



# Girl-focused life skills interventions at a distance

---

*Tal Rafaeli*  
*Education Development Trust*  
*27 April 2020*

## Question

*What is the evidence and lessons learned about engaging girls in life skills interventions at a distance (i.e. through mobile, online, radio or other) both in emergency and non-emergency setting?*

## Contents

1. Overview
2. Background
3. Impact of Remote Life Skills Programmes on Girls and Review of Relevant Interventions
4. The Access and Inequity Challenge
5. Lessons Learned
6. Annex - Intervention List
7. References

---

*The K4D helpdesk service provides brief summaries of current research, evidence, and lessons learned. Helpdesk reports are not rigorous or systematic reviews; they are intended to provide an introduction to the most important evidence related to a research question. They draw on a rapid desk-based review of published literature and consultation with subject specialists.*

*Helpdesk reports are commissioned by the UK Department for International Development and other Government departments, but the views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of DFID, the UK Government, K4D or any other contributing organisation. For further information, please contact [helpdesk@k4d.info](mailto:helpdesk@k4d.info).*

## 1. Overview

This rapid review explores the evidence and lessons learned about engaging girls in life skills interventions at a distance (i.e. through mobile, online, radio or other) both in emergency and non-emergency settings<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of the review is to assist programmes in identifying relevant and effective ways to continue and build girls' life skills remotely during the widespread school closures and quarantine of the COVID-19 crisis (Albrechtsen and Giannini, 2020).

The main interest of the review is emergency contexts, however, the limited evidence as well as the potential for learning from programmes from non-emergency settings, led to the inclusion of non-emergency settings in the review. As evidence is scarce in this area, the report is based on a rapid literature review of academic studies, grey literature and emerging evidence, to ensure relevant insights are captured. The lack of rigorous studies on the impact of remote life skills interventions in general and specifically those focused on adolescent girls demonstrates a clear evidence gap.

The review did identify relevant evidence when reviewing literature on several other topics, mainly shifting gender norms using media and communications and remote Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) approaches (most of which focus on HIV). The literature reviewed explored many modes of remote programme delivery, including – radio, magazines, TV, social media, mobile phones, interactive apps and hotlines. Some of the interventions reviewed were ones that require significant planning and preparation, such as TV and radio soap operas (Sugg, 2014; World Bank, 2017). To increase the applicability to the COVID-19 response, the review put greater emphasis on interventions that could be developed and implemented quickly.

Overall, the evidence reviewed suggests that remote approaches show promise in developing the attitude, confidence and knowledge of girls and shifting gender norms in their communities (Marcus & Harper 2015; Marcus & Page, 2014; Sugg, 2014). There is also strong evidence to suggest the remote approaches focused specifically on SRH can positively impact adolescents' SRH knowledge, skills development and goal setting (Ippoliti & L'Engle, 2017; Cugelman et al., 2011). However, the evidence that remote life-skills related interventions can lead to behavioural change shows small to medium impact (Shane-Simpson et al., 2017).

The review explored ten programmes that most closely align with the review question. Their modes of remote delivery is wide and includes – mobiles phones, radio, magazines and online platforms. One reviewed programme did not include an impact evaluation (Girl Effect, 2017a). The other nine showed strong evidence of influence on the attitude and knowledge of girls' and their communities (Girl Effect 2017b; Girl Effect, 2018b; Handforth & Bertermann, 2018; Stavropoulou et al., 2017; Ubongo 2019). Three, all focused on SRH, also demonstrated impact on behavioural change (Kyomuhendo Bantebya et al., 2015; IRH et al., 2015; Peltzer & Promtussananon, 2003).

The review identified the following lessons learned and best practice on effective design and implementation of remote girl-focused life skills interventions.

---

<sup>1</sup> This reports draws on a help desk report of the same author - Rafaeli, T. (2020). The link between girls' life skills intervention in emergencies and their return to education post-crisis and prevention of unwanted pregnancies and early marriage. K4D Helpdesk Report 520. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.

- Evidence and best practise suggest that taking an integrated approach which incorporates both media and non-media elements and a number of communication components achieves stronger impact.
- Creating a space for interaction, reflection and dialogue which engage both girls and their gatekeepers can help achieve meaningful impact.
- Taking a tailored approach and planning for access challenges specific to the intervention target population is emphasised as a success factor in some of the literature.
- A number of lessons learned document and studies highlight that a fun and emotionally engaging approach can lead to better outcomes.

## 2. Background

**The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about widespread lockdowns and school closures around the globe.** It is currently estimated that schools have been closed in 185 countries and that 89 percent of globally enrolled students are currently out of school (Albrechtsen and Giannini, 2020). This reality poses a great risk to adolescent girls, as evidence from similar crises indicate that they are amongst the most at-risk populations at times of disease outbreaks and emergencies (Plan International, 2019).

