Participation For, With, and By Girls: Evidencing Impact

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Rejuvenate

Cover photograph: Girls with posters and banners protest against war and violence.
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Introduction

This paper presents the findings of a review of publicly available, published evidence on the efficacy of development projects that self-identify as 'girl-led', both within academic literature and from established organisations working with girls. What is meant by 'girl-led', of course, varies hugely. Terms such as girl-led, girl-centred, and girl-focused are often defined fluidly and used interchangeably by various implementation agencies. Fried, Gathumbi and Bordallo (2019: 10) note that even among the members of the With and For Girls Collective, 'There is no consensus around what "girl-led" means.' They also comment that the 'interchangeable use of the terms girl-led and girl-centred has resulted in many organisations defining themselves as girl-led but in reality, being only girl-centred'. Because our review contained a wide and diverse range of programme interventions, we divided this range into three categories during our analysis – **for**, **with**, and **by girls** (these are explained more fully in our conceptual framing section).

This paper focuses on 'girl-led' work, rather than, for example, a gender-based approach to addressing girls' rights, due to the dominant global focus on girls as 'sites of intervention' (Moeller 2018: 34). A significant proportion of development practice by a range of stakeholders including funders, practitioners, academics, corporates, and governments focus their programmes on young women and girls. While their motive, objectives, and modes of operation might be varied, their focus on girls as a separate category stems from their understanding of girls and young women as facing specific social, economic, political, and structural barriers due to their gender.

Much has been written about the politics of evidence (see, for example, Eyben *et al.* 2015 and Johnson 2015) and the inherent tension between a focus on results and a focus on process in development practice (Apgar *et al.* 2023; Bamberger, Rao and Woolcock 2010). If one assumes that participatory work with girls on their rights is an intrinsic good, then a focus on process is likely to be primary because there is no perceived need to justify the value of the work. However, as many scholars have commented, we are writing this paper at a time when there is a very palpable backlash, not just against women's/girls' rights but against rights more broadly (Gilmore 2018; Goetz 2020). In addition, many funders and practitioners, regardless of their own ontological and methodological leanings, are required to produce quantitative data on impact in their reporting.

In this context, rather than dismissing calls for evidence that development interventions in this field **work**, we set out to articulate (and evidence) why there are gaps in terms of what evidence of impact is **available**, particularly in relation to substantively participatory work with girls. By substantively participatory, we mean work that encourages, facilitates, and supports the active involvement of girls, where possible, not just in a project's implementation, but also in its design and evaluation. We also want to show why the collection of particular forms of evidence (quantitative and outcomes based) is often not desirable (for funders, practitioners, and participants) or appropriate in the context of participatory work, because of the limits to the type of information that it produces.

This paper builds on REJUVENATE's first working paper (Johnson, Lewin and Cannon 2020) which examined the intersection of youth/child-led work and social change to further children's rights, and in which we argued for the '3Ps' of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – Protection, Provision, and Participation, to be extended to a focus on the '3Ss' – Space, Support, and Structural Change, with 'Support' referring to the idea that children need to be supported by adults to meaningfully participate. While this paper makes the case for more girls' participation in projects and their evaluations, we recognise that participation is not an inherent and uncontested good and that more participation is not always in the best interests of girls (Cooke and Kothari 2001). However, we do argue for critically examining how girls are perceived in projects, from unagentic beneficiaries to social and political actors operating within cultural, contextual, and structural constraints.

Our paper is divided into four main sections. The first two sections lay out our conceptual framework, followed by our methodology. The third, the interventions in the programmes/projects which we reviewed. This section details the intervention objectives, intervention methods, and the extent of girls' participation in the evaluation of interventions. The fourth section explores the types of evidence which programmes/projects used to measure the impact of interventions, and the implications of girls' participation in programmes/projects and their evaluations. Finally, we reflect on future areas for inquiry to evidence the strengths of girls' participation.

Conceptual framework

Adopting and adapting Mary Kellet's (2005) typology of research **on**, **with**, and **by** children as a natural progression for children as active researchers, we divided the range of 'girl-led' programme interventions in our review into three categories – **for**, **with**, and **by girls**. We draw on Andrea Cornwall's (2002) work on spaces for participation and the work of our first working paper (Johnson *et al.* 2020) to sharpen our definitions of these three categories. Table 1 shows how we define each of these categories.

Table 1: Types of participation

Participation type	Working definition
For girls	These are interventions in which girls are viewed exclusively as targets or beneficiaries. In some cases, these interventions are tailored to the specific needs of girls in particular contexts while in other cases they are more generally aimed at girls. What distinguishes this category from the other two is the absence of girls in the conceptualisation, planning, and implementation of programmes. Girls in these programmes are only recipients or targets of the intervention rather than actors within it.
With girls	These interventions involve girls in a range of different capacities in the actual process/implementation of the intervention. Examples include girls being involved in delivering curricula, engaging in advocacy through platforms constructed through an intervention, or taking up the role of mentors to other girls. Importantly, the space girls occupy in interventions 'with' girls are **invited** rather than **claimed** spaces (Cornwall 2002). These invited spaces are generated/created and to a large extent controlled by adults although girls might be invited and involved in specific capacities (the roles girls are involved in are predetermined rather than decided by girls themselves).
By girls	These interventions involve initiatives in which girls have a central role in and control over the initiation, design, and implementation of the programme, and are key decision makers at these stages of the project cycle. These interventions facilitate the emergence of claimed

	or more 'organic' spaces (in the words of Cornwall 2002), where girls exercise significant autonomy over both the nature of the space as well as their role in it. Girls decide what issue they want to address, how they are going to take action and occasionally how they are going to measure the success of their actions.

Source: Authors' own

Throughout our analysis, we refer to this framework to illustrate the differences in objectives, interventions, and evidence of projects in relation to how girls are involved.

Each of these intervention types tends to prioritise a different type of evidence to measure success. Interventions that are carried out **for girls** tend to evidence success through quantitative monitoring, including randomised control trials (RCTs) and quasi-experimental methods. An example of interventions of this kind are projects that work to increase the numbers of girls registering and attending school, and a range of health interventions such as for nutrition. Interventions **for girls** are popular with policymakers and funders because they appear easy to measure (both in terms of outcomes and use of funding). However, evaluative metrics seldom illuminate the complexities of how projects improve the quality of girls' everyday lives. What constitutes success in these types of intervention can be misleading as it may be based on indicators that assume a connection between particular outcomes and the improvement of girls' lives. Additionally, they are rarely participatory, and they rarely include the most marginalised. Even where programmes may say they are girl-led or -focused, when we looked in detail at the methodology under the three categories above, we have suggested that many are indeed **for girls** rather than with or by. Girls' participation in these interventions tends to be limited. Much of the evidence collected on the efficacy of this type of project does not include the participation of girls. Instead, progress is measured simply in numbers. Further, what is measured is based on assumptions by researchers on what good change is, rather than on what girls decide good change is for them in their contexts. The complexities of these projects, and an assessment of why they have worked (or not) can be addressed, to some extent, through the use of mixed methods. The quality of the education or health-care provision can also be made more girl-focused using qualitative data to complement the quantitative data.

The next category comprises interventions **with girls**, including complex interventions that have used mixed methods to assess quality. These may include, for example, reproductive rights and health services for adolescents that are girl-centred. Projects that aim to understand the quality of education initiatives, or how their delivery or impact is gendered, might also be included. The mixed methods for the monitoring of these programmes rarely include RCTs or quasi-experimental methods but may include a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative may include, for example, more closed or semi-structured questionnaires, or even what Chambers (2003) refers to as 'parti-numbers' (the use of numbers within more participatory approaches). The inclusion of girls in interventions is often instrumental, i.e. as a means to better meet particular development goals.

Our third category includes interventions **by girls** and often connects to social justice work. The motivation for these interventions tends not to be instrumental but assumes that rights are intrinsic, i.e. supporting girls is regarded as inherently valuable. This includes work confronting adultism, the assumption that children are inferior to adults, and the related 'social structures, practices and behaviours based on this' (Shier 2012: 9); understanding and supporting social movements; and changing social norms towards girls and women. The bulk of evidence available for girl-led projects draws on the experience and critical reflection of the experts and communities that facilitate them and the iterative learnings of this tradition. Additionally, many of the issues that this kind of work sets out to address are complex and inherently difficult, if not impossible, to measure during the lifecycle of a development project. Shifts in gender norms, for example, may take place over generations, not within one to two years; and factors responsible for these changes are unlikely to be purely attributable to a development intervention.[1] Because the value of this work is assumed, evidence collected tends to focus on improving implementation, rather than showing a broader impact (although some try to incorporate both through learning and adaptation). As such, outcome reporting on this type of work can be seen as axiomatic or circular.

[1] We know from colleagues that there are cultural shifts within evaluation practice which means some funders are beginning to accept evidence of contribution or influence rather than requiring direct attribution.

