

Integrating Family Life Education into Distance Learning

Learnings from COVID-related Program Adaptations in Kinshasa, DRC

Social and Behavior Change Communication Summit
December 7, 2022

Dr. Kathryn M. Barker | Assistant Professor
Center on Gender Equity and Health
University of California, San Diego



Passages



UC San Diego
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



Background



In March 2020, with the aim of slowing the spread of COVID-19, **the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo closed schools nationwide**



27 million children had no access to education

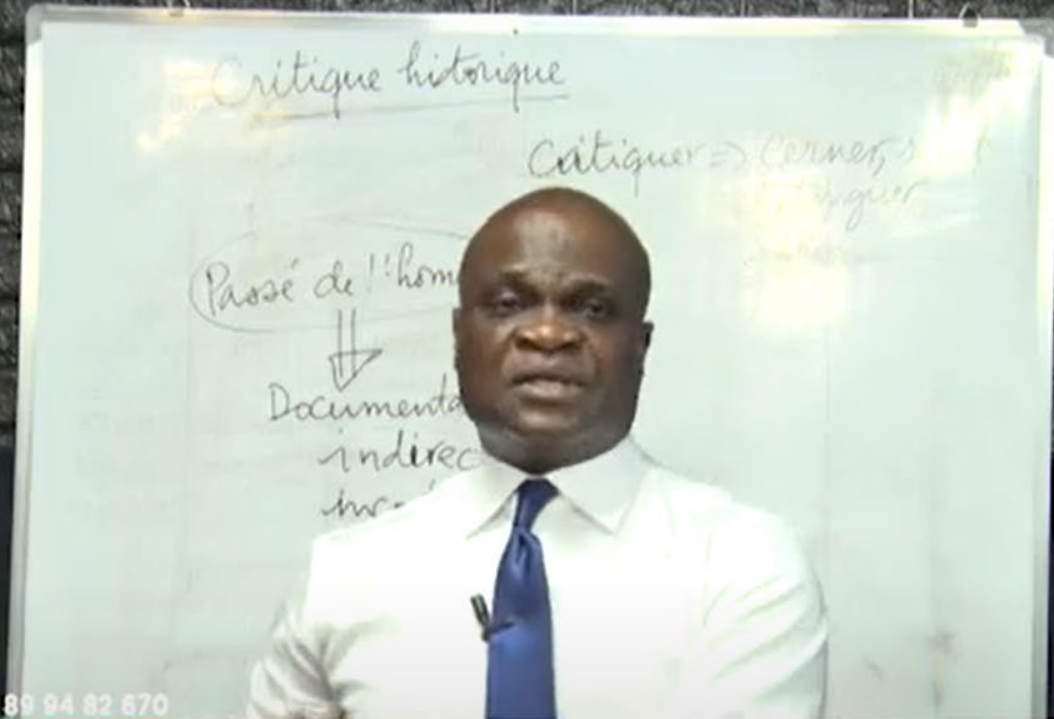
Pivot to TV & Radio Broadcasts (April 2020)

Broadcasts of core school curricula

- Math
- French
- Reading & Writing
- Sciences
- Information Technology
- Hygiene

Led by the Ministry of Primary, Secondary, and Technical Education (EPST)

Minister of EPST Teaching on EducTV



+243 89 94 82 870

**CLASSE
TÉLÉVISÉE**

LEÇON D'HISTOIRE POUR LES FINALISTES DU SECONDAIRE



Minister of EPST Willy Bakonga



Untapped Opportunity

DRC's national sexuality education program (known as Family Life Education (FLE)), not initially included in distance learning broadcasts



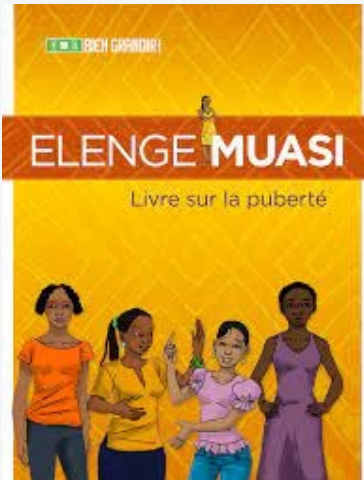
Growing Up GREAT!

