
GENDER AND THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AND DIGITAL LITERACIES

**Understanding the issues and
identifying promising practices in
sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia**

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Without the knowledge, language, skills and confidence to use communications technologies, adolescent girls are not only missing out on a crucial part of youth culture and networking: they are being deprived of the very skills that are needed for work and life in the coming decades of the 21st century.

(Plan International, 2010, p. 112)

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INTRODUCTION

The goals of this literature review are two-fold. The first goal is to provide the British Council with a consolidated evidence base against which the organisation can review its existing programmes and approach and identify potential investment opportunities for programme improvement. The second goal is to identify gaps in the research that British Council programming might aim to fill going forward.

Five research questions guided the research and analysis:

- What types of programmes currently exist that seek to enhance the socio-economic status and opportunities of girls in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa through English language learning and the development of digital literacies?
- What outcomes are being pursued by these programmes?
- What measures are being used to assess the achievement of programme objectives?
- What does the evidence tell us about the characteristics of ‘successful’ programmes and effective assessment and monitoring processes?
- What gaps remain in terms of the evidence base guiding gender/English/ICTs programming in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa?

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS

Towards implementing a streamlined approach to synthesising evidence, a rapid structured

literature review approach was applied. These types of reviews have been used to inform decision making and programme reform processes in the health and education sectors. Guided by the research questions, a series of string searches on Google and keyword searches in the scholarly literature (using University of Toronto international database) were used to locate relevant literature. The literature was then rigorously and critically appraised, with data categorised and synthesised into descriptive summaries. The findings from the review are presented below, starting first with a discussion of the importance of promoting girls’ education for inclusion and empowerment and the associated challenges and opportunities in South Asia (SA) and sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) regions, more generally as well as with specific reference to ICT and English skill development. Findings are then presented concerning promising or good practices in girls’ education. The next part of the review identifies and briefly discusses select programmes in SA and SSA that include at least one of the following features: English language skill development, ICT skill development, special focus on girls and/or gender. Good practices are next discussed in terms of the approaches and indicators used for the monitoring and evaluation of relevant programmes (and educational programmes more generally). Before the presentation of concluding remarks, a discussion is included that highlights gaps in the evidence base and suggests some potential research questions to guide programming and practice going forward.

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FINDINGS

The importance of promoting girls' education for inclusion and empowerment: understanding the challenges and opportunities

This section has two primary objectives. First, based on a review of the literature, a rationale is presented concerning the importance of formal and non-formal education for girls, with special attention paid to adolescent girls and particularly in relation to language and ICT skills development. The second part presents the findings concerning the educational and socio-economic challenges facing girls in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

For over two decades, girls' education has been championed and promoted as a key strategy for poverty reduction and women's socio-economic empowerment. Over the past decade, adolescent girls have been framed in the broader gender and education and development literatures as a group with unique needs and characteristics, distinct from younger girls and women, particularly in poor and socially conservative settings (Murphy-Graham & Lloyd, 2016; Stacki & Baily, 2015; Warner, Stoebenau & Glinski, 2014):

Because of their age and development status, as well as their legal and social status, adolescent girls have needs, constraints, and capabilities that are different from those of adult women. Complete autonomy is neither feasible nor desirable for most minors, who should be supported and protected by parents or guardians, teachers and other duty bearers in society. At the same time, adolescents have vast potential, and the decisions that they make during this critical time can significantly alter the course of their lives and future

opportunities as they transition into adulthood. (Warner, Stoebenau & Glinski, 2014, p. 9)

While space does not permit a full explication of the girls' and women's empowerment literature (see for example Kabeer, 1999; Monkman, 2011; Mosedale, 2005; Murphy-Graham & Lloyd, 2016; Ross, Shah & Wang, 2011; Warner, Malhotra & McGonagle, 2012) much of what has been written on the topic is captured by Murphy-Graham's assertion that

empowered individuals come to recognize their inherent worth, the fundamental equality of all human beings and their ability to contribute to personal and social betterment. They develop the capacity to critically examine their lives and broader society and take action toward personal and social transformation. (2012, p. 3)

When thinking about what empowerment might mean specifically for adolescent girls, Warner et al. (2014) expand upon Kabeer's (1999) conceptual work on empowerment, stating that

[empowerment denotes] the expansion of girls' current and future ability to make and act on strategic life choices. Girls are on a 'journey' of empowerment, one that can start in childhood or adolescence, and continue throughout their lifetimes. During adolescence, as girls are making transitions to adult roles, they are expanding their resources and agency which will be fully exercised later. (Warner et al., 2014, p. 9).

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Other frequently identified outcomes associated with improved girls' access to quality education include:¹

- the development of the potential of all children
- improved confidence and sense of agency and self-efficacy
- more effective lifelong learning
- improved employment and income earning opportunities
- healthier mothers and healthier children
- inter-generational effects (i.e. children of educated parents are more likely themselves to go to school)
- social development
- improved civic participation.

It is important to note that while the above outcomes have dominantly been associated in the literature with formal schooling, they are also relevant outcomes associated with non-formal education programming as well (Unterhalter et al., 2014).

Yet, at the sunset of the Millennium Development Goal development framework, within which universal primary education for all and gender equality were two of the eight goals, 58 million children and 63 million adolescents were not in school, with girls representing more than half of out-of-school children around the world (31 million primary school-age children and 34 million lower secondary school-age girls were not enrolled in school) (UNESCO Institute for Statistics and UNICEF, 2015, as cited in McCleary-Sills, Hanmer, Parsons & Klugman, 2015, p. 73). Regionally, gender disparities in enrolment at the primary and secondary level are highest in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (King & Winthrop, 2015). At the primary level in sub-Saharan Africa, 83 girls are enrolled

per every 100 boys, and in South and West Asia, 93 girls are enrolled per every 100 boys (McCleary-Sills et al., 2015, p. 73). In SSA, the average girls' enrolment rate at the secondary level is a mere 29.8 per cent, far lower than in other regions and significantly lower than that of boys (King & Winthrop, 2015). In South Asia, the average girls' enrolment rate is 86.5 per cent of boys' enrolment rate at the secondary level, despite similar participation rates of boys and girls at the primary level in this region (King & Winthrop, 2015). Moreover, there are significant gaps between more well-off and poor households, with poorest girls lagging the furthest beyond their counterparts in terms of educational opportunities and outcomes (UNESCO & UNGEI, 2014).

