This report was made possible by the generous support of the American people through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of Contract No. GHH-I-00-07-00032-00, USAID | Project SEARCH, Task Order 01. The contents are the responsibility of the Go Girls! Initiative and do not necessarily reflect the views of PEPFAR or the United States Government.

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Addressing the needs of women and girls is a critical step towards halting the spread of HIV/AIDS. From the outset, PEPFAR’s HIV/AIDS programming has reflected this with its focus on: increasing gender equity in HIV/AIDS programs including through maternal and reproductive health; examining male norms and behaviors; reducing violence and coercion; increasing women and girls’ access to income, productive resources, and education; and finally, increasing girls’ and women’s legal rights and protection.

The Go Girls! Initiative (GGI) directly addresses these HIV and gender dynamics through its’ combination of structural and behavioral approaches to reducing girls’ vulnerability to HIV in Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique. CCP is proud to have been part of this initiative that is contributing to both the pool of literature and tools for HIV and gender programming, including a Girls’ Vulnerability Index – the first of its’ kind.

Through this initiative, the GGI team trained and worked closely with local implementing partners in each country to foster an environment of hope and openness regarding girls’ vulnerability while giving communities the knowledge, tools and inspiration to take action to protect themselves, their families and communities. There is no doubt that GGI affected the project communities’ perceptions and actions around girls’ vulnerability in Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique. We hope that the GGI research, lessons and related tools will provide direction and inspiration for other programmers and communities to tackle this critical issue.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to members of the GGI team in our three country sites and in Baltimore, along with the many partners and collaborators who made this initiative possible. I would also like to acknowledge and thank our USAID counterparts, the PEPFAR Gender Technical Working Group and the PEPFAR Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique country teams for their invaluable guidance and support over the last three-and-a-half years.

Go Girls!

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Acknowledgements

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This report was written by Carol Underwood, Joanna Skinner, Hilary Schwandt, Jane Brown, Patricia Poppe, and Rupali Limaye. Valuable contributions were provided by Susan Krenn.

Our primary thanks go to our national country partners who made GGI a reality. In Malawi: Local government of Thyolo district, Thyolo school personnel, Thyolo Active Youth Organization, Concern Universal Microfinance Operations, and Galaxy Media. In Botswana: National and local government, Francistown and surrounding areas school personnel, Botswana Christian AIDS Intervention Program, Youth Health Organization, Makgabaneng, and Education Development Center. In Mozambique: Local government of Zambézia and Nampula provinces and respective District Directors of Education; the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) in Nampula, the Microcredit institutions of Ophavela, Sacos (Nampula) and Banco de Oportunidade (Zambezia); and local CBOs who supported the implementation of GGI: AMORA, Geracao Biz, Solidariedade Zambézia and Niwanane in Nampula and AMME, Liga dos Direitos da Crianças, Geração Biz and NAFEZA in Zambézia.

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### Acronyms and Abbreviations

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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>Adult-Child Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCC</td>
<td>Behavior Change Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOCAIP</td>
<td>Botswana Christian AIDS Intervention Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAC</td>
<td>Community Action Cycle</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBLS</td>
<td>Community-Based Life Skills</td>
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<td>CBOs</td>
<td>Community Based Organizations</td>
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<td>CCP</td>
<td>Center for Communication Programs</td>
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<td>CM</td>
<td>Community Mobilization</td>
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<td>CSF</td>
<td>Cross-Sectoral Fora</td>
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<td>CUMO</td>
<td>Concern Universal Microfinance Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDC</td>
<td>Education Development Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>Economic Strengthening</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
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<td>GGI</td>
<td>Go Girls! Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome</td>
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<td>IGAs</td>
<td>Income Generating Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>JHU</td>
<td>Johns Hopkins University</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCP</td>
<td>Multiple Concurrent Partners</td>
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<td>MSP</td>
<td>Multiple Sexual Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>OVC</td>
<td>Orphans and Vulnerable Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEPFAR</td>
<td>U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBLS</td>
<td>School-Based Life Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>School Personnel</td>
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<td>TAYO</td>
<td>Thyolo Active Youth Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>T/A</td>
<td>Traditional Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>VGI</td>
<td>Vulnerable Girls Index</td>
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<td>YOHO</td>
<td>Youth Health Organization</td>
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Executive Summary

In sub-Saharan Africa, adolescent girls are 3-5 times more likely than adolescent boys to be living with HIV/AIDS. To reduce adolescent girls’ susceptibility to HIV/AIDS in Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique – three countries with high levels of HIV prevalence – the United States Agency for International Development awarded the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEFPAR) Gender Initiative on Girls’ Vulnerability to HIV to the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Center for Communication Programs (CCP), via a three-year contract in September 2007.

The Gender Initiative, also known as the Go Girls! Initiative (GGI) explicitly shifts the focus from the individual-as-risk-taker, which places the onus on the individual, to the systemic and foundational contextual factors associated with the vulnerability of girls/adolescent girls. The social ecological framework that guides GGI views individuals as nested within a system of socio-cultural relationships – families, social networks, communities, nations – each of which potentially shapes individuals’ beliefs and attitudes and constrains or enables individuals’ actions.

Given the multi-level, social ecological perspective, the GGI team developed interventions to span the framework. This resulted in eight interventions:

- **Structural Level**
  - economic strengthening for girls and their families
  - school personnel training to create safer school environments
  - cross-sectoral fora for district-level leaders
- **Community Level**
  - community mobilization for all community members
- **Family Level**
  - adult-child communication for parents and other concerned adults
- **Individual Level**
  - community-based life skills for girls not in school
  - school-based life skills for school-going boys and girls
- **Multi-level**
  - a reality radio program

The Go Girls! Initiative was implemented in four communities in the Thyolo district of Malawi, four communities in the Francistown district of Botswana and eight communities in Mozambique – four in Zambezia Province and four in Nampula Province.

GGI research findings indicate positive trends at the individual, school and community levels.
**HIV Knowledge among Adolescent Girls:** An increase in HIV knowledge was positively associated with program participation in Botswana and Malawi among adolescent girls.

**Adult-Child Communication:** In both Botswana and Malawi, girls whose mothers were adult-child communication participants compared with those who were not were significantly more likely to report that their relationship with their mothers had improved. Across all three countries, girls whose fathers were adult-child communication participants compared with those who were not were significantly more likely to indicate that their relationships had improved over the past year.

**School Environment:** In Botswana and Malawi, girls attending GGI intervention schools were significantly more likely than their counterparts in non-GGI schools to report decreases in teachers asking for sex in exchange for favors.

**Legal Literacy among Adolescents:** In Malawi and Mozambique, there was a positive and significant trend in legal literacy when comparing GGI participants with non-participants.

An important focus of GGI was structural level change – creating safer environments for girls – together with changes at other levels of the social ecological framework. Not surprisingly, therefore, some of the most important research findings reflect changes not only at the individual, but also in the family, school and legal spheres.

We hope the results reported herein will spark greater interest in multi-level programming that will take us well beyond the beginning and into an era in which girls are no longer vulnerable to HIV.
Chapter 1: 
Introduction to the Go Girls! Initiative

The challenge
In sub-Saharan Africa, women and youth have been devastatingly and disproportionately affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic; girls lie at the intersection of this vulnerability. Young people aged 15-24 represent more than half of all incident infections; more than 60% of all young people living with HIV are female. In many countries in the region, women face their greatest risk of infection before age 25 (UNAIDS, 2008).

The evidence
There is widespread agreement that HIV prevention programs must be designed and implemented to reduce young people’s vulnerability to HIV, yet “vulnerability” had not been clearly defined when GGI was first conceptualized. While there have been cases of successful HIV interventions, many programs for adolescents lack gender-specific approaches and materials, ignoring the unique factors that make female and male adolescents vulnerable to HIV (MEASURE Evaluation, 2007). Moreover, these programs often focus on individuals and fail to address the larger social, cultural and economic factors that impede individual-level change even when the will to change is evident (Gupta et al., 2008).

The Go Girls! approach
GGI, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development through the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, was a three-year initiative with a six-month no-cost extension (September 2007 – June 2011) that aimed to reduce adolescent girls’ vulnerability to HIV in Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique. GGI was a unique initiative designed to strengthen gender programming worldwide by developing, implementing and field testing a new, integrated program to reduce adolescent girls’ vulnerability to HIV. The program incorporated new approaches and tailored existing materials to meet the specific needs of adolescent girls in all three countries.

