Improving Female Recruitment, Participation, and Retention Among Peer Educators in the Geração BIZ Program in Mozambique

April 2006

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By

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Introduction

The estimated HIV prevalence rate in Mozambique is 16.3% in the adult population. Roughly 50% of all cases are in young people between 15-24 years old. A multisectoral program, Geração BIZ (GBP), has addressed young people's lack of access to knowledge, life skills, and clinical services in the areas of Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) and HIV/AIDS, since 1999. Three ministries (Youth and Sport, Education, and Health) coordinate GBP activities and work in partnership with selected Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) and youth associations to maximize GBP's reach and effectiveness. These activities, related to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and HIV/AIDS, are administered at the central, provincial, regional and community levels.

The name Geração BIZ or "busy generation" was chosen by young people to represent their active involvement in addressing their own reproductive health needs and those of their peers. The program began at the central level and activities were first implemented in the city of Maputo and in Zambézia Province. By 2002, activities were initiated in the Provinces of Gaza, Maputo, and Tete. Expansion is occurring within each of the participating provinces. Since 2003 the program has operated in Cabo Delgado Province and, more recently, began in Inhambane Province.

Peer education[1] is a major component of the program, with activities developed jointly by in- and out-of-school youth. The program mandates that girls and boys be recruited in equal numbers, and there are expectations that both will perform equally well. However, boys are generally overrepresented among peer activists. They are more active, and they dominate leadership roles. Prior to this current Operations Research (OR) activity, no focused investment or specific strategies were instituted in recruitment, training, or follow-up to increase the involvement of girls, or to facilitate their participation and retention.

The socio-cultural context in Mozambique clearly relegates girls to a position of less power and greater passivity regarding peer activist expectations, and it likely interferes with their continuing with the program. Opportunities and support for girls' equal participation is a significant determinant of their ability to perform effectively, remain in the program, and help attain the objectives of the GBP.

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[1] The terms "peer education" and "peer educators" are used interchangeably in this report with "peer activis program" and "peer activists," the latter set of terms being the most direct translation for the Portuguese "activistas."

Rationale

International literature demonstrates that gender is an important element in young people's decisions to seek out peer educators for needed information. In general, girls tend to feel more at ease with female activists rather than with those of the opposite sex. Young women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS infection and other sexual and reproductive health problems is also well documented.

Thus, to assist young women in effectively carrying out their tasks as activists and to address gender-based issues, both professionals and peer educators must better understand the construction of gender roles and how they affect girls as peer activists. Naturally, male involvement is also important, as noted in the international literature. But, a notable difference in the ability of girls to perform effectively as peer educators must be addressed through research and development activities.

In response to this apparent, significant difference in performance, the GBP developed an OR plan to test new strategies for improving recruitment, participation, and retention of female peer educators in program activities. This OR used both quantitative and qualitative approaches, (based on the dialectical and historical-structural methods), to better understand the factors that lead to female adolescents' decisions to participate in the GBP. The study also proposed and tested an intervention model to increase the involvement and performance of girls in the GBP.

The study started with the hypothesis that a protocol addressing young women's needs for comfort and security, skills acquisition, support, and mentoring would improve the recruitment, retention, and effective performance of female peer educators in the GBP. The implementation plan involves four interrelated phases, using qualitative and quantitative data. This report presents results of all four phases.

Methodology

Phase 1 - Establishing the knowledge base for the study

This phase's objective was to create the theoretical and methodological foundation for the planning and development of the study through a systematic literature review. Key documents reviewed included scientific publications and less formal program descriptions that analyze or use peer educators to promote sexual and reproductive health and related themes. The study focused where possible on gender-related aspects of peer education programs. Significant approaches and findings were noted and used to plan the current study and in the analysis of study findings.

Phase 2 - Investigating the problem: the diagnostic analysis

The diagnostic analysis is based on two sets of data: quantitative data from ongoing GBP monitoring records and reports, and qualitative data from inquiries specially designed for this analysis.

Quantitative Diagnostic

To obtain quantitative data about female peer educator retention and attrition from the GBP, a specific form was designed to gather data from existing sources. Coordinators and technical advisers from both in-school and out-of-school programs were asked to provide recent data on the number of peer educators participating in the program, the number recruited and trained, and their rate of retention. Data was derived from reports and intake forms used in GBP monitoring from Maputo City, Zambézia, Gaza, and Maputo Provinces for the period between June 1999 to March 2003. These provinces were the ones with the longest periods of project implementation.

The most pertinent selected variables for analysis were:

- Number of peer educators trained,
- Number of peer educators currently in the program, and
- Drop out rate.

The data presented is disaggregated by sex, age group, and arena of activity (school or community) for the purposes of analysis.

Qualitative Diagnostic

In this phase, the objective was to identify and analyze the perceptions of several GBP stakeholders regarding retention and attrition of female peer educators. Data was collected through a semistructured questionnaire, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. The interviews and focus groups were found especially useful as methods of qualitative data collection for understanding perceptions, habits, values, beliefs, taboos, myths and prejudices of specific groups or the community, and to guide the planning of strategies and program activities for the intervention project.

Information was obtained from the following actions:

- Nine interviews with technical advisers, from both in-school and out-of-school programs were conducted to better understand the quality of female participation and reasons why girls abandoned the program. This inquiry also provided descriptions of the process used for selection, training, and support of peer educators.

- Four in-depth interviews were conducted with peer educator leaders from Maputo City and Zambézia Province and one in-depth interview was conducted with a female peer educator from Maputo City who left the program. These inquiries provided information on perceptions of peer educator incorporation into the program, family influence on participation of both male and female peer educators, and ways to improve the process and practices of the peer education program. In the case of girls who left, it is clear that a single interview was inadequate for the intended objective. However, in spite of significant effort, it was not possible to find these interviewees. This could be attributed to difficulties in contacting people who have left the project, or resistance by the coordinators and/or technical advisors to seek out those who did not occupy the program's "positions of success."

- Fourteen focus groups were conducted with peer educators. In Maputo City, six focus groups were held, with an average of eight participants totaling 53 peer educators (29 males and 24 females). In Zambézia, eight focus groups were conducted with an average of seven participants, totaling 60 peer educators (31 males and 29 females), from both urban and rural areas.

