

CASE STUDY:

Using QuIP to evaluate the impact of a multi-channel project aimed at increasing adolescent girls' confidence and literacy.

- **COMMISSIONER:** Girl Effect
- **COUNTRY OF STUDY:** Rwanda
- **INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS:** 48 respondents & 8 FGDS
- **YEAR OF STUDY:** 2021
- **PROJECT:** Ni Nyampinga Girls' Clubs in schools

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Girl Effect in Rwanda runs a branded media platform called Ni Nyampinga (NN) aimed at adolescent girls. It provides support on multiple thematic areas including self-esteem, education and sexual and reproductive health (SRH), amongst others. NN has a presence across 4 different media channels:

- **NN clubs:** school-based clubs where girls meet to discuss NN content with an aim to engage girls in discussing SRH and deepen the impact of the other media platforms;
- **NN magazine:** informative content aimed at increasing SRH knowledge and motivating girls through real role models;
- **NN radio talk show:** informative content aimed at increasing SRH knowledge and motivating girls through real role models;
- **NN radio drama (called 'Sakwe'):** fictional content aiming at shifting particular attitudes related to SRH

The focus of this study was on Ni Nyampinga's sexual and reproductive health work, specifically on behaviours on the journey towards the ultimate goal of girls practising safe sex when ready. The programme was focused on two main intermediary behaviour change objectives around sexual and reproductive health:

- 1) adolescent girls are speaking to their peers about SRH
- 2) adolescent girls are using SRH services

WHY USE QuIP?

This **Qualitative Impact Protocol** study commissioned by Girl Effect was a deep dive study to collect information from participating adolescent girls about their experiences of SRH behaviours over the past two years, and in so doing explore the impact of the programme so far. The aim of this study was to identify what may have changed in girls' experiences, and what helps to drive change - positive or negative. Visualising reported drivers and outcomes in the form of causal maps

helped to establish to what extent the Ni Nyampinga programme may have contributed to change, and how the activities operated alongside other drivers of change. The findings were presented to and discussed with wider Girl Effect staff to establish implications for future planning, and having access to visualisations and source narrative statements made the findings more accessible and transparent to all programme staff.

APPROACH

Interviews were conducted by two local members of the Girl Effect research team who had experience of working with these schools and discussing sensitive issues with adolescent girls. This was an important consideration given the subject matter and age of the respondents. There was therefore no attempt at blindfolding the researchers, and they had to discuss the aims of the research with the schools in order to gain access to the girls, but the questionnaires were kept as open-ended as possible. This means that there was no reference to the NN clubs in the questions posed in the interviews, apart from at the very end where there were some direct questions about the different NN products.

Schools were selected from Nyaruguru and Rulindo Districts. Following approval from district authorities to conduct the research, schools with NN clubs were identified with the help of NN brand ambassadors (girls who distribute Ni Nyampinga magazine in their original districts). Researchers approached head teachers at the schools to explain the purpose of the research and ask for permission to interview girls. Girls from any clubs which discussed SRH were initially sampled, and then screened by the researchers to identify NN club members. Girls in the sample were not told that they were being sampled due to their NN club membership.

The schools were selected based on status of the club, classed as either Active or Inactive. The number of interviews was split evenly between Active and Inactive, as well as split evenly between the two districts. The activity level was advised by brand ambassadors based on the following broad definitions:

Active: A club that meets often and organises some activities

Inactive: A club that meets less often and does not organise many activities

Questions focused on stories of changes over the past two years and centred around the following topics:

- Personal relationships (friendships and love relationships)
- Knowledge and sources of information about SRH
- Use of health services
- Perceptions of support for accessing SRH services

In addition to the individual interviews, researchers carried out 8 focus group discussions, 4 in each district. Between 5-6 different girls participated in each FGD. These discussions covered the same questions as the individual interviews. FGDs are often used in QulP studies as a control for whether respondents report any differently when in a group environment, and from a larger cohort. In this case the FGDs served to confirm that the stories of change were reported in the same way as the individual interviews.

FINDINGS

Once interviews were coded, they revealed a relatively low number of stories of change and causal links. Only around half the respondents provided detailed stories of change. We consider that the age of the respondents contributed to these lower reporting levels - younger respondents find it harder to give rich accounts of change over time. There was also scope for the way the questionnaire was used to be refined to generate more detailed stories of change, but this is a sensitive topic and more difficult to generate relaxed conversation about. Many girls said they were not sexually active, therefore they didn't have much to say in response to some of the questions. The schools in Rwanda had only just re-opened following a lengthy COVID lockdown, so not much activity had taken

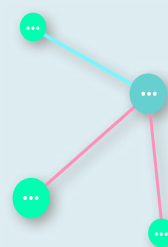
place in recent months, contributing to a lack of detailed references to change.