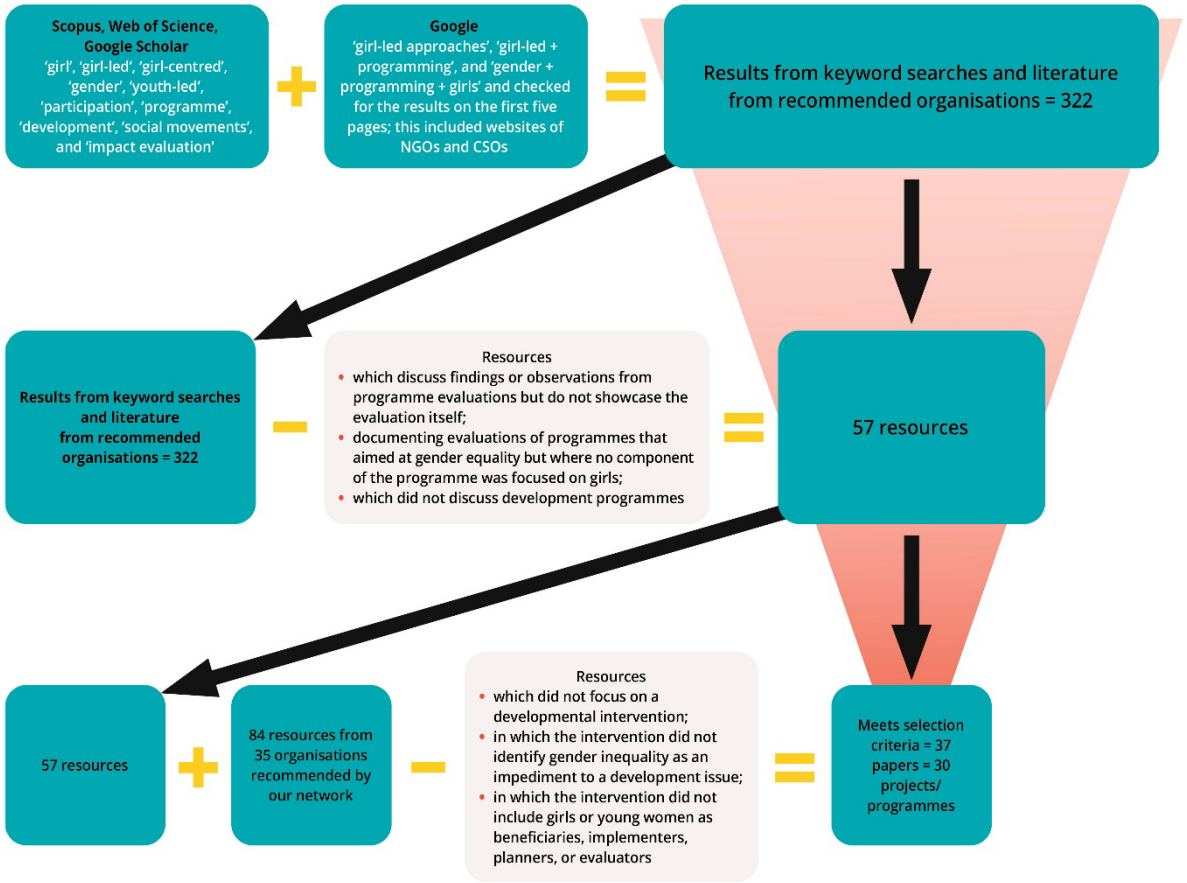
Methodology

Data selection

Our methodology was based on an inductive approach conducted in two steps. First, we performed a rigorous and systemic review of secondary data on **girl-led** projects. Second, we used a snowballing approach to gather grey literature from organisations known for their work with girls (Bryman 2012). We contained the scope of our review to published and publicly available types of evidence, with a view to exploring what this comprised and potentially showing its limitations. We recognise that knowledge is also communicated in other formats but have kept the scope of this review to more traditional forms of evidence. We hope that this paper can inform future research on more varied types of evidence, which are known to be a rich source of information, such as blog posts, webinars, and creative outputs.

To identify data, we conducted keyword searches for publications using the terms 'girl', 'girl-led', 'girl-centred', 'gender', 'youth-led', 'participation', 'programme', 'development', 'social movements', and 'impact evaluation' on the search engines Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar until the results began repeating, indicating saturation. We also searched on Google for 'girl-led approaches', 'girl-led + programming', and 'gender + programming + girls' and checked for the results on the first five pages; this included websites of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs). We checked their websites for resources and included relevant resources in our review. We reviewed the titles and abstracts of the 322 different resources that came up as the search results. In a first review of the resulting publications, we read all the abstracts and rejected publications that discussed findings or observations from programme evaluations but did not showcase the evaluation itself; evaluations of projects that aimed at gender equality but where no component of the project was focused on girls; and articles that did not discuss development projects.

Figure 1: Data selection process



Source: Authors' own

We then reviewed the titles, abstracts, and content of the publications from our literature search in more depth and we selected 57 articles. These fell broadly into two categories – they were either evaluations or research studies of development programmes involving girls or young women. We created a summary document for these articles which we used to individually review all 57 articles, based on the following selection criteria:

- They focused on a developmental intervention;
- The intervention identified gender inequality as an impediment to a development issue;
- The intervention included girls or young women as beneficiaries, implementers, planners, or evaluators.

Following our individual review, we held a series of research team workshops to collectively review our selections.

To ensure our exploratory study represented a wide variety of interventions with girls, we also reached out to our network (identified for their experience and expertise in working with and studying developmental interventions with girls) whom we asked to contribute additional studies and evaluations as data for this research. Based on their suggestions, we reviewed an additional 84 documents from 35 organisations and from these included three additional publications in the review. We used the same inclusion criteria for the 84 documents as we used in the online keyword search. Most documents were excluded because they did not include any mention of girl-led activities, which may be why they did not come up in any of the keyword searches.

At the end of this process, we had 37 publications which were a mix of project evaluations, research papers, and methods evaluations (evaluation that specifically focused on the processes within development projects involving girls, rather than their outcomes, outputs, or impact). Some of these resources relate to the same project and we have grouped these together to avoid double (or triple) counting and therefore inflating numbers inappropriately. In one case, the Networks for Change programme, four resources relate to a single programme (Networks for Change: Girl-Led Policy Making; Networks for Change: Circles within Circles; Networks for Change: Digital Dialogue Tool; Networks for Change: Social Ills Fighters (SIFs)). However, we have included these as separate projects, rather than grouping them together, as each resource corresponds to a distinct project workstream, each of which have a different focus and participant group, within the wider programme. In total, we looked at 30 projects and 37 publications. Annexe 1 lists the publications included in our review and their corresponding projects and whether we treat them as one entity or multiple.

Girls' participation

Girls' participation in interventions

We identified a range of participation within 'girl-led' interventions in the 30 projects (37 publications) we reviewed, which we categorised as **for girls**, **with girls**, and **by girls**.

Based on the categories of girl/child participation discussed in our conceptual framing, 15 of the projects we reviewed pertained to projects **for girls**, 11 to projects that worked **with girls**, and 11 to projects that were **by girls**.

Our categorisation of multi-intervention projects was based on the most participatory component of the project – for instance, Özler *et al*. (2020) write about Girl Empower, a project which involved girl mentors in one of the four intervention components (three components were simply **for girls**), so we classified this as a programme that worked **with girls**. Similarly, programmes classified as **by girls** had at least one component in which girls were centrally involved in design and decision-making.

Table 2: Categorisation of publications included in review

for = 15	with = 11	by = 11
Austrian *et al.* (2018)	Meza and Marttinen (2019)	Chen *et al.* (2010)
Hewett *et al.* (2021)	Dyke *et al.* (2021)	Moletsane *et al.* (2021)
Kotecha, Nirupam and Karkar (2009)	Hallman *et al.* (2018)	Gonick *et al.* (2021)
Aguayo, Paintal and Singh (2013)	Özler *et al.* (2020)	Yamile (2021)
Özler, Mcintosh and Baird (2010)	Manzini-Henwood, Dlamini and Obare (2015)	Gammage *et al.* (2019)
Baird *et al.* (2013)	Kelly *et al.* (2006)	Haffejee *et al.* (2020)
Baird *et al.* (2010)	Temin *et al.* (2021)	O'Leary, Dibaba and Sarkar (2021)
Adoho *et al.* (2014)	Forbes-Genade and van Niekerk (2017)	Fried, Gathumbi and Bordallo (2019)
DeBate and Bleck (2016)	Hailu (2019)	Modungwa *et al.* (2021)

for = 15	with = 11	by = 11
Kazianga *et al.* (2013)	Hayhurst *et al.* (2015)	Uma Jalloh *et al.* 2021)
Kaplan *et al.* (2015)	Kohli *et al.* (2021)	Lister *et al.* (2021)
Neumark-Sztainer *et al.* (2000)		
Jones and Kawesa-Newell (2022)		
Jones (2021)		
Zipp (2017)		

Source: Authors' own

While it is outside the scope of this paper to discuss at length, it is worth noting that the publications we reviewed and their associated projects indicate a strong movement towards more participatory intervention methods, with a greater proportion of the projects reviewed taking place within the last five years, and of those, a greater proportion are **by girls** than earlier projects.

Table 3: Type of participation by year

Year	2005–09	2010–14	2015–19	2020–22
For	1	5	5	4
With	1	0	6	4
By	0	1	2	8
Total	2	6	13	16

Source: Authors' own

Intervention objectives

The reviewed projects range from large-scale interventions to provide girls with folic acid tablets aimed at improving their health indicators, to ones that support the formation of community-based girls' groups. Some projects have more than one objective, and so they cut across more than one of our categories. Projects aimed at improving girls' health and nutrition (12), enhancing their economic empowerment (1), shifting inhibiting gender norms (8), improving educational outcomes (4), addressing sexual and gender-based violence (6), and enhancing girls' agency, capacity, and voice (11).

The last category exhibited an intrinsic approach to girls' rights and their participation, operating on the central premise that girls had valuable evidence to contribute to understanding their realities and planning appropriate interventions. They worked to expand the access to resources that aided this expansion of agency, as well as at supporting girls' development of their own understanding of their marginalisation. These projects do not view the support of agency, capacity, and voice as a means to other developmental ends but as a goal in its own right, regardless of its contribution to achieving other development objectives.

Annexe 2 provides a detailed categorisation of the range of project objectives and Annexe 3 expands on the sub-objectives. The table columns in Annexe 3 are structured across the seven broad meta-categories, each followed by a more specific sub-category, with a list of corresponding projects and their associated publications in the final two columns. The projects are colour-coded based on whether they are **for**, **with**, or **by girls**.

Annexe 3 allows us to see that of the projects that we reviewed, projects which were **by girls** only featured in the categories of:

- Gender norms and practices
- Addressing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)
- Increasing girls' collective voice and capacity and agency
- Understanding and addressing risks and vulnerabilities.

Projects which had objectives related to health, nutrition and related outcomes, economic empowerment, and education were only **for** and **with girls** and never **by girls**. These findings suggest that objectives related to behaviour change, such as those regarding norms, gender-based violence, and agency are more likely to be in projects **by girls**. This is important because behaviour change and social norms change can contribute substantially to gender equality and therefore have associated positive outcomes in other areas affected by gender inequity, such as health, nutrition, economics, and educational attainment.

Intervention methods

While intervention objectives were closely related to intervention methods, projects with the same intervention objectives did not necessarily use the same intervention method. Also, there was limited correlation between method and the type of involvement of girls.

In the 30 projects we reviewed, there were six primary categories of intervention method and 37 sub-categories. Some projects employed multiple intervention methods. The range of intervention methods employed by the projects reviewed include:

(i) resource and infrastructure provision;

(ii) the provision of vouchers, cash transfers, and incentives;

(iii) technical training and skills development for girls and associated actors (for example, teachers);

(iv) community mobilisation and advocacy, across levels and actors (including policymakers);

(v) the collectivisation of girls through a variety of strategies (including camps, symposia, girls' clubs, etc.);

(vi) awareness raising and knowledge building amongst girls.

Five of the six categories of intervention featured projects across the spectrum of **for**, **with**, and **by girls**. There was only one intervention method not featured in any project **by girls**, which was (ii) the provision of vouchers, cash transfers, and incentives. There was also only one intervention method not featured in any project **with girls**, which was (i) resource and infrastructure provision. The remaining four intervention methods, (iii), (iv), (v), and (vi) featured in projects **for**, **with**, and **by girls**.