Multi-level norms-shifting sexuality education intervention in Kinshasa





Social-ecological approach. Work in schools and communities with:

- Adolescents ages 10 – 14
- Their parents/caregivers
- Teachers, community members, health providers



For VYAs, GUG materials provide information and prompts discussion about puberty, gender equality, healthy relationships/sexuality, and violence

Filling the Gap: Rapid Learning Study

-  Rapid Learning Methods: a set of approaches designed to quickly and/or iteratively test program improvements and evaluate program implementation or impact
-  Our objective: Document FLE integration process and impact

Rapid Learning Study: Research Questions



What was the process taken to incorporate FLE into the MoE's distance learning programs?



What were the experiences with, and the feasibility and acceptability of, distance learning among adolescents, parents, and implementers?

Rapid Learning Study: Data Sources



Quantitative data

Global Early Adolescent Study (GEAS) – COVID Module

n=397

Nov. 2020



Monitoring data

of lessons recorded
of broadcasts
Frequency of broadcasts

Dec. 2020 – Feb. 2021



Qualitative data

Semi-structured individual interviews
n=13 adolescents age 10 – 18 (8 girls and 5 boys);
12 teachers, parents, and implementers

Findings

A Collaborative Response

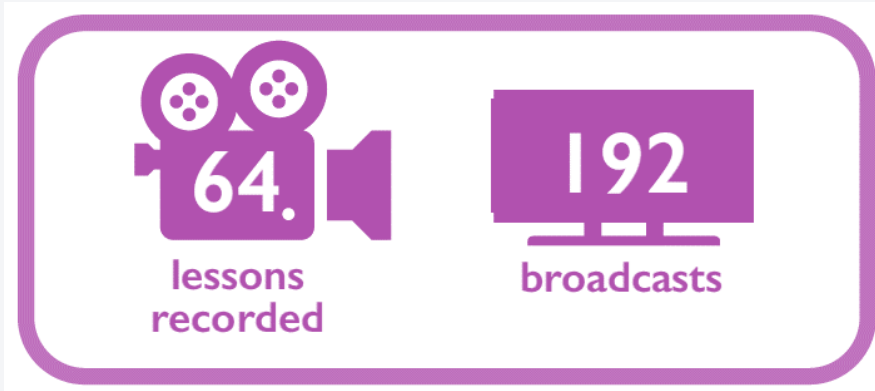


- General Secretariat of the MoE
- Directorate of Life Skills Education
- Save the Children (*Family Life Education material and financial support*)