While challenges specific to girls' education and empowerment will be discussed later in this report, it is important to note that in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, school dropout (boys and girls) is a significant problem, either before completion of primary education or at the transition from primary to secondary (Asadullah, 2016; LeVine, 2006; Sabates, Akyeampong, Westbrook & Hunt, 2010; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012). While poverty, poor-quality schooling and early marriage/pregnancy (particularly in relation to adolescent girls) are among the most frequently identified factors associated with school dropout (Hanushek, Lavy & Hitomi, 2008; LeVine, 2006; Mahmud & Amin, 2006; Sabates et al., 2010), studies in South Asia (Tamin, 2014; Tollefson & Tsui, 2014) and sub-Saharan Africa (Goswami & Datta, 2009; Ntumva & Rwambali, 2013; Wasike, 2016) indicate that insufficient English knowledge and skills, especially where English is the medium of instruction, are further causes of early school dropout.

¹ Either individually or combined, these outcomes have been identified numerous times in the literature. Recent

examples include King & Winthrop, 2015; Sperling & Winthrop, 2016; Unterhalter et al., 2014.

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Given these continuing inequality trends and the strong evidence linking the earlier noted outcomes associated with girls' education, considerable effort has been mobilised toward improved access to schooling opportunities for this group. However, this earlier focus on access has given way to concerns about the quality of education girls receive, their experiences in schools and as learners more broadly and girls' transition to higher levels of education. The idea here is that getting girls into schools (or other learning programmes), is not on its own sufficient for the realisation of gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment; rather, questions have to be asked about the content, nature and outcomes of their learning experiences, as well as how educational outcomes relate to or otherwise support broader empowerment processes and socio-economic development (Murphy-Graham & Lloyd, 2016; Unterhalter et al., 2014).

Challenges to girls' and women's empowerment and inclusion in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa

Despite diversity within and between countries in the world, there are many common challenges facing girls, women and their advocates as they strive to achieve personal change, socio-economic empowerment and inclusion in their societies. While contextual differences, including socio-cultural norms, attitudes and practices, influence the nature and degree of gender discriminatory beliefs and practices, the following are some of the key demand and supply side factors (that are sometimes overlapping) that can act as barriers to girls' and women's empowerment and inclusion in and through education (formal and non-formal) in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa regions:

- poverty (King & Winthrop, 2015; UNESCO, 2010)
- dowry (Blunch & Das, 2014; Jayachandran, 2014)
- early marriage and early child-bearing (UNICEF, 2014a,b; UNFPA, 2012)
- low valuation of girls' education/son preference (Chitraker, 2009)
- heavy domestic work burden of girls (Hartmann-Mahmud, 2011; Sutherland-Addy, 2008)
- gender-based violence and other safety concerns (Dunne, Humphreys & Leach, 2003; Parkes, 2015; Parkes & Heslop, 2013)
- schools located far away from communities (King & Winthrop, 2015)
- inadequate school facilities (Sperling & Winthrop, 2016)
- low-quality education (Lloyd, Mensch & Clark, 2011)
- gender bias in teaching and learning processes and materials (Blumberg, 2007)
- conflict and emergencies (Kirk, 2008).

ICTs, English and adolescent girls' empowerment

Around the world, the ability to effectively use new information and communication technologies (ICTs) is rapidly becoming an essential skill for 'education, for work, for networking and to build the skills, knowledge and expertise [needed] to participate fully in the 21st century' (Plan International, 2010, p. 105, see also ICF Ltd., 2015; Sugg, 2014; UNICEF, 2013). Digital literacy has been defined as 'the skills associated with using technology to enable users to find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information (US Department of Education, 2015), and the ability to use those skills to solve problems in technology-rich environments (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek, &

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Henry, 2013)' (cited in LINCS ESL Pro, no date, p. 2).

Yet, a 2016 report by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) estimates that there are 3.9 billion people globally who are 'offline' and that this population is 'disproportionately female, elderly, less educated, lower income and rural' (p. 179, see also World Bank, 2016). The ITU report suggests that education and income levels are 'strong determinants of whether or not people use the Internet' (ITU, 2016, p. 179), and thus it is of critical importance that socio-economic inequalities are reduced to promote ICT access and use. For example, in SSA, the bottom 40 per cent is 'only one third as likely to have access to the Internet as the upper 60%', with 18 per cent of men reporting use of the internet versus 12 per cent of women (World Bank, 2016, p. 104). The 2016 World Development Report, focusing on the theme of 'digital dividends' notes that while world regions are converging in mobile phone access, South Asia and Africa are losing ground in terms of internet access (World Bank, 2016, p. 103).

As introduced above, in addition to there being a digital divide in terms of access to ICTs between countries in the Global North versus those in the Global South, there is also a gender divide in ICTs, particularly pronounced in the latter region, though research in the former has demonstrated gender differences in use between boys and girls, men and women as well (Beyond Access, 2012). For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, 32 million fewer women than men have access to the internet and in South Asia, 25 million fewer women have access (World Bank, 2014).² Globally, girls and women

generally have less access to and training in how to use ICTs, and this gap is particularly acute for rural girls and women (Antonio & Tuffley, 2014; Beyond Access, 2012; Plan International, 2010; Sugg, 2014; United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2005). For example, in Indonesia, girls and young women age 15 to 24 are half as likely to use the internet as boys of the same age (Plan International, 2010, p. 105). Research has demonstrated that patterns of ICT access and use mirror wider patterns of access and inclusion in broader society (Cummings & O'Neil, 2015; Plan International, 2010; United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2005). Thus, with respect to girls and women in societies marked by high levels of gender discrimination and exclusion, their access and use of ICTs are conditioned by prevailing attitudes and values that maintain an unequal status quo (Antonio & Tuffley, 2014; Sugg, 2014). To illustrate, a 2013 study by Intel found that there are 23 per cent fewer women than men online in the developing world, and that 40 per cent of women who do not use the internet blame lack of familiarity or comfort with technology (Intel, 2013). Yet, an estimated 85 to 90 per cent of new jobs will require digital skills by 2020.³

In addition to lack of access to ICTs and training in their use, research indicates that inadequate knowledge of English acts as a barrier to girls' use of such technologies (Mutula, 2005; Plan International, 2010; United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2005), with other constraining factors including poverty and discrimination, social and cultural practices and attitudes towards girls' schooling and their engagement with technology, as well as safety

² <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2014/05/14/education-key-role-women-girls-communities-report>

³ European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2012, as cited in Education and Skills 2.0: New

Targets and Innovative Approaches, World Economic Forum, January 2014
www3.weforum.org/docs/GAC/2014/WEF_GAC_EducationSkills_TargetsInnovativeApproaches_Book_2014.pdf

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and protection concerns (UNICEF, 2013; United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2005). Not only can English be an important tool for learning and using ICTs, in many post-colonial countries in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, English proficiency is important because it is the official language of government and is therefore needed to navigate and participate in public and civic life (Coleman, 2011). Moreover, English proficiency has been linked to enhanced self-esteem and confidence, qualities that further support participation in public life and employment (Begum, 2014; Coleman, 2010; Sugg, 2014). As a dominant global language and a 'language which is associated with progress and development' (Coleman, 2011, p. 58), there is also a higher status and prestige often attached to the knowledge and use of English in such multilingual and post-colonial contexts (Coleman, 2011; Graddol, 2010, as cited in Begum, 2014, p. 128) and as such has been linked to empowerment processes and outcomes for lower classes, castes and other marginalised groups, including girls and women (Pandey, 2011; Sugg, 2014).

