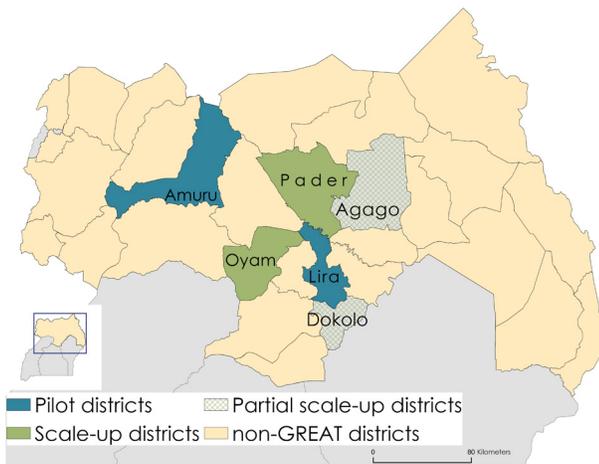


THE GREAT PROJECT



WHY DOES GREAT MATTER?

Community beliefs about ideal roles for women and men affect the well-being of girls and boys as they grow into adults. These beliefs may cause adolescents to stop going to school, marry and have children early, miss chances to earn a good living and make decisions that harm their health and the well-being of their families. For example, the belief that it is acceptable for men to beat their wives when they disagree with them may keep women from bringing up the topic of family planning.



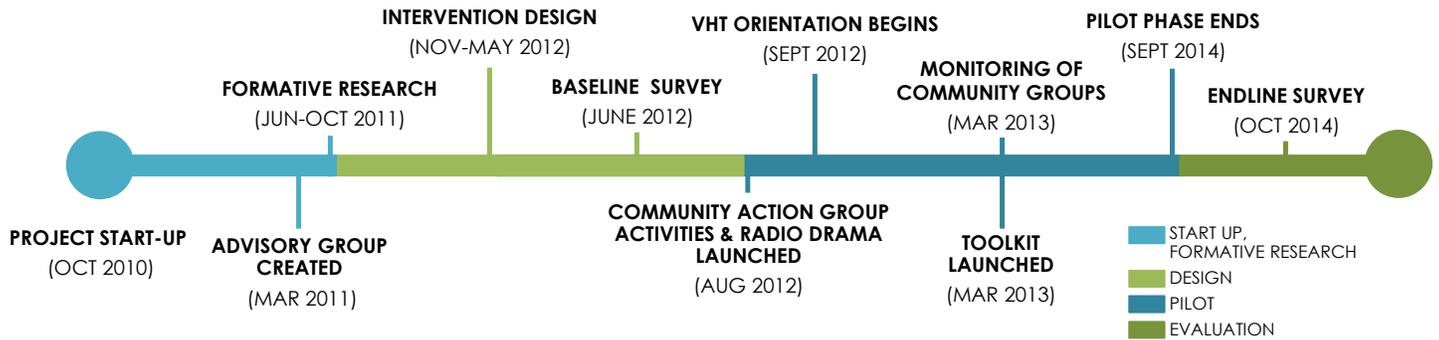
GREAT implementation sites in Northern Uganda

WHAT IS GREAT?

GREAT is a set of participatory activities to engage adolescents and adults in discussion and reflection about how to help girls and boys grow into healthy adults who live in communities free of violence and gender inequality. GREAT activities encourage equality between women and men and include: 1) Community Action Cycle: simple steps to bring communities together to take action to improve adolescent well-being; 2) Radio Drama: a serial drama with stories and songs about young people and their families living in Northern Uganda; 3) Village Health Team (VHT) Service Linkages: orientation to help VHTs offer adolescent-friendly services; and 4) Toolkit for community groups and school-based clubs: engaging stories and lively activities and games.

Beginning in August 2012, the Institute for Reproductive Health at Georgetown University, Pathfinder International and Save the Children pilot tested GREAT for 22 months in Lira and Amuru districts in partnership with Concerned Parents Association and Straight Talk Foundation. Since then, more than 260 community groups and school-based clubs used the GREAT toolkit, and activities reached over 100,000 people.