The focus groups provided data on:

- Activists' understanding of their activities within the program,
- Perceptions of the importance and consistency of the activists' work,
- Opinions on the differences in the performance of male and female activists,
- Opinions and perceptions of the motives for trained activists, especially girls, leaving the program, and
- Suggestions for increasing retention of female activists.

Two focus groups were conducted with GBP trainers; one in Zambézia Province, with seven participants, and another in Maputo City, with five participants. The objectives of these groups were to investigate the trainers' perception of the differences between male and female activists' participation during training and ways in which the trainers sought to foster equality.

Given the qualitative character of the study and the subjective nature of the focus group method, there was no need to randomly choose the subjects for participation. All focus group participants were GBP activists. All sessions were recorded with the participants' informed consent, and a full transcription was made.

It is important to highlight that individual interviews also aimed to verify if the results generated from the focus groups were consistent with individual perceptions. Transcribed material from interviews and focus groups was tabulated and analyzed according to the main empiric categories. Then data was aggregated according to the analytical categories, relating the main elements to retention probability in the GBP.

Phase 3 - Development of the new protocol

This phase, based on data analysis from different sources, aimed to identify new strategies, practices, and procedures in recruitment, training, and support process of the GBP to increase the participation and retention of female peer educators. The new actions were developed from:

- Results of the literature review;

- Results of diagnostic analysis from both qualitative and quantitative methods;

- Analysis of results from a working group with 12 provincial GBP trainers (seven from Zambézia and five from Maputo City) to better understand whether or not current training is conducive to girls' participation and to explore new approaches that will enhance female peer educators' performance and participation;

- Results from two protocol development workshops. The first one consisted of 29 participants and included selected technical advisers, national counterparts, NGO partners, peer educators, and parents. Its goals were to present and discuss results from the literature review, data collection and working group sessions with provincial trainers and develop a new protocol. The second workshop consisted of 15 participants, including technical advisers, GBP coordinators and activists to discuss, revise, and improve the proposal, structure and procedures of the new protocol;

- A draft version of the protocol was presented and discussed in a series of five workshops, including one with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and UNFPA technical staff and four with provincial directorate staff from the education and youth sectors and activists. They analyzed the coherence and feasibility of proposed actions and assessed the overall improvement in the protocol;

- Working sessions with GBP staff; and

- Feedback on findings and proposed protocol from advisors and Pathfinder headquarters staff.

As a result of all the actions listed above, a protocol was developed and structured in three components: recruitment, training, and supervision and support, including actions for implementation and supporting tools.

Phase 4 - Testing the Protocol

This phase lasted 14 months (12 for the application of the new protocol and 2 for the analysis of the results). It was designed to assess the possible effects of the new protocol on recruitment, training, and the overall participation and retention of female activists in the GBP. Maputo and Gaza were selected for application of the protocol because GBP has been operating active there for a considerable period and are in the process of expanding, and they are relatively close to the GBP central coordination offices.

A quasi-experimental design was used to test the new protocol. Two groups, intervention and control, were selected and compared according to a group of predefined variables. This design was chosen as a useful and appropriate study approach for this project because it could be applied to activities—ongoing (control) and newly expanded with a new intervention

(intervention)—within provinces that were similar in most regards other than the intervention being assessed. However, some variables could have interfered in this process. They are:

- Ethically, it was difficult to offer a more effective and supportive set of interventions to one group of peer educators while continuing to offer a lower quality set of interventions to another group just for the purpose of study comparability.

- Different districts in the same province (i.e., intervention and control groups) may have had slight differences in program participation and retention prior to the study.

- Differences in age, sex, education, and economic status of research subjects (i.e., peer activists) from the intervention and control groups could have also affected study results.

- The involved technical staff were aware of the study's objectives, and could have influenced both the production and collection of the results, thus generating possible bias.

In each province (Maputo and Gaza), one district was identified as an intervention group and the other as a control group. In each district, the OR study involved peer educators from the in-school program and ones from the out-of-school (community) program.

Control groups were selected from those in which peer educators had been trained using the existing training curriculum until September 2002. Data on their participation and activities, available from monitoring records kept by the project, were then collected for a period of 12 months following completion of their training.

Intervention groups in the chosen districts were exposed to the new protocol on recruitment, selection, training, and support. Recruitment and selection of peer educators was conducted in accordance with the new protocol guidelines. Training was conducted by trainers updated on the new protocol, with a strong emphasis on gender issues and awareness, followed by ongoing support to the trained peer educators.

Data collection took place during the 12 months following the training. The operationalization of this phase was conducted by the central level and provincial Technical Advisors (TAs) working within the GBP, trained in the implementation of the new protocol. The monitoring of each step of the protocol implementation process involved:

Recruitment

The new recruitment process was documented using data collection tools included in the new protocol. This information was one of the data sources for analysis. Working sessions between central and provincial level technical advisers who were monitoring data collection helped to ensure consistency and compliance with the process.

Training

The trainers were updated on the elements in the new protocol. A technical advisor, who was not one of the trainers, was assigned to observe the training and prepare a report which was included as a source for qualitative analysis.

Support

GBP central level technical advisers had monthly working sessions during the first three months of protocol implementation, followed by quarterly meetings with the provincial technical advisers. Meetings confirmed that both mechanisms and conditions recommended by the protocol were in place for supervision and support. The TAs provided the quantitative data and discussion was conducted around the facilitating and limiting factors of the new protocol. The qualitative analysis, based on a comparison of the implementation results of the new and old protocols, was conducted according to a set of established variables.

Variables included:

- Leadership roles assumed by peer educators, disaggregated by sex;

- Availability of time to conduct activities;

- Difficulties found in the implementation of activities;

- Support (or lack of support) from family and/or the peer education group; and

- Identification of the main facilitating or limiting factors.

Information was obtained from the following activities:

- Four in-depth interviews with technical advisers for both the in-school and out-of-school peer education programs from the participating provinces,

- Four in-depth interviews with government directors and coordinators from the education and youth and sports sectors in Maputo and Gaza provinces,

- Four in-depth interviews with activist leaders from Gaza (Guijá), and

- Eight focus groups with 60 peer educators from the intervention districts of Magude and Guijá, disaggregated by sex and whether they were in or out of school.

