEM/BEM) clubs are school-based clubs made up of girls and boys who are committed to the promotion of equal human rights and dignity for all and mutual respect between girls and boys. GEM/BEM club members receive training on different topics, including how to form a club and make it work, peer education and other issues related to the promotion of equal access to education for girls and boys.

Learners who participate in these clubs form supportive partnerships with educators in their schools, parents and adults in their communities and Government officials in National, Provincial and District offices.



Given that gender inequality is common in our society and in education, girls are usually disadvantaged when it comes to accessing quality education and future employment opportunities. So, the GEM clubs were created to empower girls to participate in leadership activities and to be pro-active in ensuring their own educational progress.

Boys participate in the clubs as partners who support the empowerment of girls, in order to achieve gender equality in education and in society as a whole. Therefore, the GEM/BEM clubs consist of girls and boys who recognise that their true liberation will only come when, as boys and girls, society considers and treats them as equals in all areas of life.

The most important thing about the GEM/BEM is that the clubs are run for the learners and by the learners. This means that the clubs are about the girls and boys who are members in them. The girls and boys decide on the management, focus and activities of their clubs. In other words, adults and educators are not supposed to play a role, apart from assisting and supporting young people in the GEM/BEM clubs. They can provide support, like suggesting areas of focus, giving tips on how to make a club work better, or making resources available where possible.

The GEM/BEM clubs engage in different activities that are based on issues that concern young people. Club members decide what activities they would like to be involved in, based on their experiences within schools and in their communities.

### ► Tip

It is a good idea for learners to speak to educators, parents and other partners who will be needed to support their clubs, before they actually start a club. Some examples of activities that the clubs can engage in are found in this guidebook, in the section: 'Possible activities for your GEM club'.

## THE HISTORY OF THE GEM/BEM CLUBS IN AFRICA



### So, where exactly does the Girls/ Boys Education Movement come from?

The GEM/BEM is an international movement and is practised in many countries in the world. In Africa, the movement was first launched in 2001 in Kampala, Uganda. In South Africa, it was first launched in three provinces in 2002, namely Limpopo,

KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape. After the launch in the three provinces, the National Department of Education (DoE) formalised the GEM/BEM and launched it as a national programme in 2003.

At present the GEM/BEM clubs are run in many schools nationally, with support from both the National and Provincial Departments of Education and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The GEM/BEM programme is also built into the UNICEF and Government of South Africa Child Friendly Schools (CFS) programme, with emphasis on promoting gender equality in the CFS agenda, as well as training GEM/BEM members in peer education and life skills.

Although the GEM/BEM operates through school-based clubs, it is not necessarily a single club or organisation, but rather a broad movement. This is because the GEM/BEM consists of groups of young people in schools and communities throughout Africa and the world, who are working in different ways to bring about positive changes and make a difference in the lives of girls and boys in their communities.

The GEM/BEM is about getting things done. It is about movement and action, not just talking. Most of all, it is about young people who are driving the movement through active participation.

# W

## WHAT DO THE GEM/BEM CLUBS AIM TO ACHIEVE?



Different social problems such as violence, sexual abuse, learner pregnancy, HIV and AIDS and other problems related to the abuse of human rights are becoming common in our schools and communities. In many ways, these problems become a barrier to learning for learners who are victims, survivors or in some way affected. The occurrence of

these problems in our schools and communities undermines children's Constitutional rights to exist in a safe and secure environment and to equal access to quality education, as well as to their right to equality and dignity.

Girls and boys who participate in the GEM/BEM clubs recognise the negative influences that these social ills have on the lives of young people. They form these clubs so that they can work together to restore positive values in their schools and communities, as a way of preventing these problems and reducing their negative impact on young people.

The GEM/BEM clubs also recognise that gender inequality is a violation of girls' human and Constitutional rights and they work together to promote gender equality in education and in all other areas of life.

The GEM/BEM club members receive training in life skills, where they gain knowledge on different topics such as rights and responsibilities, self-esteem, leadership and the importance of equality and equal access to education for girls and boys. They also gain knowledge around issues related to gender inequality, gender-based violence, sexuality, learner pregnancy, HIV and AIDS and drug abuse, amongst other topics. Training on peer education gives GEM/BEM


members skills to share this information in their schools and communities, where they encourage positive and constructive values amongst their peers.

More specifically, the GEM/BEM clubs aim to achieve:

- ✓ Equal access to education for girls and boys.
- ✓ Improved quality of education.
- ✓ Curricula and learner/teacher support materials that reflect the interests of both girls and boys.
- ✓ Safe learning environments.
- ✓ Elimination of harmful practices that are imposed on girls and boys.
- ✓ Life skills for girls and boys to prevent possible problems, or cope better with existing situations related to teenage pregnancy, sexuality, sexual abuse, drug abuse, gender inequality, gender-based violence, HIV and AIDS, racism and other social problems.

GEM/BEM members are exposed to important information and knowledge, which assist them to realise that working to achieve the above goals would benefit everyone in their schools,





communities and subsequently in the whole of South Africa. Therefore, the work of the GEM/BEM clubs focuses on issues of:

### **Transformation**

In South Africa, we are changing from a country that discriminated against people on the basis of their race and gender, to a country that embraces equality for all its citizens. In the previous system of apartheid, Black people, women and girls, as well as people living with disabilities, were discriminated against which means they are still disadvantaged in many areas of life, including being mostly affected by unemployment and poverty.