**There is strong evidence that emergencies lead to a significant rise in gender based violence and increased rates of early marriage, unwanted pregnancies and school drop-out amongst adolescent girls (Plan International, 2019).** This is due to several factors, some of which are, the increased stress on families, expectation from girls to take care of sick family members and generate income, girls' being out of schools and thus further exposed, and girls' having limited access to safe spaces and health services (Plan International, 2019). Emerging evidence demonstrates that COVID-19 might have a similar impact on girls as past crises. Since the COVID-19 lockdown a sharp rise in gender based violence has already been reported (Care & IRC, 2020). There is also strong evidence that emergencies lead to increased girls' drop-out rates and reduced access to education. To illustrate, compared to the global average, girls in crisis effected countries are half as likely to progress to secondary school (Plan International, 2019).

**During emergencies girls prioritise and can benefit from strengthening their life skills to help cope with their vulnerability.** Several situation analyses during emergencies describe how girls consulted prioritise a need for support in developing their life skills. This is driven by their motivation to find ways to continue their studies, negotiate safe sex and find employment (Lowicki and Paik, 2013; Plan International, 2018; UNFPA, 2017). Though there is limited rigorous research on girls-focused life skills interventions during emergencies, there is some evidence to suggest that such programmes can help girls develop their knowledge and skills and at times even achieve outcomes such as reduction of unwanted pregnancies and girls' school drop-out rates (UNFPA, 2017; Nobel et al., 2019; UNDF, 2016)

**Similarly, there is strong evidence that girl-focused life-skills interventions achieve multiple positive outcomes in non-emergency settings (Marcus et al, 2017; Dupuy et al, 2018, Women's Refugee Commission, 2014).** There is substantial evidence that life skills interventions can lead to improvements in girls' personal well-being, help them acquire a greater sense of agency, reduce their exposure to gender based violence and postpone marriage (Dupuy et al., 2018; Women's Refugee Commission, 2014).

**The reality of COVID-19 home quarantine requires governments and other actors to identify remote approaches to continue and help girls develop their life skills during their time of increased vulnerability.** Over 100 countries have instituted either a full or partial lockdown during COVID-19 (BBC, 2020). As a result, best practice approaches commonly used to develop girls' life skills during emergencies, such as safe spaces (Noble et al., 2019), can be challenging to implement. To effectively support girls during this crisis there is a need to identify remote approaches that address girls' increased need for life skills education.

### **3. Impact of Remote Life Skills Programmes on Girls and Review of Relevant Interventions**

**The lack of rigorous studies on the impact of remote life skills interventions in general and specifically those focused on adolescent girls demonstrates a clear evidence gap.** The review did not identify evidence on remote life skills interventions in emergency settings more generally, and specifically ones focused on adolescent girls. The review also found very limited evidence about remote girl-focused life skills interventions in non-emergency settings. To illustrate, 3ie's Youth and Transferable Skills evidence gap map (EGM) (Rankin et al., 2015), which seeks to map out the best available evidence on the outcomes of transferable skills programming for youth in low- and middle-income countries, found no systematic reviews of evidence in the field, and of the three evaluations identified that incorporated distance learning elements, none included a gender-specific analysis.

The partial evidence can be explained by a number of factors. Mass media (radio, TV, etc.) life skills education programmes are often part of a wider intervention and evaluations do not distinguish between the effects of the different programme elements (McQueston et al., 2012; Posner, 2007). Another factor is that the majority of remote behaviour change interventions have been implemented in developed settings (Ippoliti & L'Engle, 2017; Shane-Simpson et al., 2017). Lastly, there is a specific shortage of impact data of such interventions on girls (Sugg, 2014).

To overcome this gap the review explored other research areas that potentially have relevant evidence. The review identified two such areas that included life-skills elements, target adolescent girls and utilised remote approaches.

- Use of media and communications to shift gender norms – these interventions were found to include remote life skills interventions and usually incorporated other beneficiaries in girls' communities.
- Remote adolescent focused SRH interventions – these interventions usually targeted both male and female adolescents and rarely included gender disaggregated data.

**Interventions focused on shifting gender norms through communication and media showed strong impact on girls' attitudes and knowledge.** The most relevant body of evidence was literature about shifting gender norms and empowering girls using remote approaches, such as magazines, radio programmes and hotlines. Though interventions were comprised of multiple components, many included a life skills element. The literature reviewed suggests strong evidence that remote approaches can have a broad positive impact on girls, including – developing girls' aspiration, knowledge, well-being and confidence and challenging gender discriminatory attitudes in their communities (Marcus & Harper 2015; Marcus & Page, 2014; Sugg, 2014). Programmes

that had the greatest positive impact focused on the following topics - household relationships, early marriage, education, and female genital mutilation (Marcus & Page, 2014).

