

GOING ONLINE FOR SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

MEANINGFULLY ENGAGING ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND
YOUNG WOMEN FOR SMARTER DIGITAL INTERVENTIONS

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL
METHODOLOGY

PREPARED BY:

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, including a literature review, face-to-face qualitative interviews, and validation workshops in each location.

Research locations

India, Malawi, and Rwanda were chosen from the seven global TEGA geographies because of their potential to offer contrasting contexts for adolescent girls' and young women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and use of mobile devices.

In India, the study took place in the urban locations of Jaipur and Patna. The city of Patna is located in the Patna Metropolitan Region in Bihar, Northeast India. Jaipur is the capital city of Rajasthan, Northwest India.

In Malawi, the study was conducted in the urban and semi-urban of Lilongwe and Zomba.

In Rwanda, interviews were held in urban and semi-urban locations. Nyarugenge is an urban area within Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda, and Musanze is a semi-urban area located in Northern Rwanda.

Literature review

A literature review was used to understand the existing research related to adolescent girls' and young women's access to digital technology and SRHR information, ensure the added value of this study, and provide important contextual information on which to ground the research. The review sought global development literature, as well as evidence from each of the focus countries explored in the study: India, Malawi, and Rwanda.

Considering the importance of currently available technology to this research, the literature's publishing date was a key criterion; the latest sources were prioritized and material dated pre-2010 was excluded.

The process of finding relevant sources included:

- Using keywords in Google Scholar to find academic papers;
- Searching relevant journal library databases;
- Accessing global data platforms, such as Demographic Health Surveys (DHS) and the World Health Organization (WHO), for country-level statistics and trend data;
- Reviewing industry conference keynote presentations and the sources referenced;
- Searching recent media and news articles; and
- Reviewing blogs by industry experts and leading non-governmental organizations.

In total, 43 articles were reviewed, including data points from the WHO, the DHS, and Statista, an online business data platform with information on industries worldwide, were used.

METHODS

Technology nabled Girl Ambassadors (TEGA)

TEGA, powered by Girl Effect, is a peer-to-peer research methodology co-created with young people. It draws on the principles of meaningful youth engagement, human-centered design, and lean research. With TEGA, adolescent girls and young women ages 16 to 24 conducted interviews within their own communities using the TEGA research app on a smartphone. All of the TEGAs in India, Malawi, and Rwanda hold certificates in digital interviewing skills from the Market Research Society. TEGAs received additional SRHR training specifically for this study to ensure they had adequate SRHR knowledge to guide discussions, understand participants' answers, and ask effective follow-up questions to start unpacking these complexities.

Ethical approval

Prior to the start of the research, the three research teams were required to submit a research proposal to the ethics boards in their countries for review and approval. The protocols were submitted to the Ashirwad Hospital and Research Centre in Maharashtra, India, the National Committee on Research in Social Sciences and Humanities in Malawi, and the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda in Rwanda. The application packages consisted of the research background and objectives, information on the TEGA method, data-collection tools, consent forms, an account of the analysis plan, the resumes of TEGA research staff, and a detailed budget with timelines. Research clearance and permits were granted in the three countries.

Recruitment

Research participants were recruited in the target locations through our local implementing partners: Restless Development in India, Rwanda Women's Network in Rwanda, and the Centre for Youth and Development in Malawi. Specific instructions were communicated to local implementing partners

during briefings, including the need to recruit against the recruitment screener. The screener sought respondents based on gender, age, mobile access, and regular mobile usage. Recruiters were equipped with quotas and recruitment screeners in the local language.

TEGA projects employ purposive sampling. Strategies employed to recruit participants included utilizing community meetings, existing community programs, 'roaming', and door-to-door techniques. Adequate information about the purpose of the study was provided to respondents and their parents/caregivers, if they were under 18. Field staff in the respective sites discussed the objective of the research in advance with respondents and guardians. Based on supporting literature and experience from conducting projects, the TEGA research team found that saturation in qualitative findings is reached at 30 to 50 respondents. Sample sizes were also based on the number of interviews TEGAs can comfortably complete in one day.

