

OCTOBER 2017

# Growing Up GREAT! Learning Lab Report

Findings from the Final  
Learning Workshop on  
August 24-25, 2017



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**Passages**

Transforming Social Norms for  
Sexual & Reproductive Health

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND KEY PHRASES

ASRH	Adolescent sexual and reproductive health
CBO	Community-based organization
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FP	Family Planning
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GEAS	Global Early Adolescent Study
GREAT	Gender Roles, Equality, and Transformations project
IRH	Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University
JHSPH	Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
KSPH	Kinshasa School of Public Health
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
RAJECOPOD	<i>Réseau des adolescents et jeunes congolais en population et développement</i>
RECOPE	<i>Réseau Communautaire pour la Protection des Enfants</i>
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VYA	Very young adolescent(s)

# BACKGROUND

Funded by USAID and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation through the global Passages project led by the Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH) at Georgetown University, Growing Up GREAT!/Bien Grandir! is a puberty, gender, fertility awareness and menstrual management intervention that targets very young adolescents (VYA) at a critical transition point in their life course. The intervention aims to increase VYA’s knowledge about and positive attitudes towards puberty and sexuality; self-efficacy related to sexual and reproductive health (SRH); safe sexual activity; use of adolescent SRH services; parent-child communication about sexuality and gender; and increase attitudes and behaviors relating to gender equality. Long-term, the intervention aims to instill and diffuse positive social norms leading to improved SRH outcomes, notably contraceptive use, in later adolescence and beyond.

Growing Up GREAT consists of a multi-component toolkit of activities that will be implemented with both in-school and out-of-school adolescents in two communes—Kimbansoke and Masina—in the Tshangu district of Kinshasa from October 2017 through May 2018 (two school semesters). Save The Children is leading implementation and training, working closely with several community-based organizations (CBO). The Global Early Adolescent Study (GEAS), led by John Hopkins University School of Public Health in partnership with the Kinshasa School of Public Health (KSPH) will evaluate the intervention.

Growing Up GREAT is a replication of three other evidence-based programs—the Gender Roles, Equality and Transformation (GREAT) Project, GrowUp Smart and Voices—with adaptation to a new setting and a comprehensive evaluation. During a formative phase in 2015-2016, Save the Children pre-tested materials and messages with VYA, their parents, and community members to contextualize these programs, all of which were designed and implemented in rural areas, for urban Kinshasa slum communities. Save the Children also convened a Technical Advisory Group (Groupe de Référence) of expert stakeholders to guide the adaptation and validate final materials. The intervention toolkit – including separate materials for in-school and out-of-school adolescents – was finalized in January 2017. The package includes a suite of interactive materials for VYA that provide information and prompt discussion about puberty, gender

**Figure 1 | Growing Up GREAT Socioecological Program Design**



equality, healthy relationships, violence, and other related themes during weekly club sessions. For parents, group sessions featuring six testimonial videos foster discussion around non-violent parenting, equal sharing of household tasks and girls’ education. Other materials for teachers, health workers and community members complement these core toolkit materials.

One of the important goals of this project, in addition to realize stated outcomes, is to support learning and use implementation science principles to draw conclusions about how program materials, mechanisms and implementation process *lead to* expected outcomes. The Learning Lab and other activities described below provided an important foundation for these efforts.

## Social Norm Exploration

A social norm exercise was undertaken in March and July 2017 to identify reference groups for VYA and parents, and to explore existing norms related to adolescent sexual and reproductive health, in particular those that might directly influence the behaviors targeted by Growing Up GREAT. This kind of activity is generally undertaken prior to program design, but since the intervention was already poised for pilot, the tool was instead used to confirm that the program approach, materials and content were appropriate to effect the desired social and behavioral change.

## Learning Lab

Collaboration between partners to implement and evaluate Growing Up GREAT has required careful communication and timing of different study components. Program activities could not begin until baseline measures of key knowledge, attitudes and practices targeted by the intervention were collected. In order to profit from the period of time preceding data collection, the program team at Save the Children proposed running a condensed pilot of the intervention with 40 schools to learn more about implementation processes, quality and monitoring. This **Learning Lab** took place from March-August 2017.

The Learning Lab began with in March a number of trainings to lay the groundwork for intervention activities. An inaugural Training of Trainers for CBO staff and government officials was followed by a training for school directors and teachers from all 40 pilot schools. School representatives simultaneously supported verification of enrollment lists in their schools, a first step to forming VYA school clubs. Club members were identified via an open process: all interested VYAs 10-14 years (or in relevant primary or secondary grades) were eligible, but final selections were made based on participants' proximity to schools, with the understanding that living close to school would increase their likelihood of consistent attendance at club sessions. Efforts were also made to ensure equal representation across grade levels and to enroll children from different families rather than pairs or multiple siblings.

Club leaders were oriented via a series of orientations in May; each session grouped six club leaders from five schools so trainers could provide intensive support to smaller groups of 30 VYAs at a time. The project team, with input from school personnel, decided to train a club leadership committee of six students from each school club to ensure that VYA leaders would have both support from their peers and coverage in case of absences. An equal number of boy and girl club leaders were selected to ensure balanced gender representation and encourage participation of both sexes.