**Interventions utilising remote approaches to improve SRH knowledge and skills and reduce risky sexual behaviour also showed promise.** Similarly, programmes explored under this topic used a variety of approaches including online, mobile and radio based interventions. Several reviews found evidence that remote interventions can positively impact adolescent SRH knowledge, skills development and goal setting (Cugelman et al., 2011; Ippoliti & L'Engle, 2017). Their findings regarding the impact of such approaches on behavioural change showed small to medium impact. A review of 30 online health related interventions found a small effect size on behaviour (Cugelman et al., 2011). While another review of 17 studies on SRH adolescent focused mobile interventions found emerging evidence that this approach can strongly affect both knowledge and behaviour (Ippoliti & L'Engle, 2017). One of the reviews found small to medium impact on both knowledge and behavioural change (IRC, 2020). It is important to caveat that these reviews did not include gender disaggregated data, therefore the specific impact on girls is unknown.

**The review identified several girl-focused life skills interventions (full list in Annex I) with positive impact that can be learned from in developing the COVID-19 response.** Below is a short description of a sample of relevant programmes reviewed.

### *The Girl Effect*

The Girl Effect methodology of using media, mobile and branding in the development context to empower adolescent girls closely aligned with the review question and a number of their interventions were identified as relevant.

### **Ni Nyampinga**

#### *Programme description*

Ni Nyampinga is a multi-platform youth brand targeting 10-19 years-old adolescent girls in Rwanda. The purpose of Ni Nyampinga is to teach girls about SRH, sexual violence and empower them to make informed decisions about their life and create a sense of value for girls in their communities. The Ni Nyampinga intervention includes several elements all of which were developed by girls - a magazine, radio drama and talk show, a network of girl clubs and digital platforms (Stavropoulou, et al., 2017). The Girl Effect has implemented similar interventions in Ethiopia with the Yegna brand (Girl Effect, 2017c) and in Malawi with the Zathu brand (Girl Effect, 2017b).

#### *Key outcomes*

The programme was evaluated using qualitative methodologies and an audience survey (Girl Effect, 2017d, Stavropoulou, et al., 2017). These evaluations found the following.

- 41 percent of the Rwandan population aged 10 and above are regular consumers of the brand and 10 percent are multi regular consumers.
- Compared to girls unaware of Ni Nyampinga, multi-regular consumers have a 60 percent higher probability of having high levels of self-confidence.
- Compared to all those unaware of Ni Nyampinga, multi-regular consumers have a 67 percent higher probability of having positive attitudes towards gender equality (including girls, boys and adults.)

- The magazine was discovered to be particularly effective, with girls finding it easy to access and able to revisit it when needed. This was especially the case with younger girls as it enabled them to access information without the embracement of talking about SRH.
- One of Ni Nyampinga promotional campaigns had significant impact on girls. As reported by local community members, a pregnancy role-play element in that campaign led to less sex work, adolescent mothers going out to work and increased motivation of pregnant girls to go back to school.
- The magazine and radio show led girls to discuss and advise one another on health related issues and developed a space for dialogue with parents, guardians and teachers. To illustrate, 68 percent of readers of the magazine said that they discussed what they read with other people, including their friends, classmates, parents, siblings and teachers.

## **Girls Connect**

### *Programme description*

Girls connect, implemented by Girl Effect in Nigeria and piloted in 2017, is an interactive voice response service targeting girls aged 14-19. Using a mobile phone, girls call and access stories about girls' experiences and challenges, and then speak to a trained caller who helps girls reflect on how they can apply what they have learned from the story to their everyday lives (Girl Effect, 2018a). The aim of the intervention is to further develop girls' health, safety, economic empowerment and education (Girl Effect, 2018b).

### *Key outcomes*

The evaluation used qualitative methods to evaluate an eight week-long series. The evaluation included focus group discussions, role-model feedback and user feedback. The key findings of the evaluation were as follows (Girl Effect, 2018b).

- 200,000 calls were received during the 8 weeks.
- Users of Girls Connect reported increased knowledge against all thematic areas but to varying degrees. Thematic areas included - health, safety, economic empowerment, education, voice, value, and connection.
- The evaluation recorded high impact on health, voice and economic empowerment and medium impact on value, education, safety and connection.
- As a result of the interventions, girls reported that they were learning and teaching others how to practice more hygienic menstruation management,
- Girls also reported higher confidence in identifying informal employment opportunities,
- Feedback from community elders reported noticeable changes amongst users of Girls Connect,

## **Big Sis**

### *Programme description*

Big Sis is a chatbot to support girls SRH, developed and implemented by the Girl Effect. The chatbot, accessed through Facebook Messenger, provides answers from sexual health experts to girls' sexual health questions. The chatbot is comprised of a variety of elements including entertaining and informative content with quizzes to test their knowledge on sex, sexuality, contraception and relationships (Handforth & Bertermann 2018).

### *Key outcomes*

The programme was evaluated through a user survey. The survey found the following.

- 54 percent of users surveyed said they would not have been able to access the same information elsewhere.
- 82 percent of respondents said they would tell their friend about the chatbot and the information they were exposed to.
- Based on the pre and post quiz, on average, girls understanding of subjects improved by 36 percent after reading the chatbot content.
- All topics were reported by users to be helpful, with no content receiving less than 78 percent “helpful”.