Overall, 169 adolescent girls and young women ages 15 to 24 were included in the study. Participants were a mixture of internet-enabled phone owners and internet-enabled phone borrowers, from urban and semi-urban locations.

Consent procedure

Girl Effect developed a comprehensive consent form for this study and conducted a consent collection briefing for its local partner field team in each site before respondent recruitment. This detailed the step-by-step process for how informed consent and assent needs to be collected for both adults and respondents under the age of 18. Before TEGAs commenced an interview, the field staff checked the consent and assent forms and verified that they were duly signed and understood by the respondent. This was verified through short check-back questions asked to the respondent. A picture of the signed consent page was also photographed using the TEGA device and automatically saved in the Data Hub to ensure that, if paper forms were

lost, a record of consent would be maintained. After fieldwork, all consent forms were collected by field staff and transferred in person to the Girl Effect offices in each location. A contact person was provided for respondents, and the consent and assent forms clearly indicated a named local partner support staff member they could easily contact at any point to ask questions or withdraw consent.

Safeguarding

TEGAs' and respondents' safety and wellbeing are at the heart of the TEGA methodology. In each country where there are TEGA networks, TEGAs work with a local implementing partner, which has a pre-established presence in the network locations. Girl Effect and the local partner enter into a Safeguarding Partner Agreement in which all reporting mechanisms and safety and safeguarding procedures are agreed upon. Additionally, TEGA maintains location-specific risk assessments to identify, assess, and mitigate contextual risks. TEGAs and local partner field staff also sign a TEGA Commitment outlining their commitment to adhere to Girl Effect's code of conduct and appropriate behavior for how to interact with staff members and TEGAs.

TEGAs conduct fieldwork in pairs, with supervision from a local partner staff member, and have a help button installed on their phones that they can press should they feel in danger. Safety of participants answering questions is also considered. None of the respondents wished to remain anonymous during interviews, and all adolescent respondents chose to have their pictures taken and voices recorded. Despite this, all respondent data included in this report has been anonymized.

Research question formulation and survey tool generation

Several stages of desk review and consultation were undertaken to develop the final interviewing tools:

- Initial questions were developed, in collaboration with Women Deliver, and narrowed down by taking an in-depth look at data and knowledge gaps in the area of adolescent SRHR in the literature review.
- Girl Effect conducted a rapid consultation with delegates at the 2019 Women Deliver Conference. Thirty people were interviewed via the TEGA application, and attendees were invited to provide written feedback on several proposed research questions. This data was analyzed and informed the final design.
- Interview guides were designed in line with the principles of lean research, with a focus on keeping interviews short, engaging, and geared towards the research objectives.
- TEGAs and Women Deliver Young Leaders were given the opportunity to review the survey tools and give feedback during the design process.

Due to the sensitive nature of the research topic, a range of indirect questioning techniques were included in the interview guides. TEGAs utilized projective techniques by asking some questions indirectly—about adolescent girls and young women rather than the participants themselves — to allow respondents to answer the question without feeling like they were sharing very personal information. Similarly, a vignette was used to enable participants to answer multiple questions based on their perception of the character “Sarah” in “Sarah’s story.” This approach has been successfully employed in previous TEGA research to gain more depth than some of the direct questions in the survey, and to encourage insight into participants’ perception of other adolescent girls and young women.

Interview tools were translated into Chichewa, Kinyarwanda, and Hindi for each research location. TEGA reviewed the translations of the tools to ensure the language remained accurate, youth-friendly, easy to understand, and free of jargon.

Qualitative Interviews

Piloting

In each location, the survey tool was piloted with a small sample of two to three participants, who matched the sampling criteria for the study but were not recruited participants. TEGA practiced the survey with these adolescent girls and young women and then completed a short feedback survey on their TEGA device. The entire process was filmed to help understand whether the questions were able to broach the intended topics and whether TEGAs were delivering them well. Feedback from the pilot led to the refinement of the tool, in terms of length, and the merging of some questions to limit repetition.