The quantitative analysis of the quasi-intervention study was based on a statistical analysis of the differences between the intervention and control groups according to selected indicators and data collection sources. These indicators were processed through a statistical package of epidemiological modeling (i.e., EPI INFO).

The odds ratio was used to measure the association and magnitude between the two variables under investigation. The significance was measured where $p = 0.05$. For the purpose of data analysis, "loss of an activist" was considered as any activist that did not participate for three consecutive months after s/he received training in any program activity, regardless of the reason (e.g, disease, change of school or residence).

Results of literature review and diagnostic analysis

Literature Review

Peer education is one of the most popular and widely-used activities in ASRH and HIV prevention programs. Although most of these programs have not undergone rigorous evaluation, some evidence shows that peer education results in positive changes in the peer educators themselves and, typically to a lesser extent, in the target audience of their peers (Kerrigan and Weiss, 2000; Senderowitz 2000; UNFPA, 2000; FOCUS on Young Adults, 2001).

Systematic analyses of these programs have been made in recent years in an effort to identify operational elements that foster good outcomes and to understand and rectify problems and challenges common to this approach. Weaknesses most often identified by program participants include need for more training, inadequate supervision and support, lack of program materials, insufficient acceptance by the community and inadequate recognition and compensation (Flanagan, et al., 1996; Senderowitz, 1997; Kerrigan and Weiss, 2000; IPPF, 2001). Many peer educators express the need for training and support to help them in planning for their future, including gaining access to income-generating activities (IPPF, 2001). From the program management perspective, high turnover is one of the most serious challenges (Senderowitz, 1997; IPPF, 2001).

Many of these challenges relate to both young men and young women in their role as peer educators. For example, inadequate training, supervision, and compensation have been shown to result in the loss of peer educators from their programs (Lobo, n.d.; Bartling, et al., 1996; AFY, 1996). Some challenges are more serious, or unique among female peer educators. The extent to which such problems cause a disproportionate loss among female peer educators is a special concern, as research has shown that young women tend to prefer receiving information on sexual issues from same-sex peers.

There are mixed reports on recruitment of males and females. Some studies, including one covering three programs in Africa, show that girls are less likely to apply, resulting in disproportionate numbers of male peer educators (IPPF, 2001). There is evidence that parental concern over a daughter's participation, particularly because of the taboo subject matter, exerts a depressing influence on female involvement with these projects (Lane, 1997; Silva et al., 1997; Weiss and Gupta, 1998). A Sri Lankan study reports that males were more difficult to recruit than females, owing to males' great scheduling conflicts and lower level of interest. However, this project engaged university students (Silva et al., 1997). It is likely that their age and impending occupational concerns could have been factors influencing participation, compared to the younger groups in Africa.

These gender differences, including social norms regarding young women's roles and opportunities, play out further as peer education recruits enter the training and implementation phases. Differing social expectations and unequal gender dynamics between male and female peer educators have been shown to compromise young women's ability to participate fully (UNFPA, 2000; Campbell and MacPhail, 2002).

A study from Thailand showed that during training, female peer educators expressed fears of being looked down upon and gossiped about by their male counterparts (Cash et al., 1997). In a South Africa study, female peer educators felt bullied by their male colleagues, with discussions "almost totally dominated" by male participants. Upon resigning, one female peer educator attributed her departure to bad treatment of the females by the males (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002).

Female peer educators also appear to have more difficulty than males in implementing their assigned tasks. Although both males and females experience some negative reactions from their peers and the wider community, especially because they deal with sensitive issues, females appear to bear the brunt of teasing and taunting, being called names and even assumed to be sexually available because of their work (Lane, 1997; West African Youth Initiative, 1997; Campbell and MacPhail, 2002). Studies report that female sex educators were taunted and called "Little Sex Professors" in Brazil (Weiss and Gupta, 1998), "Ms. AIDS" or "Ms. Condom" in Ethiopia (Flanagan et al.,1996), and "condom girl" ("la copotiere") in Burkina Faso (IPPF, 2001). Evidence from Latin America indicates that males are more willing to distribute condoms, (Lobo, n.d.) and an assessment in South Africa confirms that it is more common for male peer educators than for female peer educators to distribute condoms (Erulkar, 2001).

Given that females have a more difficult time performing their jobs, and that there is a tendency for the target audience to prefer peer educators of the same sex, it is understandable that this situation results in gender differentials in the target audience. A Ghanaian study confirmed that, although a large number of peer educators reached opposite sex peers, male peer educators reached more males (58%) and female peer educators reached more females (62%) (Wolf et al., 2000). In a peer educator study in Nigeria, about 30% more males were reached than females. Furthermore, among those reached, females reported less self-efficacy than males (West AfricanYouth Initiative, 1997). Some program analyses have speculated that it is possible that female adolescents prefer to discuss sex or get sexual and reproductive health information from their male partners, their close friends or those older than themselves (West African Youth Initiative, 1997; Erulkar, 2002). Given that in many cultures credibility relates to age and gender, older male adults might even be most effective, which would raise questions about the basis for a peer education strategy (Family Health International, n.d.).

Within peer programs, however, there seem to be preferences and advantages for the target audience to participate in same sex activities, including discussion sessions. In Sri Lanka, a study showed that young women were able to discuss intimate issues in same-sex groups, which also helped them to develop and use their "voices" later in mixed groups (Silva et al., 1997). An International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) study reported that some girls feel too shy to ask questions in mixed groups and, for specific, sensitive themes, single-sex groups make discussion easier for them (IPPF, 2001). A South African study also reported that young people felt more comfortable discussing sex and relationships with same-sex peers (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002).

In addition to the gender composition of peer education sessions, gender differences and dynamics play critical roles in the content and approach that peer educators must take in their work. It is increasingly recognized in reproductive health, (and especially in HIV prevention) programs, that gender realities and dynamics are central in determining sexual interactions and

in reproductive health status. As Campbell and MacPhail noted in their South African peer education study, these "gender inequalities play a key role in driving the epidemic among young people" (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002).