### *Girl Effect COVID-19 response*

The review also identified several Girl Effect remote interventions that have already been deployed to support girls' knowledge and skills during the COVID-19 crisis. Some of which include utilising Facebook pages to provide factual information and preventative methods, stay safe radio broadcasts about the virus, and advice about coping with anxiety on their online platforms (Girl Effect, 2020). There was no impact data on the effectiveness of these activities available at the time of writing.

## **Ubongo**

### *Programme description*

Ubongo is an African edutainment company which has developed Ubongo Kids. Ubongo Kids is a TV and radio show which supports 7 to 14-year-olds to learn science, technology, engineering and Mathematic (STEM) and life skills through animated stories and music. Some of the topics covered by the show are STEM, gender rights, creativity, and financial literacy. The show is in several languages including English, French, Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda, Kikuyu and Luo (Ubongo, 2019). As part of Ubongo Kids, a series of financial literacy shows for girls were piloted.

### *Key outcomes*

Using qualitative methods, the the financial literacy series was evaluated to measure the impact on girls' knowledge, attitudes and behaviour towards saving, budgeting and earning. The evaluation found that all piloted episodes included elements that successfully encouraged girls' wellbeing, increasing their confidence, and helped them develop skills they can apply in their lives (Ubongo, 2019).

## **The Gender Roles, Equality and Transformation (GREAT)**

### *Programme description*

GREAT was implemented in Uganda, and aimed to improve gender norms related to SRH and gender based violence. The programme included several elements (Marcus & Page 2014):

- designed process to bring communities to take action to improve the well-being of adolescents,
- a radio drama with stories and songs about young people,
- Village Health Teams (VHTs) training to support them in offering youth-friendly services, and
- a stories and games tool-kit.

### *Key outcomes*

The evaluation of the programme included a Randomised Control Trial (RCT) with qualitative data collection methods including interviews, focus group discussion and surveys. The evaluation found that GREAT led to significant improvements in attitudes and behaviours among exposed individuals as compared to a matched control group. The main findings include the following (IRH et al., 2015).

- 48 percent of adolescents exposed to the intervention reported believing that men and women are equal, compared to 37 in the control group.
- 63 percent of young husbands participating in GREAT were involved in childcare or helping with household chores compared to 53 percent in the control group.
- 43 percent of newly married/parenting couples participating in the programme used family planning, compared to 33 percent in the control group.
- There was an improvement in attitudes and behaviours around intimate partner violence – 5 percent of newly married/parenting adolescents participating in GREAT reported reacting violently to their partners compared to 21 percent among the control group.
- The radio element of the intervention was an effective outreach strategy. Over half of the survey respondents in both intervention and control groups recalled listening to the show.

## **4. The Challenge of Inequity and Access When Using Remote approaches**

**Though access to technology and media is growing around the world there is still a digital gender divide.** Girls and women have less access to media and technology in comparison to their male peers. Evidence on the access and usage of mobile phones demonstrates this effectively (Girl Effect and Vodafone Foundation, 2018).

- 184 million fewer women own mobile in comparison to men.
- Women are 26 percent less likely to use mobile internet compared to men.
- Boys are one and a half times more likely to own a mobile phone compared to girls.

**Many barriers play a role in the limited access of adolescent girls to media and technology.** Across the literature reviewed, a range of barriers to girls' access to media and technology are described. Some of which are listed below.

- Limited time available for media consumption due to high volumes of chores and responsibilities (Sugg, 2014).
- Strong oversight and restrictions of girls' consumption of media by various gatekeepers (Sugg, 2014). To illustrate, adolescents interviewed in Uganda and Ethiopia reported that they could only listen to the radio with the permission of their father (Marcus & Harper, 2015).
- Negative cultural reactions to girls' phone and internet usage (James et al., 2018).
- Low levels of various types of literacy, including, media literacy, information literacy and reading and writing skills (Marcus & Harper, 2015; Sugg, 2014).
- The cost of mobile phones and data (Girl Effect and Vodafone Foundation, 2018).
- Infrastructure issues such as registering a SIM, network coverage and challenges in charging phones (Girl Effect and Vodafone Foundation, 2018).



**Girls' access to technology varies significantly between places and between types of technologies.** Though the barriers described above are common in many low and middle income countries, evidence shows that there can be significant differences in access between different contexts. For example, in Bangladesh, 94 percent of 15–19 year-old girls have access to TV, while in Ethiopia only 26 percent of their peers report listening to the radio at least once a week, with even lower TV viewership (Sugg, 2014).

**Due to these challenges in access, remote interventions can lead to greater inequities and increase the gap between boys and girls and between different groups of girls, especially those that are most marginalised.** The transition to remote approaches raises an equity challenge (IIEP, 2020). Beyond gender there are multiple demographics that influence digital access and practices including geographic location and socioeconomic status (Shane-Simpson et al., 2017). As a result, an unintended consequence of the use of remote approaches can be the perpetuation of existing inequities faced by disadvantaged, disabled and marginalised girls (IIEP, 2020).