Recognizing that girls’ vulnerability is deeply entrenched within the families, communities and societies in which they live, GGI was informed by a socio-ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Rose, 1985; Figure 1) that views individuals as nested or embedded within a system of socio-cultural relationships – families, social networks, communities, nations – that are influenced by and in turn influence their physical environments (Hawley, 1950; Kincaid, Figueroa, Storey & Underwood, 2007). Each of these contexts potentially influences, directly or indirectly, individuals’ ability or propensity to act.
Figure 1: Social Ecological Framework

Individuals’ choices, decisions and behaviors are theorized to be influenced by not only individual characteristics, but also by group- or community-level attributes, thus implicating the larger social-structural contexts within which they live. This conceptual framework illustrates the fact that resource availability (Mukherjee et al., 2003), community support for girls as well as social support from parents and other community members (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994; Rogers, 1995), and girls’ normative constructs (Fishbein & Azjen, 1975) all influence girls vulnerability to HIV. This approach brings attention to the need for multi-level and multi-faceted interventions to effectively reduce adolescent girls’ vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

A young Mozambican mother learns about girls’ vulnerability.
Chapter 2:
Project Development

Resource mapping
In order to identify potential intervention communities, GGI first carried out a resource mapping exercise in each country. Through this process, GGI developed an inventory of interventions, services and programs that were targeting girls, youth or broader communities, such as: youth friendly health services, education, youth HIV programs, life skills and economic empowerment. Then, GGI additionally identified potential implementation partners for the project. Based on the results of the resource mapping potential intervention districts were selected.

The first phase of the mapping collected relevant information through a desk review, meetings with stakeholders at the national level, review of newspapers and informal conversations with colleagues in various organizations. In general, the desk reviews found that within HIV programs, there were few integrated models focused on girls or youth specifically. Another finding was that economic empowerment programs targeted at youth were particularly lacking, and that micro-credit programs nearly unanimously did not give loans to girls under 18.

By the end of the first phase, potential districts for implementation were identified. To select possible implementation sites, areas were scored in terms of whether they met the following minimum criteria for inclusion:

- HIV prevalence rate between 5% and 25%
- Population size of approximately 5,000 people with about 1000-1500 girls ages 10-17
- Presence of a primary school within five kilometers
- Availability of relevant non-governmental organizations to serve as partners

The first three criteria were necessary for GGI implementation and evaluation as the program required a sufficiently large, but reachable population of girls, living in high HIV prevalence communities and with access to a primary school. The extensive mapping was primarily needed to identify probable partners, avoid duplication of effort and narrow the field of potential districts for GGI implementation.

Phase two of the mapping exercise included key informant interviews, on-site project visits and documentation gathering from local offices. This phase obtained a more comprehensive understanding of the extent and quality of services offered, identified partnership and collaboration options with existing organizations and local stakeholders and selected the most suitable intervention communities within the districts. Based upon the results of the mapping exercise, rural and peri-urban communities were selected in each
country to participate in GGI and meetings were held with relevant government and community leaders to build consensus for the project.

The program setting
GGI was implemented in a total of 16 sites: four communities in the Thyolo district of Malawi, four communities in the Francistown district of Botswana and eight communities in Mozambique’s Zambezia and Nampula provinces. The communities included equal numbers of both peri-urban and rural sites in each country. While the national HIV prevalence differs greatly between Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique - the highest prevalence is found in Botswana and the lowest in Malawi - GGI selected districts in each country with similar levels of high HIV prevalence — between 18 and 23% (BAIS III, 2008; NSO & ORC Macro, 2005; UNAIDS 2008).

Review of the literature
The literature review conducted during the first few months of GGI (Underwood, O’Brien & Skinner, 2008) found that the girls most vulnerable to HIV, or at increased risk of exposure, are those who are orphans (Birdthistle et al., 2008; Eaton, Flisher & Aaro, 2003), recent migrants (Mabala, 2006; Rassjo et al., 2006), not in school or irregularly attend school (Gavin et al., 2006; Gregson et al., 2001; Obasi, et al., 2001), socially isolated (Campbell et al., 2005) and/or live in impoverished conditions (Eaton, Flisher & Aaro, 2003; Hallman, 2005; Machel, 2001).

These characteristics, together with factors such as low levels of HIV knowledge, self-efficacy, alcohol consumption and poor relationships with parents or guardians (Eaton, Flisher & Aaro, 2003) often overlap to place girls at higher risk of being infected with HIV. Based on this research, the working definition of “vulnerable girls” in the context of HIV risk for GGI included those who are orphans, early school leavers, migrants, socially marginalized, live in impoverished conditions and/or who have poor relationships with their parents (Underwood, O’Brien & Skinner, 2008).

While this working definition was useful in theory, it required validation from community members themselves. The literature review revealed a major gap in research that examined girls’ vulnerability to HIV from the viewpoint of the community—an important perspective to inform both theory and practice. As GGI was designed to work across the social ecological framework, it was essential to understand how communities perceived and interpreted
vulnerability; whether they thought girls were particularly vulnerable; which
girls they thought were vulnerable to HIV; and why they thought some girls
were more vulnerable to HIV than others. To fill these gaps, a qualitative
study was conducted.

**Qualitative research: understanding community perspectives on girls’
vulnerability to HIV**

Qualitative research was carried out to examine vulnerability to HIV from the
perspective of the community and to elicit community perceptions regarding
who in their communities are most vulnerable to HIV and why. The study,
which took place in 2008, included 12 focus group discussions (FGD) in each
country with groups of pre-adolescent girls (ages 10-14), adolescent girls
(ages 15-19), adolescent boys (ages 15-19), adult women (ages 20-49), adult
men (ages 20-49) and community key informants.

The research revealed that although individual behaviors, such as
transactional and intergenerational sex, heighten adolescents’ risk, a complex
constellation of socio-economic factors outside of girls’ control was fueling the
epidemic. In particular, communities mapped out the interaction between
individual risk behaviors and poverty, consumerism, peer pressure, adult-child
relationships, sexual violence and alcohol. In all three countries, poverty and
the urgency of meeting basic survival needs was considered a root cause of
girls’ vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, though it was mentioned much more
frequently in Malawi and Mozambique, both lower-income countries, than in
middle-income Botswana, where poverty was discussed more in rural than in
urban areas.

On the legal front, study participants noted that extant laws and regulations
that should help protect adolescent girls, such as those against child
defilement, sexual coercion, rape and under-age alcohol consumption, were
rarely enforced.

At the community level, participants identified a plethora of places where girls
felt unsafe and very few where they felt safe. Girls believed they were at risk
in a multitude of different environments, particularly in bars to which
adolescent girls have easy, uncontrolled access and where they are taken
advantage of when intoxicated. Schools were identified as unsafe spaces
particularly in Malawi and Mozambique, and to a lesser extent in
Botswana. The market, rest
houses, video houses and
unsupervised outdoor locations
were also depicted as unsafe.

Unregulated access to alcohol,
which is readily available to
underage girls across the three
countries, was also identified as
a key factor in girls’ vulnerability.
The relationship between
alcohol and risky sexual
behaviors was spoken of frequently in both sites in Botswana, the semi-urban area of Malawi, and both sites in Mozambique. According to the focus group discussants, alcohol disinhibition was a factor both in girls’ attenuated decision-making capacity when they consumed alcohol and, whether they themselves drank or not, in increasing their risk of sexual harassment and rape by inebriated men.

At the family level, discussants suggested that some parents try to advise their children on sensitive matters, such as transactional sex and concurrent sexual partnerships, while other parents remain reticent when faced with such conversations. Parents believed sex was an inappropriate topic for parent-daughter communication or they sense that they were not sufficiently skilled to carry out such conversations. Additionally, discussants mentioned the existence of girls who were seen as stubborn and therefore unwilling to accept advice.

Although communities identified a wide range of factors that increase girls’ vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, and some expressed a feeling that these factors were difficult to change, many respondents portrayed considerable collective efficacy that action could be taken. GGI catalyzed this energy by working with the whole community in order to reduce girls’ vulnerability to HIV.
Unsafe communities
Girls are at risk in a multitude of different environments, including schools, the market, bars, video houses and rest houses...

There is no safety for girls at the school because they can be forced to have sex with their teachers, who will pass them if they sleep with him. (Malawi, periurban, adolescent boy 15-19 years)

Transactional and intergenerational sex
Regardless of whether it was sought out or coerced, transactional sex was rampant...

If you are in love with a student like yourself, it’s only pencils and pens you expect from him, unlike older men who work – they give you money... cell phones and other things.

Initiation rites
Discussions revealed considerable interaction between initiation rites, sexual behavior and relationships between youth and their parents...

The main thing is that when a boy or girl was in the initiation camp, they have mpingu (evil spirits), which they have until they have sex with someone. Girls are even instructed not to refuse sex with anyone who comes their way first. That way they are free from the mpingu they had in the initiation camp. Boys too are told to do the same.

Adult-child relationships
Respondents expressed concern for the drastic changes in relationships between youth and their parents or other elders...

On this issue I think parents are also to blame, because they fail to advise their children. How can your child go astray while you are in the same house? (Malawi,

Poverty and economic exploitation
Poverty and the urgency of meeting basic survival needs, including food and school fees, was seen as a root cause of girls’ vulnerability...