A fundamental reality is the common social norm that expects girls to be uninformed, ignorant, and noncommunicative about sex and not prepared for sex (e.g., carrying condoms) (Weiss and Gupta, 1998; Campbell and MacPhail, 2002). There are significant gender differences in knowledge, communication skills, extent of risk behaviors and preferred behaviors for risk reduction (Silva et al., 1997). Girls lack power to negotiate if and when sex will occur and with what protections.

Peer educators, themselves a product of their own societies and culture, must work within a context that is prejudicial to safe sex and the protection of reproductive health. In recent years, this challenge is increasingly acknowledged. A Horizons Project consultation, which brought together peer education experts from all over the world, strongly recognized the need for programs that address gender inequalities and to have means and materials to analyze gender dynamics and evaluate gender implications of program activities (Kerrigan and Weiss, 2000). There is a profound need among peer education professionals for more gender-specific approaches, including how to address gender roles and relations that undermine safer sexual behavior (UNAIDS, 1999; Brieger et al., 2001).

Peer education training is a key area for inclusion of a gender perspective (IPPF, 2001). Although guidance on gender issues can be seen as too directive, given the context of peer education, a study in South Africa concluded that these project participants may need such guidance to ensure that their work does not further reinforce old gender norms (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002).

More research is also called for to better understand what gender-oriented projects might be most effective, such as what works best with boys or girls, who might be most trusted to provide information and how effective various approaches might be (UNAIDS, 1999; Kerrigan and Weiss, 2000; Brieger et al., 2001).

There is considerable room for optimism that a gender perspective can be successfully adopted by peer education programs. In Thailand, for example, both girls and boys learned to identify those aspects of socially constructed ideas of masculinity and femininity that posed the greatest barriers to safe sex. Researchers there concluded that their study "demonstrated the importance, feasibility, and acceptability of incorporating a gender perspective into interventions for youth" (Cash et al.,1997). In Brazil, female peer educators reported not only a positive change in their own comfort level in talking about sensitive issues, but also a feeling of greater value and respect from their communities (Vasconcelos et al.,1997). In Nigeria, where there was initial parental disapproval, a female peer educator reported that her parents grew to respect her activities and even helped her to remember her obligations (Lane, 1997).

While peer education cannot alone solve all the problems of gender inequalities, it can, as the IPPF report noted, help prepare "the new generations (males and females) to be more involved in the SRH programs and also more open about sex education, family life education and the use of SRH services" (IPPF, 2001). Female peer educators, in particular, are providing socially legitimate ways for female adolescents to discuss HIV/AIDS and safe sex (Cash et al.,

1997). As a South African study concluded, a key goal of peer education is to promote a context within which young people can collectively develop confidence in their power to resist dominant gender norms, in the interest of being able to assert their sexual health (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002).

Diagnostic Analysis

Quantitative Data

Data presented here was derived from the new quantitative data collection form, which was based on instruments used in the monitoring and evaluation of the program's activities. These forms were completed by the TAs. Some difficulties were encountered during the process, including delays in returning questionnaires (up to two months) and some incomplete data. The data from Zambézia Province was not supplied in a form stratified by age, therefore only the general totals of qualified and active activists disaggregated by sex are being considered.

The program has been implemented in the Zambézia Province and the city of Maputo since 1999, in Gaza Province since 2001, and in Maputo Province since 2002. The "Qualified Activists" data represent cumulative numbers of trained activists from the start of the program through March 2003. "Activists Currently in the Program" represents the number of those trained activists who were active as of March 2003.

From the general consolidated data (Table 1) supplied by the provincial technical advisers, it was observed that 30.5% of the girls that signed up for the GBP abandoned the program, as opposed to 24.9% of the boys.

In the school-based program, 24.2% of girls and 20.5% of boys abandoned the program. Among community-based activists, the program trained 26.5% fewer female than male activists. Thus there are two factors contributing to the lower participation of girls: 1) they sign up in smaller numbers and 2) they leave in greater numbers. In addition, as described by themselves, their activist colleagues and by the technical advisers, girls are less active than boys in project activities. This will be better described in the qualitative results, below.

In analyzing the data according to age groups (Table 2), it is clear that the group from 10 to 14

Table 1
Distribution of in- and out-of-school activists according to loss of activists. Geração BIZ Program. 1999-2003

		Qualified activists	Activists currently in the program	% loss of activists
School	M	540	429	20.5
	F	484	367	24.2
Community	M	382	263	31.2
	F	281	165	41.3
Total	M	922	692	24.9
	F	765	532	30.5

Table 2
Distribution of activists in- and out-of-school according to age groups. Geração Biz Program. 1999-2003*

	Qualified		Acting		% losses	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
10-14	19	18	8	6	57.9	66.7
15-19	232	234	142	112	50.0	52.1
20-24	114	79	57	50	50.0	36.8
+25	7	6	1	0	85.7	100.0

*Zambézia's data not included, as the province does not have disaggregation by age

Table 3
Distribution of activists according to age groups in the school-based program. Geração BIZ Program, 1999-2003*

	Qualified		Acting		% losses	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
10-14	17	16	7	6	59.9	62.5
15-19	232	196	125	99	46.2	49.5
20-24	22	26	6	17	72.7	34.6
+25	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Zambézia's data not included, as the province does not have disaggregation by age

Table 4
Activist distribution according to age groups in the community-based program. Geração BIZ Program, 1999-2003*

	Qualified		Acting		% losses	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
10-14	2	2	1	0	50.0	100.0
15-19	52	38	17	13	67.3	65.8
20-24	92	17	51	12	44.6	29.4
+25	7	6	1	0	86.0	100.0

*Zambézia's data not included, as the province does not have disaggregation by age

Table 5
Distribution of in- and out-of-school activists according to loss of activists in the Zambézia Province. Geração BIZ Program, 1999-2003.

		Qualified activists	Activists currently in the program	% loss of activists
School	Male	269	265	1.5
	Female	244	233	4.5
Community	Male	229	193	15.7
	Female	182	131	28

years represents the highest drop-out rate, among boys (57.9%) as well as girls (66.7%), although the overall number of activists aged 10-14 is small. (It should be noted that there were a few problems in analyzing this data, as Zambézia Province did not supply data according to age groups. Considering that this is the province with the greatest number of trained activists, it is thus difficult to extrapolate these results to the whole program.)

