



**ADOLESCENT
GIRLS** COMMUNITY
OF PRACTICE



JUST LIKE MY CHILD
FOUNDATION

Intentional Design Practitioner Report

The Girl Power Project (Just Like My Child Foundation) Moves Forward with Intentional Design to Intensify Regional Impact, Central Uganda

By Tessa Davis, Annette McFarland, Audrey Kanyesigye, Agnes Achom, Allen Kakakawa, Janat Nakigudde, Judith Akware, and Sophie Soares

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<https://buildcommunity4girls.org/>



About

The Intentional Design approach has been foundational to the Population Council’s work since 2000, when on-the-ground programs to reach the most excluded girls in the poorest communities greatly expanded. This practitioner report is part of a series of 20 reports reflecting work in sites around the world from 2000 to 2020. The Intentional Design approach was implemented in these sites with nongovernmental and governmental partners who explored the question: Why invest in girls? Once that was understood, the Council offered learning tools to navigate the questions: Where do we work? With whom do we work? When, chronologically, in the girls’ life cycles are the most crucial moments? Which content is meaningful and realistic and builds girls’ protective assets? What does success look like for different segments of girls?

In 2013, the Girl Roster tool was added when it was clear that many partners lacked the technical and scientific resources to establish the “universe” of girls in the places they had selected to work. Intentional Design tools—with the Roster being the most known and catalytic learning aid—have been utilized in South and East Asia; the Middle East; Central, East, and West Africa; North America; Latin America; and the Caribbean.

The Roster has been adapted for use in an array of sociodemographic contexts including dispersed rural villages, poor urban neighborhoods, conflict zones, refugee camps, densely packed informal/migrant-receiving settlements, high-risk HIV zones, before and after epidemics, as a rebuilding tool, and in Native American reservation communities. In every context, the Roster provided a transformative opportunity to see girls’ lives more systematically, drawing both quantitative and qualitative information. The efforts to estimate and segment the universe of girls has challenged initial assumptions about girls, families, safe and unsafe zones in communities, and the accessibility and relevance of services, even among those who felt they knew their community, including longstanding program staff. Across the board, practitioners report that on-the-ground application of the learning tools generates surprising and useful knowledge vital to shaping their work, assessing its reach, and articulating plans for expansion.

In the 20 reports that comprise this series, our partners share their experiences applying Intentional Design tools and principles. The reports represent just a few on-the-ground projects, but most of our partners report that the Intentional Design approach has taken root. We honor our partners for their honesty and dedication. They inspire us.

Judith Bruce and Sophie Soares

Authors, *Intentional Design: Reaching the Most Excluded Girls in the Poorest Communities—A Guide for Practitioners and Advocates*, from which these reports were excerpted.

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Findings and Decisions	Implementation Observations and Adaptations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Intentional Design/Girl Roster process was implemented, in part, to find out why an appreciable number of girls were dropping out of school and marrying early, with the intention of reaching 50–80% of the girls 10–14 years old. • It is necessary to focus on the girls living in the catchment areas of the smaller schools (heretofore excluded because of the small number in the classrooms) both because the higher proportions out of school and the lack of other social/health/other supportive services the Roster revealed double and triple the disadvantage of girls living in the catchment areas around smaller schools. • The Roster process helped to engage both community members and JLMC field staff in uncovering underused and valuable resources (ranging from dairy goats to entrepreneurship support services) and also unsafe places (e.g., bars, swamps, boreholes, at certain times of day). • Maps were terrific follow-up in rostered communities and quickly generated in new communities, serving as an excellent foundation for planning and building trust going forward. • The Roster process uncovered extreme and invisible situations (e.g., disabled children), which required immediate follow-up care by the field team or community. • JLMC utilized the Building Assets Toolkit to refine program content and expand the range of skills of JLMC and partners to deliver needed content (livelihoods, better knowledge of community) and strategies to engage socially excluded girls at greater disadvantage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing a Community Mapping Tool simultaneous to rostering, and improved insights from both, helped JLMC to “see” households that are highly disadvantaged alongside physical conditions and underutilized resources. • Trained field staff were able to not only collect the quantitative information from the households using the Roster but also make qualitative assessments and offer almost simultaneous care if extreme situations were uncovered. • The Roster results were used as a basis of calculating projections of off-track girls and confirmation that girls in the catchment areas of small schools were especially likely to be out of school. This information, combined with population data, served to enlarge the geographic areas in which JLMC operated, adding girls in five catchment areas that had smaller schools.