She has no food to eat. As a result, she will accept. She doesn’t know if such man is HIV positive or negative. She just accepts without thinking of the consequences. (Mozambique, periurban, opinion leader)

Alcohol
Alcohol is easily accessible and puts girls at risk...

At [local bars] they only want money so they don’t discourage children from drinking beer. (Semi-urban, opinion leader, Malawi)
Chapter 3:
Program Implementation

GGI comprised eight core activities that together formed a comprehensive, multi-sectoral program targeting the whole community across the social ecological framework. There were three components aimed to influence the structural/society level: (1) the school personnel (SP) training for teachers and school administrators that aimed to create safer school environments for girls (Gallant & Maticka-Tyndale, 2004), (2) the economic strengthening (ES) component, designed to improve access to financial resources previously unavailable to vulnerable adolescent girls and their families (Botswana and Malawi only) (Jukes & Bundy, 2008; JHU/CCP, 2010) and (3) the cross-sectoral fora (CSF) that brought leaders from various sectors together at the district level to give institutional support to the program. At the community level, community mobilization (CM) gave community members – men and women alike, youth as well as adults – the skills to organize a collective response and motivate them to take action to safeguard adolescent girls (Bandura, 1986). At the family and social network levels, the adult-child communication (ACC) component brought adults together to hone their skills to communicate with youth and increase their knowledge about how they could better nurture and positively influence the girls in their lives (Fuglesang, 1997; Babalola, Tambashe, & Vondrasek, 2005). Finally, at the individual level, the community-based life skills (CBLS) program for girls who were out of school and the school-based life skills (SBLS) for boys and girls who were in school were designed to enhance HIV-related knowledge, build skills and change social norms so as to enhance vulnerable girls’ ability to avoid high-risk situations and behaviors (Gallant & Maticka-Tyndale, 2004).

Social Ecological Framework for the Go Girls! Initiative
The reality radio program was intended to reach people at all levels of the social ecological framework (Botswana and Malawi only). It provided listeners with information about key factors that contribute to girls’ vulnerability, raised awareness about existing laws that are protective of girls but are often not enforced, built girls’ skills to protect themselves and enabled adults to support them, and inspired communities to take collective action to make them safer and more protective for girls. Given the widespread reports (Tembon & Fort, 2008; Underwood et al., 2010) that governments and communities often fail to enforce laws and regulations that would protect girls from abuse, information about laws, regulations and enforcement were woven into every GGI component.

GGI’s comprehensive approach ensured that reducing HIV vulnerability among girls was linked directly to the multi-level factors that put them at risk. The approach also held the whole community accountable, to ensure a safe and supportive environment in which girls can thrive.

Monitoring and evaluation
In 2009, GGI conducted a baseline cross-sectional sample survey in the intervention communities in all three countries to establish benchmark indicators. The survey was designed to gain a better understanding of the communities. In 2010 an endline survey was conducted primarily as part of a comprehensive process evaluation, but went beyond a standard process evaluation in that it included selected outcome measures.

For both surveys, separate samples were drawn for adults and adolescent girls in the 16 intervention communities. The research team used a quasi-experimental, separate-sample baseline and endline design.

Process evaluation data were collected throughout the program implementation period (September 2009 – September 2010) in all 16 sites. The facilitators and participants filled out monitoring forms for the process evaluation. The forms assessed fidelity and whether the program was implemented according to plan, dose delivered or the number of sessions held per component, dose received or the number of participants per session or component and program satisfaction. Key informant interviews and group discussions were conducted with program staff, community leaders and program participants to learn how the different contexts influenced implementation, to gauge communities’ and individuals’ reception of the program and to understand barriers to as well as opportunities for participant recruitment.

The Go Girls! toolkit
To share GGI’s results globally, a toolkit of key materials— including a comprehensive set of program materials and an innovative new index for measuring girls’ vulnerability – is available to assist program managers, implementers and researchers working in the areas of HIV, gender, or youth programming. See Annex One for more details on the Toolkit.
Go Schools!
Creating a safe and supportive environment for girls at school

Activity overview
In GGI’s formative research, many community members identified schools as an unsafe place for girls. In particular, older adolescent girls felt unsafe in schools due to teachers using their power to demand sex. In response, GGI developed and implemented an innovative training program for teachers and school administrators to foster a safe learning environment for adolescent girls.

The training helped school personnel to understand girls’ vulnerability to HIV and the relationship between girls’ vulnerability to HIV, school and education. The goal of the training was to promote gender equitable teaching practices and address school environments and school personnel behaviors that placed girls at risk of HIV exposure. Through the program, school personnel came to recognize and strengthen their roles as protectors of vulnerable girls and agents of change in their schools. By promoting gender equitable teaching practices, addressing harmful school practices and barriers that put girls at risk of HIV, school personnel gained the skills to create a safe learning environment for all pupils.

“I learnt that it is the responsibility of the teacher, the community and all stakeholders to protect the girl child and all vulnerable children in our society.”
— Go Schools! participant

The program addressed issues such as gender in the classroom, education and HIV, school violence and power, coercion and consent. At the end of the program, participants worked together to design a school-based action plan to reduce girls’ vulnerability to HIV. Follow-up meetings were held quarterly with participants to review progress made.

Prior to implementing the program, GGI met with education system authorities, school heads and teachers at the provincial, district and local levels to develop consensus about the aims and objectives of the program. The training workshops were then implemented during school breaks, usually during scheduled training days, so that no conflict arose with student supervision or learning.
Tools

*Go Schools! Creating a safe and supportive environment for girls at school: A training manual for school personnel* was developed based on findings from GGI’s literature review and formative research. The manual focused on the factors relating to schools as places of safety or vulnerability for adolescent girls, such as gender norms, teacher-student relationships and school violence. The sessions in the manual involved participatory teaching methods such as group discussion, brainstorming, role play, small group work, educational games, drama, case studies, storytelling and the use of adult education techniques. Participants worked collaboratively to develop concrete action plans that they could implement at their respective schools to foster safe school environments for girls.

GGI in Action

The teachers trained by GGI from a primary school in Malawi returned to their communities and put in place the School Action Plan they had developed at the training. One item in the School Action Plan was to conduct retreats with girl learners to encourage their sustained attendance and participation in school through exposure to female role models. At one particular retreat the school invited successful women to come speak to the students and show the girl learners the potential result of staying in school, working hard at your studies, and obtaining an education. The picture below shows a policewoman speaking to students in Malawi about her experiences as a young student, like them, and the steps she took to achieve her current position in the police force.
Activity overview
Given the widespread recognition in the formative research that poverty was driving many risky behaviors among adolescent girls (especially transactional sex), many community members noted the need to strengthen girls’ economic opportunities, such as through loan programs, small business development and employment and training programs—opportunities that would leave the girls less susceptible to men's advances.

GDI hired a local economic expert in each country to conduct a situational analysis to identify the economic activities available to adolescent girls in the intervention areas, identify the strongest opportunities, make recommendations on the best approach and identify potential partners for implementation. Six main categories of economic empowerment programs were identified: social transfer, agricultural production-enhancement, public works, technical skills enhancement programs, community-based savings and credit associations and externally sourced microcredit finance programs.

The situational analysis quickly found, in all three countries, a paucity of income-generating programs for minors. Governments prefer youth attend school, additionally, financial capital programs are restricted to adults—who are able to consent on their own behalf and have access to collateral. Given this finding, GDI targeted families of vulnerable girls with the idea that the girls would benefit indirectly.

GDI's economic empowerment approach utilized partnering with local income-generation, microcredit or training programs to create linkages between vulnerable girls and their families.

GDI utilized its other program components - community mobilization, adult-child communication and community-based life skills - to identify vulnerable girls and their families, publicize the eligibility requirements and availability of intervention programs and provide appropriate referrals and linkages. Specific GDI economic strengthening activities included creating savings and credit groups, linking vulnerable girls with existing government goods transfer programs and informing community members about available government loan programs.
Cross-sectoral fora: bringing it all together

Activity overview
The aim of the cross-sectoral fora was to build and sustain support for GGI among key stakeholders and to foster cross-collaboration across sectors that do not traditionally work together, including ministries or departments of education, health, HIV/AIDS, gender and youth, as well as province and district level authorities. The Fora was a continuation of the activities already undertaken by GGI in building support for the program among stakeholders. However, while previous meetings may have taken place separately with stakeholders from different sectors, the Fora brought all those involved together.

The Fora, held every three months during implementation of activities, provided an opportunity for GGI to report on activities and enlist support, but more importantly, allowed for sharing of experiences, encouraged cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches, and fostered a sense of ownership, involvement and commitment to GGI’s vision of using multi-sectoral strategies to reduce girls’ vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. They also increased the capacity of leaders and administrators to understand and replicate cross-sectoral approaches to preventing HIV/AIDS and support sustainability of the program.