In the school-based program, more male activists drop out than females in the age group of 20 to 24 years (Table 3). One explanation could be related to the fact that they leave school once they have concluded their high school studies. Girls, on the other hand, may experience disruptions in their attendance and complete school later, while also facing fewer opportunities than boys to participate in other activities that would compete with their activist roles. For girls, the 10 to 14 year age group represents the greatest loss, with 62.5% leaving, though the numbers are small.

It is possible that in this age group, girls find more difficulties in dealing with the obstacles of program participation. Among the 15 to 19 year age group, the loss is 49.5% for girls, and in the 20 to 24 year age group, the loss is 34.6%.

A significant difference exists by age for girls. Older girls remain in the program in significantly greater numbers. Mechanisms are needed that provide greater support to younger girls that will strengthen their participation, and increased recruitment of older girls may result in an overall increase in female activists in the program, if that age structure is desirable for the program.

In the community-based program (Table 4), these two age groups reflect the same pattern for girls seen in the school-based component, with 20-24 year-old girls remaining in the program longer than those in the 15-19 year age group.

Data must be questioned for Zambézia Province. In the school-based program, (Table 5) the report shows a 1.5% loss of boys and a 4.5% loss of girls, which would indicate a loss

of 1 boy and 2.7 girls per year of the operating project. However, in these four years of high school, activists were trained who probably already left the program following completion of their studies. This becomes more evident if we compare the data from Maputo city (Table 6), which has the same period of implementation as Zambézia, and presents an average loss of 53.2% of activists.

The greatest loss of female activists (Table 7) can be observed in the community-based program, in the age group above 25 years. All trained activists in this age category left the program. However, the numbers are small and refer only to Gaza Province, the sole province that has qualified activists in this age group. Still, in the program with out-of-school youth in Gaza Province (Table 8), a greater loss of activists compared to other sites is observed concerning all ages: (76.3% among girls and 61.6% among boys). These percentages are well above the losses observed for the program's out-of-school activists as a whole (31.2% for males and 41.3% for females). It would be important to evaluate what occurred that contributed to such a significant loss of activists.

Looking at the averages of acting activists in the program's participating schools, Maputo city has 26.3 per school, Maputo Province has 13.6, Zambézia Province 6, and Gaza Province 4.2 activists per school. There are significant differences in group size in the schools. Considering that each of the schools has approximately 1,500 students, it seems that 4 to 6 activists per school are too few to guarantee access to activities planned in the program. This influences the program's potential for quality and participation.

The majority of activist leaders are male: 62% of leaders are male, just 38% are female (Table 9). This proportion is similar in both school-based and community-based programs, and is consistent with information obtained from the TAs as well as the activists.

Table 6
Distribution of in-school activists according to loss of activists in Maputo City. Geração BIZ Program, 1999-2003.

		Qualified activists	Activists currently in the program	% loss of activists
School	Male	168	82	51.2
	Female	148	66	55.4

Table 7
Distribution of activists according to groups in the community-based program in Gaza Province. Geração BIZ Program, 1999-2003.

	Qualified		Acting		% losses	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
10-14	2	2	1	0	50.0	100.0
15-19	37	37	14	6	62.2	83.8
20-24	53	31	22	12	58.5	61.2
+25	7	6	1	0	85.7	100.0

Table 8
Distribution of in- and out-of-school activists according to loss of activists in Gaza Province. Geração BIZ Program, 1999-2003.

		Qualified activists	Activists currently in the program	% loss of activists
School	Male	60	39	35.0
	Female	53	29	45.3
Community	Male	99	38	61.6
	Female	76	18	76.3

Table 9
Distribution of activist leaders in the program according to gender. Geração BIZ Program, 1999-2003.

	Total	%
Male	39	62
Female	24	38

Table 10
Male and female leader activist distribution in the program according to age groups. Geraçao BIZ Program, 1999-2003*

	Male	%	Female	%
10-14	0	0	2	100.0
15-19	19	70.0	8	30.0
20-24	19	57.5	14	42.5
+25	0	100.0	0	0

*Zambézia's data not included, as the province does not have disaggregation by age

The 15 to 19 year age group (Table 10) presents the greatest difference between female and male leaders. The girls represent 30% of the leaders, the boys represent 70%. In the community-based program, female leaders are found only in the age group 20 to 24 years, while in the school-based program, they are represented in the first three age groups. In the 20 to 24 year age group, 57.5% of the leaders are boys and 42.5% girls. Clearly, with increasing age, the difference between female and male leadership decreases. As already noted, the retention of girls in this age group is greater than in other age groups. It is assumed that girls in this age group feel more secure and can better occupy leadership positions. In the analysis of the qualitative data, it is also noted that age is an important factor in the quality of participation for girl activists.

Qualitative Data

As noted in the description of the methodology (p. 5), a significant amount of information was obtained from TAs, peer educators, and peer educator leaders through in-depth interviews and focus groups.

Following are the categories of discussion topics and findings resulting from this investigative study.

A. Self-identification as a hero or savior and the need for social recognition

Activists reported that they saw themselves as occupying the position of a hero with the responsibility to "save or redeem the lives of others," as opposed to offering options so that others are helped to choose actions for themselves. This position of hero demands sacrifice and brings frustration when efforts fail. And as the position of hero is solitary and individualistic, failure can be especially difficult, since prevention programs require long term work and often face significant difficulties.

While this perception may not directly explain the motives why female activists leave, it seems to explain pressure placed on the boys and indirectly to compromise female engagement. If the girls participate less because of their perceived lack of "heroism," which is directly related to their expected social role, they receive less "social compensation" for their involvement.

Girls who obtain social recognition are observed to remain in the program longer. That is especially true when the recognition affects parents, as in the young activist's comment about her father, "when his friends say that they saw me on TV, he feels proud."