With respect to ICTs, thus far there is relatively strong evidence to suggest that providing adolescent girls with ICT skills and training can facilitate their exposure to 'new ideas and ways of thinking that open up huge possibilities for learning, networking, campaigning and personal development' (Murphy-Graham & Lloyd, 2016; Plan International, 2010, p. 101; Stornaiuolo, Hull & Sahni, 2011; Sugg, 2014). Furthermore, Cummings and O'Neil (2015) suggest that 'gaining both skills and access to digital ICTs can provide women and girls with alternative channels for self-expression and engagement in public affairs, regardless of their physical location and if they experience gender-based constraints on their voice locally (i.e., increased power to)' (Cummings & O'Neil, 2015, p. 6, cited in King & Winthrop, 2015, p. 48).

Importantly, teaching adolescent girls how to use ICTs 'safely, on their own terms and in ways that promote their development and build their future' (Plan International, 2010, p. 102, see also UNICEF, 2013) is a key component of calls for targeted programming to support the development of ICT skills. Aligning with the literature on the topic (see, for example, Cummings & O'Neil, 2015; Winthrop & Kirk, 2015), in their 2010 report, Plan International (pp. 105–106) highlighted seven specific reasons why building rural and urban adolescent girls' abilities to use ICTs safely and effectively is so important for their socio-economic empowerment:

1. to keep in touch with others, which reduces their isolation in countries where this is an issue (see, for example, Coumba, 2001; Dayoung, 2009)
2. to further their education and acquire new skills and more generally aspire to different futures (see, for example, Isaacs 2002, 2005; Sugg, 2014)
3. to take an active part in their communities and countries (see, for example, Mishra & Kiran, 2015)
4. to have the skills to find work (see, for example, Cherie Blair Foundation, 2010)
5. to build specific skills and knowledge on subjects they might otherwise not know about, such as HIV and AIDS
6. because evidence has shown that learning to use these technologies can build self-esteem (see, for example, Cummings & O'Neil, 2015)
7. last but definitely not least, in order to keep safe.

Based on a review of the evidence, Cummings and O'Neil (2015) suggest in addition to the above that digital technologies 'can be important resources for women and girls' empowerment, but this depends on which women and which context' (p. i). They also highlight that through

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the learning of new digital skills, women and girls can build their confidence, 'increase their economic power and independence and make better-informed decisions' (p. i). Moreover, while digital technologies can help enable girls' and women's self- and collective agency, for example through communications online, exchanging information, building solidarity and lobbying decision makers, there 'remains only limited evidence that women's individual or collective voice, enabled by digital ICTs, influences government policy and actions' (p. i). Furthermore, it is important to note that Cummings and O'Neil's research concluded that in challenging gender-based power relations, developing girls' and women's access to and use of digital ICTs can 'provoke a backlash, including in ways that increase women and girls' insecurity and subordination' (2015, p. i). As such, girls' and women's safety in the context of the learning and use of ICTs must remain paramount.

Interventions that support enhanced girls' education and gender equality more broadly

The goal of this section is to overview current good practice in the area of girls' education broadly speaking, with a later section overviewing current good or promising practices with respect to digital literacy and/or English language skill and knowledge development.

First, in terms of overarching 'ingredients for effectiveness', there appears to be consensus that successful gender equality in and through education approaches apply multidimensional, and holistic, multisectoral approaches (Unterhalter et al., 2014). Horizontal programmes that engage multiple levers are more effective than those seeking to address single levers of girls' agency and empowerment, particularly in the area of child marriage, where

complex socio-cultural and economic processes and norms interact to limit girls' and women's agency and life opportunities (Lee-Rife et al., 2012). Moreover, success of programme interventions depends critically on their being adapted to the socio-economic and cultural contexts and needs of the intended beneficiaries (UNESCO, 2012; Unterhalter et al., 2014). Lastly, both formal and non-formal educational interventions can have positive impacts in terms of gender equality in and through education and girls' and women's empowerment (Unterhalter et al., 2014).

In their review of evidence concerning girls' education challenges and opportunities, King and Winthrop (2015) propose two streams of action that they argue are necessary to promote girls' education, gender equality and broader processes of socio-economic development and change: i) promotion of girls' and women's leadership and ii) systemic reform with a gender lens (see also Unterhalter et al., 2014).

The first stream of action builds on evidence that demonstrates that 'supporting girls' and women's leadership capabilities and promoting opportunities can: be a positive and potentially life-changing experience for the girls themselves; yield important information and insight for program and policy designers; contribute to longer term changes in social norms' (King & Winthrop, 2015, p. 50). More specifically, supporting the development of girls' leadership capabilities 'can help them increase their sense of self-worth and sense of own ability to affect change (i.e. "power within") as well as their ability to make choices, and interact and influence others (i.e. "power to")' (King & Winthrop, 2015, p. 51). It is recognised that while foundational numeracy and literacy skills are critical, it is imperative especially for marginalised girls that they be given opportunities to develop soft skills across a range of competencies, including critical and creative thinking, effective communication and

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self-confidence (King & Winthrop, 2015). Connecting to the literature introduced earlier in this report, King and Winthrop suggest that 'engaging girls in leadership activities during adolescence is particularly useful because they are especially open to learning new skills and it can pave the way for a lifetime of activism' (p. 51). Ultimately, the importance of soft skill development, positive role models and social networks are highlighted as good practices towards supporting adolescent girls' empowerment and broader socio-economic development and change.

Towards building the leadership capabilities of girls, several programme elements are highlighted as being particularly effective. First, evidence suggests that formal and non-formal educational programmes that are based on peer-mentorship models can have a positive impact on girls' leadership capabilities (Adolwa, Brand, Kintz, Renault & Toth, 2012; Baric, Bouchie, Cronin, Heinzen, Menon & Prather, 2009; King & Winthrop, 2015; Sperling & Winthrop, 2016; Unterhalter et al., 2014). Second, mentors need clear and effective materials to support their facilitation of discussion and the development of leadership and soft skills among their mentees. Third, the critical importance of ensuring a safe space for adolescent girls to reflect, discuss and act is highlighted (Sperling & Winthrop, 2016). Fourth, girls need to have opportunities to 'learn by doing' and practise their developing leadership and soft skills, for example in the context of after-school girls' clubs (Adolwa et al., 2012; Unterhalter et al., 2014). Fifth, it is recommended that programmes connect across schools or communities to build networks or communities of practice that can support improved effectiveness and sustainability of programmes and their outcomes (Sperling & Winthrop, 2016). Lastly, evidence suggests that it is important to engage boys and men in schools and communities (King & Winthrop,