### Learning Lab Topics

The aim of the Learning Lab was to pilot Growing Up GREAT and identify any challenges to intervention process, quality, and monitoring. Broad categories of learning included:

1. Trainings and other pre-intervention preparation
2. Group formation (VYA) and identities
3. School context, enrollment, and partnership
4. Parent/guardian participation
5. Health provider engagement
6. Elements of the intervention (toolkit)

Meetings of VYA clubs commenced in late May along with teacher-led lessons during the school day. After the end of the school year, the Learning Lab continued via a **Colonie de Vacances** – a month-long summer camp supported by trained teachers and CBO facilitators. The camp followed a slightly different model than in-school implementation (see Table 2 below for additional information). Trained teachers from pilot schools were recruited to help organize and run the camp during their summer break, and clubs participated in continuous, day-long programming rather than individual hour-long after school sessions. However, the camp provided an important opportunity to continue gathering feedback on intervention processes and materials, especially the health provider lessons and clinic visits, which were not tested before the end of the school term.

## Mini-Evaluation

The Learning Lab was evaluated by a qualitative evaluation led by the Institute for Reproductive Health at Georgetown University. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide systematically-collected information from the pilot period to identify changes needed to improve post-baseline implementation during the 2017-2018 school year and to provide feedback for revision of implementation guidelines to support future scale-up. This qualitative data provided a valuable complement to regular monitoring data and learning meetings held periodically during the Learning Lab.

The mini-evaluation consisted of a series of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with VYA club member and leaders, parents, teachers and school leadership, health providers and CBO partner staff. Questions were developed to draw out observations on Growing Up GREAT's feasibility, acceptability, and implementation. Data were reviewed and summarized using matrix analysis by a skilled qualitative researcher from the KSPH.

## OVERVIEW OF THE MEETING

Save the Children held two formal Learning Workshops during the Learning Lab to cultivate critical reflection and discussion with implementing partners and stakeholders on key challenges, successes and lessons learned. The first meeting, held in early June 2017, resulted in important reflections on the preparatory period, trainings and distribution of materials. The second meeting, held as a final Learning Workshop in late August 2017, engaged additional partners, including those working with out-of-school VYAs, potential scale-up partners, and youth representatives from various structures to share thinking on the in-school and summer school implementation learning. The Learning Workshop agenda and participant list are included in Appendix A.

This report provides a synthesis of the final Learning Workshop, which allowed Save the Children to consolidate data from many different sources in order to capture the most essential lessons from the pilot period and make critical decisions about how to adjust the intervention before replication. It includes a description of both presentations and group work sessions, highlighting the main points that emerged throughout the meeting.



# PRESENTATIONS

The first day of the workshop began with a series of presentations, each one representing a distinct source of data. Presenters were each asked to end their presentation with lessons learned or recommendations, as well as a few points for further discussion. Participants were encouraged to ask questions and note data of interest for afternoon group work.

## Conclusions of the Social Norms Exploration Exercise

This presentation provided a brief introduction to the social norms exploration methodology for workshop participants, many of whom were not familiar with the process, and an overview of the findings. While the results of this activity do not directly reflect Learning Lab successes or challenges, they provide important context for program replication. A number of social norms linked to Growing Up GREAT’s key outcome behaviors emerged from the exercise – see Table 1 below or the full report attached in Appendix B.

**Table 1:** Summary Results from Social Norms Exploration Exercise, March & July 2017

Topic	Desired Normative Behavior	Exploration Results	Cause
Puberty and Sexuality	Parents and VYA children talk about puberty and sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people believe it is inappropriate to discuss these topics</li> <li>• VYA who ask questions about these topics are considered impolite or troublemakers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These topics are taboo according to custom</li> <li>• Lack of information</li> <li>• Fear of social consequences</li> </ul>
Household Chores	Household chores are distributed equally between girls and boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people disapprove of boys doing household chores</li> <li>• Fathers especially expect that boys be exempt from chores</li> <li>• Boys who help with chores are called pedophiles or mentally deficient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boys’ role and superior social status in the family</li> <li>• Household chores seen as preparation for girls before marriage</li> <li>• Traditional attribution of gender roles</li> </ul>
Violence Against Women & Girls	Violent treatment of girls is not tolerated for any reason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many boys use violence to “discipline” girls or intimidate them into sexual behaviors</li> <li>• Few community members view this behavior favorably</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superiority complex and power imbalance</li> <li>• Juvenile delinquency and drug/alcohol use</li> </ul>
Girls Education	Girls are supported to remain in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people prioritize boys education and expect this to be the reality</li> <li>• Many people see an economic and social benefit to prioritizing boys education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Custom dictates that girls get married and boys take on financial responsibility</li> <li>• Poverty (lack of means to send all children to school)</li> <li>• Boys are seen as a long-term investment</li> </ul>
Use of Health Services	VYA feel comfortable seeking health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people disapprove of VYA going to clinic unaccompanied</li> <li>• Adolescents who do so are stigmatized and bring shame on their families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of stigma and shame</li> <li>• Concern that children may be mistreated by providers</li> <li>• Concern that providers may provide “inappropriate” information</li> </ul>



