The Go Girls! Initiative (GGI), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development through the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, was a three-and-a-half year project (2007-2011) designed to reduce vulnerable adolescent girls’ risk of HIV transmission in Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique. Implemented by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/Center for Communication Programs (CCP), Go Girls! strived to strengthen gender programming worldwide through implementation of an innovative approach to HIV prevention for girls aged 10 to 17 years.

To share the Initiative’s results globally, a toolkit of key materials—including an innovative tool for measuring girls’ vulnerability and a comprehensive set of program materials—are available as a free resource to help policy-makers and programmers promote strong girls and strong communities worldwide. To access the full set of Go Girls! resources, visit http://www.k4health.org or http://www.aidstar-one.com, or contact U.S. Agency for International Development at GHCommunicationsTeam@usaid.gov.

This technical brief shares the Go Girls! systematic step-by-step process so programmers in any country can help vulnerable girls learn to protect themselves with the support of families, communities and schools (as well as through their own personal development).

Go Girls! Step-by-Step Implementation Process

1. ASSESS THE SITUATION OF GIRLS’ VULNERABILITY.
   A key first step is to conduct formative research to better understand what young people, adults and leaders think about girls’ vulnerability to HIV. This valuable information enables programmers to design effective interventions and messages and also allows local stakeholders to assess girls’ vulnerability and plan for collective action. The formative research report, Community Members’ Perspectives on Adolescent Girls’ Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique: A Summary Report, provides an example of the recommendations from formative research that can support program design. The report can be found in the toolkit CD ROM. It is also accessible at www.k4health.org or www.aidstar-one.com.

2. IDENTIFY KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND OTHER PARTNERS.
   Key stakeholders include civil society and government officials from the Ministries of Health, Education, Gender and Women’s Affairs, and others. These important players at the national, provincial and district levels provide legitimacy, guidance and opportunities for scale-up; they also enhance the likelihood of program sustainability. After identifying stakeholders, it is essential to engage them throughout the implementation process via regular communication and meetings.
3. CONDUCT PROGRAM AND RESOURCE MAPPING TO IDENTIFY INTERVENTION SITE, PARTNERS, AND GATEKEEPERS.

Mapping allows program planners to develop an inventory of potential partners and existing interventions (i.e., school-based life skills, HIV prevention activities, economic empowerment initiatives). The first mapping exercise may take place at the country level to select project sites. Once selected, the project sites should be mapped to identify local assets, partners and gatekeepers. Go Girls! country specific mapping guidelines and reports are accessible from the Toolkit CD ROM or at www.k4health.org or www.aidstar-one.com.

4. SELECT PARTNER NGOS AND CBOS.

Partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) are critical for successful program implementation. NGO and CBO selection criteria include: a) trust, credibility and linkages with intervention communities; b) organizational experience with youth, gender, HIV/AIDS and school retention programming; c) commitment to the Go Girls! principles and goals; and d) availability of staff for the duration of the program.

5. BUILD CAPACITY AMONG SELECTED PARTNER NGOS AND CBOS. Go Girls! provided mentoring and capacity strengthening for local partners throughout the life of the project. Areas of mentoring included skills-building in community participation approaches, gender-equitable teaching practices and HIV/AIDS prevention, among others.

6. IMPLEMENT GO GIRLS! USING THE INTERVENTION MANUALS. Go Girls! used a social ecological or ‘whole community’ approach by engaging communities, local institutions, schools, CBOs and other stakeholders in a comprehensive program. Successful partner engagement required the leadership of trained facilitators and provision of ongoing mentoring and monitoring/supervision. The Go Girls! intervention manuals and guides are available from the Go Girls! Toolkit CD ROM or at www.k4health.org or www.aidstar-one.com.

- **Go Communities! A Manual for Mobilizing Communities to Take Action to Reduce Girls’ Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.** This component strengthens the skills of Community Facilitators to empower communities to: a) recognize girls’ vulnerability to HIV; b) identify the root causes of girls’ vulnerability and c) take collective action to reduce girls’ vulnerability to HIV.

- **Go Girls! Community-Based Life Skills for Girls: A Training Manual.** This life skills training is intended for vulnerable girls ages 13 - 17 who are not in school, including orphans, recent migrants or girls who are socially or economically disadvantaged. The life skills program focuses on: goal-setting, decision-making and communication skills, and the basics of puberty and reproductive health. Girls learn and practice skills for resisting unwanted sexual advances and, in turn, become mentors to other girls.

- **Go Families! Building Adults’ Skills to Communicate with Young People: A Training Manual.** This component helps parents, caregivers and other concerned adults to better communicate with the young people in their lives and encourages them to become strong role models for youth.

“I have a daughter who dropped out of school and was promiscuous, I tried to talk to her, she told me that I gave birth to her and that is all I need to do. I came here (Go Girls! Adult-Child Communication Program) and I learned the skills on how to communicate with my daughter and now she has changed.”

– mother in Malawi

_An adult consults with a young person during an economic strengthening meeting._
• **Go Teachers! Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment for Girls at School: A Training Manual for School Personnel and Teachers.** Go Teachers! helps school personnel understand and assume responsibility for their role as protectors of vulnerable girls. Thus, personnel become agents of change. The manual promotes gender-equitable teaching practices and addresses harmful school practices that put girls at increased risk of HIV infection.

• **Go Students! School-Based Life Skills for Girls and Boys: A Teacher’s Manual.** This manual enables teachers to implement life skills sessions for students, to raise their awareness of harmful gender stereotypes and to develop strategies that promote resiliency and empowerment. Life skills sessions cover topics of HIV prevention, communication and negotiation skills and sex and pregnancy. The manual can be used in full or in part to complement existing school-based life skills programs.

• **Cross Sectoral Fora.** This intervention provides a critical meeting opportunity for district-level leaders, public sector officials, civil society and community leaders to share project activities, successes and challenges.

• **Strengthening Economic Opportunities for Vulnerable Girls and Their Families.** This report shares key lessons learned in partnering with local economic strengthening organizations. Examples of Go Girls! activities included partnering with savings and loans groups, inviting representatives from economic institutions to speak to communities and linking vulnerable girls to economic support programs.

> “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.”

- GGI teacher training participant

• **Improving Community Support for Vulnerable Girls through Radio.** Go Girls!, using real stories from the communities, designed and implemented innovative reality radio programs to raise awareness of girls’ vulnerability. This radio guide provides content for similar programs along with a sample script and a listening guide for group discussions.
7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Regular program activity monitoring is essential to address unforeseen barriers or program challenges. Monitoring forms are incorporated into all of the Go Girls! training manuals. If resources permit, conduct baseline and end-line surveys to measure the program’s impact on the reduction of girls’ vulnerability within project sites. Evaluation results should be discussed with the community to share progress, reinforce commitment and build support for scaling-up. The Go Girls! Research Findings Report is available at www.k4health.org or www.aidstar-one.com

For questions about Go Girls! program implementation, monitoring or research activities contact the US Agency for International Development at GHCommunicationsTeam@usaid.gov. To access an online version of the Go Girls! toolkit, please visit www.aidstar-one.com or http://www.k4health.org.

The Go Girls! Toolkit

Training Manuals:

✓ Go Communities! A Manual for Mobilizing Communities to Take Action to Reduce Girls’ Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS
✓ Go Girls! Community-Based Life Skills for Girls: A Training Manual
✓ 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:

✓ Go Girls! Overview
✓ How to Implement Go Girls!
✓ Research Findings
✓ Go Girls! Indices

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)