Transforming South Africa to a free and equal society includes, amongst other things, empowering girls and other discriminated people to gain equal access to quality education for better employment opportunities. It also includes empowering girls and boys to become self-reliant and active participants in the economy so that we can advance our economic development, as well as reduce unemployment and poverty.

### **Safety and security**

The GEM/BEM clubs work to promote the right of young people to exist in an environment that is free of violence, exploitation, abuse, fear and suspicion. Through life skills education, they are empowered to collectively discuss and address various issues related to health, economic, social and emotional problems, that may be contributing to their schools and communities becoming unsafe. Understanding these issues is intended to motivate GEM/BEM club members to share information and encourage change in self-destructive attitudes, as well as to promote values of mutual respect and peaceful conflict-resolution amongst their peers.

### **Science, maths and technology**

As you may already know, one of the most common situations in unequal gender relations is that girls and boys are socialised to perform

different roles in different areas of life. In education, the most common situation throughout history has been that girls were expected and encouraged to do subjects that reflect existing gender-role stereotypes such as home economics, sewing and languages. Since they have historically been assigned the role of 'provider', boys have been expected and encouraged to do subjects, including maths, science and technology, that would prepare them to compete in the market economy. These role allocations were reinforced partly by creating stereotypes like: 'Boys are good at maths and girls are good at languages'.

In modern progressive-thinking societies, where girls and boys are increasingly being allowed equal opportunities to learning, the gap between boys and girls in enrolment and success in maths, science and technology has reduced over the years. The GEM/BEM clubs recognise that gender inequality is a barrier to learning, mainly for girls, and the boys and girls in these clubs work to promote girls' enrolment and success in these subjects, in order to balance access to quality education for both girls and boys.

### **Curricula and learner/teacher support materials that reflect the interests of both girls and boys**

One of the most disempowering situations in learning, is learning from material that reflects nothing familiar to a learner's reality, or material that shows negative images or messages about some learners. Many different things make learning much easier, including being able to identify with what is being taught, through role models. For example, in the past education system, great scientists and inventors were portrayed only as White males, which carried a hidden but powerful message about who is intelligent. This can be discouraging for learners who are not represented in the messages.

Therefore, the curriculum, learner and teacher support material and teaching methods need to accommodate the diversity of learners, to facilitate learning for all, regardless of their gender, race, class, culture and other characteristics that make people different. Teach-

ing support materials also need to be sensitive to these differences, so that all learners are inspired and encouraged to learn and adopt a positive outlook for their future.

### **Girls and boys with special needs**

Inclusive curricula, learner- and teacher-support material and teaching methods are also necessary, in order to specifically accommodate girls and boys with special needs. The learning environment needs to be accessible, affordable and friendly for learners with special needs (including disabilities), girls and boys living or working in the streets, refugees, or orphaned learners. The GEM/BEM clubs promote equal learning opportunities for girls and boys with special needs, because they recognise that all learners have the right to access quality education and a learning environment that encourages them to reach their full potential.

### **► Tip**

It is important to keep in mind these main areas of focus in the work of the BEM/GEM, so that when you plan your club activities, you always remember that the activities are intended to contribute to the transformation of our country into a society that is free from all forms of discrimination, violence, exploitation, abuse and fear, a society that affords girls and boys equal opportunities to reach their full potential and a society that raises responsible citizens who embrace the spirit of peace, equal rights and justice.

## **B**ENEFITS OF BELONGING TO AND SUPPORTING A GEM/BEM CLUB

### **Benefits of belonging to a GEM/BEM club**

There are many benefits for girls and boys who participate in the GEM/BEM clubs. Some of these include:

- ✓ Gaining knowledge and skills that assist young people in preventing and dealing with various problems in their lives, including teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence, HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- ✓ Exposure to different kinds of information that assist learners to make informed decisions and choices in life, including career guidance.
- ✓ Gaining social skills that contribute to the development of positive self-worth, assertiveness and confidence, especially to resist negative peer pressure.
- ✓ Opportunities to learn leadership and strategic planning skills, through organising and running GEM/BEM club operations and peer education.
- ✓ Being involved in discussions and social activities with peers in an environment that encourages positive thinking and constructive behaviour and discourages self-destructive attitudes.
- ✓ Participation in annual camp outings, where GEM/BEM members




engage in adult supervised fun and educational activities outside of the school environment.

### **Participation in a mentorship programme**

In addition to the above benefits, girls also get opportunities to participate in a mentorship programme called the 'Techno-Girls'. Since one of the goals of the BEM/GEM clubs is to





increase the uptake and retention of girls in the maths, science and technology fields, the Techno-Girls mentorship programme operates under the theme of '*Mobilising Business to Empower the Girl Child*'. This is aimed at exposing girls to scarce and in-demand career fields, especially in the science and technology industry, where their access has been limited because of gender inequality in education and in society as a whole.

### **Benefits of supporting GEM/BEM clubs**

Supporting young people to establish and sustain GEM/BEM clubs will benefit our learners, our schools and our communities. Violence in schools, learner pregnancy and other problems that affect young people are of major concern to parents, educators, communities and Government. Therefore, it is of benefit to all concerned to lend support to these clubs, because:

- ✓ Girls and boys will have forums where they can share experiences and advise each other, and be informed by reliable and constructive information, especially around issues that they find difficult to discuss with adults.
- ✓ Learners' involvement in the GEM/BEM clubs is likely to minimise their chances of getting involved in negative activities in their communities.
- ✓ The GEM/BEM clubs encourage boys and girls to focus on their education and plan their future in a more informed manner.
- ✓ The GEM/BEM clubs seek to encourage human rights, equality, respect and self-affirming values, which characteristics we would presumably like to encourage in young people.