A number of programmatic recommendations were formulated from the data provided by the social norms exploration, all of which reinforced existing program strategies. Several recommendations centered on engaging parents and other social reference groups (like grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles, pastors' wives, and neighbors) in conversations about VYA health, emphasizing that curiosity is a normal part of adolescence, and providing them with information so they felt confident to talk with their children. Another important recommendation underlined the importance of positive role modeling, like that in the parent testimonial videos. Finally, a suggestion was made to clarify the difference between sex and gender at different stages throughout the life course, focusing on gender roles and gender equity.

## Key Results of the Midterm Learning Workshop

The first Learning Workshop was held in June 2017, about halfway through the Learning Lab, to share and synthesize observations and lessons from preparatory activities such as trainings, formation of VYA school clubs, and planning with government stakeholders. This presentation summarized the main findings of that workshop, which are documented in detail in the workshop report (Appendix C). Highlights are displayed in Table 2 below.

**Table 2:** Summary Results from Learning Workshop, June 2017

	Success	Challenge	Recommendation
<b>Engaging teachers and school directors</b>	Strong engagement of school personnel in training, selection of VYA to join school clubs and use of Growing Up GREAT materials in class work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor participation of private school directors due to lack of authorization from private school owners (<i>promoteurs</i>)</li> </ul>	Increase efforts to raise awareness of Growing Up GREAT among <i>promoteurs</i>
<b>Establishing school clubs</b>	School clubs were formed and operational, and had received intervention materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School clubs were formed late in the school year, just before the exam period, so motivation was low</li> <li>Selection criteria for VYA participation was not well communicated and some school and community members felt excluded</li> </ul>	Put in place strategies to engage VYA who are not club members
<b>Selecting club leaders</b>	Club leaders were enthusiastic and actively engaged in leading club sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certain parents discouraged or even forbade their children from serving as club leaders because they did not see a direct benefit from the role</li> </ul>	Sensitize school-based Parent Committees and parents of participating VYA to ensure their support
<b>Holding club sessions</b>	Despite the short time and impending exam period, some school were able to hold VYA club sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The game and CycleBeads were not well understood by club members</li> <li>Difficulties with time management led to slow progress and incomplete activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase length of club leader orientation on challenging intervention components</li> <li>Encourage leaders to follow time allocations noted in materials and evaluate progress via monitoring forms</li> </ul>
<b>Organizing video sessions with parents</b>	Strong interest and good participation from parents at video sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low participation from fathers and other male guardians due to schedule conflicts</li> </ul>	Consider revising viewing times to encourage better participation among men

## Lessons Learned from the Growing Up GREAT! Summer Camp

Given that the Learning Lab was launched late in the spring school term, the Growing Up GREAT Summer Camp (*Colonie de vacances*) provided an important opportunity to continue testing intervention activities. The structure of the Summer Camp, however, was notably different than school year implementation, so learning was considered with this caveat.

This presentation included updates and observational learning from Save the Children’s two local partners working with in-school VYA: El Dorado and the Network of Associations of Congolese Youth and Adolescents for Population and Development (RAJECOPOD). In particular, partners shared reflections on school club sessions using the health provider lesson and local health centers visits. These activities had not been implemented before the end of the school year because supporting facility-based providers and staff were trained on youth-friendly health services in late May after the exam period had already begun. VYA were receptive to health providers, who emphasized openness and the confidentiality of the provider-client relationship. They expressed curiosity at the different instruments (stethoscope, blood pressure cuff, microscope, etc.) in clinics and asked questions about illnesses typical for their age group and about available health education materials. Providers, however, were consistently underprepared for interactions with VYA. Recommendations were therefore made to give providers more advance notice of club session and clinic visit dates, and to ensure that they review the relevant Growing Up GREAT materials before each meeting.

**Table 3: Differences between school year vs. summer camp implementation**

School Year	Summer Camp
1 club session per day	3-4 club sessions per day
Sessions led by VYA club leaders	Sessions led collectively by group members with support from teachers
Preference for certain intervention materials	Use of all intervention materials
M&E form completed by VYA club leader	M&E form completed by all group members

## Learning Lab Monitoring & Evaluation Results

The Learning Lab provided a chance to test monitoring processes and tools in addition to program activities. The focus of this presentation was to analyze quantitative monitoring data and quality benchmarks to draw conclusions about VYA and parent participation, use of materials, and partner performance. Monitoring data bore out many of the observations from the Midterm Learning Workshop and the Summer Camp, but also brought to light some new information.

