



RIGHT TO PLAY
PROTECT. EDUCATE. EMPOWER.

Impact of the GREAT Project

Project Description

The Gender-Responsive Education and Transformation project (GREAT) strives to improve the quality of children's primary school education in Ghana, Mozambique, and Rwanda from 2018–2023. This report covers the project's successes up to its midpoint in 2021.

GREAT aims to make it easier for children to go to and stay in school, to incorporate gender-responsive play-based techniques into the classroom, and to engage parents and caregivers to be more involved in children's learning.

By the midway point reported on here, project staff had trained 1,097 teachers in 139 schools in Ghana, 1,286 teachers in 138 schools in Mozambique, and 1,089 teachers at 89 schools in Rwanda.

Context

Prior to the pandemic, GREAT was showing good progress at supporting children's learning, but the COVID-19 pandemic has made the educational barriers children in Ghana, Mozambique, and Rwanda face more severe. Schools closed for 57 weeks in Ghana, 53 weeks in Mozambique (the entire 2020–2021 school year), and 41 weeks in Rwanda.

This left teachers rushing to make up for lost time, and in many cases falling back on older and more familiar, but less effective, teaching methods. School closures also limited the exposure children had to improved teaching and other supports, pushing more responsibility onto parents and caregivers to support them to keep learning at home.

KEY RESULTS

- 1 Girls' literacy improved**
73% of girls in GREAT schools in Ghana are showing improved reading, compared to 60% in other schools. On average, girls in GREAT are reading seven more words per minute.
- 2 Girls show more leadership**
In Ghana, 89% of girls in GREAT schools are showing high levels of leadership skills mid-way through the project, compared to 75% at project start.
- 3 Better classroom experiences**
Children in Rwanda reporting gender discrimination by teachers fell from 9% to 2%. 28% of girls and boys are reporting frequent teacher absences by the project's midpoint, compared to 40% of girls and 48% of boys at the project's start.
- 4 Improved parental engagement in learning**
In all three countries, parents are engaging more with their children's learning and are better able to support children with at-home lessons when schools are closed.
- 5 Corporal punishment almost eliminated**
Only 8% of teachers in GREAT schools in Mozambique are using corporal punishment, compared to 13% in other schools.

KEY LEARNINGS

- 1** Girls' clubs in Ghana improved leadership opportunities and literacy for girls. The model should be scaled up and adapted for use in other contexts.
- 2** A lack of parental education reduces children's school outcomes. Methods to shift parents' attitudes about education need to be improved and combined with more outreach.
- 3** Gender-responsive play-based learning shows good results for girls, but improvements in teachers' practices are needed to achieve stronger results for boys.
- 4** Gender-responsive play-based learning practices need to target specific life skills, especially when children are at risk of their skills eroding due to crises like the pandemic.
- 5** Parents and teachers need more support to abandon corporal punishment and replace it consistently with positive discipline in the home and the classroom.



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Changing Minds in Rwanda: Emiline's Story

Emiline is one of more than 400 Right To Play-trained volunteers in Rwanda who led an awareness campaign in late 2020 as part of GREAT. The campaign spanned 200 villages in rural Rwanda, where girls struggle to access education. Usually, community members would gather at local schools for awareness-building activities. But COVID-19 restrictions forced the volunteers to change their approach.

So Emiline and fellow volunteers took to the streets, using megaphones to broadcast messages about gender equality. During the three-week campaign, they spoke to close to 20,000 parents, caregivers, and community members about the barriers girls face in attending school, like being asked to do far more chores at home than boys, which forces them to miss class.

"We have been encouraging parents to treat their children equally. It is important to let both girls and boys participate in household chores and give them all enough time to play and complete their studies," Emiline says.

Over five years, the GREAT project will help more than 219,000 children to rise above adversity and access quality education.



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