### **Role of business in the GEM/BEM clubs**

Business has a crucial role to play in supporting the activities of the BEM/GEM clubs and providing resources to support the exposure of girls to mentorship programmes that may prepare them for tertiary education and better employment opportunities. Other ways in which business can support the GEM/BEM clubs include:

- ✓ Offering club members a stipend for transport or safe venues and supervision for their club activities.
- ✓ Offering club members scholarships for tertiary education.
- ✓ Offering club members job placements during school holidays or weekends.
- ✓ GEM/BEM members can be guided by educators or parents to approach businesses in their surrounding areas, for partnerships to advance their clubs, as well as support mentorship programmes.



## GIRLS AND BOYS EDUCATION MOVEMENT: BOOK 2

### IN THIS SECTION OF THE GUIDEBOOK YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT:

- ✓ **Starting a GEM/BEM club at your school**
- ✓ **Deciding how to recruit members and run your club.**
- ✓ **Ideas for the composition of a GEM/BEM club, and**
- ✓ **Calling the first meeting.**



## STARTING A GEM/BEM CLUB AT YOUR SCHOOL

To start a GEM/BEM club at your school, the following steps are suggested. The steps may be different in different schools, depending on the local context. What is more important, is that girls and boys in the clubs don't lose focus of their objective to work together to promote better inclusion of girls in education, especially in the maths, science and technology fields.

### Step 1: Doing your research

Do some research in your school and in your community to identify some of the issues that concern you as young people, so that you can list some of these issues as topics that you will need information on, to inform your discussions in your clubs. Use the information provided in Book 1 (What a GEM/BEM club is, history of the clubs, their aims and benefits), for ideas on issues to do your research on. Below are some ideas to guide you on your research, but first:

### ► Tip

Again, using the information in Book 1, motivate for starting a BEM/GEM club in your school to your educators and or principal and ask for permission to do the research, before you start. You can start off this process as an individual or as a group.

### Ideas for your research:

Identify issues in your school and in the community that have a negative influence on girls' and boys' education.

Find out about issues that influence the ability of girls and boys to enrol and finish school, or reasons for dropping out of school.

Find out about issues that influence girls' enrolment and success in the maths, science and technology fields.

Speak to learners, educators, parents, community members, business people and others. Ask them what they think are the causes of the issues you are researching, what they think would be the solutions and whether they would support you when you start a GEM/BEM club.

## ► Tips

Always explain to people that you interview why you are doing your research, by giving them the background of the GEM/BEM clubs (what they are, where they come from, what they are trying to achieve, their benefits and that you want to start a club in your school).

Always remember that people need to volunteer to answer your research questions; they must not be forced.

It is advisable to select a manageable number of people to interview when you do your research, and set a time frame for your research, planning and actually establishing your GEM/BEM club.

Keep in mind that when you have established your club, you may not be able to immediately deal with each and every issue you have identified in your research, but you can take one issue at a time. Always focus on what is realistic and possible for the club to achieve. The decision is yours as club members. Remember that educators and other adults are there to advise you.

### Step 2: Announcing your plans to start a GEM/BEM to learners in your school

Once you have done the initial research, inform your educators and/or principal about what you found out, and ask for permission to present your findings to the whole school, to motivate all learners on



the idea of starting a GEM/BEM club. Present your research findings to the learners, according to arrangements agreed upon with the principal (e.g. presenting during assembly). When you have won the support of the principal, educators, learners, the SGB and other partners on starting a GEM/BEM club in your school, then it is time to do some thinking and planning:

Get a few learners to volunteer to form a group that will start planning how to start a vibrant GEM/BEM club in your school. This group needs to work as a team, to plan things like how to recruit more members, how the club will be run, who can join, how many members in a club and so on.

**Remember: No club or organisation can claim to have direction without having defined its purpose, vision, mission, values and how it is going to do its business.**

So, the most important task for this initial group is to define the purpose of the GEM/BEM club, its vision, mission, values and how the club is going to perform its activities.

To do this, you need to ask yourself these questions: Why are we starting this club? **That is your purpose.** What is the situation that we desire, which we want our club to achieve? **That is your vision.** How are we going to work towards achieving our vision? **That is your mission.** What kind of attitudes, beliefs and behaviour will promote the achievement of our vision? **Those are your values.** Finally, what activities are we going to engage in and how are we going to turn the activities we have identified into real action?

Guided by the information in Book 1 and your research findings, define your club's purpose, vision, mission, values, activities and how you will put these into action. This must be recorded in a document that will serve as the Constitution for your club. See the example below and refer to Book 3 for ideas on activities:

THE CONSTITUTION OF XYZ GEM/BEM CLUB	
DATE:	
<b>PURPOSE</b>	Our purpose is to work together as girls and boys, to promote gender equality in education, promote girls' enrolment and success in the fields of maths, science and technology, promote constructive values amongst our peers and share information within our schools and communities to empower young people to prevent and deal with social problems that affect them.
<b>VISION</b>	Our vision is a society that is free from all forms of discrimination, violence, exploitation, abuse and fear and a society that raises responsible citizens for the future.
<b>MISSION</b>	Our mission is to engage in peer education, initiate debates in our schools, conduct campaigns, engage in public speaking during community events and be role models for our peers.
<b>VALUES</b>	We embrace values of equality of human rights and dignity in education and in all areas of life, mutual respect between girls and boys and we believe in kindness, empathy and peaceful conflict-resolution.

