

Improving effectiveness for scale: Use of responsive feedback in a multi-sectoral adolescent sexual and reproductive health program in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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RESPONSIVE FEEDBACK

Responsive feedback is a systematic process for linking ongoing implementation learnings to modifications in project design.

- It requires timely use of multiple data sources, including ongoing reflection and discussion between project designers, implementers, researchers and decision-makers.
- This results in a “culture of learning” that enables systematic adaptation for improved project impact and sustainability.

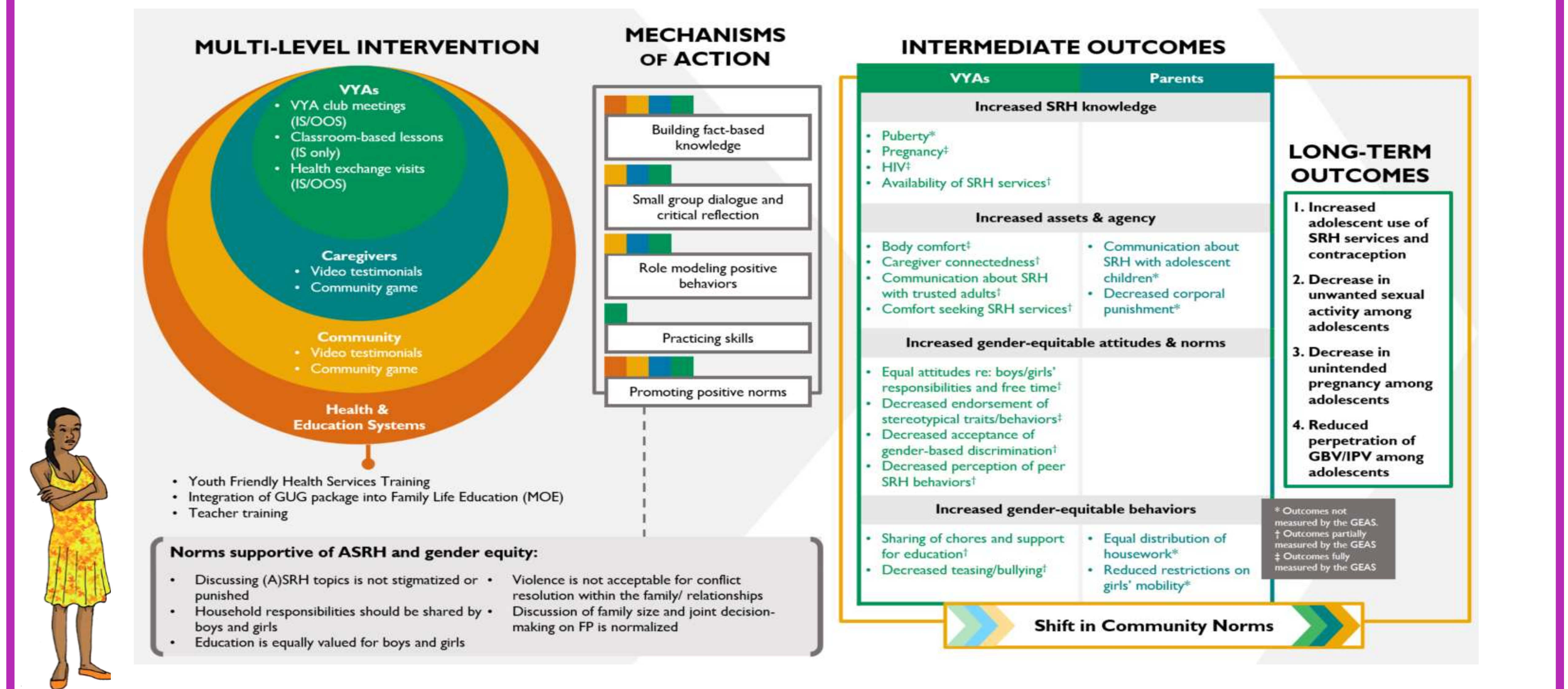


Resources & Tools
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THE MULTI-LEVEL GROWING UP GREAT! PROGRAM

Growing Up GREAT! is a multi-level gender-transformative sexual and reproductive health program for very young adolescents ages 10 to 14 in Kinshasa, DRC, designed to address gender norms and promote sexual and reproductive health and gender equity.