Each meeting initially included one or two representatives, usually from the district level, from relevant government ministries, including social welfare and women’s affairs, youth, health, education, National AIDS Council, the police and GGI’s staff and NGO/CBO partners.

“At the next meeting we would like to hear from the teachers, community leaders, community members and girls about their personal experiences with GGI in the community.”

Cross-Sectoral Fora participant

As this cross-sectoral fora district administrator expressed at an early meeting, the attendees were interested in hearing about GGI directly from the project beneficiaries. Efforts were made in all three countries to respond to this common request. The participation of community representatives was found to be particularly important – as they shared the activities, lessons learned, success and challenges with the wider group. The Fora also provided opportunities to learn from the other GGI communities, provide feedback and identify potential solutions to shared challenges.
Go Communities!
Community mobilization to address and reduce girls’ vulnerability to HIV

Activity overview
Community mobilization capitalized upon the collective capacity of communities by mobilizing them to take action to reduce girls’ vulnerability to HIV. Community mobilization is the process of bringing community members together to share a vision, promote dialogue and take actions to address problems affecting the entire community.

The intervention component is based on the following key ideas:
- Every individual has the capacity to improve his/her health better
- Communities know best how to solve their problems - local solutions will be lasting ones and will not depend on help coming from the outside
- Coming together as a community helps to solve bigger problems than an individual is able to overcome alone
- Participation from all parts of the community is very important: men and women, youth and grandparents
- Everyone’s opinion is important
- HIV/AIDS affects everyone so prevention needs to involve everyone
- When all members of the community are thriving, the entire community will thrive, but when some members are vulnerable, it weakens the entire community

GGI identified local NGO partners and trained their staff as “Mobilizers”. Mobilizers established, as well as strengthened, good relationships with communities; created awareness of and interest in the issue of girls’ vulnerability to HIV; guided and facilitated the process of community mobilization; encouraged the community to value internal assets and resources; and set realistic expectations.

To guide the process, community mobilization used the Community Action Cycle (CAC) - a set

Program Component

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

Main objectives
- Increase community efficacy to identify causes of girls’ vulnerability and implement actions to protect girls

Intended audience
- Formal and informal community leaders
- Community members
- Community-based organizations

Go Girls! tools
- Go Communities! A Manual for Mobilizing Communities to Take Action to Reduce Girls’ Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS
- Go Communities! Field Guide for Mobilizers
- Visual Briefs

Implementation strategy
- Identify and train Mobilizers from partnering NGOs and CBOs to support the CM process
- Establish Community Facilitating Groups and build their capacity to lead the community through the CAC
- Ensure full engagement of community members including adult men and women, and girls and boys in exploring the causes of girls’ vulnerability and set priorities for action
- Use the Visual Briefs to facilitate the CM process and ensure understanding of HIV/AIDS and girls’ vulnerability issues
of stages and steps that community members can follow to take action in an organized way. Through this process, communities not only work together to address girls’ vulnerability, but they also develop valuable mobilizing skills, take responsibility for the process and outcomes and contribute to sustainable change over time, thereby improving the health and wellbeing of their community members, especially that of girls.

Tools
The Go Communities! A Manual for Mobilizing Communities to Take Action to Reduce Girls’ Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS aimed to strengthen the skills of Mobilizers (implementing NGO partners) to inspire and empower communities to reduce girls’ vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. It provides an overview of the various components of GGI, step-by-step instructions on how to use the manual, information about useful tools to use during the mobilization process and monitoring tools to track activities over time.

The Go Communities! Field Guide for Mobilizers was developed to support Community Facilitation Groups (community members) in working with their communities through the mobilization process. It is a simpler version of the above manual organized around the six stages of the CAC providing easy to follow step-by-step instructions for each stage of mobilization process.
A collection of Visual Briefs on Girls’ Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and a How To Use Visual Briefs Booklet were also produced to facilitate learning about girls’ vulnerability. The briefs are used to stimulate conversations with community members throughout the community mobilization process. The visual brief flipchart covers a wide range of topics that help communities reflect upon factors that put girls at risk and the steps they can take to make the environment safer for girls.

GGI in Action

In one Go Girls! intervention community in Malawi, the community mobilization Facilitating Group worked with the local, traditional leadership to address the CAC prioritized issue of early marriage in the community. After examining the problem and possible solutions together, the local leadership decided to establish local by-laws to protect young girls from early marriage. They announced to their community that any parents who marry their daughter before she reaches the age of 18 will have to pay a fine of 3 chickens and 2 goats. The leadership also went so far as to publicize their action at GGI CSF meetings, and in other communities in hopes the other communities would also implement by-laws to protect vulnerable girls from all the risks entailed in early marriage.
Go Families!
Building adults' skills to communicate with young people

Activity overview
GGI worked with parents and caregivers of girls and boys ages 10 – 17 to help them strengthen their relationships with the young people in their lives. This component also focused on increasing parent and caregiver knowledge of adolescent HIV vulnerability and included building skills to assist adults with their communication with young people about difficult topics such as sexuality and HIV/AIDS. The Go Families! program was developed with the full and equal participation of male and female community members in mind because guiding and supporting young people into happy and healthy adulthood requires both caring men and women in their lives.

The program prepared parents, caregivers and other concerned adults to better communicate with the young people in their lives about the unique needs, concerns and interests of adolescents. Puberty, sexuality, HIV/STI prevention and violence are areas of concern for most, if not all, adolescents. These topics were addressed directly in several of the sessions. The program also aimed to help adults engage in nurturing, supportive relationships with young people by building communication, role-modeling and relationship skills as well as by increasing HIV, puberty and sexuality knowledge. In addition, it helped adults better deal with conflicts that often arise between traditional expectations and modern influences. Participants in the program had many opportunities to apply their recently acquired knowledge and skills, both in and out of the training sessions.

“As parents we were relaxed, even if a child brings something home we didn’t ask anything, we would just receive the thing and eat. With the coming of Go Girls! we have learned that we should ask the girls where they got the thing from. Now girls don’t dare bring anything home because they know the parents will ask them where they got the item.”

GGI Adult-Child Communication Participant

During the formative research phase, GGI found that young people said they want to talk more with adults and want and need their attention, support and advice, but felt it was lacking. Adults said that they were frustrated because
young people did not listen to them. Additionally, adults believed they were ill-equipped to talk effectively with young people and expressed a strong desire to overcome this challenge. As a consequence, the response of communities to this component of GGI was overwhelming, signaling the high demand from adults for this type of program.

**GGI in Action**

Adults who participated in the adult-child communication training groups in Mozambique shared their newfound understanding that their own attitudes and behaviors shape those of children. They also have a new appreciation for the power of respect. By making a conscious effort to show children respect, adults lay the foundation for open and trusting communications with children about HIV risk and prevention.

In Botswana, a female ACC participant said, “This program has helped me build a better relationship with my children. I used to be very strict with my children – I would beat them or yell at them. I attended the Go Girls! Adult-Child Communication program and now I can sit with them and tell them that I love them. I can give them advice without beating them or yelling at them.”

In Malawi, men are often reluctant to talk with their adolescent daughters because such communication is suspected of being sexually motivated. The fear of this kind of suspicion can lead fathers to withdraw from their daughters. Dickson is a father of two children, a boy and a girl. After participating in the Go Girls! Adult-Child Communication sessions, he said, “At first, it was difficult for me to talk to my daughter – I could only discuss sensitive issues with my son. Now, I am able to talk freely with my daughter, and my wife is now able to talk to my son. All of this is possible because of GGI.”
Tools

*Go Families! Building Adult’s Skills to Communicate with Young People* is an 11-unit interactive curriculum that focused on building core communication skills, getting comfortable with talking about difficult subjects such as sexuality and puberty with youth and practicing skills in a supportive environment. It used highly participatory methods and encouraged participants to practice new skills in a safe and supportive setting through role-play before trying them at home. The GGI Visual Briefs on Girls’ Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS was also used in the Go Families! sessions as a tool to reinforce key messages in the curriculum.
Activity overview
To address individual level knowledge and skills, GGI developed a life skills program for girls in and out of school. The school-based program was designed for both boys and girls so that it could be taught in existing classroom settings. The community-based program targeted out-of-school girls, paying particular attention to the needs of an older age group – girls aged 14-17 – who are more likely to be out of school.

Both life skills curricula were designed to address the specific factors that make girls vulnerable to HIV, such as decision-making skills, goal setting, tips on how to stay in school or return to school, how to communicate with adults, physical and emotional changes of puberty, conception and contraception and STI/HIV basics. The curricula also included difficult topics such as gender-based violence and transactional sex, with a sensitive approach that addressed the underlying factors of these behaviors (i.e., gender norms and the value of money and gifts). Although the sessions were designed to build and reinforce skills as participants proceeded through the program, they could also be used individually to complement existing life skills curricula.