Again, guided by the information in Book 1, your research findings and your Constitution, identify issues that you need information on

and find out from your educators where you may get the information or how you may be supported to receive training on the issues you need information on. It is important to gain full support from your educators, because you will need their assistance to get information and guidance in running the club and to organise resources needed to run the club. You may also seek this kind of information from the Department of Education, at the National, Provincial or District offices.

### ► Tips

When you motivate starting a GEM/BEM club to all the learners in your school, it is advisable to also present the background of the GEM/BEM clubs so that everyone has a common understanding of the purpose of the club.

When you plan your club and define your Constitution, always ask for information and advice from educators and other adults who support you. Avoid going ahead with something if you are not fully sure of it. You may ask an educator or any available adult to supervise your planning meetings.

As you learn new information and become experienced in your club, you may find that there is a need to review and revise your Constitution, as situations change or it may be that other issues need to be accommodated. Always check that your activities are in line with your Constitution.



## **D**ECIDING HOW TO RECRUIT MEMBERS AND RUN YOUR CLUB

### **Step 3: Recruiting members**

Your club Constitution is the basic criteria for joining your club. Learners who want to join the club may be sworn in to promote the values, mission and vision of the club.

Decide on the rules for your club. Examples of rules include:

- ✓ Commitment to attend meetings or send apologies for being absent.
- ✓ Attendance of meetings and events on time.
- ✓ Respect for the club and its members.
- ✓ Switching off cell phones during meetings,.
- ✓ Participation in the activities of the club.

Members will be expelled for repeated behaviour that goes against the values of the club.

Decide on the age groups of members you want in your club and how you are going to recruit them.

Decide on the number of members that you feel will be reasonable for the club, or easy to manage, especially when you organise activities and share responsibilities.

Decide on the initial activities that you will do to start off your club, e.g. one orientation meeting a week to introduce new members to the club Constitution and discuss commitment to the vision, mission and values and agree on the rules of the club.

Start recruiting members or inviting other learners to join your club.

### **► Tips**

To start recruiting members, you can ask your principal and/or educators to allow you to announce your club's Constitution in assembly for instance, and invite learners who agree to your club values, mission and vision to approach you if they want to join the club. Tell them about other requirements for joining the club if there are any that you have identified, for example, if you are going to interview them before they join the club.

Remember that the GEM/BEM clubs embrace equality, respect, dignity, fairness and transparency, so when you recruit members, you need to be true to the values you stand for. The Constitution needs to be treated as a basis for fairness, not for excluding potential members who are seen not to meet the criteria. Also remember that our purpose as GEM/BEM clubs is to encourage our peers to adapt constructive attitudes and behaviour.

It will help to understand the background, purpose and the aims of the GEM/BEM clubs thoroughly before you start a club, so that you are able to answer questions from anyone who needs clarity.

If you are going to interview potential members, here are some ideas of questions you may ask:

We are starting a new club in our school. We want to start discussions, as young people, around issues that affect girls' and boys' education. If you are interested in joining our club, please answer the following questions:

Are you between the ages of 12 and 18?

Are you committed to your community?

Are you involved in any other community activities?

Do you like meeting new people, learning and doing new things?

Will you be available for regular meetings?

Will you be willing to volunteer your time and effort to assist in club activities?

Are you interested in girls' education and making the school and community a better place for girls?

## ► Tip

Always thank the interviewees for answering the questions and tell them what will happen next (e.g. if you will call them to join your club, if you have decided to allow them to join, or if they can come to an orientation meeting for instance, and also tell them the venue and time for this if that is the case). Give them a contact name in your school, so that they can follow up if they need to.

## IDEAS FOR THE COMPOSITION OF YOUR CLUB

### Step 4: How do we mix members in the club?

How you mix members in your club is mainly going to depend on the way your school is organised, in terms of what grades are in your school. Try to include a good mix in terms of grades, especially including learners from the lower grades, so that they can make sure the club continues when the older learners graduate and leave the school.



Have a good mix of girls and boys of different ages, so that younger learners can have a chance to learn from older learners.

If too many learners are interested in joining your club and you think the number is too big to manage, you may think about starting more than one club in your school. Again, how you work this out may depend on what is possible to do in your school. You may consider the

other clubs as branches of the first club or independent clubs within the school.

If you start more than one club, remember that the most important thing here is that the clubs need to share the same Constitution, so that the purpose, values, mission and vision of the GEM/BEM clubs is not lost or confused by different Constitutions.

The clubs within one school need to find a way to cooperate in what they do. Encourage a spirit of 'sisterhood' or 'brotherhood' within the clubs and avoid the kind of competition that can create hostility.

## ► Tips

When you divide and share responsibilities in your club, avoid reinforcing gender-role stereotypes. That is, avoid giving girls and boys responsibilities that are usually seen as things that girls do or things that boys do. For example, making girls take notes while boys are given responsibilities like deciding who should do what. Allow boys and girls to exchange roles and responsibilities, so that they both experience other things that they can do if given a chance.

Remember, girls and boys who join your GEM/BEM have unique qualities that give them courage and readiness to overcome fear of change, shift from a conditioned mindset and desire to reach for a higher level of thinking, where self-worth is motivated by their own achievements, not the weakness of others.