Figure 2: Intervention methods by type of participation

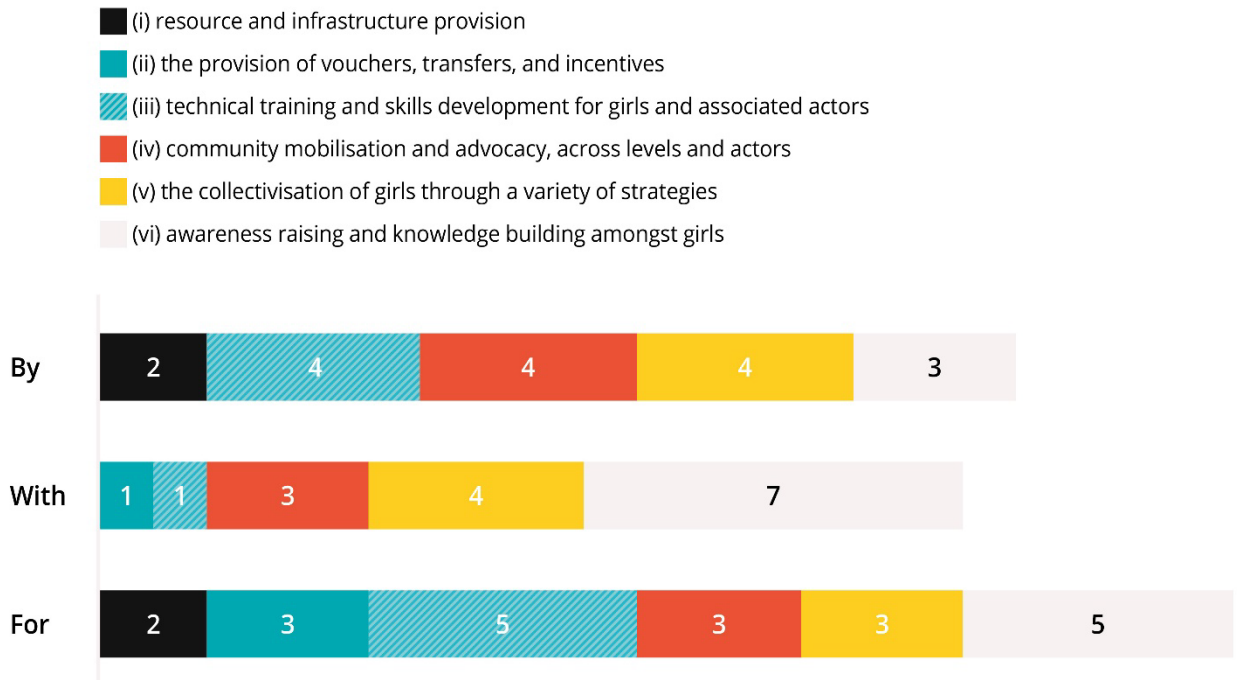


Figure 2 data:

	Intervention 1	**Intervention 2**	**Intervention 3**	**Intervention 4**	**Intervention 5**	**Intervention 6**
By	2	-	4	4	4	3
With	-	1	1	3	4	7
For	2	3	5	3	3	5

Source: Authors' own

Figure 3: Type of participation by intervention methods

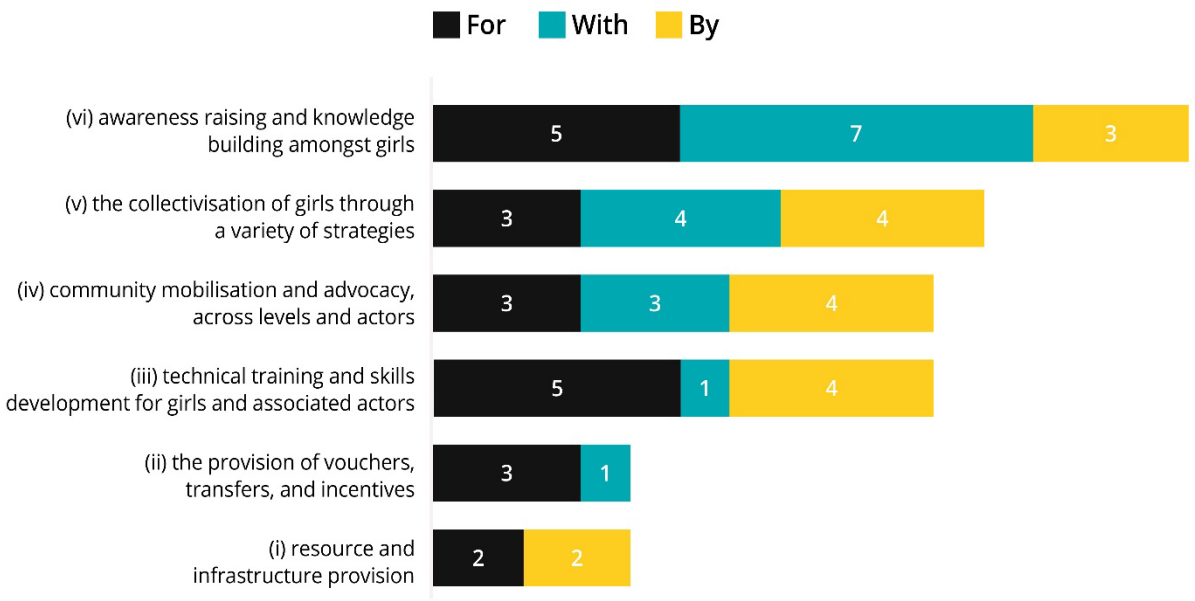


Figure 3 data:

	For	With	By
(vi) awareness raising and knowledge building amongst girls	5	7	3
(v) the collectivisation of girls through a variety of strategies	3	4	4
(iv) community mobilisation and advocacy, across levels and actors	3	3	4
(iii) technical training and skills development for girls and associated actors	5	1	4
(ii) the provision of vouchers, cash transfers, and incentives	3	1	-
(i) resource and infrastructure provision	2	-	2

Source: Authors' own

Annexe 4 provides a complete list of intervention methods, sub-categories, and the projects and publications which showcase these.

The findings in this section suggest that project objectives rather than intervention methods are more likely to correlate with the level of girls' involvement. However, there are still some patterns in the relationship between intervention method and types of girls' participation in implementation. The highest levels of girls' participation (projects **with** and **by girls**) in intervention methods took place across categories (vi), (v), and (iv) and the lowest levels of girls' participation was in projects which used the intervention methods of (ii) and (i). The categories which

had higher levels of participation were those in which interpersonal relationships were an essential component of implementation. Fewer projects **with girls** and **by girls** used intervention methods that were based on provision. This is in keeping with the focus of many countries and organisations on the first two Ps of the UNCRC: Protection and Provision (Johnson *et al.* 2020: 13).

Girls' participation in evaluations

As well as considering the extent to which girls were involved in the implementation of the projects reviewed, we explored the extent to which, and in what way, they were involved in the monitoring or evaluation of the projects.

While assessing girls' participation in evaluations, we specifically examined the different types of girls' participation in the project's evaluation from design to implementation to analysis. Our analysis places these types of involvement on a spectrum of no participation from 'no involvement of girls' to the highest levels of participation in 'involvement of girls in data analysis'.

In some cases, projects have multiple types of girls' involvement in the evaluation and therefore when quantifying the number of projects which feature a type of girls' involvement, the total number across all the types will add up to greater than 30. For example, in Jones and Kawesa-Newell (2022) and Jones (2021), girls are involved as data collectors, as well as survey respondents and focus group discussion (FGD) participants. In this case, we have listed the project as having each type of involvement.

Overall, there was no information on girls' involvement in evaluation in one of the projects ('Rapariga Biz Community Based Girl Groups' (Temin *et al*. 2021)). In one project, girls were not involved in the project evaluation at all ('GenNext' (Kaplan *et al*. 2015)). They were only involved in giving biological data in another (Kotecha *et al*. 2009). They were survey respondents in 12 projects. In 16 projects, girls were consulted through FGDs, or interviews, or in offering their reflections. In five projects, girls were involved in data collection. In four projects, girls helped determine what data to collect. And also in four projects, they were involved in data analysis. There is a detailed breakdown of girls' participation in evaluation per reviewed publication in Annexe 5.

Figure 4: Girls' participation in evaluation

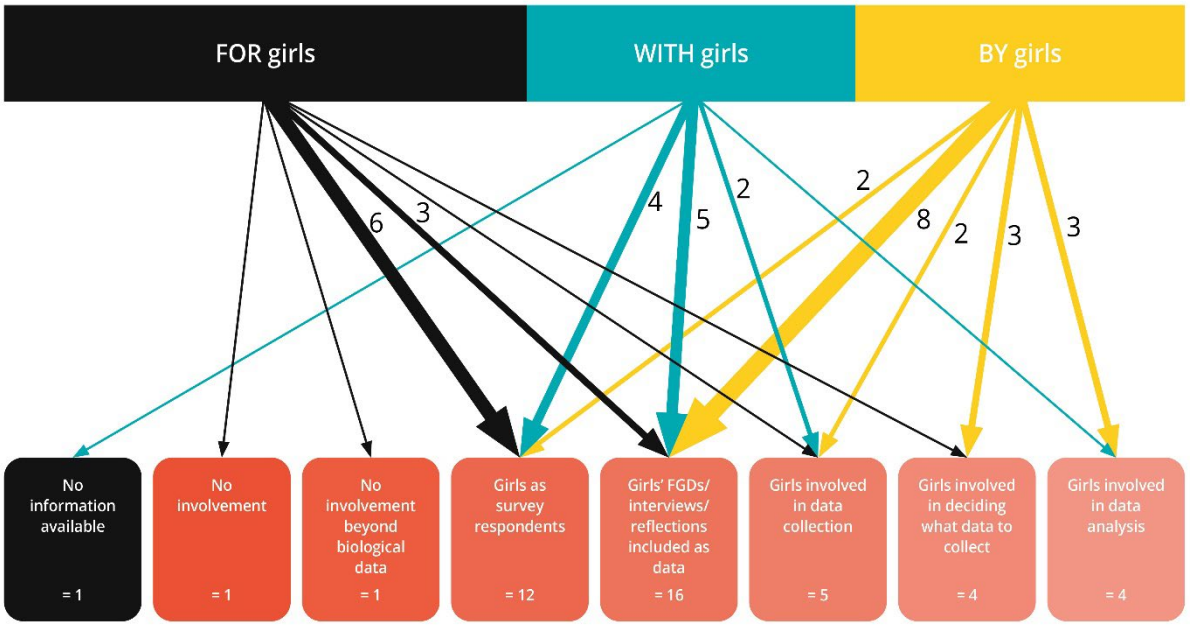


Figure 4 data:

	For girls	With girls	By girls	Total
No information available	-	1	-	1
No involvement	1	-	-	1
No involvement beyond biological data	1	-	-	1
Girls as survey respondents	6	4	2	12
Girls' focus groups/ interviews/ reflections included as data	3	5	8	16
Girls involved in data collection	1	2	2	5
Girls involved in deciding what data to collect	1	-	3	4
Girls involved in data analysis	-	1	3	4

Source: Authors' own

In our analysis, we found that the more participatory the project, the more participatory the evaluation. While not all projects which are **by girls** necessarily have highly participatory evaluations, highly participatory evaluations were **only** found in projects **by girls**. For example, in O'Leary *et al*. (2021), the programme is categorised as **by girls** because of the role girls have in implementation. But girls' engagement in the evaluation was limited to responding to surveys, participating in FGDs, and giving in-depth interviews. Similarly, in Gammage *et al*. (2019), which is also **by girls**, girls take part in an FGD as part of the evaluation but have no role in analysing the evaluation data or deciding what will be measured. However, projects **by girls** with limited girls' participation in the evaluation are reflective of

their absence: 'We reflect on what we see as some critical features of the Girlfesto, recognizing that we offer these reflections through our adult interpretation of its meanings and that the participating girl groups or policymakers could have different interpretations' (Gonick *et al*. 2021: 109). This reflectivity is not apparent in projects categorised as **for girls**. Not surprisingly, large-scale self-described RCTs have no substantial participatory involvement of girls. In these evaluations (Hewett *et al.* 2021; Austrian *et al.* 2018; Adoho *et al.* 2014; Hallman *et al.* 2018; Özler *et al.* 2020), girls are exclusively survey respondents. In evaluations which examine the **process** of implementing projects with girls, girls are involved in more stages of the evaluation – from deciding what data to collect to evaluating the findings. Projects such as Girls Inc. (Chen *et al*. 2010); With and For Girls (Fried *et al*. 2019); and Haffejee *et al*. (2020), all evaluate the process of undertaking participatory work with girls. They also use the most participatory evaluation methods and include girls in the analysis of data. All of these projects are **by girls**.