**Participation:** Participation in program activities during the school year was relatively consistent, with only occasional absences, and even participation by girls (53%) and boys (47%) in clubs. During the Summer Camp, however, attendance was more irregular. VYA were more likely to stop coming to sessions, and girls were especially likely to be absent because of household responsibilities. Cooptation of curious VYA onlookers helped to balance some of the attrition from enrolled clubs during this period, but club size was smaller overall. Conversely, parent participation was starkly divided by sex, with 71% of video session attendees mothers or other female guardians.

## Learning Lab by the Numbers

- 66** partner staff and MOE Master Trainers oriented to program
- 114** teachers and school directors oriented to program
- 56** facility-based providers and staff trained on youth-friendly health service and program
- 240** VYA trained as school club leaders
- 1000** VYA reached by school clubs
- 4217** VYA reached by teacher-led sessions in class
- 1068** parents reached by program
- 784** community members reached by program

**Use of Materials:** The most frequently used materials were the Activity Cards and the Puberty Books; the Girls Puberty Book was more popular than the Boys Puberty Book. The least used material was the game, likely due to challenges understanding the instructions and some of the questions.

**Partner Performance:** Quality benchmarks indicated that the majority of activities implemented were high quality. A few areas of medium quality (50-80% of benchmarks achieved) were also identified. Facilitator competence among VYA club leaders emerged as a theme because of minor challenges with time management some and unaddressed teasing of group members. Issues with the health clinic visits and parent video sessions were also discussed. In clinics, a lack of appropriate space to welcome and converse with VYA, as well as a lack of provider preparedness to cover content, led to lower quality scores, while logistical challenges with light and sound resulted in some unsuccessful video sessions.

## Topline Results of the Learning Lab Qualitative Mini-Evaluation

As part of efforts to evaluate Growing Up GREAT, IRH in collaboration with the KSPH led a qualitative mini-evaluation to provide systematically collected data from the Learning Lab. The primary goals of this evaluation were to identify changes to improve replication of the

intervention and to support development of implementation guidelines for scale-up. Evaluation questions focused on the feasibility, acceptability and implementation of Growing Up Smart. A series of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were carried out with VYA, parents, teachers, and partner staff generated data, which was analyzed manually using matrices.

This presentation introduced major findings from the mini-evaluation, organized by group. Data was rich and plentiful, so a condensed summary is included in Table 4 below. The full report is attached in Appendix D.

**Table 4: Topline Results of the Learning Lab Mini-Evaluation, by Group**

<b>Key Results from the Mini-evaluation</b>	
<b>VYAs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almost all of the VYAs interviewed (n=72) stated they learned something new</li> <li>• VYAs were motivated to attend the clubs to learn how to be healthy, to spend time with other students, to learn about changes to their bodies and to get advice</li> <li>• Puberty books and flipbooks were the most appreciated club activities because VYAs liked learning about their changing bodies, menstrual hygiene management and the importance of education</li> <li>• Adolescents primarily missed club sessions because they were sick, helping their parents, doing household chores, or watching their siblings</li> <li>• VYAs appreciated the health provider exchange visits and said health providers answered all of their questions, even those they could not ask their parents</li> </ul>
<b>Club leaders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of club leaders enjoy leading the clubs and think it is a good environment where VYAs can actively participate</li> <li>• VYA club leaders were motivated to become leaders because they wanted to help others learn</li> <li>• There are some challenges around translating the French materials (for in-school VYA) to Lingala – most club sessions are held Lingala.</li> </ul>
<b>Teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers felt their orientation to program materials was too short</li> <li>• Access to the Growing Up GREAT! materials is an issue. School Directors lock them in their offices so teacher cannot access them when they are not around</li> <li>• Teachers felt that VYAs like the flipbooks most because they like the pictures</li> <li>• Both boys and girls seem to be more at ease when discussing body changes for the opposite sex</li> <li>• Teachers emphasized engaging the school administration to ensure buy-in and support from the start</li> <li>• They also noted parental approval as essential and noted instances of VYA being pulled out of clubs when parents saw the content of puberty books</li> <li>• Teachers felt health provider lessons were appreciated but should be better organized</li> </ul>
<b>Parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almost all of the parents interviewed (n=48) found the video sessions to be educational and said they learned something new</li> <li>• Several parents discussed how they had already changed their behaviors and attitudes related to girls' education, violence, and getting their sons to help with household chores</li> <li>• Parents want video sessions be held later in the day so fathers and male guardians could attend</li> <li>• The majority of parents said they talked about the videos with other people after the sessions including with their spouses, children, family, friends and neighbors</li> </ul>
<b>Health providers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health providers found the youth-friendly health services training to be good preparation for youth health center visits; however, they thought it was organized very last minute</li> <li>• They felt the health provider lessons and exchange visits were informational to VYA and said that VYA asked good questions showing an understanding of the information</li> <li>• They felt that provider-led lessons should be better organized and longer</li> <li>• Groups of VYA visiting the health centers were large; it is preferable to have fewer VYA at a time</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Growing Up GREAT! trainings were very beneficial</li> <li>• Partners suggested the quality of the video sessions could be improved and that the sessions should be held on the weekends so that men can attend</li> <li>• Partners felt the most appreciated video topic was dividing household chores equally; they felt the video on sexuality sparked the most questions and discussion</li> <li>• Partners said that getting parental and school administration buy-in was important to the success of the project</li> </ul>