School-based program
In school, the Go Students! curricula was taught within existing life skills classes. In instances where this was not possible, after-school clubs were formed to provide a safe space for girls to come together and participate in the program. Sessions were held with teachers in advance of using the curricula to strengthen their skills in participatory learning and to further sensitize them to the factors that render girls vulnerable to HIV.
Community-based program
In the community, community-based life skills were targeted toward out-of-school girls, or girls with other vulnerability attributes. Facilitators from the implementing partner NGOs led the sessions with the girls with the aim of equipping girls with the knowledge and skills to protect themselves from HIV infection.

“I always wanted to be a nurse but people in the community would laugh at me. … The GGI project has helped me believe that I will be able to achieve my goals in life.”

Go Girls! life skills participant

GGI in Action
Flora, a student in Standard 5 in Mozambique, participated in the Go Students! school-based life skills sessions at her school. Flora reported she did not have a boyfriend and says it’s too early for her to be involved in such relationships, just as Go Girls! recommended. Thanks to her interaction with Go Girls!, she learned better ways of saying no and resisting men who try to seduce her. She talked openly about a challenging situation where she clearly used her newfound skills to say no to advances from an older man. A male teacher at the school once approached Flora during the lunch period and told her he wanted to ‘clean his hands’ after eating by touching her breasts. In response, Flora covered herself and told him no firmly. The teacher was insulted but he stopped bothering Flora after she refused his advances.
Tools
Two manuals were developed for the life skills program: Go Girls! Community-Based Life Skills for Girls: A Manual for Facilitators and Go Students! School-Based Life Skills for Girls and Boys: A Manual for Teachers. The manuals covered similar topics although each manual was adapted to the needs of each age group and circumstances. Highly participatory teaching methods were used, including group discussion, brainstorming, role play, small group work, educational games, drama, case studies and storytelling. Participants also had many opportunities to practice using new skills, such as communication and decision-making.

The GGI Visual Briefs on Girls’ Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS was also used in the school- and community-based groups as a tool to reinforce the key messages in the curriculum using a low-literate approach.
Reality radio: improving community support for vulnerable girls

Activity overview
Radio is the most widespread and popular tool of communication in southern Africa. As such it has the ability to communicate consistent and correct information to large audiences and the power to stimulate dialogue and motivate people to take action. With this in mind, GGI produced an innovative “reality radio” program that provided listeners with information about key factors that contribute to girls’ vulnerability; raised awareness around existing laws that are protective of girls but often go unenforced; built skills of girls to protect themselves and of adults to support them; and, inspired community members to take collective action to make communities safer and more protective for girls. It also provided a space for girls’ voices – their hopes, dreams, concerns, challenges and more – to be heard and for young girls and women’s lives to be celebrated.

Each episode included true stories from real people. This might include an interview with a local community member or a testimony from a young girl about her life. Interviews were also conducted with local experts and activists working to improve girls’ lives. These stories and interviews highlighted the real challenges faced by girls, their families and communities and the rewards that result from working together to find solutions to those challenges. The program included music, poems, opinions of people in the community and the voice of a host who brought all the elements together.

The content of the program was developed during a regional radio design workshop and included topics such as building a strong, safe, supportive community, the role of traditional practices in girls’ vulnerability, modern lifestyle pressures that girls face, the importance of keeping girls in school, the role guardians play in protecting girls, peer pressure for girls to have sex and specific high-risk
behaviors such as transactional and intergeneration sex. Each episode provided a call to action to highlight what community members could do to reduce girls’ vulnerability.

The audience for the program was primarily “extended families” – in the broadest sense of the word. Family members included mothers and fathers, but also guardians, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters and young girls themselves. The program was presented in such a way that it had relevance for the entire “family” while ensuring that the voices of young girls played a central role throughout each episode.

Listening groups were formed in each community to bring people together to further discuss the issues raised in each program and what collective action could address them. Each group was led by a trained facilitator who guided the discussion and ensured everyone had a chance to participate.

“…we are hearing issues that are happening and at the same time we are learning what we can do about them.”

*Radio Listening Group participant*

**Tools**

A design document that was relevant to all three countries was developed by representatives from each country during a participatory workshop. The document provided the building blocks for producing a reality based radio program that focused on the real life experiences of girls, their families and communities as a means to engage listeners to take action. It covered both the structure and content of the program (including issues to be covered in each program), suggested profiles of people to be interviewed and recommended timing for each segment of the radio program. Follow-up meetings with GGI staff, NGOs implementing the program and radio producers were held in each country to refine the regional design document based on the local context.

A listening guide was developed to help listeners discuss the topics raised in the program, how they apply to their own families and communities and what they can do together to reduce girls’ vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and improve the quality of life for everyone in their communities. The guide included a summary of each episode, suggested questions to stimulate discussion and reminders of “calls to action” that...
Chapter 4: Program Results

Reports from the field: Botswana

Program highlight
In Botswana, Go Families! proved to be one of the most successful aspects of GGI. Problems with adult-child communication were highlighted by community members during formative research and their desire for change in this area was clearly seen in the overwhelming response to participate in the Go Families! training program. In response to the demand for this program component, GGI Botswana trained 16 ACC groups instead of the intended 12.

Challenges
The multi-level approach behind GGI necessitates working at the community level, with the whole community. However, Botswana’s centralized style of government meant that it was necessary to work with national-level partners rather than those closer to the communities. Although partnerships were strong,
challenges were faced in garnering district- and community-level involvement in a timely manner, such as participation of teachers in the Go Schools! training workshops. In addition, Botswana does not have a long history of active civil society engagement, so to respond to this, additional emphasis was placed on building community mobilization skills of the local NGO and the Facilitating Groups.

**Lessons learned**

**Engaging with Traditional Leadership:** GGI recognized the importance of first entering communities via traditional leadership, met with formal and informal leaders in each community to introduce them to the comprehensive program and advocated for their support prior to program introduction and implementation. This approach proved to be very beneficial in gaining access to communities and community members, successfully introducing the program and sustaining support for the project throughout the life of the project. Indeed, traditional leaders not only introduced GGI to the broader community – which is common in community-based interventions – but continued to propose and take part in actions aimed to create a safer environment for young people throughout the project lifespan.

**Community-Based Life Skills:** Recruiting out-of-school girls for community-based life skills in Botswana was challenging. The difficulty was exacerbated by the fact that two different partner NGOs were implementing the Initiative’s activities. One NGO was mainly responsible for community mobilization and adult-child communication, and the other was responsible for community-based life skills. Through its experience in Malawi, GGI learned that it is easier to recruit the most vulnerable girls if the same implementing partner is working on all
components of the program as partners are able to build stronger, more trusting relationships with community leaders and members who are then able to assist in the identification and recruitment of the most vulnerable.

**Capacity Building:** The GGI radio program used a reality approach, which was a new innovation for the partner producing the program. While a brief training was initially conducted, it was later realized that more in-depth skills building was necessary. This caused delays, as several rounds of scripts had to be drafted before they were approved.

**Intervention communities:**
Tonota (Molebatsi ward), Tsamaya (whole village) Francistown (Bluetown and Kgaphamadi)

**Implementing partners:**
Botswana Christian AIDS Implementation Program (BOCAIP), Youth Health Organization (YOHO), Makgabaneng and Education Development Center (EDC)

**Research partners:**
 iTalk (Formative), Ken Bainame (Baseline), SunCapital (Endline)
Reports from the field: Malawi

Program highlight
In Malawi, an overwhelming 4,111 community members participated in the community mobilization process, compared to a target of 400. With just a small amount of support and capacity-building, community members demonstrated how they are ready and willing to make real, lasting change in their communities. Malawians’ enthusiastic adoption of the community mobilization process lead to a number of successful interventions to improve the lives of adolescent girls.

Tackling early marriage in Malawi

One factor that contributes to girls’ HIV vulnerability in Malawi is early marriage, which robs young girls of the opportunity to attend school and gain the skills and capacity to avoid HIV infection.

As a young girl, Chimwemwe* was abandoned by her mother and stepfather. Although she had an older sister to look after her, life was hard, and there was not enough money for Chimwemwe to continue in school. These difficult circumstances compelled Chimwemwe to marry when she was only 15. However, she soon realized that marriage was not improving her situation as she had hoped. A year after her marriage, Go Girls! arrived in Chimwemwe’s village. The Facilitating Group recognized the detrimental effects of early marriage on girls and advocated delaying marriage as a strategy for maintaining girls’ health and encouraging their educational pursuits. Understanding Chimwemwe’s vulnerability, the team convened a meeting of all interested parties at the village headman’s house to discuss her situation and officially dissolve the marriage. Since then, Chimwemwe has returned to school.

When asked if her life has improved, she affirmed that it is better now. “I feel good about being back in school. If I had the opportunity to advise other girls, I would tell them not to marry early but to continue schooling because school is good. I am working hard at school every day so that I may have a brighter future.”