## CALLING THE FIRST MEETING



### Step 5: Making club decisions in a bigger group

Call the first meeting. Ask an educator or available adult to supervise the meeting. Make sure that you register all your members. Make a register which you will use to register all new members who join your club – recording their names, contact details and date of joining the club. In this meeting, you may discuss practical issues such as:

- ✓ How many times you will meet (for instance, will you meet as a club once or twice a week, or once a month?).
- ✓ How long will the meetings be?
- ✓ Who will take notes at the meetings?
- ✓ Does the club need a chairperson and a secretary? If so, how do we elect them? Do we vote or just pick people we trust?
- ✓ What will we expect the chairperson and secretary to do?
- ✓ Are the roles of chairperson and secretary going to be rotated or stay with one person?
- ✓ What happens when members miss meetings?
- ✓ What do we think our club should be doing?
- ✓ Do we need to come up with themes or topics for discussion?
- ✓ Do we need to do more research?

It is always better if you decide these practical issues with the other members, so that everyone is in agreement. You will also need to think about what is the best time to meet, to accommodate as many

club members as possible. For instance, some students may need to take the school bus home or travel long distances so they cannot stay too late after school.

It is also important at the first meeting to review the objectives and goals of the GEM/BEM club. Use information in Book 1 and your Constitution to make sure that everyone knows what the club is about and what it is supposed to try to achieve. Put your decisions and agreements in writing. Look at the example below:

**Our members have decided and agreed that:**

We will meet on the last Friday of every month in Classroom One.

We will meet after school for one hour or longer, as necessary, and then we will escort each other home to ensure that we get back home safely.

Our meetings will be supervised by volunteer educators, and they will help us with the club in general. We have spoken to these educators and they have agreed to help us.

We have discussed the areas of focus and themes, but we have not yet come to an agreement on what these should be.

We have agreed to do some more research and discuss it at the next meeting.

We have agreed to regularly invite speakers to come and give motivational talks to our club and make presentations on different topics such as health, career choices and other topics of interest to us.

We have agreed to always ask for advice and guidance from our educators, parents and other community members in running our club.

We have agreed that \_\_\_\_\_ will be our contact person for the club.

**► Tip**

It is useful to make posters of your club's purpose, values, mission and vision, as well as a few important decisions and agreements, and post these on walls where you conduct your meetings. Get permission to do this from the people who own or are responsible for the venue you use. It is important to choose a contact person for your club. That is, a person that other members can contact if they need information on the next meeting, or if other girls and boys need to find out more information about the club. Club members also need to come up with a Code of Conduct which outlines acceptable behaviour for all members. As the club gets bigger, you may find that you need to revise and refine the club rules you came up with initially and include these as part of your Code of Conduct. Each member of the club needs to be given a copy of the Code of Conduct and they must sign to commit to upholding and promoting it. There is an example of a Code of Conduct on page 28.





## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR XYZ GEM/BEM CLUB

We, the members of XYZ GEM/BEM club, have decided upon this Code of Conduct and commit to abiding by it and promoting it:

I accept this Code of Conduct as binding and I commit to abiding by it and promoting it. I commit to my membership in the XYZ GEM/BEM club and to conduct myself and relate to other members of the club with respect, dignity and pride, acting as a role model for my peers in our school and in the community. I will abide by the rules of the club as agreed below: I will:

- Respect and adhere to the purpose, values, mission and vision of the XYZ GEM/BEM club as stated in the Constitution of the club.
- Keep the goals and focus of the club in mind whenever I undertake activities.
- Maintain the confidentiality of information about club members and others that have been entrusted to me.
- Engage in GEM business and volunteer duties in an ethical manner.
- Not use my volunteer status for personal or financial gain.
- Treat all people as individuals and respect their beliefs, opinions, knowledge and experiences.
- Treat all club members as equals.
- Respect others irrespective of their sex, race, religion, age, creed or health status.
- Use appropriate language that will not offend others.
- Accept and respect constructive feedback and practise effective listening skills.
- Give constructive supervision, support and feedback to club members when I'm required to.
- Accept supervision and support from teachers and/or adult volunteers.
- Fulfil my assigned duties, including attending meetings, or let the contact person know if I'll be late or absent from the meeting, providing a reason for my absence.
- Serve the interests of the club and my fellow club members.
- Not commit illegal or abusive acts.
- I understand that the violation of one or more of these standards of behaviour and conduct will be treated most seriously.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 6: Getting information and knowledge on how to run the club

You may need training on what to do and how to do it and we suggest you get this training soon after starting your club if possible, to help you understand your roles, responsibilities and functions as members of the GEM club. You may also receive information on different issues that you will be dealing with.

Ask your principal and/or educators to guide you in this regard. They may be able to do the training themselves, or they may contact (or suggest that you contact) a local organisation to conduct the training. You can also get information from the Department of Education at the National and your Provincial or District offices (see Annexure B).

## Step 7: Keeping an eye on how your club is doing

You should meet regularly (depending on what you have agreed as a group). At least once a year, review your progress and how your club activities are affecting peers in your school and community. When you check your progress, also look at what you have achieved, what have been the challenges in your activities, how to overcome the challenges in your future activities and any changes that you may need to make. This process will help you identify your successes and learn from previous challenges, as well as monitor if you are moving towards reaching your club goals and vision. When you do your annual reviews, you need to write a progress report, documenting all your successes and challenges and making recommendations for improving your activities. There is an example of a progress report on page 30.