# DISTILLING LESSONS LEARNED

Following the series of presentations, participants were guided through group work and discussions to obtain reflections and feedback on lessons learned from the Learning Lab. Participants were divided into four groups and asked to analyze and cross-triangulate data from the different presentations, each of which represented a distinct data source. Groups were not pre-selected, but meeting organizers made an effort to ensure consistent representation of different kinds of stakeholders – implementing partners, school officials, and government representatives – in each group. Conversation was guided by a series of simple questions focused on identifying the most evident challenges and successes, and formulating recommendations to improve the intervention (see box at right). Each group recorded their responses on Post-It notes, which were placed on a set of three communal flip chart papers (one for each question) at the front of the room.

## Group Discussion Questions

1. What similarities do you see across sources of data? Are there success or challenges that were underscored by multiple different monitoring and evaluation approaches?
2. Are there any notable differences or contradictions across sources of data about what works or does not work?
3. Based on these reflections, what recommendations would you make to improve the implementation process?

After an hour of small group work, participants came together in a plenary session led by the Director of the Life Skills Education Administration (Direction de l'Éducation à la Vie Familiale). Each group was given the opportunity to present the major points of debate in their group, and summarized responses to the discussion questions. Key output from this session is summarized below.

## Common Findings

- Results of the mini-evaluation bore out feedback from the Midterm Learning Meeting and experiential learning (observations by partner CBOs) around **engagement with school officials**. Participants noted that all three of these data sources revealed active engagement of school directors and teacher focal points, but poor buy-in and even resistance from private school owners (*promoteurs*).
- Various data sources reflected well-functioning school clubs, including strong mastery and ownership of materials by VYA group leaders and cooptation of non-group members interested in activities.
- Monitoring data and mini-evaluation results both pointed to clear preferences among VYA for specific materials – boys' and especially girls' puberty books and flipbooks. Similarly, the game was found to be the least popular and least used material, primarily due to the format and confusion about how to advance once a question has been answered.
- Numerous data points touched on similar challenges with parent engagement on both ends of the spectrum. In general, participation among mothers and other female guardians was higher than among men, with some mothers expressing a desire for more information about CycleBeads, both to help their daughters understand them and to use them themselves. However, participants also saw evidence of resistance from parents who did not understand the content of the intervention.

- Finally, several data sources suggested that operational challenges with sound and screening at video sessions put the quality of the activity at risk. In particular, the small speakers were not large enough to amplify sound in open or outdoor spaces, and the video projections were difficult to see when displayed in bright open spaces during the daytime.

## Differences

- Participant found notable differences across data sources on enrollment and participation of VYA girls and boys. Monitoring data from the in-school implementation period recorded slightly higher number of girls enrolled (53%) than boys. However, results of the mini-evaluation, which took place during the Summer Camp, found that girls were less likely to attend club sessions because of family expectations that they be more available for household chores during the summer. Similarly, girls, who had been equally engaged and participative during after-school club sessions, seemed to be less actively engaged in Summer Camp sessions.
- Other differences discussed by participants centered on variance in activity completion between implementing partners and were not as relevant to the meeting's goals.

## Recommendations

- Implicate private school owners (*promoteurs*) to ensure better integration of activities and support from school personnel. Participants suggested increasing partner-led efforts to sensitize *promoteurs* and explain that collaboration is mutually beneficial. They also proposed leveraging existing relationships with local government officials who oversee both public and private schools to ensure better compliance. Representatives of the Ministry of Education who were present committed to advocating with local sub-prefects to bring the issue to their attention.
- Inform parents about Growing Up GREAT activities and program content before club sessions begin with VYA. Additionally, consider launching video sessions with parents before club sessions.
- Reconsider how VYA groups are formed: increase the number of members per club (25) and/or extend the age range to include adolescents over 14 years.
- Various suggestions for minor improvements to the VYA materials (puberty book, activity).
- Establish a learning exchange for partners so that each CBO can visit and observe other partners implementing program activities. In this, partners could learn best practices and build capacity among themselves.
- Provide an Implementation Guide for implementing partners.\*
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation system. Participants agreed that monitoring forms were simple and easy to use, but they desired more clarity on definitions and compilation of data, as well as a more user-friendly database. They also proposed a separate but linked monitoring system for health providers and clinics participating in the health exchange activities.

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\* Partners received a draft Implementation Guide for use during the Learning Lab. The Guide includes instructions for implementation of each intervention activity and the project's M&E plan.

# FORMULATING RECOMMENDATIONS

Day 2 of the meeting focused on converting feedback from Day 1 into actionable next steps. Preparatory work done the preceding evening allowed meeting organizers to classify group work output into six overall themes, which formed the basis of the full day Marketplace of Ideas activity. Workshop participants were divided into six groups and each group was assigned one theme to explore during the first session. Each group’s task was to consider the feasibility and scalability of all recommendations related to their theme and to prioritize them based on group consensus. Each group had 30 minutes to discuss their theme before moving on to the next theme, where they were asked to review and build on the work of the previous group. Groups circulated six times so that each one had an opportunity to review recommendations and rankings for each theme.