Both girls and boys were observed to seek recognition and a positive social identity. However, girls often see the position "stolen" by the boys, and they have fewer means to achieve needed recognition. This can be exacerbated if the technical team picks more boys for prominent roles, as noted by a female activist. And if the heroic character emphasized and expected by the boys originates from socio-cultural expectations of gender roles, this pattern can be repeated in program dynamics, even in subconscious ways.

Courage seems to be an important attribute in exercising this role. "I think that for the girls there isn't that courage, whereas for the boys they have the courage," observes an activist in Zambézia. Lack of courage in confronting a situation is seen as a negative characteristic.

The Geração BIZ Program offers no type of financial compensation to volunteer peer educators (with the exception of t-shirts, caps, and training material), and unpaid voluntary activities are not common in Mozambique, so it is important to continued participation. The possibility of recognition and the capacity of influencing a sexual partner, which involves attaining some power, are likely to be key to these young activists. At the same time, power is attributed to men in the Mozambican society, and women mainly have a "dream of power" that is difficult to actualize. "The boys also make them give up. They participate more and this immediately brings them down morally," noted an activist from Zambézia.

There may also be the assumption that the peer educator is expected to know what is right and wrong and to dictate this to his or her peers. Interestingly, the female activist typically seems to offer a more appropriate posture in believing that "being an activist is being capable of being among people, being able to listen to their problems and help them to make a decision." In fact, the hero is an unattainable myth. Furthermore, it places the activist in the inappropriate role of dictating action.

These misplaced identities that were observed suggest a need for clearer understanding during the training program and a need for continuous supervision of the activists, stressing the horizontal character of their relationships with peers. Furthermore, more opportunities should be sought to offer recognition for girls.

B. Defining the role of activist/empowering girls to feel competent

If the role of heroine does not belong to the girl, she seems to want the position of affection. While male activists seem to note that "to be an activist one needs to be an active person, who is preoccupied with wanting to know and develop the message," or "being capable of spreading a message," including maintaining a masculine preaching tone. The girl activist prefers the role of transforming relationships between agents, "being able to be among people and being able to help them make a decision." Knowing how to recognize the other's position and make him rethink his practices and attitudes is perhaps the core of activist practice, as suggested during the focus groups. But while this conforms to stated program objectives, it is unclear if this approach is followed by the program staff.

At the same time, playing the role of "the other" can inhibit the development of the female activist's work. Those who stayed in the GBP seem to have found a way to overcome this problem and empower themselves. "There was no woman being chief or coordinator, we were only to do things. It was male chauvinism, but today it's changed, we can be more active," noted a female activist. For a girl to remain, she must confront an unfavorable environment that excludes her from a position of power and recognition. Valuing the capacity of interacting with others could be emphasized in the training, including the capacity to feel affected by someone's difficulty.

During the supervision, it is important to focus on the daily difficulties encountered by the activist. In addition to technical meetings, additional qualified supervision could address fears, shyness, and the need for feeling competent among girls. Girls should be offered opportunities to gain positive feedback while carrying out their tasks.

C. Effects of parents and family ties

The understanding and views of parents and family are critical to female activists' success. "Parents are the main cause for the lack of adherence in girls," notes an activist. Another comment: "When I joined in 2000, my father was against it; I didn't go on the first day and gave my place to a colleague. When he returned, he said that it was great and beautiful, so on the second day I argued with my father, 'I want to, I want to'. He continued to say 'no', so I spoke to my mother and she said 'OK, go, I'll talk to your father'. In the first months, he was irritable, I didn't want to accept it, but he saw for himself that I wasn't joking."

The activist's job, in the parent's eyes, goes against the expected role for a young woman. She is to prepare herself to take care of the home and not have a social activity within the community. This is viewed as the boy's territory. "The girls have little time, they have to take care of the home, their brothers, and this makes them leave the GBP," said a boy activist. "It's more difficult when the activities are on Saturdays . . . I'm the oldest female child, I have to stay and take care of the housework," said a girl activist This is a particularly challenging problem as it stems from a strong social norm. The role of activist is greater than just carrying out tasks; it is overcoming important social barriers that construct the position of women in society. It's important to emphasize that it's the "father figure" who appears most often as a difficult factor in the girl's participation.

In addition, these girls are talking about issues involving sexuality, territory that is socially more permissible for men. "Some parents think that it is bad to talk about sex," said one activist. "They would not like to speak of these topics," noted another. If it were another theme, there would probably be smaller barriers. "They didn't want her to speak of these things and she had to abandon [the program], or else she'd have to choose between Geração BIZ and her parents," said a provincial coordinator. "When they speak of sex it's because they like to do it, she is a prostitute," commented another activist.

The barriers are not limited to the home. It is difficult for the girl to speak about sexual and reproductive health issues without having her behavior considered deviant. Even in focus group sessions composed only of activists, there can be difficulties in saying the word "sex."

The situation often becomes more difficult when the girls have boyfriends or are married, something that occurs more frequently with those who are out of school. However girls who are romantically involved with male activists find greater support to remain in the program because of these relationships.

Fortunately, it appears that these barriers are not impossible to overcome. "Sometimes they fuss, but when their friends say they saw me on TV, they feel proud." Being exposed in the media seems to catalyze the parents' approval. "I participated in the march and spoke on TV. He [my father] didn't even leave the house and he called his friends. It's a motive for pride," said one activist. It also appears that girls who were already involved in similar activities beforehand are better able to remain in the program. "Before being trained [in the GBP], I did theatre and they [my parents] saw me doing theatre and things and they liked it. Then when I said I was going to the training and they saw the work I was doing, they supported me," said one activist.

Given that an important factor related to girls' improved retention is previous participation in other extra-curricular activities, this could constitute a selection criterion for recruitment. On the other hand, this selection priority could compromise the selection of those girls who would most benefit from becoming a peer educator and could possibly better relate to some

of the target audience. During the recruitment process, parents should be more intensely involved to clearly observe the social importance of the activities their children will be carrying out. Parents should be invited to participate in a training session.

