



**ADOLESCENT
GIRLS** COMMUNITY
OF PRACTICE



Intentional Design Practitioner Report



Implementing the Girl Roster and Community Resource Scan in Sierra Leone: The Foundation of the Sierra Leone Adolescent Girls Network

By Audrey Anderson

Contributions from Chernor Bah, Vira David, Salma Babu, Fiona Kaikai,
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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"> • Girls, particularly around age 15, increasingly are off-track because they drop out of school, there are no continuing schooling options, and/or they are married and have a child. • The vast proportion of girls are living with just one or neither parent, plausibly for the reason that some have moved close by the secondary school some distance away (this would have to be explored more in focus groups or individual interviews). • There are significant findings for the Because I Am a Girl project—the age range is far too broad, reaching participants 18–25, although it was only intended to reach 7–14-year-olds. Any program for females in a resource-poor area will likely draw a broader than anticipated range of participants. • The participants may not be the most-at-risk. For example, in the case of Songo, 78% of those living with both parents were participating, but just 36% of the large number of girls living with just one or neither parent were participating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Originally, Songo was thought to be one community in Sierra Leone. However, through implementing the Community Resource Scan, it became apparent that it was, in practice, two communities: Songo Colony and Songo Koya. • In Sierra Leone, Plan often had to repeat the questionnaire because families would miscount the number of people in the household or forget to include someone. Because of this, it is essential that the survey include the questions on the total number of individuals in the household to ensure that no one is excluded. • The wording regarding age should read “age 25 and older” and “age 24 and younger” rather than “over/under age 25,” to ensure that individuals who are exactly 25 years old are not excluded. • Many individuals in Sierra Leone did not know their exact age, so they stated certain historical events that occurred around the time of birth, and Plan recorded an estimate. • We suspected that many families exaggerated their daughters’ educational achievement. For example, Plan received reports that three-year-olds were already in second grade. • It is important to make the questions neutral, otherwise households may overstate or understate the situation of their daughters if they think their answers affect inclusion in a new program. It is also important to train rosterers to stay neutral and not criticize the families if their daughters are, for example, out of school. • The Community Resource Scan was conducted in partnership with the local village leader, but it can also be conducted as a participatory exercise with adolescent girls in the community as appropriate.

Introduction

Overview

This document outlines practitioner experiences in the implementation of mapping tools developed by the Population Council: the Girl Roster and the Community Resource Scan.¹ Plan International USA, through a formal partnership with the Council, is working to cascade these mapping tools and methodology through its Because I Am a Girl (BIAAG) programs around the world. It is doing so to improve targeted recruitment of the most marginalized girls through a better understanding of the universe of girls in the community of intervention, as well as to learn which specific girls are benefiting from ongoing programming.

This practitioner report takes place in target communities in Plan's BIAAG program in Sierra Leone, which targeted girls 7-14 years old with a focus on reproductive health and financial literacy.

The mapping process is part of a broader effort to promote coordination among organizations working for adolescent girls globally. This effort includes the establishment of an Adolescent Girls Network in select countries/regions to foster collaboration and sharing of resources—including mapping information—among girl-focused organizations. Members of the Sierra Leone Adolescent Girls Network include Save the Children (StC), BRAC, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and Plan International, along with many local NGOs. In the first case study on Sierra Leone, the mapping was made possible by collaboration among members of the Network. The full vision of the mapping process is to collect targeted information using the Girl Roster and the Community Resource Scan on target communities and share among the Network members to strategically prioritize and plan interventions.

Why Map?

The mapping tools outlined in this report are used to translate subjective knowledge of adolescent girls to make tangible and actionable plans for these excluded populations at critical life stages. The process and methodology are in response to information that overwhelmingly points to a severe need for targeted programming for specific segments of adolescent girls:

- At puberty, adolescent girls experience a dramatic decrease in their mobility and an increase in school dropout rates, and they are at risk of early pregnancy, which in turn contributes to these risks (Hallman, Kenworthy, et al. 2013; Hallman and Peracca 2005);
- Adolescent girls, particularly younger and poorer girls, have little or no access to existing community resources such as schools, youth centers, and financial institutions (Bruce 2011b);
- Adolescent girls, particularly younger girls, are systematically excluded from programs that aim to reach “youth” or “adolescents” (Population Council 2011);
- Recruitment for youth and adolescent programs is often demand-led, resulting in elite capture of participants (Bruce 2011a).