**Themes for Group Work**

1. VYA Sessions
2. School linkages
3. Parent (video) sessions
4. Community group sessions
5. Health system linkages
6. Partner collaboration

To facilitate their work, groups were provided with a comprehensive list of theme-specific lessons learned and recommendations from the previous day on flipchart paper. An actual example is shown below in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Sample List of Lessons Learned and Recommendations for School Linkages, with Scalability Criteria**

Lessons Learned	Recommendations	Scalability		
		Cost	Simplicity	Administrative charge
<b>Teacher capacity:</b> Only Life Skills Focal Points and sciences teacher use Growing Up GREAT materials, and some lack the knowledge or confidence to implement activities well.	1. Increase the # days of teacher orientation from (3) to (5)	Reasonable	Feasible	Acceptable
	2. Provide a separate training for teachers on the National Life Skills Curriculum	Reasonable		
<b>Teacher motivation:</b> Desire for financial support for teacher focal points.	Provide small fee for focal point teachers	Expensive	Reasonable	Acceptable
<b>Challenges with private schools:</b> Low participation among private school owners.	1. Sensitize private school owners to Growing Up GREAT	Very reasonable	Simple	Acceptable and simple
	2. Advocate with local MOE authorities to integration private schools into programming	None	Simple	Acceptable

Groups were instructed to follow the steps below to guide their conversation.

1. **Review all lessons learned and recommendations** generated by Day 1 group work. Add any other recommendations that the group feels could improve the intervention to the flipchart paper.
2. **Prioritize recommendations that are most critical** to improving the intervention. Use basic principles of good implementation (value, impact, etc.). Try to ensure group consensus on ranking. Rank all recommendations from 1 to X directly on the flipchart paper.



3. **Consider the scalability of each recommendation**, starting with the most highly prioritized recommendation. Use the three key principles of cost, staff burden, administrative charge to determine scalability. Note your observations directly on the flipchart paper next to each recommendation.
4. **Brainstorm next steps for operationalizing top recommendations**. What concrete actions does the program team need to take to realize the recommendation?

Workshop organizers did not provide specific instructions on how to grade individual scalability principles or rank overall scalability, so groups were free to score and comment freely. Debate was lively and productive – new recommendations were added under every theme and groups debated scalability from a very real implementation perspective.

Group work went long so a planned plenary session to present and debate the most critical recommendations under each theme was skipped. Instead, next steps for review, analysis and decision-making by the project team were described to participants before a closing session ended the workshop.

## TAKING ACTION: ADJUSTING THE INTERVENTION

All group work from the flipcharts was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet organized by theme. The program team – including Save the Children’s Kinshasa-based Program Manager and Program Officer, and a US-based ASRH Specialist – met with the Institute for Reproductive Health the following week to debrief the workshop and discuss the most salient proposed recommendations. Notes from this meeting resulted in a comprehensive set of proposed adjustments to the intervention; several subsequent conversations allowed the program team to select the highest priority adjustments. A particular emphasis was placed on those that required only minimal additional funds and that could be easily integrated into existing implementation structures without compromising scalability. The spreadsheet was color-coded to provide an easy visual reference: green denotes adjustments that will be implemented in full, yellow denotes adjustments that will be partially implemented and red denotes adjustments that will not be implemented. Key modifications are summarized below and the full table is attached in Appendix E.

### VYA Sessions

1. One strong recommendation was to reinforce the VYA leader orientation for better management of club sessions. Increasing the length of their training was not considered scalable, so CBO partners will instead **increase supervision visits** for improved capacity. Partners will make weekly supervision visits to each school during the first month of implementation which will taper off in following months.
2. Another strong recommendation was to ensure parent awareness and approval of Growing Up GREAT! activities with VYA before club sessions begin. To achieve this partners will **sensitize school-based parent committees** so all students’ parents understand program content. At the same time, they will **launch parent video sessions prior to activities with VYA**, using the first video session as an opportunity to introduce parents to project goals and VYA materials.

3. A final recommendation centered on gendered differences in participation. Meeting attendees expressed concern about the slight difference in girls vs boys numbers in club membership. However, the program team is primarily concerned with differences in participation between VYA of different sexes. Save the Children will emphasize this during trainings and **add a Quality Benchmark indicator on active participation by sex.**

## School Linkages

1. In response to the recommendation to engage private school owners, Save the Children and partners will **hold a joint meeting with private school owners and directors and MOE sub-division representatives** to clarify government support for Growing Up GREAT and clarify expectations for private school participation.
2. Strong recommendations to increase teacher training to five days minimum could not be reconciled with scalability concerns, nor could additional overlapping recommendations to provide a separate training for teacher on the national Life Skills Curriculum. As a compromise, the **teacher training will be extended to four days**, including the standard three day Growing Up GREAT training and one day for a brief overview of the national curriculum.