PROJECT PHASES: Adaptation: 2017 | Pilot: 2017 – 2018 | Scale-Up: 2019 – present



RESPONSIVE FEEDBACK ENABLING CONDITIONS

A. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Creation of a stakeholder reference group that served as the technical advisory committee and supported Growing Up GREAT's monitoring and learning efforts.
- Creation of a youth advisory council, composed of adolescents ages 10 – 19, provided feedback on project implementation and results to ensure that feedback was VYA-centered.

B. THEORY OF CHANGE

The theory of change (pictured above) was revised several times during the project and articulated how program activities would lead to positive change in key sexual and reproductive health behaviors.

C. DONOR SUPPORT

Donors committed adequate resources and funding over the seven-year period to allow for the establishment of responsive feedback mechanisms and deployment of program adjustments.

D. LEARNING CULTURE

The team worked to create a culture of learning to ensure that all parties involved from government partners to local implementing partners had the technical knowledge and capacity to voice the needed course correction actions. More importantly, all observations were given the same weight as monitoring data or rapid study results.

RESPONSIVE FEEDBACK MECHANISMS & ACHIEVEMENTS

PHASED APPROACH

Responsive feedback was operationalized to maximize opportunities for learning at each phase from adaptation, to the learning lab, pilot and scale-up.



MONITORING APPROACHES

Monitoring tools and quality benchmarks were developed and adapted during the course of the program to track and document the program's reach, dose, fidelity, challenges and lessons learned.



LEARNING MEETINGS AND DOCUMENTATION

Quarterly learning meetings were conducted to bring together all actors (direct implementers, local partners and government technical experts) to discuss monitoring data, research results, and lessons learned and agree on any needed adjustments.



RAPID LEARNING STUDIES

Three quantitative studies and scalability assessments were conducted to examine the feasibility, adaptability and effectiveness of the caregiver sessions, school-level activities, and health system-level activities of Growing Up GREAT.



PROGRAM ADAPTATIONS

- ✓ Review of monitoring data and discussion with local stakeholders revealed community push back due to lack of awareness of Growing Up GREAT's objectives.
Solution: Adjusted the timing of the first parent session to occur before the VYA club sessions begun.
- ✓ Monitoring data revealed low engagement of men in activities designed for them.
Solution: Identified days and times for caregiver sessions to better accommodate men's schedules and encouraged all participants to share lessons learned from the sessions attended.
- ✓ Learning studies identified a low mastery of topics discussed in caregiver sessions.
Solution: Revised the implementation materials to improve usability and flow and increase discussions among caregivers.
- ✓ Needed adaptation to sustain the scale up of community level components of Growing UP GREAT.
Solution: Task shifting from community based organizations to community health workers as facilitators of video sessions.

KEY FINDINGS & IMPLICATIONS

- ✓ Using responsive feedback approaches improved the community and parental buy-in for Growing Up GREAT activities, improved participation and implementation, led to the incorporation of the program into the national adolescent health strategy and allowed for quick adaption in response to the of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ✓ Ultimately, responsive feedback approaches created meaningful opportunities for program adaption throughout the program life cycle—from design to pilot to scale. Prioritizing responsive feedback approaches for course-corrections can strengthen program sustainability and respond to community needs.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ Engage all key actors as stakeholders and build capacity to encourage them to provide needed feedback, a role some may not be used to.
- ✓ Explore the benefits and challenges of each approach and be flexible as the best approach may change over the program cycle.
- ✓ Implementing responsive feedback approaches can be time and resource intensive. It is important to foster donor and partner relations that can provide financial and technical support.