- 1 GREAT begins with establishing community action groups to identify and prioritize adolescent sexual health issues and engage community and government leaders. Each action group consists of nine members who embody GREAT principles and are committed to working with adolescents and adults in their parish. Action groups conduct awareness raising meetings and fireside chats (*wang-oos/wii-otems*) on gender equality, family planning and violence. Members also visit families and youth groups to advise them on how to apply GREAT lessons in everyday situations.
- 2 Next, staff from community-based organizations map existing community groups and school-based clubs and health services.
- 3 Community-based organization staff then select three groups in each village to receive the GREAT toolkit during a half-day orientation.
- 4 This is followed by the launch of the radio drama and VHT orientations. In order to provide support for adolescents as they adopt new ideas and behaviors, adults are engaged through the radio broadcast and activities hosted by the Community Action Group and youth groups.

WHAT MAKES GREAT UNIQUE?

GREAT was created based on a review of effective adolescent programs around the world combined with information collected through ethnographic research with adolescents, their parents and community leaders to learn about the challenges and opportunities of growing up in Northern Uganda. GREAT aims to reach enough people in a community through different activities to bring about community-wide change.

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

GREAT was designed for scale as a simple, low cost, intervention to promote dialogue and information sharing. GREAT explored whether less intensive inputs (“light” approach) could bring about changes in social norms and behavior related to gender and sexual and reproductive health. Implemented in four sub-counties, all parishes in each were included in the intervention. However, saturation of villages in each sub-county varied due to available resources: 10%, 49%, 52%, 73%. On the other hand, all communities were reached by the radio drama, which was aired twice a week in each district by at least one station with broad coverage. Community Action Groups were formed at the parish rather than village level, to keep costs and staff time to a minimum. About one-third of VHTs in the intervention area participated in gender reflections and adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health (SRH) service orientations.



GREAT PRINCIPLES

GREAT was designed to:

1. shift social norms and attitudes to foster healthier, more equitable behaviors by correcting misinformation, encouraging critical reflection and dialogue, changing expectations for appropriate behavior and supporting groups to take action.
2. focus on life course transitions when adolescents learn new roles and social norms: children entering puberty, women and men entering marriage, and individuals becoming new parents.
3. diffuse new ideas and information through different levels of the community to support individual change.
4. engage girls and boys, sometimes apart, sometimes together, but always in relation to each other.
5. be scaled up by existing groups with modest additional resources.

COMPONENT	INTENDED COVERAGE	ACTUAL COVERAGE ACCORDING TO ENDLINE SURVEY			
		10-14 YRS	15-19 YRS	NEWLY MARRIED/ PARENTING	ADULTS
 RADIO DRAMA	2x A WEEK PER EPISODE	78%	59%	58%	62%
 VHT SERVICE LINKAGES	60 TEAM MEMBERS PER DISTRICT	12%	9%	22%	25%
 COMMUNITY ACTION CYCLE	9 GROUPS PER PARISH	8%	5%	7%	10%
 COMMUNITY GROUPS & CLUBS USING TOOLKIT	3 PER VILLAGE	40%	3%	5%	2%

Coverage during GREAT pilot phase

WHAT DID WE SET OUT TO LEARN?

-  Do adolescents exposed to GREAT have improved attitudes and behaviors related to:
 - Equality between men and women?
 - Couple relationships and family planning?
 - Gender-based violence (GBV)?

-  Do adults exposed to GREAT provide positive advice to adolescents about equality, couple relationships, family planning and GBV?

To understand how adolescents participated in GREAT and what difference it made in their lives, we conducted: 1) focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with 152 adolescents participating in GREAT; 2) four rounds of in-depth interviews with 30 males and 30 females in control and intervention areas over a two-year period; and 3) a survey of 4,500 adolescents and adults in Amuru and Lira districts before GREAT began and again after almost two years of implementation. Data was collected from communities where GREAT activities took place (intervention), as well as similar areas where no activities were planned (control).

WHAT DID WE DISCOVER?