Before a program is designed, the mapping process is used to enhance intentional recruitment, to do the following:

- Identify off-track girls who have special needs;
- Identify on-track older girls as potential mentors;
- Identify community resources that may be designated as safe spaces for girls;
- Create like segments of girls to benefit from potential programs.

¹ This was one of the foundational field exercises undertaken just pre-Ebola, engaging the initial SALONE Network members. The Network had been founded by the Population Council, BRAC, Plan, Save the Children, and nine local NGOs.

During or after a program, the mapping process shows which girls benefited from the program. Using mapping is an efficient and cost-effective way to deliver services for greater impact on targeted populations. The mapping tools complement Plan's development approach of Child-Centered Community Development (CCCD) to efficiently implement more effective programs and maximize overall impact.

Implementing the Girl Roster and Community Resource Scan in Sierra Leone

Overview

In May 2014, Plan Sierra Leone hosted a training session on the methodology and an on-the-ground mapping exercise in three communities: two where Plan had active girl-focused programs and one where Plan might potentially work in the future.

Members of the Adolescent Girls Network, including Plan, BRAC, the World Food Programme (WFP), and Metcorps, participated in the training and on-the-ground mapping, and donated organizational resources to the effort. The training was led by a representative from the Population Council, with additional facilitation by representatives from UNFPA and Plan USA.

Process and Timeframe

A one-day training was held prior to conducting the fieldwork, on the methodology and the case for mapping, hands-on training with the mobile phones and information collection tools, and the contextualization of the Girl Roster questionnaire.

Within one week, three communities in Sierra Leone were mapped:

- Songo Koya community, Western Rural Area, Sierra Leone;
- Songo Colony community, Western Rural Area, Sierra Leone;

- Yoyema community in Moyamba district, Sierra Leone.
- The total time commitment for the mapping process in Sierra Leone was as follows:
 - One day of training on the tools;
 - One day per community to implement the Girl Roster and Community Resource Scan;
 - Eight rosterers implemented the Girl Roster in less than four hours for a community of 90 households. Note: The rosterers started out collecting information in pairs, but once they became comfortable with the tools, they split up to work faster;
 - Two rosterers implemented the Community Resource Scan in less than three hours for a walkable community;
 - One day of information analysis and review.
 - Several members of the group in Sierra Leone had already conducted this mapping process in the past. If it is the first time for a group to implement the tools, taking one day for revision after first day of implementation is recommended.

Results

The following are illustrative results from the girls in Songo Colony, a BIAAG community (see Table 1).

Note: White cells indicate on-track girls (those girls age 6-17 of school-going age who are in school, unmarried, and living with one or both parents). Light-grey cells indicate off-track girls (those of school-going age who are out of school, living with no parents, and girls who are married and/or had a child under exact age 18.) In reading the Output Table, risk increases as you move to the right. Darker grey cells indicate girls who may be potential mentors, older girls with higher levels of education relative to community averages; both may have the talent, and the unmarried may have more time available to serve as mentors.

TABLE 1. WITHIN THE “UNIVERSE” OF GIRLS IN SONGO COLONY, IDENTIFYING THE GIRLS PARTICIPATING IN THE “BECAUSE I AM A GIRL” PROGRAM

Age group	Unmarried				Married		Total
	In School		Out of School		Has a child	Does not have a child	
	Living with both parents	Living with just one or neither parent	Living with both parents	Living with just one or neither parent			
6-9	2/9 (22%)	2/13 (15%)	0/1 (0%)	0/0	—	—	4/23
10-14	7/9 (78%)	13/36 (36%)	0/0	0/0	1/1 (100%)	0/0	21/46
15-17	4/5 (80%)	1/9 (11%)	0/0	1/3 (33%)	1/7 (14%)	0/3 (0%)	7/27
18-24	3/5	1/4	0/2	0/0	4/13	0/1	8/25
							40/121

Numerator = Girls in Program

Denominator = Girls in Segment

*Either status—bearing a child or being married under 18—indicates a violation of child rights.

Note: At the time of this Roster fielding, the Output Tables combined girls with one parent and neither parent; this has since been changed. Further, the age range 10-14 has now been broken into 10-12 and 13-14 because of the intensity of transitions in this age group. It is often the age at which girls who have completed primary school transition to secondary school, but as secondary school is often a distance from households and girls' labor is needed by the family, many do not make this transition.