## Parent Sessions

1. There was a strong recommendation to revisit days and times for parent video sessions so they are scheduled when fathers and other male caregivers are more available. Partners agreed to **hold informal consultations with fathers**, either or during parent committee meetings, to solicit their input on more convenient times.
2. Challenges with the sound system were a significant challenge to holding successful video sessions. Save the Children has placed an order for **acquisition of new larger speakers** that will produce strong, high quality sound.

## Community Sessions

Recommendations under this theme primarily dealt with how to expand diffusion and reach with limited resources. Two simple and inexpensive approach were suggested.

1. Partners will **invite opinion leaders and other influential community members to community sessions**. These individuals might include religious or lay leaders for sessions in churches, school leadership for sessions held in schools, and local traditional and political leaders.
2. Additionally, partners will make an effort to create and maintain relationships with other community organizations in order to take advantage of any **opportunities to integrate VYA clubs into community events or religious or neighborhood celebrations**. Note that this approach is purposefully left open-ended and optional for partners to use when possible.

## Health System Linkages

The primary recommendation was to improve the overall organization of health provider lessons and facility visits. The program determined that the best way to ensure strong facilitation of health linkage activities is to **engage health providers on days they are not on call**, and to provide a small fee compensate for their

additional time. **VYA clubs will also be divided in half for clinic visits** to make their size more manageable.

## Partner Collaboration

Several recommendations focused on ensuring consistent and faithful implementation of the intervention across partners led to the following revisions.

1. Save the Children will undertake several **improvements to its monitoring system**, including clarifying definitions of key several indicators and adding missing indicators to the database. It will also immediately **convene an M&E capacity-building refresher training with all partners**. Budget allowing, it will also **hire a cost-shared M&E Officer** at 50% to provide more intensive support and oversight to project monitoring efforts.
2. Review and **update the implementation guide** with additional detailed information and feedback from partners.
3. Encourage **exchange visits across partners** so that organizations can learn from each other's strengths. *\*This activity is optional and will be dependent upon individual partners' budget and ability to integrate additional site visits into their ongoing work.*

## OPPORTUNITIES & NEXT STEPS

The above revisions to Growing Up GREAT will be integrated into program processes and implementation immediately. Partners will launch preparatory activities – including trainings and formation of VYA clubs in 40 new schools – in October 2017 and VYA club sessions will continue through the end of the school year in May 2018. Regular monitoring of activities will track progress during this period, and a rigorous learning agenda will help the program team continue to draw lessons for use in future scale-up.

# **APPENDICES**

**Appendix A: Final Learning Workshop Agenda and Participant List**

**Appendix B: Social Norms Exploration Report for Growing Up GREAT**

**Appendix C: Midterm Learning Workshop Report**

**Appendix D: Mini-Evaluation Report**

**Appendix E: Decision Matrix**

## Appendix A: Final Learning Workshop Agenda & Participant List

### 2<sup>ème</sup> Atelier d'apprentissage Bien Grandir ! - PASSAGES Laboratoire d'apprentissage 24 – 25 Aout 2017

#### Jour 1 : Jeudi 24 Aout 2017

Durée	Activité	Facilitateur
8h30 – 9h00	Bienvenue et objectifs	Dr. Mbadu Muanda, Directeur du PNSA
9h00 – 9h30	Contexte et mises à jour	Pierrot Mbela
9h30 – 9h45	Résumé des résultats clés de la <b>réunion d'évaluation à mi-parcours</b>	Djessa Wa Matchabo
9h45 – 10h15	Présentation des réflexions sur <b>la Colonie de vacances</b>	Gracia , Coco Mukola
<b>10h15 – 10h30</b>	<b>Pause-café</b>	<b>Service traiteur</b>
10h30 – 11h15	Présentation sur les <b>données de suivi</b>	Alex Fikiri
11h15 – 12h00	Présentation des conclusions et recommandations de <b>l'exploration des normes sociales</b>	Djessa Wa Matchabo
12h00 – 12h45	Présentation des résultats clés de <b>la mini-évaluation</b>	Eric Mafuta
<b>12h45 – 13h45</b>	<b>Pause-repas</b>	<b>Service traiteur</b>
13h45 – 14h45	Travaux en petits groupes – Leçons apprises et recommandations	Jennifer Gayles
15h00 – 15h45	Séance plénière	Christine Nepanepa, Directrice de l'EVF
15h45 – 16h00	Modalités finales et clôture de la première journée	Pierrot Mbela