Most girls in the sample were aged 15-16 years, single (27% were in a relationship), and were regular or occasional users of all NN media channels. During the interviews, when asked closed questions about change, between 60-75% of girls reported positive changes in knowledge, healthy behaviours and support from others, related to their SRH. However, when the same girls were asked open-ended questions about change, a lower percentage of stories of change emerged.

In the maps below, respondent counts are used – indicating how many girls have made the link displayed in the map.

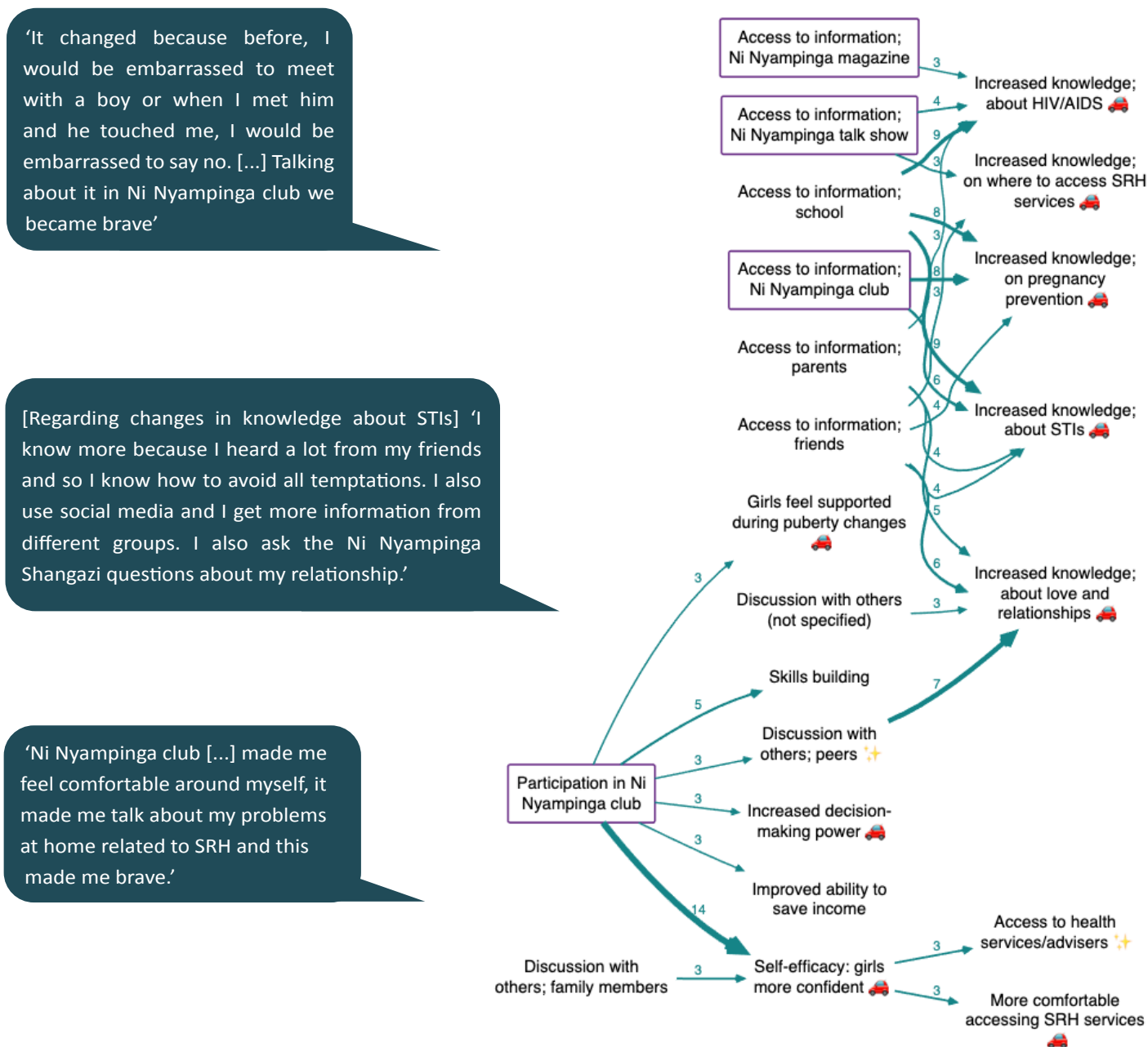
HOW TO READ CAUSAL MAPS

- Maps are designed to be read from left to right.
- The direction of the arrowhead on each link reflects the direction of causation or influence.
- Above each link there is a number which represents the number of participants who made that causal claim.
- Maps have been filtered and simplified to focus on the most frequent links in relation to a particular query.