D. Pregnancy as a compromising factor

Pregnancy also appears to be related to girls' dropping out. "Some leave due to pregnancy," says an adviser and "pregnancy in young girls prevents their participation in the GBP," says another. Pregnancy demonstrates a contradiction between what the activist says and what she does. As an activist notes, "There are those girls who become pregnant and are embarrassed to give talks, how am I going to tell people to use a condom if I am pregnant?" This is in addition to the difficulty that the girl has dealing with sensitive issues. Pregnancy casts doubt on the validity of what she preaches. If the girl is not secure in her views, she will not be able to handle the criticism and will likely abandon the program.

School policies that are unclear on whether pregnant girls can remain in school pose another difficulty for activists who fall pregnant. Many leave school and the GBP as a result. Others have their school shift changed and must study at night. Parents share the prejudice shown at school. As noted by a trainer, "We had a pregnant girl who continued to study and some parents complained that our daughters could become pregnant and not cease their studies." Parents generally feel that girls lose their right to study when they become pregnant.

But when the boy happens to make a girl pregnant, he does not have this problem. "Then this girl became pregnant. Then she left school and then she doesn't participate in the project anymore, because she is pregnant. She's out, doesn't come in. But, the boy, even when he gets someone pregnant, there's no problem," said an activist.

A pregnancy case is also seen as the program's lack of success, as if the expected results were not happening. Very often, teachers and others do not fully appreciate that significant time is needed for a prevention program to achieve results, such as the decrease of unwanted pregnancy rates among students.

During training and supervision, the program must move away from stereotypes and gender discrimination that punish the girl but not the boy when a pregnancy occurs. In addition, clear guidelines must be set for a possible pregnancy or any other development considered to be a fault of the activist.

E. The role of the group

The importance of the group is clearly identified in the interviews and discussions. This is especially true if the girls have colleagues from prior activities. "If there are four girls in the church choir group, if we select only one its easier for her to abandon the GBP," says a trainer. The enabling factor of group contacts is easier to build upon in urban areas that have more existing activities. The group performs an important function in the development of adolescents, helping them to find their new place in the world. Friends contribute to the formation of this identity. "I didn't have great difficulties; I had help from many friends. They were already activists, and when I would express doubts, they helped. So with their help, it was easier," said an activist. This activist's group helped to integrate her into the program. She was already part of a community that included activists which made her participation in the program easier.

Feelings of incapacity and isolation can be addressed in various ways. One is for girls to stick together for mutual support and advocacy. Another is to promote opportunities to gain confidence. According to a boy activist, "You need to involve the girls in more of the association's activities, give place in the directorate so that they can choose to be activists. She'll gain confidence and see that she is in a position in which she can make decisions." In this way, the creation of places where girls can congregate may contribute to their continuation in the program and also be a positive factor in the quality of her work. A female activist's comment that, "We girls need to converse more among ourselves and convince ourselves that we are capable of being activists . . . we girls can place ourselves in their position and know what they're feeling." Similarly, according to an advisor, "One can think of making female subgroups within the activists."

When the program is implemented in cities, the environment seems more favorable for girls. "Here in the city there is more conversing, there are more parties, the youth meet more often," said one activist. Similar strategies are needed for more remote regions, where the youth concentration is smaller and access to communication more difficult.

Using the group's sense of identity can also be strategic in sensitizing the girl's entry to the program. As another activist suggests, "We can take the girls who are in the program to influence their other colleagues and the boys can also do this. They can take their sisters, female friends, and girlfriends." Given that the project's objective is to increase the number of girls, this can be done through friends, family, and group encouragement.

Along with the history of previous participation in other extracurricular activities as a selection criterion, the recruitment of girls in groups may facilitate the creation of a mutual support group, which could enhance retention.

F. Expectations regarding the program

Both girls and boys pointed out various issues related to the program's management, including the work setting. They identified a need for a certificate, shirt, and cap to reinforce their roles and participation in society. Especially in the context of few available material resources, and in connection with abstract concepts such as citizenship and rights, the search for recognition seems to require the presence of visible signs that communicate a difference or status. Given girls' more vulnerable position within the activity, this need is certainly a more salient issue for female peer educators.

Peer educators also report the lack of materials for carrying out activities. "We had a few problems, IEC material was not distributed at the end of the course. This is bad, it generates frustration," said a technical adviser. The lack of condoms is often pointed out, by both boys and girls. Bicycles, too, are seen as an element that could facilitate the activists' work.

Financial issues are a serious concern. There are complaints regarding transport money and other expenses not covered by the GBP. Some point out that the loss of activists is due to the lack of monetary incentives. "So they stop giving talks in order to do something that will give them money (braiding extensions on hair). This makes them quit," said one activist. A girl notes that, "Some quit in order to work." Another adds, "The girl thinks, they don't give me any money, I'll worry about my boyfriend who is my future." Moreover some expected to be paid, as are the professionals from NGOs who coordinate their work. Since this seems to be an area of friction, further clarification of these aspects is crucial.

The activists also explained, however, that it's not only about money, but also about "un-kept promises." Apparently, computer and English courses were promised a few times and not fulfilled. These elements seem to be linked to a future perspective that the youth are asked to address in their work. If the activists are promoting a better future, the program needs to consider alternatives for the youth who manage to remain in the GBP.

Although somewhat true for those in school, the need to work towards a future is more compelling for those out of school. This issue is corroborated by the high loss of community-based activists identified in the quantitative part of this study. Thus, the program could provide introductory sessions pertaining to the job market, foster income-generating activities, or help prepare the activists for future work in other ways. "Maybe activities that generate income or abilities for the future," suggested a technical adviser, or "forms of income which could remove them from domestic activities. This gives more independence and sustenance and could keep them in the program."

Guidelines are needed to address these concerns such as:

- Incentives policy: the activist needs to know which benefits and resources are available;

- Activist's identification kit: good quality identification products provided as part of the activists' role and not as a "gift;"

- Material resources: BCC and other materials should be available in sufficient quantities to aid talks, debates, theatre and other forms of communication; and

- Condoms for distribution: a sufficient supply to provide to those who are already sexually active

G. Addressing gender within the training experience

"Sometimes we think that the fact that we place three boys and three girls in a room we're already resolving the gender problem, but it's not really so . . ." said a master trainer. In short, gender is not always comprehensively addressed in training sessions. Another trainer noted that "All the themes are directed towards gender. We already spoke about it during the first training days, of sexual organs and all." The challenge thus begins with the need for deepening the discussion among professionals responsible for activist training.