Survey implementation

TEGAs explored the research questions in one wave of 30-minute semi-structured interviews with adolescent girls and young women. One-on-one interviews were conducted without guardian supervision. TEGA conducted interviews in quiet community spaces or respondents’ homes— whichever was more appropriate. These interviews were primarily qualitative in nature, including audio and video questions, with responses ranging from one to three minutes long. Supplementary quantitative questions were added, including scale questions and single- or multi-code questions covering demographics, school status, and some information on mobile ownership and frequently accessed digital platforms.

ANALYSIS

The Data Hub is Girl Effect’s centralized database, which houses all TEGA data. Here, data can be viewed immediately when TEGAs upload it after completing their interviews. Technology, similar to BitTorrent, ensures video files are transferred quickly, even when operating in areas with slow network speeds. TEGAs collect data during interviews with participants in the form of audio, video, photo, and closed-question responses (single-/multi-code and scale answers). TEGA’s unique methodology provides the opportunity to actually see — rather than just read about — adolescent girls’ and young women’s responses, bringing tone, nuance, and greater insights into how they feel about issues that affect their lives. The Data Hub programmatically organizes the data in a way that allows for quick and easy statistics for each closed question. Audio and video files can be instantly listened to or watched, and the researcher can tag relevant topics. Researchers can also view the complete data set within the Data Hub in a table format and filter the responses in a variety of ways.

All data was transcribed and translated by in-country translators, who are specifically trained to translate TEGA data from adolescent participants and moderate any safeguarding issues that may arise in the responses. The Data Hub automatically creates tags of common words, which is a useful way to search for relevant data across multiple projects and geographies within the Data Hub.

After translation, data were exported as a CSV file. The CSV file showed codes for both quantitative data and the qualitative translated transcripts. The files were then collated and uploaded into Google Sheets, where multiple researchers could access and interrogate the data by individual, theme or segment. The analysis team consisted of six trained qualitative researchers from India, Malawi, Rwanda, and the United Kingdom.

For this qualitative study, researchers conducted both thematic analysis and coding in Excel. Thematic analysis was conducted per country to enable insights into geographies as a whole and to establish any differences between urban and semi-

urban locations, older and younger respondents, and phone owners and borrowers. Once thematic analysis was complete, the analysis team had a two-hour download workshop to discuss the research findings. The topline insights were established in this workshop, which were then to be confirmed or questioned by coding the data.

The research team then used a spreadsheet to code all meaningful information contained within the qualitative sample, as well as to analyze the total sample quantitatively. Once fully coded, the team analyzed the codes to complete a bespoke analysis framework in Excel, organized according to the key questions and themes of the research. Each researcher working on the data analysis and populated the framework with their findings corresponding to the theme and audience they were analyzing. Seeing each other's findings helped to build on knowledge throughout the analysis process. The team had regular download meetings to share and reflect on emerging findings and check any contradictions that emerged between the thematic analyses and coding.

To test for any differences between usage patterns among phone owners and borrowers, and between older (young women) and younger (adolescent girls) participants, TEGA researcher ran a Fisher's exact test, which is a statistical test used to detect any association between variables.

Validation workshops

In each country, between 10 and 12 adolescent girls and young women were selected from the original TEGA interview sample and brought together to participate in a validation workshop. Participatory techniques and exercises were employed to unpack and generate discussions around the qualitative findings, understand how these findings can be used for advocacy efforts, and ask participants to develop recommendations on how digital platforms could be optimized to improve SRHR.

In India, the validation workshop took place on 14 October 2019. Due to the long distances between study locations in India, validation workshops took place in Jaipur, as it was most accessible for the Girl Effect team and the Jaipur respondents. The workshop was conducted in Hindi with 12 participants, including six phone owners and six phone borrowers. Two TEGAs were present to help facilitate the activities. A Women Deliver Young Leader, Poorvi Mehrota, was present for the entire workshop and led the advocacy session.

In Malawi, the validation workshop took place in Chinsapo, Lilongwe district on 26 October 2019. Lilongwe was selected as it was a convenient location for respondents and the Girl Effect staff. Risk assessments were conducted for adolescent girls and young women travelling from outside Lilongwe. The workshop, conducted in Chichewa, had 11 participants ages 16 to 21, including seven phone owners and four phone borrowers. A Women Deliver Young Leader, Talimba Chisala Bandawe, was present.