**The literature reviewed proposed a number of strategies to expand girls' access to media and technology and thus enable them to have greater access to the support they require.** Some of which include (Sugg, 2014):

- public screening of films, TV shows and radio programmes,
- providing equipment to those working with girls to enable them to become an access route,
- establishing community listening groups and providing them with cheap DVD players or radio transmitters to help access content, and
- working and communicating with parents and other gatekeepers to gain their support and demonstrate the benefits that girls' access to certain media outputs and content can have.

## 5. Lessons Learned

The review identified a significant number of lessons learned and best practice on effective design and implementation of remote interventions. These lessons can be used to support high-quality delivery of remote girl-focused life skills interventions.

**Evidence and best practise suggest that taking an integrated approach which incorporates both media and non-media elements and a number of communication components achieves stronger impact.** Several case studies suggest that integrating media programmes with community mobilisation work can have greater impact for girls. Community activities can include educational sessions in schools, local discussion groups and links with service providers (Marcus & Page, 2014; Sugg, 2014;). There is also evidence that an increase in communications elements in an intervention can lead to greater Impact (Marcus & Page, 2014). To illustrate, one systematic review found that providing printed materials linked to radio and TV shows is helpful as it reinforces the messages from the show and remains accessible to participants (Marcus & Page, 2014).

**Creating a space for interaction, reflection and dialogue which engage both girls and their gatekeepers can help achieve meaningful impact.** Communication approaches which generate peer discussions and include components of community dialogue are more effective in bridging the gap between attitude and behavioural change (Marcus & Page, 2014). One systematic review

found that six out of seven studies which explored the impact of a dialogue-based component found that it led to improved gender- equitable attitudes and outcomes (Marcus & Harper, 2015). Evidence also suggests the creating a space for reflection and discussion using interactive elements in radio or TV programmes can also help achieve stronger impact. For example, incorporating opportunities for listeners and viewers to interact with the content through calling or writing to the show helps to further engage both adolescents and adults with the content delivered (Marcus & Harper, 2015).

**Taking a tailored approach and planning for access challenges specific to the intervention target population is emphasised as a success factor in some of the literature.** As mentioned, girls’ access to technology and media varies significantly from one place to another (Sugg, 2014). Therefore it is important to consider the complexity of access of targeted girls’ and design ways to overcome the barriers they will face. Factors to consider include (Barry & Newby, 2012; Girl Effect and Vodafone Foundation, 2018):

- frequency of access,
- levels of literacy and technological literacy specifically,
- the type of technology she can access (e.g. basic mobile or smartphone, radio, TV),
- the permission required to enable access,
- whether she owns or barrows the means of access, and
- the existing infrastructure in her environment.

Studies suggest that one strategy that can lead to positive impact is to put specific emphasis on engaging girls’ gatekeepers, as it can help gain their support and alleviate their concerns (Girl Effect and Vodafone Foundation, 2018).

**A number of lessons learned document and studies highlight that a fun and emotionally engaging approach can lead to better outcomes.** Information and messages that incorporate an emotional element have shown to be more effective in getting people’s attention and increasing the probability of them remembering the messages delivered (Malhautra, 2018; Marcus & Harper, 2015). To illustrate, the GREAT project in Uganda included several comedy skits about what would happen if gender roles were reversed. Research found that these skits were key in shifting gender norms of participants (Marcus & Harper, 2015).