Girl Power Project Intentions and Target Population

Just Like My Child Foundation’s Girl Power Project® is a transformational program targeting girls in central Uganda as they enter the most vulnerable juncture of their lives: adolescence. This project steps in just as girls in early puberty face the choices that will either lead them to a life of early marriage, pregnancy, and disease, or alternatively, a life of education, economic independence, and delayed marriage. It does so by aiming to reach a high proportion (50–80%) of girls aged 12–15 years in a given community with interactive content—covering subjects such as sexual and reproductive health (SRH), financial literacy, self-defense, and civic engagement—delivered through an intensive two-year program. Girls receive 60+ hours of content through two multiday workshops, a weekend overnight camp, and monthly two-hour-long club sessions. Moreover, adults and boys in the community receive two multiday workshops focused on similar content with an emphasis on supporting girls.

Selecting Geographies for Implementation of the Girl Roster

Having worked in Uganda since 2006, Just Like My Child (JLMC) selected places strategically in which to implement the Roster. In the communities in which JLMC had built schools

as part of a separate program, the teachers had created strong learning environments with JLMC’s support but still reported appreciable levels of girls dropping out and getting married as children.

The Girl Power Project was a response to these gaps, and it was built as a layer on top of the other successful programs JLMC had established. These programs had already grown self-sustainable in the communities where they had fostered a relationship and now wished to reach a new population and ensure the Girl Power Project was additive to what existed on the ground. The Roster was implemented in all key areas in which JLMC programs already existed.

Selection and Engagement of Community Leaders in Rostering

In November 2015, JLMC selected and trained 19 community leaders in central Uganda (Table 1) to serve as implementers of the Girl Roster, a role they served across three parishes (which make up Uganda’s subdivisions) over an eight-day period. While some of the leaders had already engaged with JLMC in the past, the remaining leaders were carefully vetted and selected by longtime JLMC partner Save for Health Uganda (SHU), which was deeply embedded and highly respected in the three parishes in which the Girl Roster was carried

TABLE 1. NOVEMBER 2015 KEY GIRL ROSTER FIELD TEAM AND TRAINERS*

Rebecca Nalubega	David Muyenja	Ismail Nyanzi
Carol Giibwa	Kizito Benah	Yusuf Kimuli
Flavia Alimo	Joseph Buguma	Goretti M. Nabunya
Agnes Achom	Allen Nakakawa	Joyce Nakitende
Livingstone Kanakulkya	Regina Naiga	Judith Akware
Tito Lubega	Ivan Kabaale	Hassan Kizito
Rebecca Namugabe	Annette McFarland (M&E Specialist)	Audrey Kanyesigye (Country Director)
Tessa Davis (Program Director)		

*The names highlighted in blue served as Girl Roster trainers for others who were in the first phase of rostering.

FIGURE 1. OFFICIAL GIRL ROSTER BADGES WERE PROVIDED TO COMMUNITY LEADERS WHO SERVED AS ROSTERERS IN NOVEMBER 2015. BADGES INCLUDED THE ROSTERER'S PHOTO, AND GIRL POWER PROJECT, POPULATION COUNCIL, JLMC, AND LOCAL PARTNER LOGOS



(Photo: JLMC.)

out. SHU knew precisely who could implement the Roster effectively, intensify community engagement, and craft improvement (sometimes immediate, where difficulties were found) on behalf of girls. The leaders, or rosterers, were also incentivized by JLMC to implement the tool through the following culturally appropriate mechanisms:

- A daily per diem, lunch allowance, and transport reimbursement;
- An official Girl Roster badge that provided them credibility as they moved through communities (see Figure 1)¹;

FIGURE 2. A FIELD TEAM MEMBER RECEIVES HER TRAINING CERTIFICATE



- A certificate confirming their training and experience in carrying out the Roster, to be included in their resume and job search, should they wish (see Figure 2);

Before rostering and to onboard the communities, letters were sent to official community leaders to request permission to conduct the activity. Once more, the selected rosterers proved useful as they were well known and their motives were trusted by the official community leaders.

In the second phase of rostering, which occurred in April 2016, the field team was comprised of 15 rosterers. In a clear demonstration of how capacity had been built, these 15 rosterers were prepared for rostering by “phenomenal” trainers—four individuals from the first rostering experience who stood out for their skill set, including an affinity for team-building, familiarity with technology, excellent facilitation and training skills, and keen interest and passion for the implementation process. These trainers are highlighted in Table 2.