2015), a feature of effective empowerment programming recognised by the British Council:

Empowering women and girls is not just about women: it is fundamentally about power and the relationships between women and men, as well as about how society shapes expectations of genders. Engaging men and boys in understanding gender inequalities and the impact these have on the lives of women and girls is a critical step towards changing gender norms and gender relations. (2017, p. 23

In their report, King and Winthrop (2015) also argue the importance of involving girls in generating data about themselves and their communities:

Girl-generated big data has the potential to radically change the power dynamics with girls themselves generating regular information about their circumstances, needs, and achievements that is translated into digestible and timely insight for policymakers, civil society actors, community leaders, and educators. Transparency and accountability take on whole new meanings in this light and ultimately puts the girls at the center of the process. A girl-generated big data initiative also can go a long way in helping fill the data gap on girls' education, both on basic education data that we have seen is often missing in many countries but also more importantly on sensitive issues. (pp. 52–53)

The learning and application of digital technologies is central to the generation, by girls, of data and information, particularly on sensitive issues for which nuanced data is missing, like, for example, early marriage and gender-based violence:

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For example, we frequently hear the phrase that a girl has dropped out of school 'to get married.' But dig behind this reason, and there is a complex interplay of causal factors. Often, it is not the case that a girl drops out of school, but that she is 'pushed out,' and at that point her only option lies in marriage (Lake, 2015). In other words, she did not drop out to get married; she was pushed out and then got married. If we can get to such hidden truths as to why girls are being pushed out of the school system, then we can inform the right action to tackle these challenges and deliver much more effective solutions. In the end, it is ultimately the girls themselves who are best able to explain and share these stories and who with technology as a tool can generate helpful and timely action on the part of adults in their lives. (King & Winthrop, 2015, p. 53)

The second stream of action urged by King and Winthrop (2015) concerns the need for systemic reform for gender equality and girls' empowerment. In brief, systemic reform includes paying attention to the full range of supply and demand side factors that currently constrain girls' education and empowerment, both within and beyond formal schooling. Systemic reform requires that gender equality become a concern and part of the work of a full range of state and non-state actors, including governments, civil society, private sector, donors and communities (and not just the responsibility of specialised gender agencies), with these actors having important roles in challenging unjust and exclusionary social, cultural and economic processes.

In their review of the evidence concerning girls' education policy and programming, Unterhalter et al. (2014) highlight several important lessons learned. First, learning outside the classroom

through formal and non-formal extra-curricular activities, including, for example, tutoring and after-school clubs, has a strong and positive effect on girls' learning outcomes (p. 3). Involving girls in community mobilisation and leadership shows promise in terms of supporting girls' learning. Recognising that gaps remain in terms of understanding how different education and skills-building programmes can support girls' empowerment and socio-economic development (King & Winthrop, 2015; Murphy-Graham & Lloyd, 2016), the evidence reviewed by Unterhalter et al. (2014) suggests strong impacts of group learning and learning outside the classroom on processes of empowerment. The authors suggest that 'using complementary learning spaces to school (e.g. NGO programmes, girls' clubs) are effective in giving opportunities to discuss gender equality, develop confidence to strategise for the future and reduce risk-taking behavior' (p. 4). The provision of alternative spaces for girls to learn and discuss the issues that matter to them appears to be important for enabling the development of attitudes and capacities that can support the changing of discriminatory gender norms across a range of different contexts (Unterhalter et al., 2014).

Girl-focused language and ICT educational programmes in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa

A central finding from the review is that while there has been growth in the number and coverage of programmes that focus on gender and digital literacy in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, programmes that target adolescent girls specifically, and those that include an English language skill development component, are fewer in number. Table 1 provides a snapshot of some of the most

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relevant programmes identified in the review and includes details concerning the organisations implementing them, geographic coverage, type

(formal or non-formal) and whether or not they target girls or gender, ICT skill development and/or English language development.



Figure 1: Girls from the EDGE programme in Nepal try some computer-based activities

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Table 1: Sample of relevant educational programmes

| START YEAR | ORGANISATION(S) | COUNTRIES/ REGIONS | FORMAL OR NON- FORMAL | ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT | ICT SKILL DEVELOPMENT ⁴ | INCLUDES SPECIAL FOCUS ON GIRLS AND/OR GENDER | NUMBER OF GIRLS REACHED |
|--|---|---|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| PROGRAMME: COMMUNICATIONS AND FREE CLASSES PROGRAM | | | | | | | |
| 2005 | Team4Tech with VMware & Journeys Within Our Community (JWOC) | Cambodia | Non-formal | X | X | | 1,000 youth/year ⁵ |
| PROGRAMME: TEACHER TRAINING | | | | | | | |
| 2013 | Team4Tech with VMware & CARE India | India | Formal | | X | X | 33,859 ⁶ |
| PROGRAMME: YOUTH EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ARTS AND MEDIA (YETAM) | | | | | | | |
| 2008 | Plan International, Plan USA, Plan Finland, Nokia, local partners | Benin, Cameroon, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda | Non-formal | X | X | X | All evaluation data is internal and not available to the public ⁷ |

⁴ Programmes listed here aim to build the digital literacy skills of their participants through both direct skill building training and use of digital as a channel.

⁵ Programme does not provide gender disaggregated statistics on the number of girls and boys participating or completing it. See: <https://www.journeyswithinourcommunity.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Annual-Report-2016.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.team4tech.org/about/history>

⁷ www.comminit.com/africa/content/youth-empowerment-through-arts-and-media-yetam;
<https://lindarafree.com/2011/06/20/vac-cameroon-ushahidi-the-what-and-the-why>

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| START YEAR | ORGANISATION(S) | COUNTRIES/ REGIONS | FORMAL OR NON-FORMAL | ENGLISH LANGUAGE | ICT SKILL DEVELOPMENT ⁸ | INCLUDES SPECIAL FOCUS ON GIRLS AND/BOYS | NUMBER OF GIRLS REACHED |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
|------------|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|

PROGRAMME: GIRLS' DIGITAL LEARNING CENTRES

| | | | | | | | |
|------|-------------------------------|-------|------------|--|---|---|------------------|
| 2015 | Plan International & Ericsson | India | Non-formal | | X | X | 500 ⁹ |
|------|-------------------------------|-------|------------|--|---|---|------------------|

PROGRAMME: DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAMME

| | | | | | | | |
|------|--|-------------|------------|---|---|---|----------------------|
| 2012 | The Digital Citizen Fund with MTI & Afghan Citadel | Afghanistan | Non-formal | X | X | X | 9,000+ ¹⁰ |
|------|--|-------------|------------|---|---|---|----------------------|

PROGRAMME: TECH AGE GIRLS (TAG)

| | | | | | | | |
|------|---|---|------------|--|---|---|----------------------|
| 2005 | IREX with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, OSCE, Peace Corps, USAID, and US Dept of State | Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Myanmar, the Philippines, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam | Non-formal | | X | X | 1,300+ ¹¹ |
|------|---|---|------------|--|---|---|----------------------|

PROGRAMME: CINI'S GIRLS' LEARNING CENTRE PROGRAMME

⁸ Programmes listed here aim to build the digital literacy skills of their participants through both direct skill building training and use of digital as a channel.