## 6. Annex – Intervention List

| Resource           | Programme  | About the programme   |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Girl Effect, 2017a | <b>Springster</b><br>Online platform for girls, developed and implemented by the Girl Effect | A global mobile brand, targeting marginalised and vulnerable girls through online content. The platform is designed to equip them with the knowledge, confidence and connections they require for healthy development during their adolescents. |
| Girl Effect, 2017b | <b>Zathu</b><br>A media brand aiming to support adolescent girls in                          | Zathu uses music, music videos, a radio show and website to empower girls and enable their voice. It addresses challenging topics about growing up, including - friendships, stereotypes and SRH.   |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | Malawi. Developed and implemented by the Girl Effect   |  |
| Girl Effect, 2017c and Stavropoulou, et al., 2017 | <b>Yegna</b><br>A multi-platform media brand in Ethiopia. Developed and implemented by the Girl Effect   | Yegna aims to impact three main social norms that act as a barrier for girls in Ethiopia – lack of social networks, violence and early marriage. Yegna’s key component is a radio drama focusing on five diverse girls who cope with the everyday challenges of adolescent girls in Ethiopia. The brand also includes a talk show where topics raised in the show are discussed, as well as music videos and films.                              |
| Girl Effect, 2017d and Stavropoulou, et al., 2017 | <b>Ni Nyampinga</b><br>Ni Nyampinga is a multi-platform youth brand targeting 10-19 years-old adolescent girls in Rwanda. Developed and implemented by the Girl Effect | The purpose of Ni Nyampinga is to teach girls about SRH and sexual violence, empower them to make informed decisions about their life and create a sense of value for girls in their communities. The Ni Nyampinga intervention includes several elements all of which developed by girls - a magazine, radio drama and talk show, a network of girl clubs and digital platforms.  |
| Handforth, C., and Bertermann, K. (2018)          | <b>Big Sis</b><br>A chatbot for girls to support girls SRH. Developed and implemented by the Girl Effect   | Accessed through Facebook Messenger, Big Sis provides answers from sexual health experts to girls’ questions about sexual health. The chatbot is comprised of a variety of elements including entertaining and informative content with quizzes to test their knowledge on sex, sexuality, contraception and relationships.  |
| Girl Effect, 2018a and Girl Effect, 2018b         | <b>Girls connect</b><br>Implemented by Girl Effect in Nigeria, first piloted in 2017   | Girls Connect is an interactive voice response service targeting girls aged 14-19. Using a mobile phones, girls call and access stories about girls’ experiences and challenges, and then speak to a trained caller who through a discussion helps girls reflect on how they can apply what they have learned to their everyday lives. The aim of the programme is to further develop girls’ health, safety, economic empowerment and education. |
| Ubongo, 2019                                      | <b>Ubongo Kids</b><br>An African edutainment company which has developed Ubongo Kids that is aired across 11 African countries   | Ubongo kids is a TV and radio show which supports 7 to 14-year-olds to learn STEM and life skills through animated stories and music. Topics covered include gender rights, creativity, and financial literacy. The show is in several languages including - English, French, Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda, Kikuyu and Luo As. As part of Ubongo Kids a series of financial literacy shows for girls was piloted.                                      |
| Marcus & Page 2014 and IRH et al., 2015           | <b>The Gender Roles, Equality and Transformation (GREAT)</b><br>SRH and gender equity intervention for adolescent girls and boys in Uganda                             | The purpose of GREAT is to improve gender norms related to SRH and gender-based violence. The programme includes several elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designed process to bring communities to take action to improve the well-being of adolescents</li> <li>• A radio drama with stories and songs about young people</li> </ul>  |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village Health Teams (VHTs) training to support them in offering youth-friendly services</li> <li>• A stories and games tool-kit</li> </ul>   |
| Kyomuhendo Bantebya et al., 2015 and Marcus & Page 2014 | <p><b>Unite for Body Rights Programme</b></p> <p>A Straight Talk Foundation (STF) SRH programme in Uganda for adolescents</p> | the programme delivers information on SRH to children and young people aged 10-19 and 20-24 both in and out of school. The programme includes several school based elements, some of which are - training programmes for students, teacher training and school clubs. There are also out of school elements, mainly youth clubs and popular media components. The media components are - a newspapers for older adolescents and a radio programmes for primary students.     |
| Peltzer, K., & Promtussanon, S. 2003                    | <p><b>Soul City</b></p> <p>SRH programme for adolescents in South Africa</p>  | Soul City is a mass media edutainment life skills intervention among junior secondary school learners. The programme includes television, radio, newspaper, school elements, aimed at adolescents ages 14 to 18 years. The purpose of the programme is to provide relevant information about puberty, improve HIV/AIDS-related knowledge, develop skills that will enable young people to develop safe sexual behaviours, and reduce the stigma toward people with HIV/AIDS. |