#### Jour 2 : Vendredi 25 Aout 2017

Durée	Activité	Facilitateur
8h30 – 9h00	Lecture et adoption du résumé de la 1 <sup>ère</sup> journée	Laetitia Okana
9h00 – 10h00	Présentation des TDRs du Conseil des jeunes Bien Grandir !	Grace Molisho
10h00 – 10h30	Utilisation des données pour la prise de décisions programmatique – Café du Monde (20 minutes par table)	Jennifer Gayles
<b>10h30 – 11h00</b>	<b>Pause-café</b>	<b>Service traiteur</b>
11h00 – 12h40	Utilisation des données pour la prise de décisions programmatique – Café du Monde (20 minutes par table)	Jennifer Gayles
12h40 – 13h30	Séance plénière – Résumé et débat sur les propositions	Pierrot Mbela
<b>13h30 – 14h30</b>	<b>Pause-repas</b>	<b>Service Traiteur</b>
14h30 – 15h00	Séance plénière – Prochains pas	Pierrot Mbela
15h30 – 16h00	Clôture	Dr. Mbadu Muanda, Directeur du PNSA

## Participant List

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>Alain Kihanda</b>	El Dorado	Secretary General
<b>Alex Fikiri</b>	Save the Children -RDC	MEAL Manager
<b>Alpha Masasu</b>	ADDHDC	President
<b>Annie Munzekila</b>	PNCPS	Chef de Bureau/DOC
<b>Bibi Kalume</b>	PNSA	Chef de Bureau /DA
<b>Brianan Kiernan</b>	IRH-HQ	Program Officer
<b>Carin Boleko</b>	El Dorado	Logistics Officer
<b>Carlin Vese Pinzi</b>	PECS	Supervisor
<b>Christian Kwele</b>	RAJECOPOD	Chargé de suivi et Evaluation
<b>Christian Mutombo</b>	Save the Children-RDC	Communication Officer
<b>Christine Nepa Nepa</b>	Ministère EPSP/EVF	Director
<b>Clement Mahungu</b>	Ministere de la Jeunesse	Director EVF
<b>Coco Mukoka</b>	RAJECOPOD	National Coordinator
<b>Deborah Balelia</b>	RAJECOPOD	M&E Officer
<b>Djese Wa Matchabo</b>	IRH - RDC	Country Representative
<b>Donatien Tshimanga</b>	RECOPE	Supervisor
<b>Eric Mafuta</b>	Kinshasa School of Public Health	Professor
<b>Freddy Ballanganay</b>	RAJECOPOD	Secrétaire Permanent
<b>Girbaud Mbungu</b>	El Dorado	President
<b>Giscard Kumeso</b>	El Dorado	Vice President
<b>Grace Salima</b>	Save the Children	Project Officer
<b>Gracia Diantisa</b>	RAJECOPOD	Communication Officer
<b>Hyacinthe Lipanzo</b>	UJCA	Vice President
<b>Jacques Mbumba</b>	RECOPE	Supervisor
<b>Jean Baptiste Mbaya Kashala</b>	Ministère Affaires Sociales/DGENF	Director
<b>Jean Marie Kalala</b>	PNSA	Chef de Bureau /Training
<b>Jennifer Gayles</b>	Save the Children-RDC	ASRH Specialist
<b>Justin Mpinda</b>	Centre des jeunes Bomoto	CEICA Coordinator
<b>Kizekele</b>	Comité de parents/Kimbanseke	Parent
<b>Laetitia Okana</b>	IRH - RDC	Administrative Assistant
<b>Liliane Kibundu</b>	PNSA	Youth Center Manager
<b>Louis Mpanzu</b>	Ministère EPSP/EVF	Expert Chef de Division
<b>Lydie Tukebana</b>	PNSA	Chef de Bureau /RO
<b>Maval Mavambu Lutete</b>	Ministère de Genre/DEP	Expert
<b>Mbadu Muanda</b>	PNSA	Director
<b>Molali Bens</b>	Centre des Jeunes de Matete /PNSA	Manager
<b>Musifou Bougain</b>	ABEF	Project Coordinator
<b>Neneth Bolula</b>	CODE	Program Officer

<b>Neville Mudekereza</b>	Tearfund-RDC	Passages Coordinator
<b>Odile Matemo</b>	UFEM	Presidente
<b>Ornette Nyok</b>	CONEPT	Communication Officer
<b>Pablo Ilua</b>	CODE	Legal Protection officer
<b>Patricia Mabaya</b>	RAJECOPOD	Finance Officer
<b>Paulin Dangu</b>	Ministère EPSP/EVF	Expert Chief of Division
<b>Pierrette Muanda</b>	PNSA	Chef de Bureau /IEC
<b>Pierrot Kanyiki</b>	APDF	Coodinator
<b>Pierrot Mbela</b>	Save the Children	Project Manager
<b>Richard Matoka</b>	SD Masina	Studies & Planning Officer
<b>Selego Chalet</b>	ASF/PSI	Adjoint Director, SRH/FP
<b>Steve Yoka</b>	RACDJ	M&E Officer
<b>Susan Igras</b>	IRH-HQ	Senior Technical Advisor
<b>Teddy Landu</b>	COJET	Point focal Jeune
<b>Théophile Nemuandjare</b>	UNFPA	Family Planning Program Analyst
<b>Therese Aloma</b>	ACHREDDEF	Presidente
<b>Vubu Ngoto</b>	Ministère EPSP	Sous Proved