GREAT led to significant improvements in attitudes and behaviors among exposed individuals, as compared to a matched control group created by propensity score analysis. Adolescents and adults who heard the radio program or participated in reflection activities reported positive changes in gender equity, partner communication, family planning use and attitudes towards GBV. This design was chosen because all communities were exposed to the radio broadcast and therefore there were no areas to serve as control. Qualitative research revealed that young people and adults enjoyed being involved in GREAT and felt that their participation resulted in positive changes in themselves, their families and communities.

Participation of one group each of VYAs, older adolescents and newly married or parenting adolescents in each community was insufficient to spark community-wide change. While participation in GREAT was associated with positive changes among all age groups, these changes did not diffuse to those not exposed. Possibly, too few adolescents were engaged in reflection activities in intervention areas; only 13% of older adolescents and newly married or parenting adolescents participated in toolkit activities. Yet, 40% of 10-14 year olds reported using the GREAT toolkit, suggesting that working in schools may be an efficient strategy to achieve broad coverage among in-school adolescents.

The serial radio drama was an effective strategy to reach community members who did not participate in small group activities. Designed to amplify diffusion of GREAT messages in the community, over half of the survey respondents in both intervention and control areas recalled listening to the Oteka radio drama.

Determining the effect of community mobilization activities remains a challenge. Qualitative data suggests that community leaders were important in engaging the community and creating excitement about the changes promoted by GREAT. However, less than 10% of respondents stated that they participated in Community Action Group activities. Participation may be under-reported because: 1) survey respondents did not recognize that activities were led by GREAT; 2) they were conducted at the parish rather than village level and may have been insufficient to have an impact; 3) leaders supported similar activities under other projects.

Although GREAT was successful in achieving individual change, expansion must focus on increasing depth and breadth of coverage to reach a “tipping point” of community change. Although changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviors were observed at the community-level between baseline and end line, only a few were statistically significant. This may be because too few people were reached to achieve a “tipping point” or because 22 months of a “light” intervention was insufficient for change to take hold and diffuse.

What follows are results organized by GREAT themes.

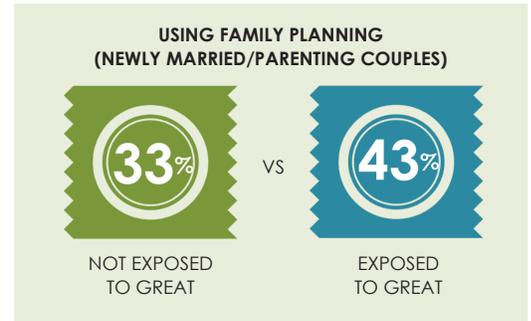
FAMILY PLANNING ATTITUDES, COMMUNICATION AND USE



Most young people who participated in GREAT showed improved attitudes and behaviors related to sexual and reproductive health.

Older adolescents and newly married/parenting adolescents exposed to GREAT were more likely than those not exposed to hold positive attitudes towards family planning use, talk to their partner about the timing of their next child and discuss family planning use. Newly married or parenting couples were also more likely to seek and use family planning.

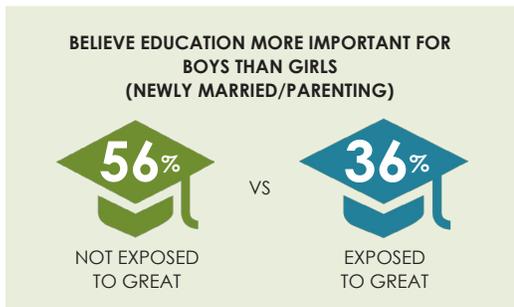
“ I learned something, and that is why I am on family planning with my wife now.”



GENDER EQUITABLE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

Exposure to GREAT resulted in more gender-equitable attitudes, and some changes in behaviors. For example, fewer older adolescents exposed to GREAT held inequitable gender norms.

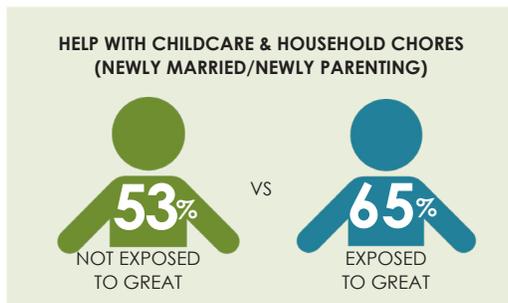
“ I learned that education is not only for boys, but also for girls.”