## 7. References

- Albrechtsen, A. & Giannini, S. (2020) 'Covid-19 school closures around the world will hit girls hardest'. Plan International and UNESCO Blog published on 31 March 2020 <https://plan-international.org/blog/2020/03/covid-19-school-closures-hit-girls-hardest>
- Barry, B., & Newby, L. (2012) Use of technology in emergency and post-crisis situations. *IIEP-UNESCO* [https://inee.org/system/files/resources/UNESCO\\_Use\\_of\\_Tech\\_2012\\_en.pdf](https://inee.org/system/files/resources/UNESCO_Use_of_Tech_2012_en.pdf)
- BBC (2020) Coronavirus: The world in lockdown in maps and charts <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-52103747>
- Care and International Rescue Committee (2020) Global Rapid Gender Analysis For COVID-19 <https://inee.org/system/files/resources/globalrgacovidrdm33120final.pdf>
- Cugelman, B., Thelwall, M., & Dawes, P. (2011) Online interventions for social marketing health behaviour change campaigns: A meta-analysis of psychological architectures and adherence factors. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 13(1) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3221338/>
- Dupuy, K., Bezu, S., Knudsen, A., Halvorsen, S., Kwauk, C., Braga, A., & Kim, H. (2018) Life Skills in Non-Formal Contexts for Adolescent Girls in Developing Countries. CMI Report Number 5. Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution <http://www.ungei.org/Life-skills-in-non-formal-contexts-for-adolescent-girls-CMI-Brookings-April-2018.pdf>
- Girl Effect (2020). How we are supporting the fight against COVID-19. Published 7 April 2020 <https://www.girleffect.org/stories/how-we-are-supporting-fight-against-covid-19/>
- Girl Effect (2017a) Springster Audience Survey 2017 <https://www.girleffect.org/stories/springster-factsheet-2017/>
- Girl Effect (2017b) Zathu Audience Survey 2017 [https://prd-girleffect-corp.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Zathu\\_Audience\\_Survey\\_2017.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWWYO5R6RMTXA2NA&Signature=aP%2BbspVUfw7tSrOJIDhDlJnFap0%3D&Expires=1587738437](https://prd-girleffect-corp.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Zathu_Audience_Survey_2017.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWWYO5R6RMTXA2NA&Signature=aP%2BbspVUfw7tSrOJIDhDlJnFap0%3D&Expires=1587738437)
- Girl Effect (2017c) Yegna Audience Survey 2017 <https://www.girleffect.org/stories/yegna-and-its-impact-ethiopia-2017/>
- Girl Effect (2017d). Ni Nyampinga Audience Survey 2017 [https://prd-girleffect-corp.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Ni\\_Nyampinga\\_2017\\_Factsheet\\_final.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWWYO5R6RMTXA2NA&Signature=%2BUtkNIhdUmxmRjusqkgbr1YOwhk%3D&Expires=1587719431](https://prd-girleffect-corp.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Ni_Nyampinga_2017_Factsheet_final.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWWYO5R6RMTXA2NA&Signature=%2BUtkNIhdUmxmRjusqkgbr1YOwhk%3D&Expires=1587719431)
- Girl Effect (2018a) Success for Girls Connect as it scales across Nigeria. Blog published 24 July 2018 <https://www.girleffect.org/stories/success-girls-connect-it-scales-across-nigeria/>
- Girl Effect (2018b) Girls Connect –Impact monitoring, Series 2
- Girl Effect and Vodafone Foundation (2018) Real girls, real lives, connected Using mobile phones to reach girls [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b8d51837c9327d89d936a30/t/5bbe7cbe9140b7d43f282e21/1539210748592/GE\\_VO\\_Executive+Summary+Report.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b8d51837c9327d89d936a30/t/5bbe7cbe9140b7d43f282e21/1539210748592/GE_VO_Executive+Summary+Report.pdf)

Handforth, C., & Bertermann, K. (2018) How Girl Effect built a chatbot. Girl Effect <https://www.girleffect.org/stories/meet-big-sis-chatbot-potential-reach-millions-girls-advice-sexual-health/>

IIEP (2020). Three ways to plan for equity during the coronavirus school closures <http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/three-ways-plan-equity-during-coronavirus-school-closures-13365>

Ippoliti, N. B., & L'Engle, K. (2017) Meet us on the phone: mobile phone programs for adolescent sexual and reproductive health in low-to-middle income countries. *Reproductive health*, 14(1), 11 <https://reproductive-health-journal.biomedcentral.com/track/pdf/10.1186/s12978-016-0276-z>

IRC (2017) Protecting and Empowering Adolescent Girls from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies November 2017 <https://www.rescue-uk.org/sites/default/files/document/1590/p708ircadolescentgirlspolicylowressinglepages1012171.pdf>

IRH, Pathfinder & Save the Children (2015) The GREAT project: GREAT Results Brief <http://irh.org/resourcelibrary/brief-great-project-results/>

James, L. E., Welton-Mitchell, C., Laird, B., Neiman A., & O'Connor, M. (2018) Feasibility and acceptability study of the IRC's mobile and remote GBV service delivery in Myanmar, Burundi and Iraq. The International Rescue Committee [https://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/GBV-Mobile-and-Remote-GBV-Service-Delivery\\_-Full-Research-Report.pdf](https://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/GBV-Mobile-and-Remote-GBV-Service-Delivery_-Full-Research-Report.pdf)

Kyomuhendo Bantebya, G., Muhanguzi, F.K. & Watson, C. (2015) 'This is not the work of a day': Communications for Social Norm Change around Early Marriage and Education for Adolescent Girls in Uganda <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9895.pdf>

Lowicki, J & Paik, K. (2013) Scattered dreams, broken promises: An Assessment of the Links between Girls' Empowerment and Gender-based Violence in the Kyaka II Refugee Settlement, Uganda. Women's Refugee Commission <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/resources/document/921-scattered-dreams-broken-promises>

Malhautra, A. (2018) Youth brands and the future of 'edutainment'. Girl Effect Website <https://www.girleffect.org/stories/youth-brands-and-future-edutainment/>

Marcus, R., Gupta-Archer, N., Darcy, M., & Page, E. (2017) Girls' clubs, life skills programmes and girls' well-being outcomes. *London: Overseas Development Institute*, 359-69 <https://www.gage.odi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/GAGE-Girls-Club-Report-FINAL.pdf>

Marcus, R., & Harper, C. (2015) Communications to change discriminatory gender norms affecting adolescent girls. ODI <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9808.pdf>

Marcus, R. & Page, E. (2014) Changing discriminatory norms affecting adolescent girls through communication activities. A review of evidence. ODI <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9041.pdf>