## Annual Progress Report for the XYZ GEM/BEM Club

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ For submission to: \_\_\_\_\_

The XYZ GEM/BEM club has been operating for nine months. We have done a lot of things and made a difference in the lives of some of the girls and boys in our school. The activities that our club has engaged in so far are:

Club members received two days of training on the prevention of HIV and AIDS, gender-based violence and learner pregnancy on 15 and 16 February 2008. The training was conducted by ABC organisation, with support from UNICEF. Club members received one day of training on peer education, organising a workshop and managing a club on 10 April 2008. The training was conducted by the Department of Education. We had several speakers come to the GEM/BEM meetings and talk about various issues such as available career options and scholarships, organisations that assist girls to access career opportunities and companies that sponsor girls to enter ICT industries.

On 12 May 2008 some club members visited the home of a girl learner who had left school and spoke to her parents. We wanted to find out why she had left and see what we could do to help her return to school. We found out that it was because her parents could not afford the school fees. We then told her parents about the fee exemption, helped them apply, spoke to the principal and also got a uniform from a student who had graduated last year. She returned to school after two months and we helped her catch up with her school work. She is now writing exams and we are all very happy and proud that we could help.

We have experienced challenges, including not having enough resources to run our club. For example, sometimes we don't have taxi fares for travelling home after activities that finish late. As club members, we recommended that we need to ask our educators to help us to get training for fund raising, so that we can approach local businesses and organisations to assist us with transport when we finish our activities late.

We also spoke to the local supermarket and were able to get them to make a donation box where people could leave food for some of the students who need assistance. We helped provide food to three families and that was very good.

We also had some problems with one of our members who stopped coming to meetings and participating in the club. Unfortunately, after trying to discuss issues with him, we had to ask him to leave, considering what we had all agreed upon in the Code of Conduct at the beginning. That was difficult but we found it necessary.

Next year, we are planning to continue to do similar work but we might also consider other projects such as trying to rebuild the school toilets, providing sanitary materials for girls and involving boys more in our activities.

### Step 8: Keeping your club vibrant

As some students leave the club (for example, because they graduate, move schools or lose interest), keep getting more to join. Remember to use the transparent criteria to select members. When members leave, this should not make the club give up what the members who have left were doing. Have a 'Plan B' for such situations:

- ✓ You may have a requirement that members who play an important role in the club (e.g. a chairperson, someone who communicates with supporters in business or the Department of Education) teach other members what they are doing, so that when they leave, someone can take over.
- ✓ You may work in such a way that everyone in the club is exposed to what others are doing, so that anyone can easily take over when someone leaves.
- ✓ Keep thinking of new activities that will make your club vibrant and attractive to your peers.

### ► Tips

Remember that these are only guidelines. What works best to establish the GEM/BEM club or how to best run it in your school should be determined by you and your educators, depending on what will work best for your situation. You may contact the Department of Education or UNICEF if you need further help or ideas on how to start the club.

It may be useful to build club associations or friendships with other GEM/BEM clubs in other schools, so that you can create cooperation in how you do your activities, or sometimes get together to share experiences and ideas. You may even come up with recreational activities that you can compete in, like drama, choirs or sport.

# A

## **A GUIDE TO POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR GEM/BEM CLUB**



The GEM/BEM clubs offer young people an opportunity to engage in many exciting things, while in the process they learn constructive social skills, play a responsible role in their schools and communities and prepare for the world of work, plan and make decisions, through running the clubs.

There are many possible activities that the GEM/BEM club members can engage in, for example:

- ✓ You could start a campaign in the community, where you speak to community leaders about the issues you identified in your research and ask them to join you in your efforts to address these issues.
- ✓ You may even write articles for local newspapers about your club, the issues and activities you are involved in and why you are doing them, or request a slot at your local radio station to speak about this.
- ✓ You can start recreational activities like drama, to express the issues that concern you as young people.

What is important is that your activities need to be addressing issues that affect the education of girls and boys in your school and community. Your research findings and information in Book 1, including the aims of the GEM/BEM clubs, need to be a basis for your activities.

## ► Tips

Remember, the activities you engage in need to be approved by the relevant authorities. For instance, meetings at school may need to be approved by your educators, or a campaign in the community may need to be approved by your Local Council.

Always ensure that your activities are legal and they do not go against any rules in your school or community. Always ask for advice from your educators or other adults if you are not sure of something.

The following is intended to guide you in making sure that your activities are guided by the purpose and goals of the GEM/BEM clubs. Make sure that your activities try to address these:

### **Resources and legislation**

It helps to understand the rules and regulations of your school, so that you make sure your activities do not go against any of them. Becoming familiar with your school policies such as the Code of Conduct, the HIV and AIDS policy, admission policy or dress code will also help you see how your school is creating and promoting a positive environment for learners.

You may ask for permission from the Student Governing Body (SGB) and your principal to read these documents so that you can assist in implementing them in the school, use them to support some of your club activities and also review them to see if they promote an enabling environment for girls' and boys' education.

### **Transformation in our country**

In Book 1, we talked a bit about some things that need to happen for our country to be transformed from an unequal to an equal society for all. There is something for everyone to do to contribute to transforming our country to be a better place for all. What activities can you as young people do to make your contribution?