Analysis and Programmatic Learning

Implementing the Girl Roster at this stage of the program (midline) allowed for learning which girls were benefiting from the program:

- As seen in Figures 1 and 2, the BIAAG project was reaching nearly twice as many on-track girls as off-track girls.
- Of girls in school, the project was reaching 78% of those living with both parents but just 36% of the large number of girls living with just one or neither parent.

- It is not uncommon for girls in Sierra Leone to have children by age 15-17 (see Figure 3). In Songo Colony, in fact, one girl under 15 had a child.
- There are many girls in school in Songo, more than would be expected compared with secondary information for the region. However, many girls are living with just one or neither parent (see Figure 4). One possible explanation is that Songo is a destination community for schooling, having two secondary schools, and many girls travel from more remote communities and stay with distant relatives to attend school in Songo.
- The Plan program in Sierra Leone is reaching a very broad range of ages (including 8 girls in the 18-25 age range), although the program was intended to reach only 7-14-year-olds.
- Although reaching a broad range of ages, the program is disproportionately reaching girls with more advantage (those in school and living with both parents). In the 10-14-year age range, the program reaches 78% of girls who are living with both parents and only 36% of girls who are living with just one or neither parent.

FIGURE 1. THE BIAAG PROJECT IS REACHING 26% OF OFF-TRACK GIRLS AGED 6-17

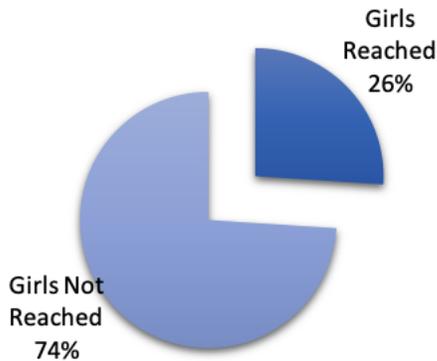


FIGURE 2. THE BIAAG PROJECT IS REACHING DOUBLE THE PERCENTAGE OF ON-TRACK GIRLS AGED 6-17



FIGURE 3. 37% OF GIRLS AGED 15-17 ARE ALREADY MARRIED AND/OR HAVE A CHILD

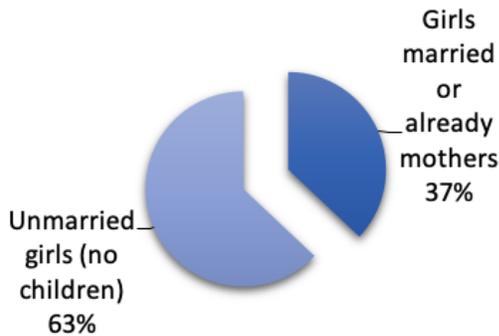


FIGURE 4. 72% OF GIRLS AGED 6-17 LIVE WITH JUST ONE OR NEITHER PARENT



Conclusion

As of 2019, Purposeful Productions² serves as the Secretariat of the Network, providing a full-time program manager as coordinator of the Network and taking the lead in the Steering Committee that sets the agenda of the group. The Network's membership increased from 80 to over 150 members by 2018. It continues to be a platform for collaboration, capacity building,

information exchange, joint advocacy, and a building of evidence-based programs for girls in Sierra Leone.

In 2019, the Network for the first time brought together all 150 members and 400 girls to commemorate the International Day of the Girl by taking over the national well of parliament with a parliamentary debate session on the newly amended sexual offences law, which was

² For more information about Purposeful Productions, please visit: <https://www.wearepurposeful.org/>.

topped off with other social activities for the enjoyment and socialization of the girls.

The Network recognizes that among its members there are different levels of expertise and that capacity gaps need to be addressed. On that note, members continually deliver capacity-building trainings and coaching to increase partners' ability to deliver quality interventions for girls.

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Due to constraints, members from the provinces are not always able to attend general meetings in Freetown, the capital city. Therefore, Network members agreed to form four district chapters in four district headquarter towns and hold regular meetings there. Updates from one member/district coordinator are provided during general bimonthly Network meetings.

The coordinator liaises with government bodies to understand their structure, explore collaboration opportunities, and link members to services and resources of the state that will be useful for the work they do.

The Network, overall, has proved the potential of learning circles, if utilized fully.

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For more information, please visit the Salone Adolescent Girls Network website: <https://www.friendsofsalone.org/the-network>.

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