In this first phase of rostering, the field team rostered 1,249 households making up 76% of the population in the three parishes.

¹ Note that an ID badge for rosterers is only effective in certain contexts. Some rosterers might need to consider issues of safety. For other rosterers, having an ID badge might actually challenge the work from getting done as it might make the process overly formal or because households may be wary of the organization due to their own safety concerns.

TABLE 2. APRIL 2016 KEY GIRL ROSTER FIELD TEAM AND TRAINERS*

Aisha Nakito	Anna Akello	Norah Ssekadde
Nauma Nabakooza	Jjuko Ssalongo	Lovinsa Opyera
Sarah Nankanja	Mariam Nampiima	Martin Luther Mukalazi
Rukia Birungi	Hammy Ssenkindu	Raphael Opyera
Fred Lwanga	Joseph Buguma	Carol Giibwa
Ivan Kabaale	Flavia Alimo	
David Muyenja	Florence Nassuna	

* Individuals highlighted in blue served as Girl Roster trainers in April 2016 after serving as excellent rosterers in the first rostering in November 2015.

Analyzing and Visualizing the Intentional Design Information

Learning How to Prioritize Segments and Specific Schools

Concerned with getting sufficient coverage of the girls 10–14 years old in the three poor parishes rostered, the Roster revealed that approximately 913 girls in this age range lived in these areas, of which JLMC wished to reach 50–80%, or approximately 457 to 730 girls total, a solid target number within its own geographic confines.

The initial Girl Roster exercise also guided JLMC to change the criteria for selecting parishes. For example, one parish mapped had very few primary schools and all but one had small populations of girls in the target age range. Previously, JLMC had determined not to implement in the catchment areas around schools with fewer than 50 girls in the target age range of 10–14 years, but as a result of the Roster information, JLMC learned that girls in these catchment areas and in places that were generally underserved in the surrounding community (remote areas with longer walking distances to schools, minimal to no local health clinics or community-based organizations [CBOs] providing support around education, health, income generation, etc.) were at higher risk of being out of school and of child marriage. So, in order to reach 50–80% of the most-off-track girls in that parish, girls in the catchment areas around those smaller schools

needed to be reached. This changed JLMC’s priority geographies.

The Roster process, in the hands of the field team coming from the communities being rostered, not only provided good numeric visualizations of the “universe” of girls but also immediate, focused observation of the challenges girls were facing and the nature of their communities. The field team noted a higher incidence of child-headed households than anticipated and poor living conditions (such as living in mud homes rather than cement homes, being remote from water sources, having no electricity or land for farming). They also observed a number of girls with disabilities, some requiring immediate follow-up. Due to JLMC’s partnerships built over the years and the thoughtful selection and training of the field team, the team was prepared almost immediately to link many households with appropriate resource persons and services.

Visualizing the Information onto Vital Real-Time Community Maps—A Form of Advocacy and Linking of Neglected Off-Track Girls to Services

Rostering was undertaken simultaneously with the mapping of community resources, including unsafe spaces (such as bars or swamps) and not previously apparent or underused resources (where one could obtain loans, health insurance coverage, livestock, etc.). Within three days of rostering, JLMC saw an opportunity to

transform a map of unsafe spaces and lesser-used resources into a flyer—a service within itself to be distributed to rostered communities, with the names and contact information of helpful resource persons such as local child-protection officers (see Figure 3). Extra flyers were given to community leaders as a real-time resource, and the field team was armed with calling cards as they went door-to-door. This spontaneous innovation reflects the deep service commitment of JLMC and the empathy and strength of their field team, and validates JLMC as a trusted resource.

Mapping Your Community—Generating New Content

Commitment to innovation included swiftly integrating a mapping exercise into sessions with girls as well. In an early session of our curriculum, girls came together and used phones to create their own maps of the community so that they could articulate times and places in which they felt safe.²

Integrating Intentional Design and the Roster into the JLMC Community Introduction and Program Design Process

In April 2016, in Ssambwe Parish, another cadre of well-trained rosterers implemented the Roster across 808 households in three days and generated a similar map of resources in the parish as had been generated in the previous experience. Table 3 shows the results of that rostering—29 girls aged 10–14 were out of school, which represented 8.7% of the girls aged 10–14; 77 of 778 girls aged 6–17 were out of school, about 9%, comparable to the national average at the time (the 2011 DHS stated 9% of children 7–14 were out of school).