⁹ Plan India, 2016

¹⁰ <http://digitalcitizenfund.org/about/>

¹¹ <https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/tech-age-girls-myanmar-fact-sheet.pdf>

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| | | | | | | | |
|------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|------------|---|--|---|---------------------|
| 2010 | Children In Need Institute (CINI) | India - West Bengal | Non-formal | X | | X | 4,000 ¹² |
|------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|------------|---|--|---|---------------------|

PROGRAMME: COMPUTER AND LEARNING INSTITUTE IN GHADDANI

| | | | | | | | |
|------|--|----------|------------|---|---|--|---|
| 2013 | Grass Roots Assistance and People Empowerment Society (GRAPES) | Pakistan | Non-formal | X | X | | 45 (22% of the 206 participants reached by the programme) ¹³ |
|------|--|----------|------------|---|---|--|---|

PROGRAMME: TALEEMSHALAS – GIRL CHILD EDUCATION

| | | | | | | | |
|------|--------|-------|------------|--|---|---|---------------------|
| 2000 | IBTADA | India | Non-formal | | X | X | 9,000 ¹⁴ |
|------|--------|-------|------------|--|---|---|---------------------|

PROGRAMME: SARA COMMUNICATION INITIATIVE

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---|------------|--|---|---|---------------------------|
| 1995 – 1999 | Pearson Foundation (with UNICEF) | Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe | Non-formal | | X | X | Information not available |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---|------------|--|---|---|---------------------------|

¹² <http://www.educationinnovations.org/program/cinis-girls'-learning-center-program>

¹³ <http://www.educationinnovations.org/program/computer-and-learning-institute-ghaddani>

¹⁴ <http://www.educationinnovations.org/program/girl-child-education-taleemshala>

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| START YEAR | ORGANISATION(S) | COUNTRIES/ REGIONS | FORMAL OR NON-FORMAL | ENGLISH LANGUAGE | ICT SKILL DEVELOPMENT ¹⁵ | INCLUDES SPECIAL FOCUS ON GIRLS AND/ OR GENDER | NUMBER OF GIRLS REACHED |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
|------------|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|

PROGRAMME: WOMEN'S DIGITAL LITERACY AND ENGLISH PROGRAM (WDLEP)

| | | | | | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|------|------------|---|---|---|---------------------|
| 2012 | FHI360, US Department of State | Iraq | Non-formal | X | X | X (focus on women, not adolescent girls) | 2,500 ¹⁶ |
|------|--------------------------------|------|------------|---|---|---|---------------------|

PROGRAMME: TECH DADA¹⁷

| | | | | | | | |
|------|---|-------|------------|--|---|---|-------------------|
| 2013 | Tunapanda Institute, with Kibera Girls Soccer Academy Foundation (implementing partner) | Kenya | Non-formal | | X | X | 430 ¹⁸ |
|------|---|-------|------------|--|---|---|-------------------|

PROGRAMME: GIRLS' EDUCATION PROGRAM

| | | | | | | | |
|------|--------------|------------------------------------|------------|--|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 2000 | Room to Read | Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos, | Non-formal | | | x | 38,750 (2015) ¹⁹ |
|------|--------------|------------------------------------|------------|--|--|---|-----------------------------|

¹⁵ Programmes listed here aim to build the digital literacy skills of their participants through both direct skill building training and use of digital as a channel.

¹⁶ <https://www.fhi360.org/projects/womens-digital-literacy-and-english-program-wdlep>

¹⁷ *Tech Dada* translates to 'tech sisters' in Swahili.

¹⁸ <http://biznews.co.ke/2016/11/03/is-tech-dada-swag-system-replacing-the-tech-learning/>

¹⁹ Room to Read, 2015

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| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|------------|--|---|---|---------------------------|
| | | Nepal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Vietnam Zambia | | | | | |
| PROGRAMME: GIRL HUB | | | | | | | |
| 2010 | Department for International Development (DFID) & Nike | Ethiopia, Nigeria, Rwanda | Non-formal | | X | X | Information not available |
| PROGRAMME: BALIKA (BANGLADESHI ASSOCIATION FOR LIFE SKILLS, INCOME, AND KNOWLEDGE FOR ADOLESCENTS) PROJECT | | | | | | | |
| 2012–2016 | Population Council | Bangladesh | Non-formal | | | X | 9,000+ ²⁰ |

The following presents short overviews of select gender, ICT and/or English language training programmes that have been or are currently being implemented in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa regions.

Case one: Youth Empowerment Through Technology, Arts and Media (YETAM) – Plan International

Partnering with the private sector (Nokia) and ministries of education, this Plan International project was implemented between 2008 and 2011 in six countries in SSA: Cameroon, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda and Senegal. The project sought to use ICTs and participatory methods to encourage the participation and voice of youth in advocating for themselves and broader changes in their communities and societies. Digital technology, social media and arts-based (e.g. drama, storytelling) tools were used to assist participants to analyse their realities and advocate for change. While both

boys and girls participated in YETAM programmes, specific girl-focused objectives included the development of leadership, communications, negotiation, networking, mobilisation and advocacy skills and their application to address an array of gender discriminatory practices, including gender-based violence.

Case Two: The Digital Citizen Fund

The Digital Citizen Fund is a US-based non-profit organisation that aims to assist girls and women in poor countries to access technology, develop digital skills, connect with others around the world and develop the 'necessary skills to succeed in today's expanding global market'. Specific goals targeted by the Digital Citizen Fund include a) the creation of digital citizens that are capable and confident in their voice, b) empowering women and children in developing countries to establish sustainable economic livelihoods, c) encouraging personal global

²⁰ www.popcouncil.org/research/balika-bangladeshi-association-for-life-skills-income-and-knowledge-for-ado

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connectivity to inspire and raise cultural awareness, and d) providing safe, accessible environments for individual and cultural expression. At this time, the programme has only been implemented in Afghanistan and Mexico, but as more funding becomes available the programme is expected to be implemented in other countries. The focus of the Digital Citizen Fund has been on building internet training centres and two stand-alone media centres, in partnership with MTI and Afghan Citadel, where girls and young women are provided with digital literacy tools and opportunities to learn how to use them effectively and creatively. Curriculum components other than digital literacy are financial literacy, coding/programming and blogging/photography workshops. Some English training is provided; however, no further information on this is available at the moment. No data is available on the implementation of this programme in Mexico; however, 9,000 young women in Afghanistan have been reached. No information is available on the M&E strategy(s) used by the Digital Citizen Fund.