* Name changed
Challenges

The situation of married adolescent girls in Malawi also posed a challenge for the community-based life skills program. Girls who were married had to obtain permission from their husbands and in-laws to attend the sessions; this permission was rarely granted. In Malawi, it is not considered appropriate for a girl who has given birth, no matter how young she might be, to associate with her age-mates any longer. Given this context, GGI made a midterm correction by including husbands in the recruitment process, going door-to-door to talk to girls and their families and including both in-school and out-of-school girls in the same group.

Another challenge pertained to the economic strengthening activity. Given that girls could not engage directly in activities to gain finances, GGI looked for other partners working on micro-credit that would be willing to expand their reach to GGI intervention communities. After finally identifying the right group, challenges arose because community members were expecting to receive cash directly (as opposed to pulling their funds together) and did not realize at first that if they did receive loans, they were required to pay them back.
Lessons learned

Greater GGI Participation in Malawi: In Malawi there were many community members who participated in GGI activities – more so than in Botswana and Mozambique. The reasons for higher participation in Malawi could be due to a number of factors. One potential factor was the fact that one partner NGO implemented most of the project components (CM, ACC, CBLS) and supported the implementation of others (ES and radio) in all intervention communities. Working with one main implementing partner has its advantages (e.g., the partner is saturated with the repetitive program messages through each program component and training; the community links each program component to the other as the facilitators of the components are consistent; facilitates recruitment for project activities; fosters the development of trusting relationships with the community leaders and community members through consistent interaction). It was also easier for GGI (headquarters and Malawi staff) to communicate with, and receive communication from, one main partner as opposed to many partners with various implementation roles. Additionally, intervention communities in Malawi had a longer GGI implementation period than the other two countries, as activities started in Malawi before they did in the other two countries. A factor that potentially assisted earlier GGI implementation in Malawi was that all Malawians in the GGI intervention area spoke a common language, Chichewa. Not only did the community members all speak a common language but many of them could read Chichewa as well since it is taught in primary schools. The ability to communicate verbally and through written communication in one language facilitated the earlier implementation in Malawi and ease of communication between the community members and GGI staff throughout the program implementation period.

Community Radio: In Malawi, unlike Botswana, the reality radio program was aired through community radio stations. In Botswana only national radio stations were available – which were more expensive and would have had limited meaning to Batswana not living in the GGI intervention communities. The ability to broadcast the reality radio program on community radio stations in Malawi allowed GGI to reach many community members with the GGI message. While it was beneficial to broadcast on local radio stations – GGI also learned that community radio stations cover small areas so it is necessary to broadcast the program on multiple radio stations in order to reach the entire target population with the broadcasts.

| Intervention communities: |
| Thyolo District: T/A Bvumbwe, T/A Thomas, T/A Mchiramwera, and T/A Kapichi |

| Implementing partners: |
| Thyolo Active Youth Organization (TAYO), Galaxy Media, Concern Universal Microfinance Operations (CUMO) |

| Research partners: |
| George Mandere and Benjamin Kaneka (Formative), J&F Research (Baseline/Endline) |
Reports from the field: Mozambique

Program highlight
In Mozambique, Go Schools! and Go Students! proved to be two of the most successful and highly valued GGI components. GGI exceeded its target of 48 school staff and teachers trained, 400 students reached, and 20 school based life skills sessions delivered, by training 95 school staff and teachers and delivering 271 SBLS sessions to 536 students. District Education authorities and school personnel were highly receptive to the program, as previous country HIV/AIDS SBLS efforts failed to reach all provinces. The high level of participation achieved is indicative of the felt need by the school system to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. As expressed by many school authorities and teachers, GGI was a unique opportunity to strengthen their role as protectors of vulnerable girls and agents of change in their schools. Likewise, Go Families! assisted 550 parents, guardians and initiation counselors (surpassing the target of 480) to gain the communication skills needed to discuss sensitive issues of sexuality and HIV/AIDS prevention with young people.

Participation in Go Girls! Mozambique

- 57% of the girls and 61% of adults interviewed in the endline survey had heard of GGI (these rates are very impressive considering that only community-based activities (no mass media) were conducted in Mozambique).
- 759 community members participated in the community mobilization.
- 555 adults participated in the ACC program.
- 231 girls aged 12-17 participated in CBLS
  - 85% of the participants were currently not in school.
  - 218 OVCs participated in the program.
- 95 school administrators and teachers were involved in Go Schools!
- 536 students aged 10-17 participated in the GGI SBLS program.
- 132 people participated in cross-sectoral fora.
- 20 girls and 12 community mobilization Facilitating Group members (adults) formed two loan groups. They all received training and started small businesses selling food, clothing and hygiene products.

Challenges
**Local CBO Capacity:** Local implementing partners required greater monitoring and mentoring than expected. GGI’s participatory approach and bottom-up education methodologies were new to many of the CBO’s members, and consequently, it took them longer to absorb, practice and master the skills. Likewise, GGI’s “reality radio” format proved that the set of skills needed to produce the radio programs required that the radio producers to receive on-going
training. Identifying testimonies and amplifying the voices of vulnerable girls also proved to be challenging for the local radio firm. Due to these challenges, the radio program was dropped in Mozambique.

**Economic Strengthening:** Another important challenge was the implementation of the economic strengthening component, not because of lack of interested partners in the field of microcredit, but due to internal community distrust and disbelief that funding opportunities were given to girls and not to adults. Poverty and lack of overall opportunities created tensions among community members. Leaders acted as mediators and signatories of the small loans given to girls.

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**Community Rallies Support for a Young Mother**

Dulce is a 13-year-old girl who lives in Nicoadala District, Mozambique. She comes from a poor family and recently gave birth to her first child. During Dulce’s pregnancy, her mother, Chica, was shocked to learn the baby’s father was married, in his late twenties, and owned a small business in their village. Chica reported the man to the police, who found him guilty of failing to provide financial compensation to Dulce and her family after victimizing the young girl. The man subsequently promised to support the baby. However, he moved away from Nicoadala shortly thereafter and did not live up to his word. Fortunately, Dulce and her family were able to receive help from the GGI community mobilization Facilitating Group. When the Facilitating Group learned of Dulce’s case, it acted swiftly to take the case to the provincial capital so the baby’s father could be prosecuted. It also notified the Provincial Department of Women and Social Action, a government agency that could offer Dulce financial support.

Dulce also benefited from her participation in community-based life skills. It enhanced her knowledge, taught her critical skills and built her self-efficacy – the better to avoid situations that hold the risk of HIV infection.

Dulce, who is HIV negative, understands the value of her new skills. She said that, before Go Girls!, her girlfriends encouraged her to start sexual relationships, and there was no communication about sexuality at home. Only after attending Go Girls! training did she understand that sexual relationships pose the risks of both pregnancy and HIV.
Lessons learned

**GGI responded to a felt need for establishing safe schools and offering HIV/AIDS life skills to students:** The schools’ response in Mozambique exceeded all expectations. In most of the participating schools, principals called all teachers (not only those from 5th to 7th grades) to participate in the GGI training events. Teachers were open to including SBLS sessions in the ongoing curriculum and across subject matters, and even organized special sessions on Fridays when the schools are usually closed. Moreover, the GGI project was discussed at the ZIP level (Zona de Influencia Pedagógica) which gathers 5-6 schools at the sub-district level. Project staff offered a number of presentations on the GGI vision, approaches and tools and worked with GGI schools to train ZIP members and share the results achieved.

**Engage initiation counselors to identify the most vulnerable girls:** GGI engaged initiation counselors from project inception and encouraged their participation in a number of GGI activities. Initiation counselors soon became active champions and supporters of vulnerable girls, assuring their participation in the CBLS sessions. The successful identification of vulnerable girls made it possible to target out-of-school girls; 85% of CBLS participants were girls who were currently not in school.

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Chapter 5: Overall Research Findings on Key Variables of Interest

The main research findings from the baseline and endline surveys are presented below to demonstrate the impact of the constellation of GGI programs on individual girls, adults and the broader community in which GGI was implemented.

**HIV Knowledge among Adolescents:** In multivariate logistic regression analysis, controlling for age, religion, vulnerability and residence, a program effect is observed in Botswana (OR=3.0, p ≤ 0.01) and Malawi (OR=1.5, p ≤ 0.05) on HIV knowledge when compared to the reference, baseline (data not shown). There is an association between program participation and HIV knowledge in Mozambique in the bivariate analysis, but this effect is described by other factors in the multivariate regression.

**Adult-Child Communication:** A question in the adolescent girls endline survey asked respondents if their mothers (or closest female adult) and fathers (or closest male adult) participated in the GGI ACC program. They were also asked about changes in their relationships with their parents (closest adult). As shown in Graph 1, in both Botswana and Malawi girls whose mothers were ACC participants were significantly more likely than girls whose mothers were not ACC participants to report that their relationships with their mothers had improved. Across all three countries, girls whose fathers participated in ACC compared with those who did not were significantly more likely to indicate that father-daughter relationships had improved over the past year (data not shown).