## ► Tip

As a GEM/BEM member, it is advisable to get informed. Remember: 'Knowledge is Power'. Read about transformation in our country. What is it? What are we transforming? You will find that it is simple – basically throughout history many people were disadvantaged because of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, class, religion and other factors. To transform, we want to move from this situation to make our country a fair place for everyone. To contribute, you may think about activities that promote the human rights and dignity of people who have been discriminated against.

### **Girls' participation in leadership and decision-making process**

Charity begins at home. You can start practising this in your club. We gave you a tip before, about not reinforcing gender-role stereotypes when you divide responsibilities amongst yourselves in your club. It is important to remember that the roles girls and boys play do not end at home, at school or in the playground. They follow these stereotypes throughout their lives, including in the kinds of paid work that they do.



Gender inequality in education and in society has led to a situation where women are usually in low-paying jobs that are normally related to their gender-role stereotypes. It is for this reason that as young people who want to create an equal society for all, we work to promote girls in our schools and communities to take up leadership and decision-making positions, so that we can balance the participation of girls and boys in these roles. The aim is to create equal opportunities for better employment and self-reliance and overall, a better standard of living for all. Starting at school where you are:

- ✓ You may begin by electing or campaigning for the election of girls as representatives in your Representative Council for Learners (RCL) and other bodies in your school.
- ✓ You may start raising awareness amongst your peers around these issues. You may ask your educators to give you ideas about how to encourage more girls to enrol in maths, science and technology and follow careers in these fields.
- ✓ You may motivate for regular training for girls on principles of leadership.

### **Safety and security**

Many schools usually make efforts to make schools safe places for learners. You may find out what your school has put in place and come up with ideas on how to strengthen this and make it work for the safety of girls and boys in your school. Ask your educators to help you find the Department of Education and UNICEF's Child-Friendly Schools document. Read this document together with the Bill of Responsibilities (Annexure A), to get ideas on creating Child-Friendly Schools and what your responsibilities are as a young person trying to exist in harmony with others.

Think of situations that cause learners to be unsafe in your school and community and decide how as a club you can contribute to addressing these. Your research findings should give you an idea about this.

### **HIV and AIDS**

Prevention is the key word, but caring, supporting and accepting those infected and affected is also important. The main thing is to get information and then act on the information to protect yourself and others and support those who are infected or affected. Your club may:

- ✓ Ask educators to help you invite speakers to come and give you information and answer your questions to clarify myths and other wrong information.
- ✓ Share life skills and other information with peers to promote prevention in your school and community.
- ✓ Act as peer counsellors, providing support to fellow students at school who may need your support.

### **Life skills education**

You may:

- ✓ Engage parents, community leaders, teachers and others to discuss and come up with creative ways to address crime, teenage pregnancy and other challenges facing the school and community.
- ✓ Form networks with GEM/BEM clubs in other schools in your area, where you can share knowledge and social skills around



different issues, like debates between clubs about topics such as gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy or sexual harassment.

- ✓ Help other schools in your area to start their own BEM/GEM clubs.
- ✓ Create themes on life skills topics that you would like to address and make a list that you will follow for a year or a period of time that you choose.

**Some examples of what other GEM/BEM clubs have undertaken include:**

In South Africa, girls and boys have:

- ✓ Formed committees to clean school premises and walking teams to escort girls home to ensure their safety, and engaged parents whose daughters have left school to encourage them to help their daughters return to school.
- ✓ Debated, especially topics relevant to healthy living and gender equality and edu-tainment; used gumboot dancing, choir, drama, poetry and storytelling to send a message around social problems that they are trying to address.
- ✓ Invited speakers to present information on different topics in their schools.
- ✓ Sports: in one school, a boys netball team was started.
- ✓ Charity activities, e.g. collection and donation of clothes and food to needy families within the community.

In Uganda, through 'school mapping' exercises, young people show the number of girls and boys in their community, the number of children out of school and the barriers that prevent them from getting an education. The young people then identify simple, workable solutions that will enable those out of school to attend school successfully.

Young people have 'mapped' out their communities, drawing maps of their communities, including village boundaries and local landmarks. They also show where there are challenges such as impassable roads and lakes, long distances between homes and schools and markets where girls have to go to work to support their families.



Each map also includes the estimated number of girls and boys in the area who are both in and out of school. Student teams then follow the maps to the homes where children are not attending school, often raising money on their own to provide school supplies for those who cannot afford them. In response to other challenges, the boys and girls suggest straightforward solutions. For example, build a bridge and cut down bushes to make roads safe and passable. Boys volunteer to walk girls to school so they will not have to make the dangerous journey alone.

Other activities in the Ugandan GEM/BEM clubs include community discussion groups, HIV and AIDS awareness-raising sessions, classes in hygiene and life skills and drama performances. In Southern Sudan, GEM/BEM club members have a weekly radio broadcast that focuses on issues related to education, and which encourages boys and girls to go to school.



## ANNEXURE A: A BILL OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE YOUTH OF SOUTH AFRICA

### Preamble

I accept the call to responsibility that comes with the many rights and freedoms that I have been privileged to inherit from the sacrifice and suffering of those who came before me. I appreciate that the rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa are inseparable from my duties and responsibilities to others. Therefore, I accept that with every right comes a set of responsibilities.

This Bill outlines the responsibilities that flow from each of the rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

### My responsibility in ensuring the right to equality

The right to equality places on me the responsibility to:

- treat every person equally and fairly, and
- not discriminate unfairly against anyone on the basis of race, gender, religion, national, ethnic or social origin, disability, culture, language, status or appearance.