Memorandum of Understanding - June 2020

Findings

Distance Learning Program Reach



Sessions were aired during the day between 7:30 am and 6 pm



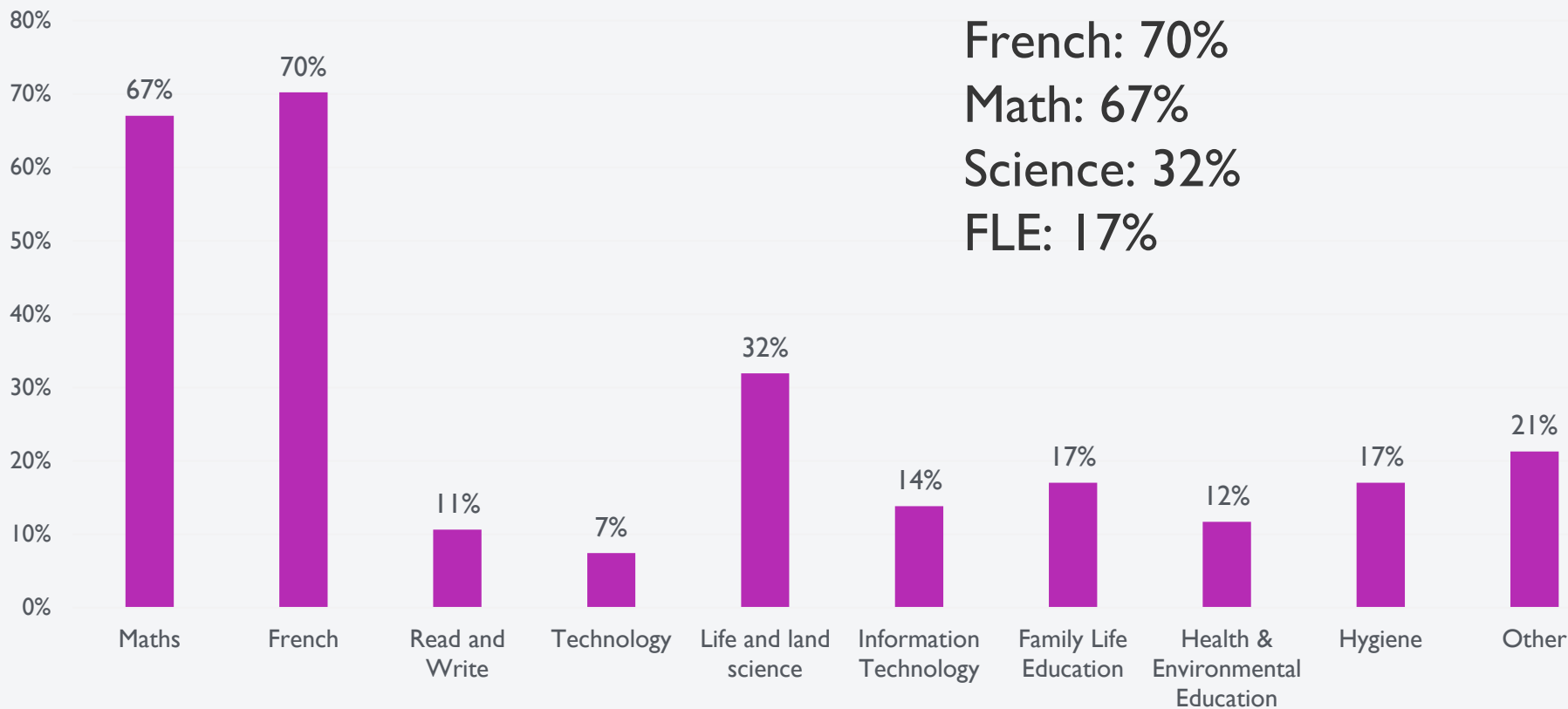
Exposure

About half of adolescents engaged in some form of the program:

56% boys and 44% girls

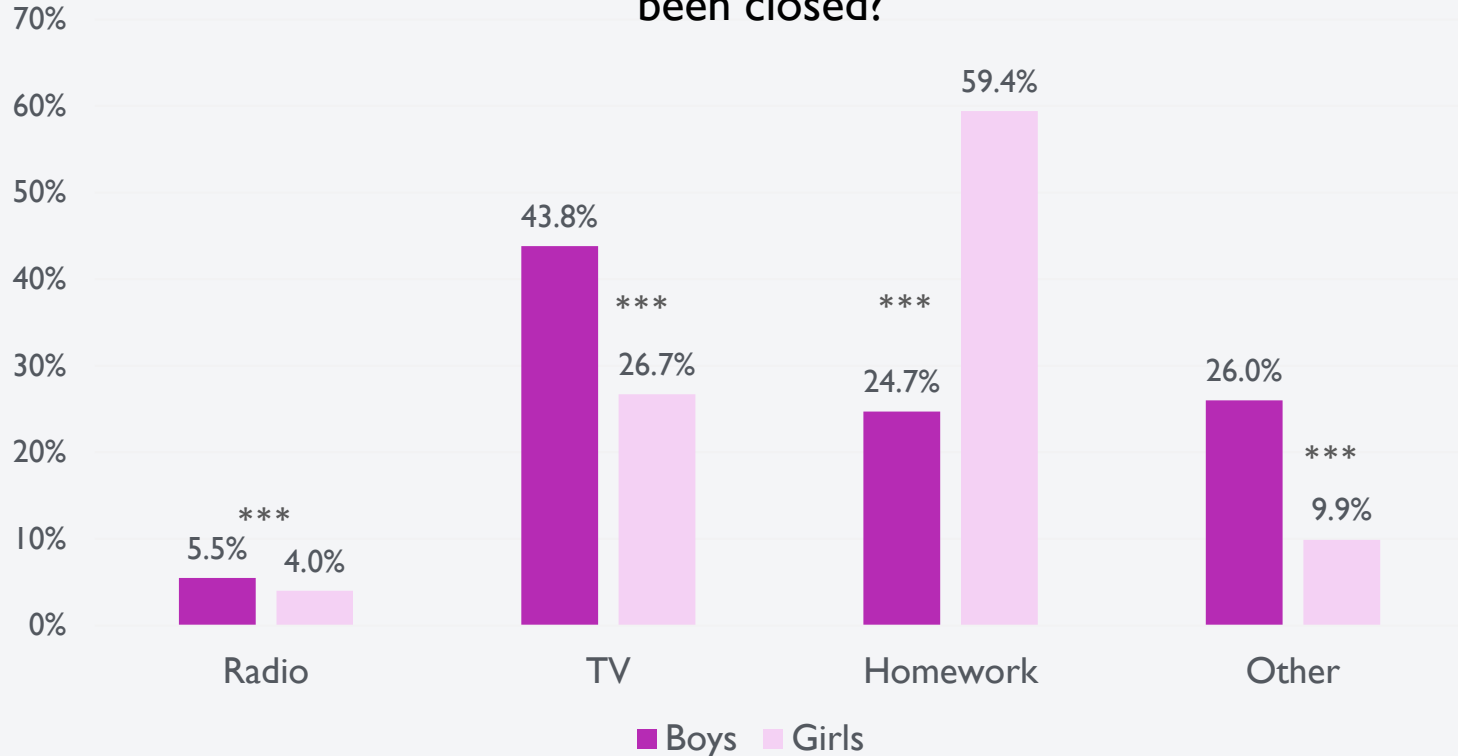
Source: GEAS sample

Lesson Topics Learned via TV and/or Radio



Types of Distance Learning Used (by Sex)

What activities have you been participating in while schools have been closed?



***p<0.001

Key Findings

Acceptability of FLE

Almost all adolescents reported....

- ✔ **Improved knowledge of FLE topics covered** (e.g., contraception, puberty, and chore sharing)
- ✔ **Found lessons to be very interesting**



I watched programs that talked about menstrual cycles. It was very interesting because in these shows they encourage parents to talk about this subject with their children because it is often a taboo in our house.

Parent, Female

Acceptability



Challenges

- ✓ Electricity outages
- ✓ Lack of access to a TV
- ✓ Lack of knowledge of broadcast schedule (irregular and not consistent)

Recommendations

- ✓ Advertise the Distance Learning programs more widely
- ✓ Broadcast at times when parents are home (e.g., 7 pm) to encourage interactivity between adolescents and parents
- ✓ Publish lessons on an online platform to allow continuous accessibility

Conclusions



TV & radio broadcasts of FLE topics feasible and acceptable in Kinshasa



Distance learning a useful way to routinely complement in-school sessions – and to engage parents



Gender and SES considerations necessary (esp. rural areas)

Acknowledgements

Co-authors

- Eric Mafuta, University of Kinshasa School of Public Health
- Jennifer Gayles, Save the Children Federation
- Francine Wood, Center on Gender Equity and Health
- Rebecka Lundgren, Center on Gender Equity and Health, University of California San Diego
- **Funder:** Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Data collection team
- Study participants
- Ministries in the DRC
 - Directorate of Life Skills Education

Visit us
online to
learn
more!



Resources
& Tools

[www.geh.ucsd.edu/
growing-up-great/](http://www.geh.ucsd.edu/growing-up-great/)



Passages



UC San Diego
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



Save the Children.



References

1. UNICEF. 2021. COVID-19 School closures in the DRC: Impact on the health, protection and education of children and youth. Accessed at <https://gdc.unicef.org/resource/covid-19-school-closures-drc-impact-health-protection-and-education-children-and-youth>
2. UNICEF. 2020. UNICEF DRC: COVID-19 Situation Report. <https://www.unicef.org/media/85276/file/DRC-COVID19-SitRep-21-October-2020.pdf>
3. Center on Gender Equity and Health & Save the Children International. 2021. A Case Study from DRC: Integrating Family Life Education into Distance Learning during COVID-19 Closures. La Jolla, CA: University of California San Diego.

Reasons for not watching FLE (n=78)

<u>Didn't know the course was available</u>	<u>69%</u>
<u>Subject wasn't interesting/didn't care about it</u>	<u>9%</u>
<u>Didn't have time</u>	<u>6%</u>
<u>My parents/teachers didn't allow it</u>	<u>4%</u>
<u>Training wasn't adapted to my knowledge level</u>	<u>1%</u>
<u>Language wasn't adapted to my knowledge level</u>	<u>1%</u>
<u>Other (No electricity; TV broken)</u>	<u>10%</u>