Integrating Family Life Education into Distance Learning

Learnings from COVID-related Program Adaptations in Kinshasa, DRC

Social and Behavior Change Communication Summit
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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)

Photo: UNICEF DRC Dicko
Minister of EPST Teaching on EducTV

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

Monitoring data
# of lessons recorded
# of broadcasts
Frequency of broadcasts

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

November 2020

December 2020 – February 2021
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

Exposure

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

- 56% boys and 44% girls

Source: GEAS sample

Sessions were aired during the day between 7:30 am and 6 pm.
Lesson Topics Learned via TV and/or Radio

French: 70%
Math: 67%
Science: 32%
FLE: 17%
Types of Distance Learning Used (by Sex)

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

- **Radio**
  - Boys: 5.5%
  - Girls: 4.0%

- **TV**
  - Boys: 43.8%
  - Girls: 26.7%
  - *****p<0.001**

- **Homework**
  - Boys: 24.7%
  - Girls: 59.4%
  - *****p<0.001**

- **Other**
  - Boys: 26.0%
  - Girls: 9.9%
  - *****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
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

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- 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/
References


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