Educating girls promotes the health and well-being of families and communities. A promising result of GREAT is that fewer newly married/parenting adolescents and older adolescents believe that it is more important for boys to be educated than girls.

“ I learned that work can be shared among boys and girls. That has made me start helping my sister at home.”

More gender equitable behaviors were also observed among adolescents engaged in GREAT, especially among newly married/new parenting adolescents. Young husbands were more likely to be involved in childcare or helping with household chores than those not reached.



ATTITUDES TOWARDS INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Changing acceptance of men's use of violence to control their wives takes time, however improved attitudes and less violence were seen among adolescents involved with GREAT. There was a significant decrease in newly married/parenting women and men who report reacting violently to their partner when they are angry.



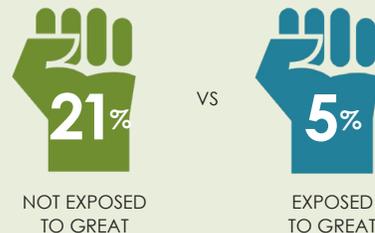
I realized we actually waste a lot of energy fighting when we could use it for something better."

In addition, fewer older adolescents reported touching/being touched on the behind or breast without permission in the last three months.

REPORT EXPERIENCING OR ENGAGING IN INAPPROPRIATE TOUCHING (OLDER ADOLESCENTS)



REACT VIOLENTLY TO PARTNER (NEWLY MARRIED/NEWLY PARENTING)



ADULTS ADVISE ADOLESCENTS ON GENDER EQUALITY, SRH, AND GBV

In order to improve equitable attitudes and behaviors among adolescents, adult support is needed. GREAT contributes to an environment that supports adolescent development. For example, the adults exposed to GREAT were significantly more likely to provide young people positive advice on gender, couple relationships, avoiding pregnancy and partner violence.



Light makes the darkness bright. I am like the light and will use my knowledge to teach young people in my village, so we chase away the darkness of ignorance."



PROVIDE ADVICE TO ADOLESCENTS (ADULTS)



"After I talked to him, even his wife started feeling better. He started reducing his drinking and his shouting was no longer there."

WHAT IS NEXT FOR GREAT?

We learned that helping adolescents manage key life transitions and encouraging discussion of different expectations of what it means to be a man or a woman makes a positive difference in their lives. District officials and community organizations are now working to include GREAT in their budgets, work plans and monitoring activities in order to maintain the momentum. GREAT will act on pilot findings to scale up in a way that moves beyond individual to community-wide change, and contributes to broader learning.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Everyone has a role in helping adolescents grow up to be healthy, happy and productive adults.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS & HEALTH PROVIDERS:

-  Talk with others about the influence of beliefs about appropriate roles for men and women on adolescent relationships and health.
-  Support men who oppose violence and who help their sisters and wives complete their education and take on new roles and responsibilities.
-  Support young couples who chose to use family planning to delay their first pregnancy and ensure healthy spacing between their children.

GLOBAL TECHNICAL EXPERTS, POLICY MAKERS & PROGRAM MANAGERS:

-  Invest time and resources in programs like GREAT which provide adolescents opportunities for healthy development. Include them in work plans and budgets, seek funding and help coordinate programs for adolescents.
-  Prioritize programs that seek to foster equitable gender norms.
-  Document and share lessons learned about gender norms to build the evidence base and strengthen capacity to implement gender programs for adolescents.
-  Involve young people and their communities in planning, monitoring, evaluation, dissemination, and advocacy for gender norms programming.
-  Expand access to adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services.

WHO MADE GREAT A SUCCESS?

Many people worked together to make GREAT a success.

GREAT applied a research-to-action process to bring together representatives from diverse sectors to lay a strong foundation for healthy sexual relationships as adolescents mature through puberty into adulthood, a key life transition during which gender norms and identities begin to coalesce.



Donor: USAID



District, sub-county & parish officials



5 Radio Stations



265 Community Groups and School-based Clubs



382 Community Action Group Members



196 Village Health Team members



3 Ministries (Health; Education and Sports; and Gender, Labour and Social Development) at national and district levels

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