Three main areas of change were reported by girls are outlined in the overview map below:

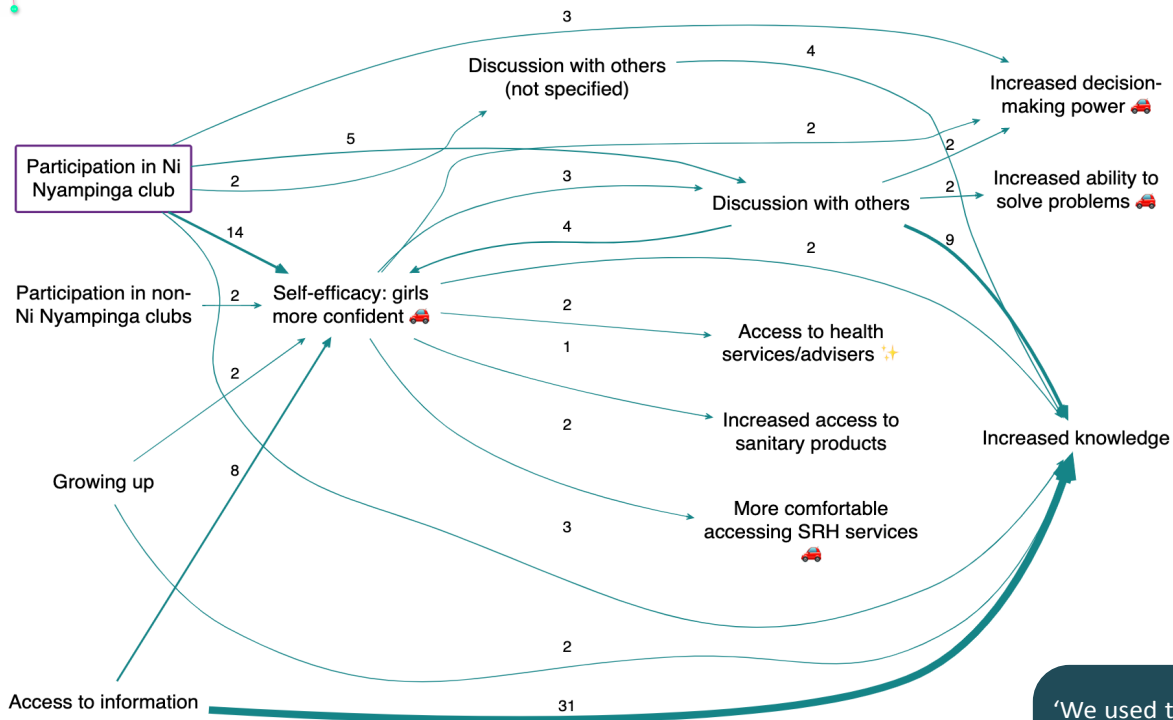
DRIVERS OF CHANGE LINKED TO NI NYAMPINGA CHANNELS



The NN programme was cited as a driver of change in relation to a range of outcomes linked to SRH. Participation in the NN clubs was the most cited platform, contributing to an increase in girls' confidence, as well as an increase in their knowledge on SRH. The other NN channels were cited to a lesser extent. School and other influences were typically stronger influences in the girls' lives, but there was positive interaction between the different drivers.

- Girls had an increased knowledge, especially about love & relationships, sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy prevention, with discussion with and information from school, friends, peers, parents and the NN clubs as the key drivers
- Increased self-efficacy: girls said they had more confidence - particularly around issues of consent with boys - and cited participation in NN clubs as being the main driver
- Increased ability to purchase goods (such as period products) driven by having access to commodities which they can also sell

DRIVERS AND OUTCOMES OF INCREASED CONFIDENCE



'I think I know more because as I grow, I get more knowledge. These past years, I would ask my friends and they would advise me. I now know more than I did before. For example, when I have an issue with the boyfriend, we talk about it and solve it.'

'I have the right to love whoever I want and I have the right to do what I want in the relationship.'

'We used to meet up with an older girl and she would give us that information too. She told us how we can prevent unplanned pregnancies. She told us that if you are raped, you should go to the health center and get help from the doctors.'

The main driver leading to increased self-efficacy/confidence is participation in the NN club. There is some impact downstream of this increase in confidence, in relation to accessing health services for example. Other drivers influencing girls' confidence include accessing information from school and the NN talk show, and having discussions with family members - exemplified in the quotes below. Data was analysed by active and inactive status. Although in most cases there was no real difference, in some domains the reported change in schools with active clubs was higher. For example, when analysed by club status, 11 of the 14 girls who cited 'participation in NN club' as a driver for increased confidence were from active NN clubs.

As well as positive changes in knowledge and confidence levels, there was also evidence that some girls were still unsure about myths relating to sex and relationships; for example that if they refuse to have sex with a boy they will never have a relationship again, or be sexually assaulted or raped anyway. Many girls talked about fearing sex or pressure from boys to have sex. Sometimes the fear was linked to the potential consequences (pregnancy or STIs), but other times it was just the fear of sex or distrust of boys. However, whilst some girls expressed these worries, many reported a better understanding of consent and feeling empowered to say 'no' to boys who ask for sex.

Bath Social & Development Research, curators of the QUIP, conducted this study.
For more information please see www.bathcdr.org