Half of the girls aged 10–14 (50.3%) lived with both parents, while the other half (49.7%) lived with only one or neither of their parents.

FIGURE 3. EXAMPLE OF A RESOURCE MAP/FLYER PRODUCED TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF RESOURCES AND GIRLS’ FEELINGS ABOUT SAFETY



This was slightly more than the national figure reported in the 2011 DHS of 44% of children under age 18 living with one or neither parent.

Combining Roster Information with National Data

This exercise was undertaken to identify the most-off-track girls and generate evidence-anchored segment-specific targets (50–80% saturation) to make these projections. JLMC combined national population data for the parish (a total of 7,835 people were living in Ssambwe parish) with Roster results to generate crude but useful estimates of how many girls 10–14 they needed to reach. As there were about 619 total girls living in Ssambwe in

² An exercise like this was suggested by the Girls in Emergencies (GiE) Collaborative, but to the Council's knowledge has not been implemented by GiE partners.

TABLE 3. GIRL ROSTER OVERVIEW OUTPUT TABLE FOR SSAMBWE PARISH, UGANDA (2016)³

Age group	In School			Out of School			Has a child	Does not have a child	Total
	Living with both parents	Living with one parent	Living with neither parent	Living with both parents	Living with one parent	Living with neither parent			
6-9	157	56	45	6	7	0	—	—	271
10-12	97	43	46	7	4	5	—	—	202
13-14	59	27	31	4	8	1	0	0	130
15-17	76	35	23	12	12	11	5	1	175
18-24	44	26	28	33	26	35	81	11	284
Total	433	187	173	62	57	52	86	12	1,062

2016, this gave them a range of 310 (50%) to 496 (80%) girls.

In sum, the Roster deepened JLMC's understanding of the community, connected us more closely to the community through the generation of the resource map, and provided an evidence base to identify targets for coverage with quality. It significantly expanded the geographies in which we intensified our work, with the understanding that the girls living in the catchment areas of the smaller schools were often more in need than the girls living in the catchment areas of the larger schools, thus adding five other areas to JLMC's programming.

JLMC as an Emerging Girl Roster Leader in Uganda

Given this multilevel expertise and commitment, the talents of JLMC staff have been recognized. They were invited by Mercy Corps and Girl Effect University to present their experience with the Roster and community engagement and other intentional design tools in November 2015. Armed with the experience of the Roster implementation and other Intentional Design tools of the Council (including the Building Assets Toolkit), JLMC served as a critical

resource during the training, and its experience sparked a great deal of curiosity about the tools and the overall approach.

Conclusion

Today, Intentional Design is an important aspect of the Girl Power Project, which involves three key steps. The first step is to lay the foundation for girls' empowerment. The second step is to conduct introductory workshops for girls, boys, potential mentors, and adults to introduce community members to the Girl Power Project, develop mentor capacity, and increase advocacy among adults for girls. The third is to hold a camp where in-school girls and teachers are selected, trained, and graduate as peer mentors. In that first step, laying the foundation, the project encourages the implementation of the Girl Roster to gain insight into specific issues faced by girls and to document how many live in each community to be served by the project.

JLMC also encourages the utilization of the Building Assets Toolkit and employing its results to assess what priority girls aged 10-14 years need, but also when JLMC needs to add content to build those required assets (such as giving

³ Note that the contemporary Girl Roster Overview Output Table differs from this one from the JLMC rostering experience. This table does not include girls who are "Unmarried and Have Children" and it also consolidates the age range of 18-19 and 20-24 into one age category.

girls with disabilities or migrant girls specific skills).

Ultimately, Intentional Design underscored and helped build our existing creed and taught us a lot more about what is real and true. As is often experienced on the ground, data provided by the government is not always valid, and so knowing that there were a lot of girls off-track and in precarious situations we used Intentional Design to help identify what in the available national data was real for the populations we were serving and what was missing. For example, the Intentional Design approach revealed that the proportion of girls not going on to secondary school was much higher than what national-level data indicated. Sessions such as our financial literacy club sessions were intended to address this dropout between primary and secondary school by providing girls skills to budget and earn small savings that could then be used on secondary school fees. Intentional Design deepened our commitment to reach as many girls as we could with the Girl Power Project because we learned not only our denominator but where promises—such as the universal primary education that Uganda offers—were being met on the surface but not successfully (e.g., the girls who were in school but severely behind or attending inconsistently).

For more information, please visit: <https://www.justlikemychild.org/>.

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