The correlation between the scale of girls' participation in projects and their participation in evaluations might be due to organisational reporting cultures and/or funding requirements; further research is needed to establish if this is the case. Additionally, the values within the project might emphasise girls' involvement across all stages of the project while simultaneously acknowledging the constraints of what can be measured within project lifecycles. Projects which focus on learning about **process** are more likely to engage girls at each project stage, from project design to evaluation.

What types of evidence exist?

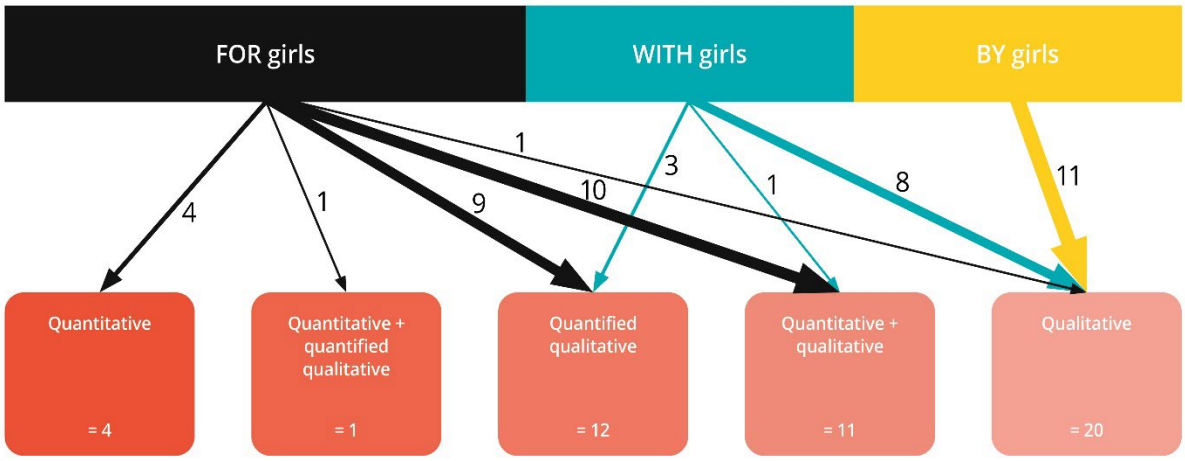
A range of measures are used to evidence impact that we have broadly classified into three types: quantitative, quantified qualitative, and qualitative data.

Quantitative data is data which is represented numerically. In the case of the projects we reviewed, most of the quantitative data was collected through surveys but also included biomedical data. This data is usually used to measure things statistically. It can help tell you **if** something has happened, and to what extent.

Qualitative data is descriptive and not numerical. It is also more open to interpretation and is usually analysed by grouping information into themes. Qualitative data can often help to determine **why** and **how** certain results come about.

The third type of data, quantified qualitative, is not a widely recognised category but one that we have found useful in our analysis. This type of data uses predetermined quantitative questions (survey-based and multiple choice, scalar) to measure qualitative themes, such as empowerment, adherence and belief in gender norms, attitudes, and behaviour. These results were then analysed using statistical models.

Figure 5: Girls' participation by types of evidence

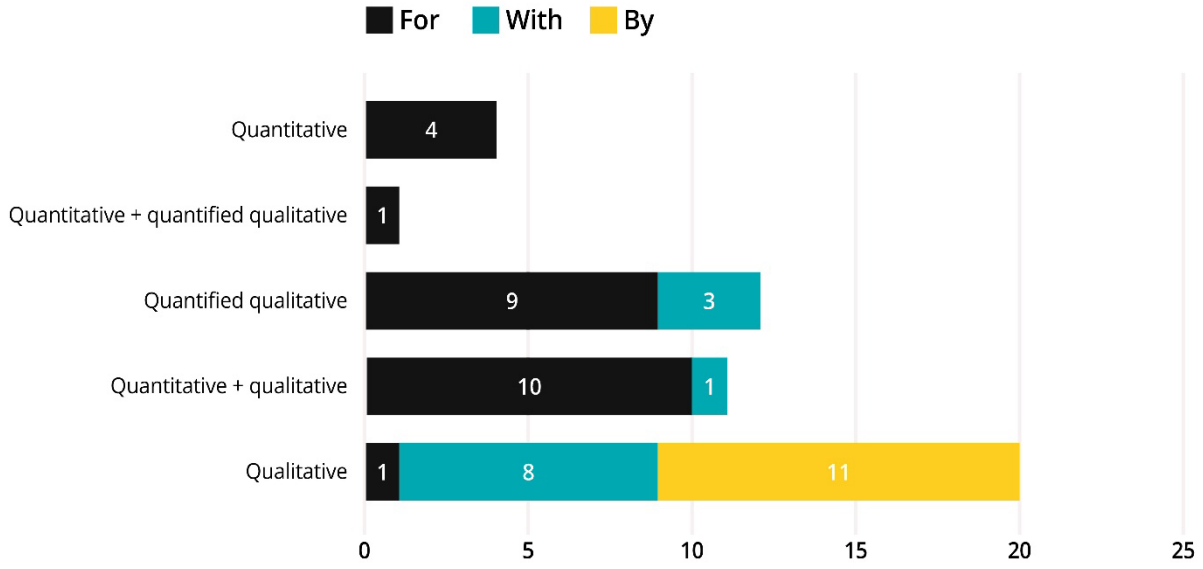


Figures 5 and 6 data:

	For girls	With girls	By girls	Total
Quantitative	4	-	-	4
Quantitative + quantified qualitative	1	-	-	1
Quantified qualitative	9	3	-	12
Quantitative + qualitative	10	1	-	11
Qualitative	1	8	11	20

Source: Authors' own

Figure 6: Types of evidence by girls' participation



Source: Authors' own

Quantitative evidence

Four of our studies relied predominantly on quantitative data (Kotecha *et al*. 2009; Kaplan *et al.* 2015; Kazianga *et al.* 2013; Özler *et al*. 2010). One (Kohli *et al.* 2021) used a combination of quantitative and quantified qualitative data.

As is common in health and nutrition evaluation and research, projects in our review aimed at health, nutritional, and educational outcomes used quantitative data collection. These were part of studies relating to projects **for girls** – (Kotecha *et al*. 2009; Baird *et al.* 2010; Kazianga *et al.* 2013; Kaplan *et al.* 2015). These projects showed up in our data set because they did have a participatory component. The Adolescent Girls' Anaemia Control Programme (Kotecha *et al*. 2009), for example, asked in-school girls to find three out-of-school girls and provide them with education and IFA tablets (containing iron and folic acid). The Zomba Cash Transfer programme (Baird *et al.* 2010) gave 30 per cent of the Conditional Cash Transfer money directly to girls. The GenNext Programme (Kaplan *et al.* 2015) trained young women within the programme to serve as health mentors and soccer coaches.

Quantitative data collection in these projects was predominantly based on 'objective' (rather than self-reported) metrics, including haemoglobin and serum ferratin estimates of iron levels for amnesia testing (Kotecha *et al*. 2009), birth rates amongst 15–19-year-old girls (Kaplan *et al.* 2015), and biomedical data based

on HIV and HPV-2 virus prevalence (Baird *et al.* 2013). Quantitative data was also collected in relation to socio-demographic indicators, such as head of household age, household assets (phones, flooring, bikes), and number of children, and educational outcomes, such as enrolment, attendance, and test-scores were used as evidence (Kazianga *et al.* 2013). In Özler *et al*. (2010), enrolment, and retention and drop-out rates based on large-scale quantitative surveys were the main measure for the effectiveness of conditional and unconditional cash transfers for girls' education.

None of the quantitative studies substantially disaggregated and analysed data along intersectional axes. For example, while some collected data on ethnicity and religion, they did not interrogate this data in relation to their outcome categories. Also, evaluations did not accommodate insights from girls on their experiences of interventions (either positive or negative). What makes these projects measurable is their very limited scope, both in terms of what they deliver and in terms of their broader conceptions of social change. The study on the BRIGHT programme (Kazianga *et al.* 2013), for example, reported a positive effect in terms of enrolment. However, it was impossible to determine to what extent (or even if) this was driven by each of the various interventions (including girl-friendly amenities, incentives for girls' attendance, community mobilisation and advocacy, and gender sensitisation and training of teachers and local officials). The projects studied through quantitative measures implicitly viewed girls as beneficiaries, as passive sites of intervention, or as (receptive or resistive) targets. They did not appear to recognise, attribute, or engage with girls' social and political agency. In all these cases, the girls' participation appeared to be limited to being instrumental to the achievement of a health or education objective. The articles and reports we read did not argue, for example, that girls' sustained attendance in school, or their improved educational performance, contributed to an increase in their participation in social life. Or that an increased political understanding through education curricula led to their participation in political life, motivated by a desire to increase their agency. Additionally, none of the purely quantitative studies involved girls in the evaluation process in any capacity other than as survey respondents, or sources of blood samples. In other words, the quantitative data collection corresponded to projects with limited participation.

Quantified qualitative evidence

Of the sample reviewed, 12 studies fell into this category, where quantitative questions were used to measure qualitative themes and sometimes supplemented with details from the thematic analysis of qualitative data. None of the studies which used quantified qualitative data were **by girls** but were spread across **for** and **with girls** as below:

- **For Girls** = 9: (Adoho *et al.* 2014); (DeBate and Bleck 2016); (Hewett *et al.* 2021); (Austrian *et al.* 2018); (Aguayo *et al.* 2013); (Neumark-Sztainer *et al.* 2000); (Baird *et al.* 2013); (Baird *et al.* 2010); (Jones 2021; Jones and Kawesa-Newell 2022)
- **With Girls** = 3: (Hallman *et al.* 2018); (Özler *et al.* 2020); (Manzini-Henwood *et al*. 2015).