Graph 1. Change in relationship with mother from the girls' perspective at endline by mother's ACC participation

![Graph 1. Change in relationship with mother from the girls' perspective at endline by mother's ACC participation](image)

- Improved
- Stayed the same
- Worsened

* p≤0.10;
** p≤0.05;
*** p≤0.01;
**** p≤0.001
School Environment: With regard to school personnel training, the responses of girls who attended schools where GGI school personnel training was implemented were compared with those that attended schools where it was not. As shown in Graph 2, girls in the GGI schools compared to non-GGI schools in both Botswana and Malawi were significantly more likely to report a decrease in teachers asking for sex in exchange for favors.

Legal Literacy among Adolescents: Responses to questions about three laws – concerning rape, sex with minors and restrictions of alcohol sales to minors – constituted the basis for the legal literacy score. In Botswana, there was a positive and significant trend over time. In Malawi, program effects were significant, with non-participants less likely than participants to score high. Finally, in Mozambique, the data reflect highly significant time and program effects (see Graph 3).
**Conclusions**

An important focus of GGI was structural level change – creating safer environments for girls – together with changes at other levels of the social ecological framework. Not surprisingly, therefore, some of the most important research findings reflect changes at extra-individual levels.

The increase in HIV knowledge over time in most of the intervention communities despite not focusing solely on enhancing individual-level knowledge is an interesting outcome as it demonstrates that programs with a broader, structural focus can still have an impact on individual-level knowledge about HIV prevention. Likewise, the findings at the family and school levels were also important outcomes linked to GGI participation.

The findings of both time and program effects on knowledge of laws and the conviction that they are enforced are, perhaps, the most striking of the research results. While no single GGI activity was devoted exclusively to the issue of laws and their enforcement, it was a key theme that was woven into every GGI component.

Yet, much remains to be done. The findings indicate that program-associated changes are incremental, uneven across countries and population groups and do not always hold up after controlling for socioeconomic and vulnerability characteristics. At the same time, the research findings do provide a wealth of recommendations, which are presented in the next section.
Chapter 6:
Further Considerations and Recommendations

Further Considerations

Replicability
GGI defines replicability as reproducing the set of approaches and tools that were developed and tested in specific sites and countries.

Although GGI was implemented in three different countries each with their own unique context and challenges, the overall GGI approach and the tools themselves proved appropriate in each country. This points to the fact that: a) girls’ vulnerability to HIV in this setting is very similar across countries despite some differences; b) tools for addressing girls’ vulnerability developed regionally are appropriate for diverse settings; c) replicability in other countries/settings should be relatively easy with minimal adaptation. This holds true even for the radio program – although smaller meetings were held in each country to refine the radio design document, the changes made were minimal and mostly centered on identifying appropriate “experts” to interview.

Some of the interventions, such as community mobilization and reality radio, require capacity building that ideally will take place before implementation begins. Programmers implementing GGI should take special note of this and may want to seek outside technical assistance for the trainings. To foster South to South collaboration, they should consider working with former GGI partners in Malawi, Botswana and Mozambique.

The tools used by GGI have been field tested in 3 countries and revised based on the feedback obtained from users on the ground. Implementers in other countries should not feel the need to pre-test the tools, but may need to do some initial refinement to adapt the tools to the local context.

Scale-Up
GGI defines scaling-up as expanding the impact of a successful program beyond a single or limited number of communities or sites to the regional or national levels (Howard-Grabman and Snetro, 2003, pp21-215).

In each of the GGI countries, the project has laid down the “building blocks” for a successful scale-up process: buy-in from key stakeholders has already taken place; the overall approach and specific tools have been tested and refined; the investment required to develop the materials has already been made; local partners have been trained in the methodology and can train others; evaluation data shows evidence of impact and there are opportunities for exchange visits.
and learning from communities and schools where GGI has already been implemented. In light of these achievements, scaling-up to other communities and districts in the intervention countries could be planned relatively easily for a successful expansion.

The following key factors should be considered in scaling-up GGI:

Financial and technical capacity investment will be needed from outside donors, cooperating agencies and the government to scale-up the intervention as schools, local NGOs and communities do not have the resources to plan and grow accordingly. However, as part of the scale-up, communities should look at what resources they do have – in terms of people, space, etc. – to make GGI a success.

Community ownership and partnership. Reactions from communities where GGI was implemented indicates that communities are ready, willing and able to address the issue of reducing girls’ vulnerability – so it is anticipated that other communities would be very open and eager to see GGI implemented in their communities. Working with government authorities and existing local groups, NGOs, CBOs at the community, district and regional levels provides the support and multi-level links needed to expand successfully. The broader the base, the more support and opportunities there will be when it is time to expand.

Media as champions. Changing girls’ lives community by community is going to take a long time; therefore, it is recommended that future programs include a mass media component (on national or regional media) to stimulate dialogue and engagement of leaders and emerging champions that can act as the public face of the program and advocate for GGI at all levels. This can include broadcasting what is happening in GGI communities on radio and TV so others can see firsthand how it works (approach) and is changing lives – and be inspired to take action in their locality as well.

Strengthen organizational capacity. Scaling-up will stretch the technical and organizational skills of partnering groups and communities. Supporting partners’ capacity ensures that human, management and financial resources can cope with program expansion. GGI approaches and tools need to be institutionalized and become part of planning budgets of government and civil society organizations. For example, the training of school personnel should become a standard part of Ministry of Education training both pre-service and in-service. District level budgets should earmark funds for the implementation of GGI through local partners.
**Continuously monitor and evaluate.** It is important to keep a close watch on how the program is working at the expanded locations and make changes as needed before expanding further.

**Sustainability**

*GGI defines sustainability as the long term goal to institutionalize program interventions by collaborating with organizations and communities to achieve normative and behavioral changes.*

The core to sustainability is building local capacity, with trained individuals working in a supportive environment with competent, committed organizations and community networks with enough local clout, coverage and continuity to sustain programs and achieve results (Piotrow et al., 2003).

**Build or strengthen the capacity of institutions in country to carry out the program.** The initial investment in capacity building in CM, ACC, CBLS, SP, SBLS, reality radio and CSF will help to ensure sustainability but continued investment is needed to ensure required technical skills are mastered and motivation is maintained.

**Stakeholder ownership.** There is already substantial stakeholder ownership in each of the countries among key stakeholders and community leaders - this is essential for sustainability. Many of the community-based Facilitating Groups continue their activities and meetings to move ahead the action plans developed beyond the formal lifespan of the project.

**Generate funds directly for project expansion.** Either from international donor or government budgets, financial contribution is needed to consolidate accomplishments and expand activities.

**Recommendations**

1. **Plan for a longer implementation period**

   While research has demonstrated that a range of HIV-prevention programs for adolescents implemented for under one year have been significantly correlated with positive behavioral change (Kirby, Laris & Rolleri, 2007), the jury is still out on the association between intervention duration and intervention efficacy (DiClemente et al., 2008) and few structural interventions have been properly evaluated (Gupta et al., 2008).

   Based on the GGI experience, the team would recommend a minimum of a three-year – and, preferably, five-year – implementation period with the understanding that start-up activities are likely to take a full year unless some of the steps described below have already been achieved.
To allow for an optimal implementation period and reduce the planning and preparation period to one year, future implementers should:

Decide upon community selection criteria prior to commencing Go Girls! (GG) activities and conduct the resource mapping exercise within the first month of choosing to implement GG (or even in anticipation of implementation).

- Resource mapping should focus on the community selection criteria, keeping in mind the need to identify ongoing programs that might overlap with GG activities to avoid duplication but, at the same time, capitalize on any potential synergies.
- Include an assessment not only of CBO capacity to conduct GG activities, economic strengthening opportunities, and supportive leadership, but also of radio production house capability to work on reality radio as part of the mapping exercise.

Select implementing partner CBOs or NGOs – fewer is better. GGI found that it is easiest to work with fewer groups – even with one implementing partner NGO, if feasible. If an NGO chooses to implement GG, it is best to hire staff solely for this project. In settings where it is not possible to find one group that has the varied skills to implement all program components, it may be useful to have one implementing partner in the lead role, or to arrange for GG meetings with all implementing partners on a weekly or biweekly basis, to ensure synergy and coordination across activities.

Involve the formal and informal leadership from the beginning. GGI entered the intervention communities in all three countries through the community leadership. This method of gaining entry led to sustained support from the leadership throughout the project lifespan. The project would not have been as successful without the support of the community leadership. The cross-sectoral fora (CSF) can begin at this time for the leadership at the district level to galvanize their support early on.