McQueston, K., Rachel Silverman, R., & Glassman, A.. (2012) "Adolescent Fertility in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: Effects and Solutions." CGD Working Paper 295 Center for Global Development. <http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/1426175>

Noble, E., Ward, L., French, S., & Falb, K. (2019). State of the Evidence: A Systematic Review of Approaches to Reduce Gender-Based Violence and Support the Empowerment of Adolescent Girls in Humanitarian Settings. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 20(3), 428–434 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838017699601>

Rankin, K., Cameron, D., Picon, M., & Brown, A. (2015) Youth and transferable skills: an evidence gap map. 3ie Evidence Gap Report 2. New Delhi: International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) [https://www.3ieimpact.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/sp4-youth\\_and\\_transferable\\_skills.pdf](https://www.3ieimpact.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/sp4-youth_and_transferable_skills.pdf)

Peltzer, K. & Promtussananon, S. (2003) Evaluation of soul city school and mass media life skills education among junior secondary school learners In South Africa. *Social Behavior and Personality: An international journal*, 31, 825-834 [https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/docview/57171867?rfr\\_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo](https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/docview/57171867?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo)

Plan International (2018) Adolescent girls in crisis: Voices from Rohingya <https://plan-international.org/publications/adolescent-girls-crisis-rohingya>

Plan International (2019) Left Out Left Behind: adolescent girls' secondary education in crisis. Plan International UK; London. <https://www.planinternational.nl/uploaded/2019/06/Left-out-Left-behind-report.pdf?x65987>

Posner, J., Williams, T., Karim, A., & Mullen, S., (2007) Impact Evaluation of the African Youth Alliance in Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda: Implications for future youth programming. JSI <https://apha.confex.com/apha/135am/recordingredirect.cgi/id/17960>

Shane-Simpson, C., Dixon, J., Switzer, T., Brucker, J., Fraser, & J., Flinner, K. (2017) From browsing to behaviour change How digital interventions influence offline change among adolescent girls. *New Knowledge and Girl Effect* <https://www.datocms-assets.com/15254/1567649714-newknowledgereportdigitalfinal.pdf>

Stavropoulou, M., Gupta-Archer, N., & Marcus, R. (2017) Adolescent girls' capabilities in Rwanda: The state of the evidence on programme effectiveness. GAGE/ODI <https://www.gage.odi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Rwanda-Interventions-Report-Jan2018-FINAL.docx.pdf>

Sugg, C. (2014) Making Waves: Media's Potential for Girls in the Global South. London: BBC Media Action [http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/pdf/policybriefing/media\\_potential\\_for\\_girls.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/pdf/policybriefing/media_potential_for_girls.pdf)

Ubongo (2019) Annual Report 2019 <https://www.ubongo.org/wp-content/uploads/2019-Ubongo-Annual-Report.pdf>

United Nations (2020) Telecommunication Development Bureau Statistics <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>

United Nations Population Fund (2016) Adolescent girls in disaster & conflict: Interventions for improving access to sexual and reproductive health services [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA-Adolescent\\_Girls\\_in\\_Disaster\\_Conflict-Web.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA-Adolescent_Girls_in_Disaster_Conflict-Web.pdf)

UNFPA Regional Syria Response hub (2017) Listen, Engage and Empower - A strategy to address the needs of adolescent girls in the Whole of Syria [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/wos\\_adolescentgirlstrategy.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/wos_adolescentgirlstrategy.pdf)

Women's Refugee Commission (2014) I'm Here: Adolescent Girls in Emergencies Approach and tools for improved response <http://www.cpcnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/WRC-Im-Here-Adolescent-Girls-In-Emergencies-report-FINAL.pdf>

World Bank (2017) MTV Shuga Soap Opera Turns Edutainment into a Tool to Fight HIV and Gender-Based Violence. Blog published on 23 February 2017  
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2017/02/23/mtv-shuga-soap-opera-turns-edutainment-into-a-tool-to-fight-hiv-and-gender-based-violence>

## Expert contributors

- Ruth Naylor, Principal Consultant, Education Development Trust

## Suggested citation

Rafaelli, T. (2020). *Girl focused life skills interventions at a distance*. K4D Helpdesk Report 806. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.

## About this report

*This report is based on six days of desk-based research. The K4D research helpdesk provides rapid syntheses of a selection of recent relevant literature and international expert thinking in response to specific questions relating to international development. For any enquiries, contact [helpdesk@k4d.info](mailto:helpdesk@k4d.info).*

*K4D services are provided by a consortium of leading organisations working in international development, led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), with Education Development Trust, Itad, University of Leeds Nuffield Centre for International Health and Development, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM), University of Birmingham International Development Department (IDD) and the University of Manchester Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI).*

*This report was prepared for the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID) and its partners in support of pro-poor programmes. It is licensed for non-commercial purposes only. K4D cannot be held responsible for errors or any consequences arising from the use of information contained in this report. Any views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of DFID, K4D or any other contributing organisation. © DFID - Crown copyright 2020.*