Case Three: Tech Age Girls (TAG)

Tech Age Girls (TAG) is a programme delivered by IREX (US-based NGO), with the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, OSCE, Peace Corps, USAID and US Department of State. TAG has been implemented in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Myanmar, the Philippines, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. The objectives of the programme are two-fold: a) to strengthen opportunities for young women as local agents of change in their communities through digital and leadership training, mentoring and hands-on opportunities and b) to help young women contribute their voices to public discussions on critical issues, including online content by and for girls.²¹ Each

TAG programme lasts one year and is implemented in three phases, including an initial training of up to six months on leadership, ICT and soft skills while developing online and in-person communities (phase 1); a one to two week in-person workshop that brings together the highest achievers for further more advanced technology and leadership training, alongside simultaneous opportunities for short internships with domestic and international NGOs or government offices and meetings with influential, national-level women leaders (phase 2); and a return of these young women to their communities where they continue peer training in ICT and soft skills and remain linked to the TAG network of young women leaders.

Note that TAG training does not involve lectures or tests per se; rather, participants work in collaborative groups on a variety of tasks that use technology to produce useful products. TAG aims to close the digital divide through a progressive model that involves the identification of girls with leadership potential, engages them in tech and leadership skills and community service projects, rewards those who excel with deeper and more advanced tech and soft skills and connects like-minded girls with mentors for lifelong support to excel.²²

In terms of outcomes, by 2015, IREX had trained over 1,300 girls in eight countries in digital and leadership skills. TAG participants have implemented over 400 service projects that have reached over 10,000 people. A survey of TAG alumni indicated that five to ten years after participating in the programme, 80 per cent of participants reported that the digital skills they learned through TAG made them more competitive in the job market, and 83 per cent were still active in their communities. Outcomes measured by the TAG M&E strategy include skill building, increasing employability, boosting

²¹ <https://www.irex.org/project/tech-age-girls>

²² <https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/pdf/tech-age-girls-infographic.pdf>

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educational attainment, generating social capital and facilitating longer-term mentoring.

Case Four: Tech Dada

Begun in 2015, the Tech Dada programme is run by the Tunapanda Foundation and engages girls and young women aged 14–25 years living in rural or informal settlements in or near Nairobi, Kenya. The programme aims to address the gender digital divide in the country and to expose girls and young women to opportunities that exist in technology. Programme activities focus on providing participants with technology, design and business skills, as well as ‘helping to build their identity’.²³ Beneficiaries are expected to become ‘economically and socially empowered to become change makers’. Tech Dada works to build capacity by teaming up with schools and by building networks and creating mentorship opportunities: ‘*Naona, Nafanya, Nafunza* (“I see, I do, I teach”) guides our training methods and decentralized scaling strategy’.²⁴ While still in its pilot phase, Tech Dada does have an M&E strategy in place, with monitored metrics including internal assessment performance, user satisfaction, increased enrolment and cost effectiveness/value for money. No further details are available on Tech Dada’s specific M&E approach(es).

Case Five: Girls’ web literacy workshops (GirlHype)

GirlHype is a partnership-driven programme involving UN Women and the Mozilla Foundation. Through girls’ web literacy workshops, adolescent girls and young women gain digital literacy skills, including coding. During club/workshop meetings, participants

discuss and learn about web design, content creation, coding, privacy, security, as well as how to ‘make use of opportunities for empowerment and leadership’.²⁵ The programme seeks to develop digital literacy as a ‘fourth basic foundational skill, in addition to reading, writing and arithmetic’, and thus GirlHype programmes can be seen as supporting academic success in formal schooling as well. Moreover, the focus on adolescent girls and young women is driven by the recognition that the gender digital divide in sub-Saharan Africa means that many women are significantly disadvantaged in terms of employment and wider participation in public life. In terms of social awareness and social change objectives, these web literacy workshops and coding clubs are also framed as being safe and relaxed spaces for adolescent girls to share life experiences, reflect and gain mentorship from club captains and other female teachers.²⁶ Outcomes also include improved leadership and communication skills. Unfortunately, no information is available on the M&E strategy used by GirlHype.

Case Six: Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) – Pearson Foundation (with UNICEF assistance)

The Sara Communication Initiative is a Pearson Foundation-funded project, with implementing support received from UNICEF and Nokia. SCI reached 200+ adolescent girls in Tanzania, Zambia, South Africa and Namibia. Programme objectives focused on ICT skill development as a means to support and assist adolescent girls to reflect on their situations, experiences and prospects and to facilitate social justice advocacy. Programme activities involved

²³ www.educationinnovations.org/program/tech-dada

²⁴ www.educationinnovations.org/program/tech-dada

²⁵ <http://africa.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2016/05/empowering-women-and-girls-through-web-literacy#sthash.D6hbkmpK.dpuf>

²⁶ www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/10/take-five-with-joy-chebet-bii

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adolescent girls using mobile phones and laptops with film-making software to create short films about their own experiences and thoughts concerning topics such as sexual harassment, HIV/AIDS, early marriage, female genital mutilation and girls' domestic workload. These videos were then shown to peers and educators across the continent as a means of raising awareness and advocating for the rights of girls.

Case Seven: Taleemshalas – girl child education

Since 2000, IBTADA has been running Taleemshalas (girl child education) learning centres for adolescent girls in rural areas of Rajasthan, India. Community attitudes towards girls' education in this area are such that girls are often restricted from accessing formal educational opportunities. Taleemshalas are community-based learning centres, and the goal of the programme is to 'empower girls with knowledge, skills, and confidence'.²⁷ The focus of training is on literacy and soft skills, as well as some mathematics/numeracy and local language/mother tongue development. Training is provided to mixed-grade groups, with the expectation that participating girls will join existing government schools when they are ready. The programme has already reached 9,000 learners. In providing computer education, careers guidance and support and life skills education, in addition to general literacy and numeracy support, Taleemshalas aim to assist girls and young women to 'fulfil their ambitions and pursue careers for a better future'. While not yet in place, the organisation plans to develop peer facilitators/mentors to support programme delivery and extend training and capacity-building to more young women, as well as promoting sustainability of the programme. Monitoring and evaluation strategies in place currently measure graduation rates and student

attendance. While community impact is noted as something the M&E strategy tracks, no details are available at this time.