In all cases of quantified qualitative evidence, researchers approached the evaluation with a predetermined set of indicators. What was measured, why, and how, was not arrived at in consultation with the girls involved in the project but determined independently by the researchers in advance of conducting the study. The Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme (AGEP): Nutrition (Hewett *et al.* 2021), for example, measured a range of adolescent attitudes, behaviours, transitions, and outcomes. Micro- and macro-dietary composition was measured based on self-reported nutritional intake in the 24 hours prior to the interview for the adolescents and their children two years or older. The data collected did indicate shifts, but these shifts did not correlate to shifts in measured attitude and behaviour. According to the study,

> The treated results indicate that exposure to the nutritional curriculum had limited influence on nutritional knowledge, behaviour or outcomes for adolescents or their children… The nutritional curriculum did not influence dietary diversity, the types of food eaten, anthropometric indicators or whether the adolescent or the child was identified as having moderate or severe anaemia. (Hewett *et al*. 2021: 658)

Furthermore, 'Neither the adolescents' education nor the wealth of their households was found to predict adolescent knowledge, dietary practices or nutrition-related outcomes.' (660). Therefore, the data does not allow insight into why these shifts did or did not happen to help understand which elements of the intervention did or did not work, and why.

The Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA) Club Project (Manzini-Henwood *et al*. 2015) used quantified measures to assess: (1) social assets; (2) awareness about SGBV; (3) practices and experiences related to SGBV; and (4) attitudes towards SGBV. The study (and project) assumed that the issue (the prevalence of SGBV) is rooted in particular attitudes around, and awareness of, SGBV. What it did not explore is whether the girls agreed with this assumption. In other words, the terms of inquiry (issue selection, theory of change, etc.) were not rooted expressly in girls' realities.

Qualitative evidence

Most studies in this category relate to projects **by girls** (11); eight are **with girls** and only one is **for girls**.

- **By Girls** = 11: (Moletsane *et al.* 2021); (O'Leary *et al*. 2021); (Yamile 2021); (Gammage *et al.* 2019); (Gonick *et al.* 2021); (Chen *et al.* 2010); (Haffejee *et al.* 2020); (Uma Jalloh *et al.* 2021); (Lister *et al*. 2021); (Modungwa *et al.* 2021); (Fried *et al*. 2019)
- **With Girls** = 8: (Kohli *et al.* 2021); (Hailu 2019); (Meza and Marttinen 2019); (Hayhurst *et al*. 2015); (Kelly *et al.* 2006); (Temin *et al.* 2021); (Forbes-Genade and van Niekerk 2017); (Dyke *et al.* 2021)
- **For Girls** = 1: (Zipp 2017)

The involvement of girls in setting the terms of what should be measured, why, and how (rather than researchers pre-determining indicators) is most evident in qualitative work. Here, research questions tended to be more exploratory/open-ended and often focused on the question of **girls' experiences** of the project.

The evaluation of the GIRL Curriculum (Meza and Marttinen 2019), for instance, asked 'How do girls in the GIRL programme experience its implementation? What challenges arose during implementation and what adaptations were made to the programme to address these challenges?' Similarly, the evaluation in Yamile (2021) asked: 'What are the schoolgirls' experiences of using the Digital Dialogue Tool in engaging rural school communities in dialogue to address GBV?' Along the same lines, the Because We're Girls project (Hayhurst *et al*. 2015) asked: 'How do young urban Aboriginal women in Vancouver, British Columbia, understand their experiences of participating in a sport, gender, and development (SGD) project that aims to enhance their lives?' Another example of an open-ended, experience-

driven question was an evaluation of Networks for Change: Girl-Led Policy Making (Moletsane *et al.* 2021), which asked: 'What approaches, mechanisms, and structures would make it possible for girls, as knowers and actors, especially those who are most marginalised, to influence social policy and social change in the context of sexual violence?' In Chen *et al*.'s (2010) evaluation of Girl Inc, girl researchers were asked about their favourite part of the project, the skills they had developed, what they had learned from their research findings, and what changes they would make if they could do the project again.

Girl-Powered Nutrition (GPN) was evaluated through a study that expressly focused on girls' experiences with the co-design and implementation of the pilot GPN programme (Dyke *et al.* 2021). While standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability informed the overall inquiry, a cross-cutting focus on questions of gender and equity was also present, and conversations allowed for respondents to reflect broadly on strengths, weaknesses, and unintended consequences of the programme. The evaluation of Kara Kura Girls' Circle (Uma Jalloh *et al.* 2021) asked mentors questions about how they were forming collectives with each other and with girls to advance girls' goals, to resist, to push back and shape their futures. Some of the direct questions included: 'How does being a mentor impact your life?'; 'What inspired you and the girls in your club to do this?'; 'What change is this having on the lives of girls in your club?'; 'What are your future plans for this work?'; and 'As a mentor, how does this collective work make you feel?'; 'What advice would you give to other mentors and girls thinking about working in a collective?' In With and For Girls (Fried *et al*. 2019), the evaluation assessed the extent to which the collective had achieved results on seven areas of enquiry, and in keeping with the commitment to girls' engagement of the independent evaluation team and the collective, a group of 12 girls conducted interviews and reviewed the evaluation findings.

In some cases, the studies used established frameworks to structure the analysis of emerging data – for instance, Gammage *et al*. (2019) used Kabeer's (1999, 2001) empowerment frameworks, Zipp (2017) used the human capabilities framework (Nussbaum 1999 and Sen 2000), and Forbes-Genade and van Niekerk (2017) used the Human Rights-Based Approach (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2010).

These open-ended qualitative studies did not predetermine rigid metrics or parameters for evaluation but instead allowed these to emerge through the active

involvement of girls in the research and evaluation process (e.g. Moletsane *et al*. 2021; Haffejee *et al*. 2020). Even when studies used established theoretical frameworks for analysis, they still employed open-ended approaches to their inquiry and allowed their operationalisation of indices/metrics to emerge from interactions with the girls (i.e. girls were involved in determining what should be measured in these studies) although they were not always involved in the analysis.

Impact of girls' participation

We found that involving girls in participation allowed for a greater complexity and nuance in metrics; often enabled an account of negative externalities; afforded more contextually aware and tailored programming; and allowed for an attention to intersectional considerations. In what follows, we articulate each of these in more detail; inevitably, there is some overlap between the four categories.

Greater complexity and nuance in metrics

In terms of girls' participation in evaluations, we found that when girls were involved (O'Leary *et al*. 2021; Chen *et al.* 2010; Moletsane *et al.* 2021; Haffejee *et al.* 2020), the range of what was measured was broader and more nuanced, capturing and accounting for more complex elements of their realities compared to studies which simply positioned girls as survey respondents, and which used predetermined metrics for evaluation that they simply measured through the study (e.g. Kotecha *et al.* 2009; Aguayo *et al.* 2013; Hallman *et al.* 2018). In project evaluations **by girls**, such as in Girls Inc. (Chen *et al.* 2010), girls' chosen evaluation questions looked at the project's role in diversity: 'How does Girls Inc. teach girls about respecting girls from different backgrounds?' and community activism: 'What does Girls Inc. do to improve our community?' (232). Higher levels of girl involvement in determining what is measured and how it is analysed thus produced more complex and nuanced frameworks for evaluating the effectiveness of projects. These wide parameters and complex frameworks were a result of more open-ended questions leading the evaluation, seeking to study project processes rather than simply measuring predetermined outcome metrics. For example, in Molestane *et al.* (2021: 4), the authors state that their research,

> seeks to ensure that the participation of girls is meaningfully recognized… and purposefully examines participation as a critical area of research. This provided the Partnership with a key framework for the research (Moletsane *et al.* 2021; Mitchell 2011; Denov 2008). At the heart of this work is the idea that girls might themselves influence the research agenda, and shape policies and practices in institutions and communities.

Projects which meaningfully involved girls in determining project aims and evaluation criteria allowed for the emergence of what mattered most to girls and

learning which could be applied to future projects to achieve the outcomes which were important to girls.

Accounting for negative externalities

As well as leading to greater complexity and nuance, studies that involved girls in the evaluations (e.g. Hayhurst *et al.* 2015; Dyke *et al.* 2021; Zipp 2017) were also the only ones that were able to capture harms/risks girls faced as part of the project, or any other unintended effects or externalities (Gammage *et al.* 2019, for instance, actively solicited feedback on not only the strengths but also the weaknesses of the programme).

Zipp's (2017) work examines sport for development with 'at risk' adolescent girls in St. Lucia, young women who have been removed from mainstream schools because of behavioural issues. She notes that while sport for development programming has flourished, the complex social and economic environment in the postcolonial Eastern Caribbean is often overlooked by researchers. Her case study also looks at negative externalities and finds that sport projects may increase children and adolescents' exposure to danger or harm. For girls, for example, sexual abuse from coaches is a real concern (Brady 2005; Saavedra 2009). Additionally, bodily injury through sport, by traumatic injuries such as a broken bone or overuse injuries from training, are also potential hazards. She notes that it is unclear whether sport projects are the most effective way to promote physical activity, health, gender equality, girls' empowerment, etc. and that better resources at schools, or art and music projects, may be equally or more effective.

Girls also tend to have very limited time given their roles in unpaid care work, domestic labour, and increasingly also in paid labour. Therefore, any work with girls needs to account for the fact that their involvement in development interventions inevitably compromises their involvement in other activities that they might take part in – particularly those which contribute to their wellbeing. Hayhurst *et al*. (2015: 961) write about their sports development project:

> Time constraints and childcare responsibilities sometimes meant that these young women and girls were unable to smudge,[2] look

[2] 'Smudging' refers to a traditional ceremony in which sacred incense/herbs are burnt to cleanse the soul of negativities.

> after children and participate in sport; instead, they were forced to choose between the activities, sometimes forgoing important cultural practices in order to take part in the sports for development sessions.

Other projects not only recognised possible negative consequences but actively built in mitigation strategies. The Enhancing Nutrition Services to Improve Maternal and Child Health in Africa and Asia (ENRICH) project (O'Leary *et al.* 2021) accounted for possible community backlash by building in community support structures, such as MenCare, which ran alongside girls' activities. They say,

> Initially, the [girls'] campaign against CEFM [child early and forced marriage] was faced with community resistance. Some community members felt that since this was a longstanding practice for generations, there were no problems with it. MenCare leaders were instrumental in meeting with these community members to support a better understanding of the risks involved in child marriage. The project also faced some resistance from elders in the community who felt that adolescent girls should not play a role in educating elderly people. The community facilitators played a part in resolving this challenge over time.
> (O'Leary *et al.* 2021: 29)

The adult researchers in Haffejee *et al.* (2020) in collaboration with Thembalethu, a local CBO, decided that girls should not be present during meetings with the Traditional Authority in the community in which they were working, to safeguard against violence. While this action could be perceived as limiting girls' agency, it is in direct response to perceived negative consequences. It also demonstrates understanding that in some cases, to have the most impact, girls' participation requires the support of adults.

