

BATONGA LEADERSHIP CLUBS: SAFE SPACES FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

A Program Factsheet

March 2021

The issue

In many communities, the arrival of puberty decreases a girl's access to friends and her freedom to move around in her community. Adolescent girls are less likely than boys to have strong social networks, someplace they can stay in case of emergency, or a trusted person from whom they can borrow money. As a result, many girls' have little to no access to spaces outside their home where they can freely speak their mind, ask taboo questions, and develop supportive, meaningful relationships.

Research shows the critical importance of strong social networks to girls' health and safety. It has also shown that when girls' economic assets are built on their own, without the protection created by strengthening their social assets, like friend networks, access to safe spaces, and the presence of a mentor, can actually leave vulnerable girls at increased risk of sexual violence.



The Batonga Leadership Clubs

Batonga's Leadership Clubs provide adolescent girls with accessible, private, and physically and emotionally safe spaces where they can meet weekly with a group of their peers and a trusted female mentor. These spaces are an essential part of their strengthening girls' voice and agency. The first sessions of any Leadership Club include discussions of club values, such as respect for your peers, confidentiality of things shared in the clubs, and trust in one another. The meeting locations of our Leadership Clubs are chosen specifically to ensure safety and accessibility. This means that meeting locations are within the girls' walkable community and are not located in isolated or unsafe areas which might necessitate a dangerous walk for the girls. The perceived safety and privacy of these spaces helps to reduce barriers to attendance and enable discussion of sensitive, sometimes taboo issues among girls and their mentor. Girls can build solidarity networks with their peers, seek advice, share traumas, learn skills, all with a sense of security.

We currently run

126 CLUBS IN
15 COMMUNITIES

We serve a total of

3,600 GIRLS

between the ages of 12 and 18, and divided in

04 AGE GROUPS



OUR CLUBS' IMPACT

- Adolescent girls are part of a trusted community that supports them and shows up for them when needed.

92.9% OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS SAY THEY NOW HAVE ACCESS TO A TRUSTED ADULT FOR ADVICE

- Enables girls to learn knowledge and skills related to:

- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
- Economic independence and financial literacy
- Citizenship and leadership

Batonga has broadcasted over **50** WEEKLY RADIO LESSONS

with an average listen rate of **81%** among program girls

"Before, when I was home, even just talking to my mom, I would hide my face, avoid eye contact, and felt uncomfortable in my own body. But since I started Batonga, I'm not afraid to talk to people, especially if they are my age, to prove to them that I am a strong girl of Batonga."

- Edith, Batonga Club Member

- Girls and young women are empowered to take on new leadership roles in their communities

1,940 GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN DESIGNED & IMPLEMENTED COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

360 GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN CREATED INFORMATIONAL RADIO SKETCHES TO COMMUNICATE INFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19 TO THEIR COMMUNITIES