Case Eight: CINI's Girls' Learning Centre programme

The Child in Need Institute (CINI) has worked with vulnerable groups (e.g. women, adolescent and younger girls) for over 40 years in West Bengal and Jharkhand, India. Since 2010, CINI has been implementing a Girls' Learning Centre programme that focuses on out-of-school girls in rural and most vulnerable/disadvantaged areas of West Bengal. The objective of the programme is to provide English language and literacy support to young and adolescent girls as a means of supporting their success in formal school studies. Since its inception, the programme has served 4,000 out-of-school girls from 100 villages. Outcomes have included improved educational performance of girls and the prevention of early marriage, child labour and trafficking, with the support of parents, schools, community leaders and local administration. Further outcomes noted include helping the younger siblings of programme participants to avoid the challenges and vulnerable situations their older sisters faced and to stimulate parental demand for education. The programme is also said to have motivated schools to create child-friendly spaces in order to assist girls' completion of their schooling.²⁸ CINI's Girls' Learning Centre programme has an M&E strategy in place, with monitored metrics including standardised assessment performance, internal assessment performance, teacher attendance, student attendance, teacher retention, student retention, increased enrolment and cost effectiveness/value for money.

²⁷ www.educationinnovations.org/program/girl-child-education-taleemshala

²⁸ www.educationinnovations.org/program/cinis-girls-learning-center-program

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Characteristics of successful and/or promising programmes

The review of relevant programmes suggests several characteristics of successful or effective programmes. While many of these characteristics overlap with broader good or promising practices in girls' education and empowerment, they are specifically noted in relation to the application and learning of digital literacy skills and knowledge. Note that the features listed below have been loosely ranked so that the factors of success most frequently identified in the literature appear at the top of the list, followed in descending order by those less frequently identified in the literature. Unfortunately, existing evidence does not allow for valid comparisons of the relative effectiveness of each item.

- Contextually appropriate and driven
- Engage local communities
- Creation of safe spaces and ensuring the safety of participants across all aspects of the programme implementation
- Training and use of peer mentors and positive role models
- Provide opportunities to develop and practise leadership skills
- Encourage discussion of and reflection on participants' lived realities, experiences, challenges and opportunities
- Collaborative methods
- Motivate learners to use new ICTs to explore, communicate about and address social problems that affect them
- Content is age appropriate and relevant to the needs of the learners
- Continual monitoring and evaluation strategies in place
- Include concern for both employability and social awareness and change in programme content and processes

- Contribute to and encourage the building up of peer networks to facilitate sustainability.

Identifying good practices in the assessment, measurement and monitoring of programme success

The study found that the monitoring and evaluation approaches and indicators used to assess processes and impacts, in the sample programmes as well as the broader education programme evaluation literature, vary quite widely. However, some common lessons can be drawn from the findings in terms of good or promising M&E strategies. The sample programmes shared similar outcome goals in terms of empowerment, raising girls' awareness, increased employability, leadership, and community mobilisation and social change. Programme documents suggested also a shared concern for linking programme outputs to broader social outcomes related to, for example in the case of the sample programmes, reducing early marriage/pregnancy and addressing gender-based violence and exclusion.

Broadly speaking, effective M&E strategies will include an initial needs assessment (taking into account the broader socio-economic, cultural and political environment of target participants) in addition to collecting baseline, midline and endline data. Participatory approaches to needs assessment (as well as overall programme evaluation) have been highlighted as particularly effective for collecting a nuanced and accurate understanding of the assets, opportunities and challenges that need to be taken into account in programme development, implementation and evaluation (Cousins, Whitmore & Shuhla, 2013; Cousins & Chouinard, 2012; Fetterman, Rodriguez-Campos, Wandersman & Goldfarb-O'Sullivan, 2013).

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To gather the clearest picture of a programme's impact, both process and impact evaluations should be conducted; however, there is not a clear consensus in the literature concerning the relative values of having such evaluations done internally or by an external/third party evaluator. The choice of which approach to use appears dependent on the capacity and resources of the organisation wishing to evaluate its programme(s). While randomised controlled tests are the gold standard in programme evaluation, these are often not possible due to human and financial resource constraints, in addition to there being ethical questions concerning who is selected to participate in programmes and who is not and how these decisions are made. Quasi-experimental designs that use features of experimental design such as comparison of results between intervention and control groups (to reduce selection bias), but do not randomly assign individuals to intervention and control groups as done in experimental design, have been more commonly applied, but are still not utilised as widely as programme-specific outcomes that are assessed only in relation to participants and not a control group (Lee-Rife et al., 2012).

Penna (2011) identifies several broad areas of best practice in M&E. First, it must be recognised that continual learning is essential to achieve sustainable and meaningful change at the individual and group level. Second, M&E strategies must seek to involve the range of stakeholder groups involved in a programme and balance their interests and priorities. Third, apply M&E methods that generate both quantitative and qualitative data, which leads to a more comprehensive understanding of not only the 'what' (e.g. avoidance of early marriage) but equally as important the 'why' (e.g. how the programme contributed to reductions in early marriage among participants). In the rush to quantify outcomes in the context of mounting pressures for evidence, it can be underestimated how important it is to collect

stories, case studies or other creative products that can significantly enrich, broaden and deepen our understanding of not only what works but why certain interventions work more effectively than others. The collection and use of qualitative data, stories, etc. was an assessment strategy of some of the sample programmes (e.g. Sara Communication Initiative and YETAM). A fourth best practice to note here concerns the use of iterative, continual and reflective feedback approaches to understand how well programme components are contributing (or not) to the achievement of programme objectives. Taking such an approach allows implementers to recognise challenges, successes and needs as they arise.

As noted above, M&E best practice involves the development and use of both quantitative (to answer questions such as how many? How often? How much?) and qualitative indicators (to answer questions such as how? When? Who? Where? What? Why?) (ICT in Education Policy, 2016). Indicator types include inputs, outputs and outcome/impact. Characteristics of good indicators include:

- **Important:** Is it relevant to your organisation? Does it provide information that is critical to future action?
- **Simple:** Is it clear and direct enough to be understood by all involved?
- **Disaggregated:** Is it disaggregated by gender and other key variables that may affect outcomes?
- **Practical:** Can this indicator be measured easily? Is measurement of this indicator affordable? (ICT in Education Policy, 2016, p. 16).

Unfortunately, not all of the sample programme reviews provided details concerning the indicators they use in their monitoring and evaluation work; however, the following list

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provides a snapshot of relevant indicators, drawn from both the sample programmes and the broader M&E literature, that can be useful in assessing and understanding programme outcomes:

- self-reporting of attitudinal change (e.g. confidence, sense of agency, knowledge of rights and responsibilities, etc.)
- self-reporting of learning and skill development
- standardised/formal learning assessments of skill development (e.g. digital literacy, language, communication, leadership)
- age of marriage and/or first pregnancy
- livelihood or employment status
- formal school enrolment (protective effect of in relation to child marriage, see Lee-Rife et al., 2012)
- community mobilisation and advocacy of participating adolescent girls
- participation of girls in community leadership and decision making at household and community levels
- challenging and breaking down of discriminatory gender norms in wider society (wider community stakeholder perspectives).