South Africa is a diverse nation, and equality does not mean uniformity, or that we are all the same. Our country's motto: !KE E: /XARRA //KE, meaning "Diverse people unite", calls on all of us to build a common sense of belonging and national pride, celebrating the very diversity which makes us who we are. It also calls on us to extend our friendship and warmth to all nations and all the peoples of the world in our endeavour to build a better world.

### My responsibility in ensuring the right to human dignity

The right to human dignity places on me the responsibility to:

- treat people with reverence, respect and dignity.
- be kind, compassionate and sensitive to every human being, including greeting them warmly and speaking to them courteously.

### My responsibility in ensuring the right to life

The right to life places on me the responsibility to:

- protect and defend the lives of others.
- not endanger the lives of others by carrying dangerous weapons or by acting recklessly or disobeying our rules and laws.

- live a healthy life, by exercising, eating correctly, by not smoking, abusing alcohol, or taking drugs, or indulging in irresponsible behaviour that may result in my being infected or infecting others with communicable diseases such as HIV and AIDS.

### My responsibility in ensuring the right to family or parental care

This right expects me to:

- honour and respect my parents, and help them.
- be kind and loyal to my family, to my brothers and sisters, my grandparents and all my relatives.
- recognise that love means long-term commitment, and the responsibility to establish strong and loving families.

### My responsibility in ensuring the right to education

The right to education places on me the responsibility to:

- attend school regularly, to learn, and to work hard.
- cooperate respectfully with teachers and fellow learners.
- adhere to the rules and the Code of Conduct of the school.

And concurrently places on my parents and caregivers the responsibility to ensure that I attend school and receive their support, and places on my teachers the responsibility to promote and reflect the culture of learning and teaching in giving effect to this right.

### My responsibility in ensuring the right to work

This right carries with it the responsibility for all learners, parents, caregivers and teachers to:

- work hard and do our best in everything we do.
- recognise that living a good and successful life involves hard work, and that anything worthwhile only comes with effort.
- this right must never be used to expose children to child labour.

### My responsibility in ensuring the right to freedom and security of the person

The right is upheld by my taking responsibility for:

- not hurting, bullying, or intimidating others, or allowing others to do so, and
- solving any conflict in a peaceful manner.

### My responsibility in ensuring the right to own property

The right to own property places on me the responsibility to:

- respect the property of others.
- take pride in and protect both private and public property, and not to take what belongs to others.
- be honest and fair, and for those who have, to give generously to charity and good causes.

### My responsibility in ensuring the right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion

The right to freedom of conscience requires me to:

- allow others to choose and practise the religion of their choice, and to hold their own beliefs and opinions, without fear or prejudice.
- respect the beliefs and opinions of others, and their right to express these, even when we may strongly disagree with these beliefs and opinions. That is what it means to be a free democracy.

### My responsibility in ensuring the right to live in a safe environment

This right assumes the responsibility to:

- promote sustainable development, and the conservation and preservation of the natural environment.
- protect animal and plant life, as well as the responsibility to prevent pollution, to not litter, and to ensure that our homes, schools, streets and other public places are kept neat and tidy.
- in the context of climate change, we are also obliged to ensure we do not waste scarce resources like water and electricity.

### My responsibility in ensuring the right to citizenship

The right to citizenship expects that each of us will be good and loyal South African citizens. This means that we are responsible for:

- obeying the laws of our country.
- ensuring that others do so as well.
- contributing in every possible way to making South Africa a great country.

### My responsibility in ensuring the right to freedom of expression

The right to free expression is not unlimited, and does not allow us to:

- express views which advocate hatred, or are based on prejudices with regard to race, ethnicity, gender or religion.
- we must therefore take responsibility to ensure this right is not abused by ourselves or others, to not tell or spread lies, and to ensure others are not insulted or have their feelings hurt.

### Conclusion

I accept the call of this Bill of Responsibilities, and commit to taking my rightful place as an active, responsible citizen of South Africa. By assuming these responsibilities I will contribute to building the kind of society, which will make me proud to be a South African.

## ANNEXURE B: CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION		
OFFICE	ADDRESS	CONTACT DETAILS
National	123 Schoeman Street Pretoria	012 312 5400/5413/5420/ 5066/5385/5428
Gauteng	111 Commissioner Street Johannesburg	011 355 0597
Limpopo	113 Biccard Street Polokwane, 0700	015 290 7600/7661/7759/7741
North West	Garona Building Dr James Moroka Avenue Mmabatho	018 387 3424/3425/3404
Mpumalanga	Government Boulevard Nelspruit	013 766 5300/5106
Free State	CR Swart Building 55 Elizabeth Street Bloemfontein	051 404 4911/8434/8084/8411
KwaZulu Natal	NED Building 228 Pietermaritz Street Pietermaritzburg, 3201	031 274 4013 033 355 2448
Eastern Cape	Steve Tshwete Building Zone 6, Zwelitsha Bisho, 5605	040 608 4230/4230
Northern Cape	156 Barclay Street Homestead, Kimberley	053 839 6500/6619
Western Cape	Grand Central Building Lower Parliament Street Cape Town	021 467 2577/2201
UNICEF	Metro Park Building 351 Schoeman Street Pretoria, 0001	012 354 8201





**GIRLS & BOYS EDUCATION MOVEMENT CLUBS**