Condense the reality radio production timeline. Producing reality radio is time consuming, follow these tips to condense the production timeline:

- Use the GG Radio Design Document and hold a validation workshop (instead of a more time consuming design workshop) with key partners within the first three months to identify relevant topics (and to remove irrelevant topics), incorporating new topics only if major gaps are identified.

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1Please note this distinction: GGI is used to refer to the Initiative, which has ended; GG is used in all recommendations, which are for the future.
- Assign a staff member from the project, along with the CM implementing partner, to accompany radio producers to the field when collecting interviews, especially for the first round or two of interviews, to ensure that the interviews and other sound collected addresses and reflects key GG objectives and goals.
- Plan on spending additional time for review on the first set of scripts. This will cut down on the review time needed later as the producer will have a better understanding of what is expected.
- A two- to three-month supply of scripts should be developed in anticipation of the overall project launch. Script writing will be ongoing throughout the implementation period as new stories are identified, and new topics possibly incorporated.

2. Use a phased approach.
GGI used a phased approach and it worked well across communities and countries. The reasons for a phased approach are:
- it is overwhelming to community members to start all activities at once;
- it is difficult for the implementers – especially if the same team is implementing all activities – to coordinate the concurrent initiation of all activities;
- this approach keeps the community members engaged in the project – they like to know something new is on the horizon; and
- the impact of each intervention might be muted if they were all introduced at the same time.

Introduce GG through the reality radio program
- Radio reaches more people than community mobilization and workshops.
- The radio program can set the stage for the broader initiative: it introduces GG concepts, announces the GG launch, informs listeners about the next phase and keeps the community motivated for action.
- For those engaged in GG activities, it reinforces the messages and provides motivation to continue, since program successes are part of the stories that will be broadcast.
- The radio program ties the pieces together – for example, individuals engaged only in adult-child communication will learn more about what is happening at the wider community level, in the schools, etc., and may be motivated to become even more involved in the wider program.
- Among non-GG participants, the radio program can stimulate discussions among listeners, their families and communities about girls’ vulnerability and how to address it.

Follow the radio launch with community mobilization activities. CM is the cornerstone of the community-based, face-to-face activities (all
activities other than the radio). Through CM, community members will gain confidence and trust in the implementing CBO and the GG process, thus assuring the engagement of a broad range of community members.

Once the radio program and CM have been underway for a few months, begin ACC sessions for adults, followed by CBLS for vulnerable girls.

**School personnel (SP) training** should begin at about the same time as the ACC sessions, recognizing that SP will necessarily depend on the school calendar; plan accordingly. Once the SP are trained, SBLS can begin.

**Economic strengthening** activities should be launched after vulnerable girls have been identified and the first group of girls has completed the CBLS cycle.

### 3. Introduce the project to the community.

GGI’s approach of introducing the project to the community through the local formal and informal leadership proved to be successful. When interviewed for the process evaluation, CBO staff and community members alike recalled the important role leaders had in calling meetings to alert community members about upcoming sessions and encouraging broad-based participation. This approach should be utilized by future projects. When the project is introduced to the entire community just prior to implementation, all implementation partners for the whole panoply of activities – CM, ACC, CBLS, SP, radio, ES – should be present to explain the various project activities. If the project is introduced to the entire community as a unified project the community will have a better understanding of the project vision, each project component and the interrelationships among project components at the project inception. They will also become familiar with all of the local program implementers. This will provide an excellent opportunity to recruit participants for the various activities.

### 4. Recruit the most vulnerable girls through community leaders and members.

In Botswana the challenge of recruiting out-of-school girls was exacerbated by the fact that two different community-based implementing partner NGOs were contracted. One NGO was mainly responsible for the community mobilization and adult-child communication program components. The other NGO was largely responsible for CBLS. As GGI learned in Mozambique, it is easiest to recruit vulnerable girls through community leaders and members. It also helps if the same implementing partner is working with the community on CM and CBLS, as the CM participants assist in identifying and recruiting the most vulnerable.

GGI correctly predicted it would be difficult and time consuming to recruit vulnerable girls for the CBLS sessions; however, the implementing partners originally did not share this view. During the timeline and budget development
phase with the implementing partners, it is important that the timeline and budget allow for the time and expense it takes to recruit the most vulnerable.

5. Encourage male involvement.
Go Girls! engaged men through the school personnel training, economic strengthening, community mobilization, cross-sectoral fora and adult-child communication activities. Boys as well as girls were included in SBLs and the radio program. Still, the process evaluation found that male community members were, at times, put off by the focus on girls. Therefore, it took more coaxing to get them involved than might have been necessary if the focus had been on adolescents. This potential barrier can be overcome by acknowledging in the radio program, as well as during CM meetings, that while the focus is on girls, boys and men (as well as girls and women) are welcome to participate, are an important part of the solution and will benefit from the program.

While boys, too, are vulnerable to HIV (Barker, 2005), a search of the literature found no study to date that has directly compared a girls-only program complemented by a boys-only program with an integrated program for adolescents. Therefore, given the paucity of research on this subject it would be premature to propose replacing Go Girls! with a Go Adolescents! approach to HIV/AIDS prevention without a rigorous evaluation comparing the two types of approaches. Moreover, GGI findings indicate that the focus on girls was successful in many respects, such as increases in HIV prevention knowledge alongside findings of improved relationships between adults and children, safer school environments and enhanced community legal literacy.

Yet, there is a clear need to address boys’ vulnerability. Girls are vulnerable, in part, due to constructions of masculinity; but boys are vulnerable – as are girls – due to systemic weaknesses and failures. While GG materials constitute a solid foundation upon which to build a complementary program for boys, formative research on boys’ vulnerability would be required to understand how the vulnerabilities of boys and girls differ as well as to understand the intertwining and overlapping aspects of such vulnerabilities. An inclusion of formative research findings on boys’ vulnerability to HIV in a program would require less time than the development, testing and implementation of GGI, as it would build on those experiences and would contribute to the urgent need to build a body of literature regarding boys’ vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS and the interconnectedness of girls’ and boys’ vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

6. Increase legal literacy and engage with the judicial system.
In all three GGI countries, laws against rape, child defilement and minors’ access to alcohol are on the books. Yet, both the formative research and process evaluation found that many community members didn’t know about the laws or contended that the laws are not enforced. Therefore, GG incorporated sessions about laws that protect adolescent girls and how those laws can be strengthened through community participation into every component. This was a successful
approach, as is demonstrated in the research findings. GGI recommends expanding the enforcement of laws to protect adolescents by developing an additional component for local leaders that would include working with local law enforcement to ensure that the systems – and political will – are in place to enforce extant laws.

7. **Further the role of structural interventions.**
GGI included three structural-level interventions – school personnel training to create safer schools, cross-sectoral fora and the economic strengthening component. There was clear evidence that SP had a positive effect despite a short implementation period. Broader and deeper effects would be anticipated over a longer implementation period. (Participation rates in ES were too small and too short to assess effects and impact of the CSF could not be assessed as participation was limited to community leaders.)

GGI also encouraged structural-level actions through community mobilization. The process evaluation documented structural-level interventions taken by community members as a direct result of CM. In Botswana actions were taken to mitigate poverty and in Malawi the CM Facilitating Groups acted as an intermediary between community members and authorities in cases of abuse and non-enforcement of alcohol laws that prohibit the sale of alcohol to minors. This evidence in tandem with the findings about legal literacy points to the vital role of structural interventions.
References


# Annex One: Toolkit Contents

## The Go Girls! Electronic Toolkit

### Training Manuals:
- **Go Communities!** A Manual for Mobilizing Communities to Take Action to Reduce Girls’ Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS
- **Go Families!** Building Adults’ Skills to Communicate with Young People: A Training Manual
- **Go Students!** School-based Life Skills for Girls and Boys: A Teacher’s Manual
- **Go Teachers!** Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment for Girls at School: A Training Manual for School Personnel and Teachers

### Technical Briefs:
- Overview of Go Girls!
- How to Implement Go Girls!
- Go Girls! Research findings
- Go Girls! Indices Report

### Program Resources:
- Strengthening Economic Opportunities for Vulnerable Girls and Their Families: Programmatic Recommendations
- Improving Community Support for Vulnerable Girls through Radio using reality programming
- Program and Resource Mapping Reports for Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique
- Low Literate Visual Briefs - Flipcharts and Guide For Use in Communities
- Final Project Report

### Research Reports:
- Vulnerable Girls and HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Literature and Program Review
- Community Members’ Perspectives on Adolescent Girls’ Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique: Full and Summary Reports
- Mozambique Formative Research Report
- Research Findings Report: Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique
- Vulnerable Girls’ Indices Guide

### Success Stories:
- Adults Improve Relationships with Youth
- Community Rallies Support for a Young Mother
- Helping Girls Return to School
- Community Solves ‘Passion Killing’ Murder Case

Note: Select items are available in multiple languages (English, Portuguese, Setswana, Chichewa)