Gaps in the evidence base

The review of the literature revealed several gaps in the existing evidence base, including considerable gaps in sex-disaggregated data across and within countries, as well as those gaps broadly concerning the relationship between adolescent girls' education (formal and non-formal) and socio-economic empowerment, as well as, more specifically, the relationship between digital literacy and English language support and processes of empowerment.

First, with respect to the links between adolescent girls' education, gender equality and social change, 'the relationship between

changes in girls' education and developments in the enabling environmental, legislative, regulation and opinion formation is under-researched' (Unterhalter et al., 2014, p. 1). Moreover, there are serious gaps in our understanding of the links between girls' education and empowerment outcomes (the existing research and evidence has primarily focused on the impact of resource and infrastructure interventions on the lives and learning of adolescent girls, with fewer studies and programming addressing interventions that seek to challenge and change exclusionary norms (Unterhalter et al., 2014, p. 1). Unterhalter et al. (2014) further highlight, as an example, those interventions that seek to enhance the agency and participation of the marginalised in decision-making processes as being under-researched and under-resourced: 'Further research is suggested on promising interventions in this area associated with girls' clubs, faith communities, work with boys on gender equality, and strategies to include marginalised girls and women in decision making, reflection and action, notably with regard to gender-based violence' (Unterhalter et al., 2014, p. 1).

Second, given the focus in this literature review on programming that seeks to develop adolescent girls' digital literacy and English language skills and knowledge, it is important to highlight several key gaps in the existing research and evidence. First and foremost is the general lack of statistical data on girls' and women's use of digital technologies. Without more and relevant gender disaggregated data on this topic, quantitative measurement of the impact of ICTs on girls' and women's voices and influence remains difficult (Cummings & O'Neil, 2015). Moreover, very little evidence is available on the significance of English language development programming on girls' socio-economic development in contexts where English is not the medium of instruction in schools. English is a dominant international

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language (e.g. in terms of science and commerce) and of growing importance in South Asia and sub-Saharan African contexts, and so it stands to reason that developing English language skills and knowledge can have positive effects on individuals' employment prospects and earnings (see, for example, Azam & Kingdon, 2013; Chakraborty & Bakshi, 2016). In turn, income generation and formal employment are agreed positive outcomes in relation to girls' and women's socio-economic development and can help delay marriage and thereby support girls' development as individuals and active members of their communities and societies (Amin, Ahmed, Saha, Hossain & Haque, 2016; Lee-Rife et al., 2012). The research is also clear that ICT users benefit from English language skills and knowledge, given that the majority of internet content is expressed in English (Goswami & Datta, 2009).

digital literacy development? Under what conditions? To what extent?

To address the research and evidence gaps overviewed above, a series of questions are identified below that could be used to guide programming and practice going forward. For each question, the issue is of the short-, medium- and longer-term impacts and outcomes, with the latter being where the biggest research gaps are (Unterhalter et al., 2014).

- What is the impact of digital literacy on adolescent girls' ability to claim and demand their rights?
- How do broader structures and norms in society mediate the impact of digital literacy on processes of adolescent girls' socio-economic empowerment?
- Under what conditions can the learning and development of English skills and knowledge support adolescent girls' socioeconomic empowerment as well as broader processes of social change?
- Does the learning and development of English skills and knowledge add value to

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

This review of the literature on adolescent girls' education opportunities and challenges, with specific reference to digital literacy and language skills development programming, has responded to several research questions introduced at the outset of the report:

- What types of programmes currently exist that seek to enhance the socio-economic status and opportunities of girls in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa through English language learning and the development of digital literacies?
- What outcomes are being pursued by these programmes?
- What measures are being used to assess the achievement of programme objectives?
- What does the evidence tell us about the characteristics of 'successful' programmes and effective assessment and monitoring processes?
- What gaps remain in terms of the evidence base guiding gender/English/ICTs programming in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa?

At the outset of the report, a framework for understanding the value of promoting girls' formal and non-formal education as a means to support their socio-economic development and empowerment was established. Attention was also paid to framing adolescent girls as a group with unique characteristics and needs, before turning to a brief discussion of the range of supply and demand side factors (i.e. those factors inside and outside of schools) that constrain gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment both within and beyond formal schooling.

The review of relevant ICT and/or language training opportunities targeting adolescent girls in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa revealed

a number of programmes offered by non-governmental organisations and the private sector, either independently or in conjunction with other NGO or private-sector partners, as well as governments and bilateral and multilateral donors. The programmes reviewed variously connected their ICT and digital literacy skill development work with outcomes related to awareness-raising, confidence-building, social change, empowerment, civic participation, community mobilisation and leadership, and employability. More specifically, programmes involving ICT and/or English language skill development have sought to reduce child and/or early marriage rates, a major challenge for many marginalised adolescent girls in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

Details concerning the monitoring and evaluation strategies of the programmes reviewed were unevenly distributed across the sample; however, some insights revealed suggested the importance of collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data in the context of process and outcome evaluations. It should be noted that most of the monitoring evaluation work reviewed focused on outcome evaluation, with less evidence of process evaluations being implemented or used. Using the broader monitoring and evaluation literature as a guide, lessons learned include the importance of ongoing and reflective practice in terms of needs assessment (e.g. SWOT analysis); the need for M&E work to be participatory and involving of a broad range of stakeholders, including girls themselves in the generation of data and the production of knowledge concerning programmatic processes and outcomes; and the importance of rigorous baseline, midline and endline data and the use of this data in continual cycles of reflection, monitoring and evaluation of programme processes and outcomes.

Several gaps in the evidence base related to the research questions guiding this review were

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revealed and may be grouped into three broad themes: i) value added of English language skill and knowledge development in terms of the girls' socio-economic development in contexts where English is not a dominant language, and particularly for rural or otherwise marginalised girls, ii) medium- and longer-term impact of English and/or digital literacy programmes on social change, including the challenging of discriminatory norms and practices that constrain girls' educational and life opportunities, iii) how specific programme components, such as digital literacy and/or English language skill development, act either together or in combination to support girls' socio-economic development and empowerment.

As discussed in the report, evidence suggests that providing adolescent girls with opportunities to develop digital literacy skills can have a direct impact on their sense of agency and self-confidence, expose them to new ideas and useful/relevant information, connect with others

to reduce isolation and form networks for further socially transformative action, and can, in theory, open up different and more employment opportunities for them. Learning English can help support the learning of and effective utilisation of digital technologies by girls in the development and exercise of their agency towards social change (i.e. challenging of discriminatory gender norms) and their socio-economic development. Moreover, recent research is exploring the link between English language proficiency and girls' and women's socio-economic empowerment (see, for example, Hussain, Ahmed & Zafar, 2009). However, beyond recognising English as a globally valued commodity (for status, communication and employment purposes – see Chakraborty & Bakshi, 2016, for example), there is a general lack of empirical literature on the extent to which (and how) English contributes to processes of girls' empowerment in different contexts

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