In Rwanda, the validation workshop took place on 19 October 2019 in Kigali, and included adolescent girls and young women from Musanze and Kigali. Kigali was selected as the workshop location because it was convenient for respondents from both locations, and the Girl Effect Rwanda staff. Risk assessments were conducted for adolescent girls and young women travelling from outside Kigali. The workshop, conducted in Kinyarwanda, had 11 participants ages 16 to 24, including six phone owners and five phone borrowers. A gender specialist, Colette Nyinawumuntu, was also present.

Youth involvement in research design, implementation, and reporting

Women Deliver Young Leaders: The Women Deliver Young Leaders are a network of youth advocates who advance gender equality in their communities, countries, and around the globe. They were involved at several points during the research process. Young Leaders and people under the age of 30 were engaged during the Women Deliver 2019 Conference to comment on the broad research area. Two Women Deliver Young Leaders helped facilitate the validation workshops. The Women Deliver Young Leaders Research Committee also provided feedback on the draft questions, validation workshops, and first draft of the report.

The TEGAs: TEGAs were involved in research design, quality assurance, and analysis. They shared feedback on content and translations of the research survey. After the fieldwork, TEGAs reflected on the research they completed, including thoughts related to participant observations, emerging themes, and trends. TEGAs also helped facilitate the validation workshops conducted in each location by encouraging group work and discussing key findings. TEGAs also reflected on the research they completed after fieldwork in "TEGA Talks". These function similarly to a traditional researcher writing up post-interview notes. TEGAs answer questions in a digital survey on their TEGA devices about their observations of the participants, emerging themes or trends they noticed, and reflections pertaining to their own skills as researchers. As TEGAs become more experienced, these observations become increasingly useful to the analysis process, and they have been used alongside the interview data to inform this report.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

Sampling

Qualitative studies, due to their small sample sizes, are not numerically representative but provide significant insights into and understanding of the lived realities of adolescent girls and young women. The study did not collect demographic data on ethnicity, religion, marital status, or caste, as TEGA research only collects data deemed necessary for a project. Marital status was not collected due to marriage laws in Rwanda and India, making any disclosures of marriages below the legal age a safeguarding issue. The study did not interview boys and men, as it was outside of the research's scope.

Social desirability bias and openness

Parts of the TEGA data show how adolescent girls and young women present themselves to others, rather than reflect private behavior. TEGAs picked up on some adolescent girls and young women giving answers that are socially desirable rather than realistic. However, overall, TEGAs reported in TEGA Talks that respondents were comfortable and open in answering their questions. In India, many participants said they never imagined they would be able to talk about SRHR, but felt comfortable throughout the process. In Malawi, TEGAs reported that they put in extra time at the beginning of the interview to warm up respondents and ease them into the interview, because some were initially nervous. In Rwanda, TEGAs observed that the younger interview participants (ages 15 to 18) were more open in their responses than the older participants.

Recruitment challenges

The difficulty of recruiting phone borrowers in both Malawi (all ages) and Rwanda (for older participants) was an unexpected challenge for this study. In India, quotas were achieved without difficulty. There are some context-specific reasons for these shortfalls in the sample, as detailed below.

Malawi

- Adolescent girls and young women borrowers often borrow a basic feature phone that is not internet-enabled.
- Adolescent girls and young women under the age of 16 are rarely allowed to borrow a smartphone or internet-enabled mobile phone because these devices are considered a luxury.
- Adolescent girls and young women may be living away from their peers, from whom they borrow most easily.
- Adolescent girls and young women may not be allowed to borrow regularly enough to meet the sampling criteria.

Rwanda

- People are only able to obtain an identity card at the age of 16, and phone-ownership registration is contingent on having an identity card. Therefore, girls and boys under the age of 16 cannot register their SIM cards in their own names. This results in SIM cards being registered under family members' or other contacts' names. This may explain why for younger participants, the borrower quota was easily met.
- Students are not allowed to have mobile phones in school; if they have one, they keep it at home, so young women do not always have their phones with them to lend them out.
- Previous TEGA research in Rwanda shows that adolescent girls and young women who borrow phones may not say so, because of stigma and community suspicion that they have a "sugar daddy" or a secret boyfriend.