These projects clearly show the ethical complexity of working with girls. While this work is important, it can present a dilemma for researchers; if harm is disclosed, action is needed, so careful attention needs to be given to safeguarding measures. Within projects which actively encourage girls' agency and those which want sustainable outcomes for girls, mitigating the risk of potential negative consequences, such as backlash, requires a strong understanding of the structural and contextual restraints to girls' participation, visibility, and activism (Ahsan 2009). We further explore these considerations in the next section.

Contextually aware and tailored programming

We found that higher levels of girl participation in the project itself (i.e. those classified as **with girls** and **by girls**) correlated with more contextually aware, culturally alert forms of programming, embedded in the social realities of the girls' immediate contexts (e.g. Networks for Change: Girl-Led Policy Making (Moletsane *et al.* 2021); Girls' Holistic Development (GHD) (Kohli *et al.* 2021); Because We're Girls (Hayhurst *et al*. 2015); Kara Kura Girls' Circles (Uma Jalloh *et al.* 2021)).

Across projects **with** and **by girls**, there were several positive examples of intervention methods which facilitated girls' agency while also acknowledging the structural constraints girls experience in their contexts and cultures. The Networks for Change: Girl-Led Policy Making Project (Moletsane *et al.* 2021) used participatory visual methodology (PVM), including digital and arts-based methods such as drawing, collage, cellphilm-making, digital storytelling, and photovoice. Researchers started with context, identifying this itself as a problem and working from there to put girls, and especially marginal (indigenous) girls, at the centre, while recognising limitations to their participation. All the projects connected to the Networks for Change programme were able to do important work around understanding girls' own experiences of participating in various efforts. They positioned girls as socio-political actors with voice and agency, while recognising their embeddedness in patriarchal and unequal structures. In a reflection on the Networks for Change programme-wide development of a Girlfesto, Gonick *et al.* (2021: 114) also speaks to this, stating, 'There is also no guarantee that the Girlfesto will be taken up by policymakers and other stakeholders who are in positions to create the changes demanded by girls.'

Some programmes explicitly addressed structural constraints, such as the girls' inability to speak to older people or decision makers. In the Girls' Holistic Development Programme (Kohli *et al.* 2021), for example, girls were supported by the project to contribute to dialogues across generations and with key decision makers in their communities. Recognising the structural constraints of girls' agency is often part of accounting for their intersectional disadvantage. Furthermore, there were positive examples of evaluations which considered not only the structural constraint of girls' agency but also the practical constraints of their organisations and those that worked with them, such as The Global

Resilience Fund, which modified their evaluation strategy to accommodate the people they funded:

> Partners appreciated not having the burden of often complicated and time-consuming written reports. In fact, one group referred to having a learning call instead of a written report as an 'act of solidarity'. Having a space to connect with others and share about their initiatives, experiences as well as how they've tackled backlash, was considered extremely valuable by the partners. Ensuring our feminist principles are reflected even in our MEL [monitoring, evaluation, and learning] practice ensured that our approach is responsive to the realities of the partners and created a meaningful space for learning.
> (Modungwa *et al.* 2021: 67)

In the case described above, project funders recognised the time and resource constraints of the small organisations they were funding, finding alternative feedback mechanisms, such as calls, in place of lengthy bureaucratic reports. These calls also provided opportunities for peer learning which individualised reporting does not.

Attention to intersectional marginalities

Further, projects **with girls** and **by girls** often began from a point of recognising intersecting marginalities (and targeting girls with intersectional marginalities).

While the focus of all the projects in the data set was related to gender inequality, only a few of the projects meaningfully addressed intersectionality. The Global Resilience Fund (Modungwa *et al.* 2021) reflected that the fund's intentionally inclusive approach enabled it to reach exceptional numbers of gender and disability rights groups. Hayhurst *et al*. (2015), studying Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society (VAFCS), use postcolonial feminist participatory action research (PFPAR) to ask about girls' experiences and to account for their intersecting identities as indigenous young women. The intervention itself came from an intersectional imperative; a desire to uncover 'how gender inequalities intersect with other categories of difference' (Hayhurst *et al.* 2015: 954) with a view to then understanding how these inequities might be managed in the context of sports, gender, and development projects. They were careful to maintain the wording used by the young women, and to ensure that the voices of the young women dominated the data. They also went back to the girls to validate data and

encouraged the girls to analyse their own data and present it back in PowerPoints. This process revealed that stereotyping, and encountering racism and gender inequalities, both in day-to-day life and in the project, created challenging circumstances for these young women.

The awareness of, and response to, the unequal power relationships between researchers and participants was further explored in Haffejee *et al.* (2020: 20) who write:

> We have to acknowledge that in spite of our best intentions to establish more equitable relationships with our participants, the difference in age between them and us might well affect their ability and/or willingness to take up leadership positions in the project.

And, 'To be successful in intergenerational endeavours requires an understanding of, and the ability to embrace the elusiveness and opaqueness of the process, and the willingness to make it up together along the way' (*ibid*.: 29). This careful reflection points to a need, in any project which aims to work with girls, to be attentive to their intersecting positionality as young and female, and also possibly disabled, and/or disadvantaged by their race, caste, socioeconomic background, or level of schooling amongst other potential factors. Other projects, such as Girl World (Kelly *et al.* 2006) cite feminist and intersectional literature in their theoretical framing but do not return to intersectionality as a key component of their implementation or evaluation.

Girl-Powered Nutrition (Dyke *et al.* 2021), was **with girls** because girls were involved in the delivery of the programme as well as in elements of curriculum design. This project was evaluated through a study that both explicitly identified how underlying issues of poverty, gender inequality, and structural norms negatively impact female adolescents' agency and nutrition but also tried to attend to girls at a variety of intersections, looking at data from different regional, linguistic, and age groups.

Focusing on intersectionality in projects involving girls can aid in better understandings of why interventions work for some girls and not others, and also lead to better, more tailored interventions which account for specific characteristics of different groups of girls within the same participant cohort.

Complicating girls' participation

While making the case for girls' participation in projects, we also want to exercise caution in uncritically advocating for 'more' girls' participation in these projects. It is important to attend to how projects construct and position the girls they involve. This includes examining the degree to which girls are perceived, and engaged, as social and political actors. A high attribution of agency is not necessarily an uncontroversial good, as it can obscure significant structural constraints, or be based on a questionable theory of change, and it may put unfair pressure on the girls involved. For instance, the assumption that projects can enable girls to make choices that reduce their vulnerability to sexual harm such as the Girl Empower (Özler *et al.* 2020; Hallman *et al.* 2018) programme in Liberia, which aims at 'equipping adolescent girls with the skills and experiences necessary to make healthy, strategic life choices and to stay safe from sexual violence' (Hallman *et al.* 2018: 4), and whose findings speak to 'reducing risky sexual behaviour' – implicitly positions girls as responsible both for their own vulnerability, and for overcoming it. Similarly, the Zomba Cash Transfer programme as evaluated by Baird *et al.* (2010) sought to encourage girls' school enrolment and retention with a view to reducing 'risky sexual behaviour'. This programme viewed education as a 'social vaccine' to reduce risky behaviour and stop the spread of HIV, while implicitly positioning girls, and their sexual practices, as being responsible for their vulnerability to infection. Other examples of this girl-as-agent-of-change, responsible for their victimisation and capable of individually surmounting it (unencumbered by structurally induced vulnerabilities) include Girl Effect Education Ethiopia and Burkinabé Response to Improve Girls' Chances to Succeed (BRIGHT) (Kazianga *et al.* 2013).

Conclusion

What is very clear from this research is that there is a huge range of projects described as 'girl-led', displaying an equally broad range of girls' participation. Although our search criteria for publications used the term 'girl-led', none of these projects are entirely girl-led, and there may be good reasons for this. For each of the projects we selected, there are components which the authors consider to be 'girl-led', and in some cases, girls do take a leadership role in these components. However, many projects in our review described as 'girl-led' or as having 'girl-led' components might be more accurately called 'girl-implemented'. Substantively girl-led work involves supporting girls to **make** decisions – not just implement decisions made by adults.

In the systematic analysis across papers and projects, we found that higher levels of girls' participation in programming and evaluation (especially girl participation in deciding what data is collected and in analysis) correlated with four positive outcomes:

(i) Girl participation in deciding what data is collected and how it is analysed co-existed with a wider set of parameters and variables under consideration in evaluations, and more complex and nuanced metrics to evaluate outcomes;

(ii) Girl participation helps avoid and ensure that negative externalities/unintended consequences of projects are captured and accounted for;

(iii) Higher girl participation in project implementation correlated with more contextually aware, situationally tailored programming which recognises structural constraints;

(iv) Projects with higher levels of girl participation displayed greater attentiveness to intersectional considerations.

Our review suggests that we need to carefully interrogate work that claims to be girl-led, and ask further questions of it, in terms of both how this classification is understood by those using it, and in relation to the extent of girls' participation at each stage of the programme cycle. It suggests, also, that while substantive participation may not always be appropriate (because of, for example, budget, or time, or ethical concerns), where possible, engaging girls fully in design, implementation, and evaluation, can significantly augment the value of each of these stages of a programme.

Annexe 1: Programme/project and associated publications

Programmes/projects	Studies
GenNext	Kaplan *et al.* (2015)
Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme (AGEP) Nutrition	Austrian *et al.* (2018); Hewett *et al.* (2021)
Adolescent Girls' Anaemia Control Programme	Kotecha *et al*. (2009); Aguayo *et al*. (2013)
Zomba Cash Transfer	Özler *et al*. (2010); Baird *et al*. (2013); Baird *et al*. (2010)
Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG)	Adoho *et al.* (2014)
Girls on the Run	DeBate and Bleck (2016)
Burkinabé Response to Improve Girls' Chances to Succeed (BRIGHT) programme	Kazianga *et al.* (2013)
Girl Effect HPV Malawi	Jones and Kawesa-Newell (2022); Jones (2021)
Upton Gardens Girls' Centre	Zipp (2017)
Free to be Me	Neumark-Sztainer *et al.* (2000)
Rapariga Biz Community Based Girl Groups	Temin *et al.* (2021)
GIRL Curriculum	Meza and Marttinen (2019)
Girl-Powered Nutrition	Dyke *et al.* (2021)
Girl Empower	Hallman *et al*. (2018); Özler *et al*. (2020)

Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA) Club Project	Manzini-Henwood *et al*. (2015)
Girl World	Kelly *et al.* (2006)
Girls In Risk Reduction Leadership (GIRRL) Programme	Forbes-Genade and van Niekerk (2017)
Girl Effect Education Ethiopia	Hailu (2019)
Because We're Girls	Hayhurst *et al*. (2015)
Girls' Holistic Development (GHD)	Kohli *et al.* (2021)
Kara Kura Girls' Circles	Uma Jalloh *et al*. (2021); Lister *et al*. (2021)
Enhancing Nutrition Services to Improve Maternal and Child Health in Africa and Asia (ENRICH)	O'Leary *et al*. (2021)
Networks for Change: Circles within Circles	Gonick *et al.* (2021)
Networks for Change: Digital Dialogue Tool	Yamile (2021)
Networks for Change: Social Ills Fighters (SIFs)	Haffejee *et al.* (2020)
Girl-Led Advocacy for Policy and Social Change	Gammage *et al.* (2019)
Global Resilience Fund	Modungwa *et al.* (2021)
Girls Inc.	Chen *et al.* (2010)
With and For Girls	Fried *et al.* (2019)
Networks for Change: Girl-Led Policy Making	Moletsane *et al.* (2021)

Annexe 2: Project objectives

Health, nutrition, and related outcomes

- Address malnutrition, anaemia, and obesity
- Decrease in micronutrient deficiency, improve nutrition practices
- Reduce incidents of disordered eating, improve body image
- Increase uptake of HPV vaccine
- Increasing developmental assets and associated physical, social, and emotional health benefits
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights: delayed sexual debut, delayed pregnancies, reduced early marriage, fewer unintended pregnancies, reduced STI transmission, reduced HIV transmission

Economic empowerment

- Increase employment
- Increase income
- Enhance access to and control over financial resources

Education

- Increase school completion/retention
- Increase school enrolment
- Improve scores and learning outcomes

Gender norms and practices

- Reduce early marriage
- Reduce early pregnancy
- Change social norms for positive outcomes for girls by challenging gendered cultural ideologies
- Positive educational ideologies
- Shifting gender power dynamics at household and community levels
- Challenging stereotypes and gender norms through sports play

Addressing SGBV

- Skills and experience enhancement to make choices that reduce risk of SGBV
- Reduce occurrence of SGBV
- Change school girls' knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to SGBV
- Advance knowledge on the nature and impact of sexual violence perpetrated against Indigenous girls and young women
- Develop innovative research partnerships to understand and address sexual violence
- Train a new generation of scholars and leaders in the area of participatory visual methods to address sexual violence
- Enhancing girls' voice on issues of GBV
- Facilitate girl-led 'from the ground up' policymaking and practice in rural indigenous communities
- Enable the development and exercise of girls' political subjectivities

Increase girls' collective voice and capacity and agency

- Increase recognition and resources for girl-led work
- Enhance girls' decision-making with regard to funding for girls
- Enhance girls' individual and collective leadership, advocacy, and agency
- Identify and navigate perceived barriers to physical activity
- Overcoming systemic barriers and empowering girls to make their own strategic life decisions (in relation to nutrition)
- Support girl-led advocacy for policy and social change including (and beyond) issues such as early and forced marriage, enhancing adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, and fostering meaningful participation in local and national development processes
- Foster a positive sense of self-efficiency and achieve their full potential
- Enhance Human Capability (Sen (2000) and Nussbaum (1999) frameworks)
- Enhanced social and life skills

Understanding and addressing risks and vulnerabilities

- Understand how risk and vulnerability are experienced and addressing them
- Enable girls to understand structural causes of their marginalisation

Annexe 3: Programme/project objectives

Programme objective	Objective sub-category	Programmes/projects	Associated publication
Health, nutrition, and related outcomes	Address malnutrition, anaemia, and obesity	Girl-Powered Nutrition	Dyke *et al.* (2021)
		Adolescent Girls' Anaemia Control Programme	Kotecha *et al*. (2009)
	Decrease in micronutrient deficiency, improve nutrition practices	Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme (AGEP) Nutrition	Hewett *et al.* (2021)
	Reduce incidents of disordered eating, improve body image	Free to be Me	Neumark-Sztainer *et al.* (2000)
		GIRL Curriculum	Meza and Marttinen (2019)
	Increase uptake of HPV vaccine	Girl Effect HPV Malawi	Jones (2021); Jones and Kawesa-Newell (2022)
	Increasing developmental assets and associated physical, social, and emotional health benefits	Girls on the Run	DeBate and Bleck (2016)
	Sexual and reproductive health and rights: delayed sexual debut, delayed	Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme (AGEP) Nutrition	Austrian *et al.* (2018)

	pregnancies, reduced early marriage, fewer unintended pregnancies, reduced STI transmission, reduced HIV transmission	Girls' Holistic Development (GHD)	Kohli *et al.* (2021)
		GenNext	Kaplan *et al.* (2015)
		Girl World	Kelly *et al.* (2006)
		Rapariga Biz Community Based Girl Groups	Temin *et al.* (2021)
Economic empowerment	Increase employment	Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG)	Adoho *et al.* (2014)
	Increase income	Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG)	Adoho *et al.* (2014)
	Enhance access to and control over financial resources	Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG)	Adoho *et al.* (2014)
Education	Increase school completion/retention	Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme (AGEP) Nutrition	Austrian *et al.* (2018)
		Girls' Holistic Development (GHD)	Kohli *et al.* (2021)
		Zomba Cash Transfer	Özler *et al.* (2010)
			Baird *et al.* (2013)
			Baird *et al.* (2010)
	Increase school enrolment	Burkinabé Response to Improve Girls' Chances	Kazianga *et al.* (2013)

		to Succeed (BRIGHT) programme	
	Improve scores and learning outcomes	Burkinabé Response to Improve Girls' Chances to Succeed (BRIGHT) programme	Kazianga *et al.* (2013)
Gender norms and practices	Reduce early marriage	Girls' Holistic Development (GHD)	Kohli *et al.* (2021)
		Networks for Change: Social Ills Fighters (SIFs)	Haffejee *et al.* (2020)
	Reduce early pregnancy	Girls' Holistic Development (GHD)	Kohli *et al.* (2021)
		GenNext	Kaplan *et al.* (2015)
		Rapariga Biz Community Based Girl Groups	Temin *et al.* (2021)
	Change social norms for positive outcomes for girls by challenging gendered cultural ideologies	Girl Effect Education Ethiopia	Hailu (2019)
	Positive educational ideologies	Burkinabé Response to Improve Girls' Chances to Succeed (BRIGHT) programme	Kazianga *et al.* (2013)
		Girl Effect Education Ethiopia	Hailu (2019)
	Shifting gender power dynamics at household and community levels	Enhancing Nutrition Services to Improve Maternal and Child Health in Africa and Asia (ENRICH)	O'Leary *et al*. (2021)
	Challenging stereotypes and	Because We're Girls	Hayhurst *et al*. (2015)

	gender norms through sports play		
Addressing SGBV	Skills and experience enhancement to make choices that reduce risk of SGBV	Girl Empower	Hallman *et al.* (2018)
	Reduce occurrence of SGBV	Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme (AGEP) Nutrition	Austrian *et al.* (2018)
	Change school girls' knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to SGBV	Girl Empower	Hallman *et al.* (2018)
			Özler *et al.* (2020)
		Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA) Club Project	Manzini-Henwood *et al*. (2015)
	Advance knowledge on the nature and impact of sexual violence perpetrated against Indigenous girls and young women	Networks for Change: Girl-Led Policy Making	Moletsane *et al.* (2021)
	Develop innovative research partnerships to understand and address sexual violence	Networks for Change: Girl-Led Policy Making	Moletsane *et al.* (2021)
	Train a new generation of scholars and leaders in the area of participatory visual methods to address sexual violence	Networks for Change: Girl-Led Policy Making	Moletsane *et al.* (2021)

	Enhancing girls' voice on issues of GBV	Networks for Change: Digital Dialogue Tool	Yamile (2021)
	Facilitate girl-led 'from the ground up' policymaking and practice in rural indigenous communities	Networks for Change: Girl-Led Policy Making	Moletsane *et al.* (2021)
	Enable the development and exercise of girls' political subjectivities	Networks for Change: Circles within Circles	Gonick *et al.* (2021)
Increase girls' collective voice and capacity and agency	Increase recognition and resources for girl-led work	With and For Girls	Fried *et al*. (2019)
	Enhance girls' decision-making with regard to funding for girls	With and For Girls	Fried *et al*. (2019)
	Enhance girls' individual and collective leadership, advocacy, and agency	Girl-Led Advocacy for Policy and Social Change	Gammage *et al.* (2019)
		Networks for Change: Circles within Circles	Gonick *et al.* (2021)
		Networks for Change: Social Ills Fighters (SIFs)	Haffejee *et al.* (2020)
		Kara Kura Girls' Circles	Uma Jalloh *et al.* (2021)
		Global Resilience Fund	Modungwa *et al.* (2021)
	Identify and navigate perceived barriers to physical activity	GIRL Curriculum	Meza and Marttinen (2019)

	Overcoming systemic barriers and empowering girls to make their own strategic life decisions (in relation to nutrition)	Enhancing Nutrition Services to Improve Maternal and Child Health in Africa and Asia (ENRICH)	O'Leary *et al*. (2021)
	Support girl-led advocacy for policy and social change including (and beyond) issues such as early and forced marriage, enhancing adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, and fostering meaningful participation in local and national development processes	Girl-Led Advocacy for Policy and Social Change	Gammage *et al.* (2019)
		Networks for Change: Circles within Circles	Gonick *et al.* (2021)
	Foster a positive sense of self-efficiency and achieve their full potential	Girl Inc.	Chen *et al.* (2010)
	Enhance human capability (Sen (2000) and Nussbaum (1999) frameworks)	Upton Gardens Girls' Centre	Zipp (2017)
	Enhanced social and life skills	Because We're Girls	Hayhurst *et al*. (2015)
		Upton Gardens Girls' Centre	Zipp (2017)

Understanding and addressing risks and vulnerabilities	Understand how risk and vulnerability are experienced and address them	Girls In Risk Reduction Leadership (GIRRL) Programme	Forbes-Genade and van Niekerk (2017)
	Enable girls to understand structural causes of their marginalisation	Kara Kura Girls' Circles	Uma Jalloh *et al.* (2021)

Annexe 4: Intervention methods

Intervention method	Intervention sub-category	Programmes/projects	Studies
(i) Vouchers, transfers, and incentives	Vouchers for general wellness and SRHR services	Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme (AGEP)	Austrian *et al.* (2018)
	School attendance-based (conditional) rations for girls' families	Burkinabé Response to Improve Girls' Chances to Succeed (BRIGHT) programme	Kazianga *et al.* (2013)
	Conditional and unconditional cash transfer for school enrolment	Zomba Cash Transfer Programme	Baird *et al.* (2010, 2013); Özler *et al.* (2010)
	Conditional cash transfer based on girls' attendance to mentorship sessions	Girl Empower	Hallman *et al.* (2018)
			Özler *et al.* (2020)

