

Case study

GEARR-ing Up for Success After School

PEAS
UGANDA

MAY 2021



Project summary (pre and during Covid-19)

PEAS' GEARR-ing up for Success After School project in Uganda supports 7,493 beneficiary girls. These girls are enrolled in the 28 PEAS secondary schools established in rural locations in Uganda. Before Covid-19, the project activities included continuing professional development (CPD) for PEAS teachers (including gender-responsive pedagogy and safeguarding), school management and governance training, girls clubs, and community advocacy to support girls' education. During Covid-19, activities have included establishing and maintaining regular contact with beneficiary girls, printing and distribution of National Curriculum Development Centre secondary home learning packs, and the production of a set of radio lessons broadcast on local radio stations.

Domain 1: Local context and educational system

1: Local context

PEAS' approach

Engagement with parents, caregivers and families

PEAS Uganda staff consulted school leaders and drew on existing expertise on the most effective ways to communicate with caregivers as appropriate to the context. Due to the Covid-19 risk, in-person contact was quickly ruled out as not appropriate. PEAS recognised the vast majority of caregivers would not have internet access (due to rural location and economic status) but that the majority have access to a phone (most caregivers use phones to make school fee payments). PEAS therefore had contact details and knowledge that this is a viable method of contacting caregivers. Caregivers were reached via the telephone tree they set up, whereby teachers regularly communicated with them (and also with beneficiary girls).

Assessing changing learning needs and gaps of girls who remain out of school

PEAS conducted three surveys over the course of 2020, during the Covid-19 period. Students were asked about the subjects they felt they needed most catch-up support when returning to school. PEAS also piloted a maths assessment over the phone with a sample of students (in Dec 2020 /Jan 2021), to identify the particular areas of numeracy that students are struggling with/will need support with.

Addressing household chores and other duties

PEAS considered the issue and surveyed students about what might limit the amount of time they can study at home. They noted that just as many boys as girls reported having household chores and duties. Teachers are guided to talk to caregivers about ensuring that children are given the time to study at home. In the long term, PEAS is considering when DTL activities (e.g. radio lessons) can best be scheduled that fit around key times for household responsibilities.

Domain 2: Distance teaching and learning modality

2: Modality	PEAS' approach
Effective DTL delivery modalities to use (for example, mobile phones, radio, television, online learning or paper-based materials)	Options for modality of delivery were rapidly assessed at the outset, with awareness of the local context, which ruled out TV and online learning as suitable means of providing DTL due to the rural/poor nature of student households. At the start, radio and phone-based DTL were deemed both possible and potentially effective. PEAS established a telephone tree to regularly reach out to beneficiaries and caregivers, as well as working with NCDC to produce radio lessons. At the beginning of the pandemic and lockdown, the distribution of paper-based materials was problematic because of limits on movement. However, PEAS was able to distribute study packs after a few months.
Factors which make self-directed activities successful	PEAS considered the accessibility of material for secondary age students and distributed existing NCDC materials to students to increase access. PEAS also considered supplementing these or creating PEAS' own material but instead decided to focus content development on other modalities where materials did not exist e.g. radio and SMS. PEAS used telephone calls from teachers to help students engage in study packs. Feedback from students showed study packs were highly valued by students suggesting they were accessible.
Safeguarding risks the DTL modalities will present	In recognition that the project was using a new method to directly connect teachers to students (telephone calls) and aware of the risks regarding safeguarding, PEAS created specific safeguarding guidance for all staff to clarify roles and responsibilities and required teachers to create a log of calls. Head teachers also conduct spot checks on teachers' logs and calls.

Domain 3: Content and curriculum

3: Content and curriculum PEAS' approach

Content is sufficiently differentiated so that it supports both high attaining and low attaining learners in different age groups

Radio content and academic SMS messages were both designed with consideration of differentiation for levels of learners. Radio sessions were created to build complexity and included a range of questions to challenge students with different attainment levels. Similarly SMS messages included a range of questions, including a word problem and a 'challenge' question to stretch high attaining students, but remain accessible to all.

How engaging the content is, whether to use techniques or approaches including play/gamification or other approaches to keep learners engaged

PEAS designed the radio lessons to be light-hearted, open, fun and focused on a growth mind-set. They involved activities such as games, tongue-twisters, quizzes and singing. They also praised effort, showing that mistakes are part of learning.

Pace and frequency of the delivery which is sufficient to generate the intended learning outcomes, and how pace can help or hinder the engagement of learners

PEAS considered how to make radio lessons engaging through appropriate pacing, and used various methods, for example, breaking down learning into manageable learning chunks, and use of lock-step for complex learning points (breaking down learning element and listeners practising step by step with the presenter). The radio lessons had varied tempo and pace through settler (e.g. meditation) and stirrer activities (e.g. high-energy dance).

Domain 4: Pedagogy and assessment

4: Pedagogy and assessment PEAS' approach

Use of various pedagogical approaches (e.g. teaching at the right level) and their relevance to learners needs and capacities

Regarding the radio lessons, PEAS considered pedagogical research which indicated that listening-only teaching can overwhelm learner cognition, resulting in poor learning outcomes (students not able to maintain attention, process and memorise information from listening only). Therefore, PEAS used a range of radio appropriate pedagogies to address this, e.g. segmentation, repetition, lock-step instruction and inquiry-based learning.

Frequency, rate and quality of feedback that learners receive from educators and/or DTL modalities

Students received feedback in different formats through PEAS' range of DTL modalities. For example, in the maths SMS pilot, hints were shared on the day students received the questions and answers followed five days later. In the radio sessions, answers were revealed following questions and called out key errors or misconceptions.

Domain 5: Monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptation and impact

5: Monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptation PEAS' approach

M&E system allows for the project to prioritise where more support is needed

The PEAS' phone survey (undertaken three times in 2020) has included questions regarding which subjects the students are struggling most with and therefore which they require teacher support for, as well as what they would like to be prioritised in catch-up classes when schools reopen.

Learning and adaptation system in place that enables operational/ delivery changes, and feedback loops being used

The project has weekly MEL calls that include key staff in Uganda and UK. One of the key points for discussion each week are MEL learnings to reflect on. This includes discussion around phone survey results and learning assessments. PEAS also maintains a monthly dashboard of key indicators.



Find out more: www.girlseducationchallenge.org | uk_girls_education_challenge@pwc.com

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