(ii) Resource/infrastructure provision	Construction of schools + provision of girl-friendly amenities	Burkinabé Response to Improve Girls' Chances to Succeed (BRIGHT) programme	Kazianga *et al.* (2013)
	Increasing recognition of and funding for girl-led initiatives	With and For Girls	Fried *et al.* (2019)
	Seed grants and other forums of flexible and responsive funding awarded to girl leaders and their organisations	With and For Girls	Fried *et al.* (2019)
		Global Resilience Fund	Modungwa *et al.* (2021)
	Provision of food/medicine and other resources, including iron and folic acid supplements	Adolescent Girls' Anaemia Control Programme	Aguayo *et al.* (2013)
(iii) Training and skills development (more technical), for girls as well as other audiences	Skills-based training for employment	Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG)	Adoho *et al.* (2014)
	Exploring running as a vehicle to deliver a curriculum via skill-building activities	Girls on the Run	DeBate and Bleck (2016)

	Gender-sensitivity training for teachers and ministry officials	Burkinabé Response to Improve Girls' Chances to Succeed (BRIGHT) programme	Kazianga *et al.* (2013)
	Capacity building amongst local officials	Burkinabé Response to Improve Girls' Chances to Succeed (BRIGHT) programme	Kazianga *et al.* (2013)
	Training teachers to monitor compliance to nutrition programme	Adolescent Girls' Anaemia Control Programme	Kotecha *et al.* (2009)
	Improving capacity of girl-led and girl-centred organisations to function effectively and to foster girl leadership	Global Resilience Fund	Modungwa *et al.* (2021)
	Financial literacy and individual and collective savings groups	Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme (AGEP) Nutrition	Austrian *et al.* (2018)
		Girl Empower	Hallman *et al.* (2018)
			Özler *et al.* (2020)
		Girl Inc	Chen *et al.* (2010)

	Train scholars and leaders and facilitate 'from the ground up' policymaking and practice	Networks for Change: Girl-led policy making	Moletsane *et al.* (2021)
	Training girls in advocacy - skills in political mapping, advocacy planning, communications, building networks, mobilising resources, and proposal development	Girl-led Advocacy for Policy and Social Change	Gammage *et al.* (2019)
(iv) Community mobilisation and advocacy (across levels and actors including policymakers)	Cascading model for community engagement (each girl engages community members)	Girl-Powered Nutrition	Dyke *et al.* (2021)
	Direct community engagement, including participatory, dialogical approaches to build	Girls' Holistic Development (GHD)	Kohli *et al.* (2021)
		Networks for Change: Social Ills Fighters (SIFs)	Haffejee *et al.* (2020)

	relationships and community consensus on girl-child issues		
	Larger regional, national, and international advocacy campaigns	Girl-Powered Nutrition	Dyke *et al.* (2021)
	World Aids day and other event-based community mobilisation	GenNext	Kaplan *et al.* (2015)
	Engaging parents – mailers, activities (e.g. healthy meal prep) or as audience for girls' advocacy events (e.g. skits)	Free to be Me	Neumark-Sztainer *et al.* (2000)
		Enhancing Nutrition Services to Improve Maternal and Child Health in Africa and Asia (ENRICH)	O'Leary *et al.* (2021)
	Using popular media and culture (including, for instance, a popular girl-band/pop culture publication)	Girl Effect Education Ethiopia	Hailu (2019)
		Girl Effect HPV Malawi	Jones and Kawesa-Newell (2022)
			Jones (2021)

	Policy posters and action briefs	Girl Effect Education Ethiopia	Hailu (2019)
	'Men-care' model where men were trained on gender equality and essential nutrition actions and were encouraged to change their perceptions about traditional gender norms;	Enhancing Nutrition Services to Improve Maternal and Child Health in Africa and Asia (ENRICH)	O'Leary *et al.* (2021)
	Digital Dialogue Tool to engage communities	Networks for Change: Digital Dialogue Tool	Yamile (2021)
	Manifestos by girls - Girlfestos	Networks for Change: Circles within Circles	Gonick *et al.* (2021)
(v) Collectivisation of girls, through	Leadership camps and other platforms for collectivisation and collective articulation of needs/demands	Networks for Change: Circles within Circles	Gonick *et al.* (2021)
		Girl World	Kelly *et al.* (2006)
		Girls In Risk Reduction Leadership (GIRRL) Programme	Forbes-Genade and van Niekerk (2017)
	Project symposia to build networks	Networks for Change: Girl-led policy making	Moletsane *et al.* (2021)

	School-based girls' clubs to empower girls against SGBV	Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA) Club Project	Manzini-Henwood *et al.* (2015)
	Girl Scouts and other groups	Girl-Powered Nutrition	Dyke *et al.* (2021)
	Adolescent Girl Power Groups and other Girls' spaces	Girl-Powered Nutrition	Dyke *et al.* (2021)
		Enhancing Nutrition Services to Improve Maternal and Child Health in Africa and Asia (ENRICH)	O'Leary *et al.* (2021)
		Kara Kura Girls' Circles	Uma Jalloh *et al.* (2021)
	All women sports (soccer, basketball, etc.) leagues, and other Sports for Gender and Development Initiatives	GenNext	Kaplan *et al.* (2015)
		Because We're Girls	Hayhurst *et al*. (2015)
		Upton Gardens Girls' Centre	Zipp (2017)
(vi) Awareness raising/knowledge building	Curriculum development and delivery through training programmes on (for instance) nutrition, financial education, body image, SRHR and sexuality	Girl-Powered Nutrition	Dyke *et al.* (2021)
		Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme (AGEP) Nutrition	Austrian *et al.* (2018)
			Hewett *et al.* (2021)
		Adolescent Girls' Anaemia Control Programme	Kotecha *et al*. (2009)
		Free to be Me	Neumark-Sztainer *et al.* (2000)
		Girl Empower	Hallman *et al.* (2018)
			Özler *et al.* (2020)

	education, life skills curriculum	GenNext	Kaplan *et al.* (2015)
		Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA) Club Project	Manzini-Henwood *et al*. (2015)
		Girl World	Kelly *et al.* (2006)
		Rapariga Biz Community Based Girl Groups	Temin *et al.* (2021)
		Girls In Risk Reduction Leadership (GIRRL) Programme	Forbes-Genade and van Niekerk (2017)
		Kara Kura Girls' Circles	Uma Jalloh *et al.* (2021)
	Media literacy and advocacy to improve body image and self-esteem	Free to be Me	Neumark-Sztainer *et al.* (2000)
		GIRL Curriculum	Meza and Marttinen (2019)
		Girls Inc.	Chen *et al.* (2010)
	Participatory visual methodology (PVM) to explore what approaches, mechanisms, and structures would make it possible for girls, as knowers and actors to influence social policy and social change	Networks for Change: Girl-Led Policy Making	Moletsane *et al.* (2021)

	Media-based social and behaviour change communication (SBCC)	Girl Effect HPV Malawi	Jones and Kawesa-Newell (2022) Jones (2021)

Annexe 5: Girls' participation in evaluation

Programmes/ projects	Studies	Type of participa-tion	Type of evaluation							
			No information	No involvement	No involvement beyond biological data collection	Girls as survey respondents	Girls FGDs/int-erviews/reflec-tions as data	Girls involved in data collection	Girls involved in deciding what data to collect	Girls involved in data analysis
GenNext	Kaplan *et al.* (2015)	for		X						
Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme (AGEP) Nutrition	Austrian *et al.* (2018)	for					X			
	Hewett *et al.* (2021)									
Adolescent Girls' Anaemia Control Programme	Kotecha *et al*. (2009)	for			X					
	Aguayo *et al*. (2013)									
Zomba Cash Transfer	Özler *et al*. (2010)	for				X				
	Baird *et al*. (2013)									
	Baird *et al*. (2010)									

Programmes/ projects	Studies	Type of participa-tion	Type of evaluation							
			No information	No involvement	No involvement beyond biological data collection	Girls as survey respondents	Girls FGDs/int-erviews/reflec-tions as data	Girls involved in data collection	Girls involved in deciding what data to collect	Girls involved in data analysis
Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG)	Adoho *et al.* (2014)	for					X			
Girls on the Run	DeBate and Bleck (2016)	for				X				
Burkinabé Response to Improve Girls' Chances to Succeed (BRIGHT) programme	Kazianga *et al.* (2013)	for				X				
Girl Effect HPV Malawi	Jones and Kawesa-Newell (2022) Jones (2021)	for				X	X	X		
Upton Gardens Girls' Centre	Zipp (2017)	for				X				

Programmes/ projects	Studies	Type of participa-tion	Type of evaluation							
			No information	No involvement	No involvement beyond biological data collection	Girls as survey respondents	Girls FGDs/int-erviews/reflec-tions as data	Girls involved in data collection	Girls involved in deciding what data to collect	Girls involved in data analysis
Free to be Me	Neumark-Sztainer *et al.* (2000)	for				X			X	
Rapariga Biz Community Based Girl Groups	Temin *et al.* (2021)	with	X							
GIRL Curriculum	Meza and Marttinen (2019)	with					X			
Girl-Powered Nutrition	Dyke *et al.* (2021)	with					X	X		
Girl Empower	Hallman *et al.* (2018) Özler *et al.* (2020)	with				X				
Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA) Club Project	Manzini-Henwood *et al*. (2015)	with				X				
Girl World	Kelly *et al.* (2006)	with					X			

Programmes/ projects	Studies	Type of participa-tion	Type of evaluation							
			No information	No involvement	No involvement beyond biological data collection	Girls as survey respondents	Girls FGDs/int-erviews/reflec-tions as data	Girls involved in data collection	Girls involved in deciding what data to collect	Girls involved in data analysis
Girls In Risk Reduction Leadership (GIRRL) Programme	Forbes-Genade and van Niekerk (2017)	with					X			
Girl Effect Education Ethiopia	Hailu (2019)	with				X				
Because We're Girls	Hayhurst *et al*. (2015)	with						X		X
Girls' Holistic Development (GHD)	Kohli *et al.* (2021)	with				X	X			
Kara Kura Girls' Circles	Uma Jalloh *et al.* (2021) Lister *et al.* (2021)	by				X				
Enhancing Nutrition Services to Improve Maternal and Child Health in Africa and Asia (ENRICH)	O'Leary *et al*. (2021)	by				X	X			

Programmes/ projects	Studies	Type of participa-tion	Type of evaluation							
			No information	No involvement	No involvement beyond biological data collection	Girls as survey respondents	Girls FGDs/int-erviews/reflec-tions as data	Girls involved in data collection	Girls involved in deciding what data to collect	Girls involved in data analysis
Networks for Change: Circles within Circles	Gonick *et al.* (2021)	by					X			
Networks for Change: Digital Dialogue Tool	Yamile (2021)	by					X			
Networks for Change: Social Ills Fighters (SIFs)	Haffejee *et al.* (2020)	by					X			
Girl-Led Advocacy for Policy and Social Change	Gammage *et al.* (2019)	by					X			
Global Resilience Fund	Modungwa *et al.* (2021)	by					X			
Girls Inc.	Chen *et al.* (2010)	by					X	X	X	X
With and For Girls	Fried *et al*. (2019)	by					X	X	X	X
Networks for Change: Girl-Led Policy Making	Moletsane *et al.* (2021)	by							X	X
		TOTALS	**1**	**1**	**1**	**12**	**16**	**5**	**4**	**4**

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