Discussing gender cannot be reduced to a combination of techniques that stimulate the girls' participation and make her interact with the group. A trainer tells us, "We've been mapping the body and they're in mixed groups, boys and girls . . . they participate, but they're shy in the beginning . . . The girls start laughing, but end up drawing and then the drawings go up on the walls. So they socialize with those images throughout their entire training process, until the end."

A difficult issue, such as gender, is not resolved just because it is addressed in a training activity. The great contribution of a gender perspective is the ability to discuss the differences between masculine and feminine constructions beyond the biological view of anatomy, and relate these to culture and history. In turn, these issues can be connected to SRH and HIV/AIDS.

Nothing in the trainers' comments promoted a broader discussion of girls' and boys' roles and difficulties, either specifically in the GBP training or where they derive from Mozambican social values. On the contrary, one trainer commented on the girls' shyness in speaking of

sexual issues by saying, "Discuss how to overcome this? It's not easy, even for us as a country, it's a process, it's our culture." Another justified the girls' difficulty in participating in some activities by saying, "In our society there's a lot more work in the mornings than in the afternoons. So if you want a greater number of girls, don't schedule activities in the morning, because they have to do a series of things in the mornings, cleaning the house, buying this and that, lunch and whatever else."

With this approach, training actually reinforces the social values that foster gender differences, making the participation of girls in the GBP activities difficult. This is particularly worrisome as the trainers believe they are addressing the issues. "Training helps form this equality. They change, start lifting heir heads up," said one trainer. Another believed that "The strategies try to be more interactive, give them (girls) roles in the subgroup that remove them from their role and condition."

Training is a key process and point of contact that decides the activist's future with the program. This is their entrance to the institutional culture that supports the work. Training should thus serve as the girls' first experience of empowerment that challenges the obstacles placed before her. It should offer a comforting environment, which gives her security and support to develop activities at school or in her community.

Enabling girls to voice their concerns and views is a key way to make training work better for all activists. As one trainer noted, "Addressing gender dynamics in the new protocol drew attention to different issues and ensured that girls would be present in equal numbers to the boys. And this not only makes the group cohesive, but also strengthens the woman."

As space for participation is created, girls will use the opportunities. Changes in training methodology and performance of the trainers must occur. Gender should not be taught as a concept in itself. It should be present in teaching strategies, in the dynamics used and in the trainers' discourse. The capacity to analyze, criticize, and propose changes should be at the core of all work done.

Deep-rooted social concepts will change only when members of that society start acting differently around these concepts. To discuss gender is not to turn one's back on expected social roles for both females and males, but rather a deconstruction of these values and the construction of a changed perspective and practice. This requires ongoing critical oversight throughout the recruitment process, training and supervision. Such a process requires well-trained professionals with sufficient practical experience.

H. Mozambican culture: part of the problem and solution

As was expected, the social roles expected of girls and boys determine their possibilities and availability to participate in the program. "The girls need to go home, they can't stay at the activities at night," an adviser points out. Another is even harsher, affirming that "There's also the role of women in the family. They occupy themselves early on with domestic routines and cannot go to school. When they do go, they have to balance school with household chores."

Literature and actual experience confirm these observations. The path determined by society minimizes the female voice. Interestingly, the advisers, more strongly than other groups, point to cultural determinism. In view of this, the patterns of recruitment, training, and support, in a more or less conscious way, may be influenced by male culture and the exclusion of the female. One advisor observed, "It's normal for the women to be behind, to be dominated. It's the same

among activists, it reproduces itself." Another said, "It's different for boys and girls. Women have to be subservient. It's a cultural constraint that stems from the socialization process. And the girls are more exposed to the ills of sexuality." Even if this adviser does not agree with this position, his speech is one of resignation.

According to program staff, one needs to respect community leaders in choosing activists. However, this can potentially perpetuate a pattern of choosing girls who subscribe to culturally-imposed gender norms, rather than choosing girls who can most effectively represent the female voice.

Ignoring these challenges would produce a program bereft of its context. In recruitment, training, and support of the activists, one should find the right balance between encouraging community participation in the program, empowering young women to participate effectively as peer educators, and helping others protect their health and advocate for their own needs.

Approaches and recommendations for implementation of the new protocol

The results of the situational analysis confirm a lower retention rate for girls than for boys among activists. Of those who initially sign up for the program, 30.5 % of the girls and 24.9 % of the boys drop out. In the program for out-of-school youth, 41.3% of the girls abandon the program, versus 24.2 % of girls in the school-based program .

As discussed earlier, many factors contribute to girls' difficulty in participating and remaining in the program, but virtually all are related to the position the female occupies in Mozambican society. Even with regional, urban, and rural differences, women remain subordinate to men, with their views having less value.

The GBP proposes a new position for the girls who become activists that will also be reflected in their peer relationships. The program seeks to enable girls to actively participate in developing their own capacity to evaluate, criticize, and make decisions about their lives, especially on issues related to SRH, sexually-transmitted infections (STIs), and HIV/AIDS. Girls should become capable of advocating for their own needs and changing their surroundings.

The GBP should pay special attention to those aspects of the program that reinforce traditional cultural roles reserved for women throughout recruitment, training, and supervision. Professionals and technical advisors, who conduct the activists' training, should be qualified to promote these discussions and intervene in situations where these cultural determinants are interfering with activities.

Parental participation in this process has been shown to be important, as they are influential in decisions about their daughters' activities. They should be involved in recruitment and training, so that they can understand the importance of the program in which their children will participate. Also, the female activists' participation in community events should be encouraged so that they have positive exposure within the community.

More girls must be recruited to achieve greater gender equity among participating boys and girls. The program trained 17% fewer girls than boys. Among those out of school, there are 26.5% fewer girls trained than boys, and among students, 10%. It is necessary to make more concentrated investments in attracting out-of-school girls.

Activist training represents the girls' first encounter with the obstacles that they will face in their activities. It should promote a comforting environment promoting the girls' empowerment, offering her the security she needs to be a GBP activist in school or the community. Special

attention should be paid to the planning of training, fostering a deep and active discussion of the adolescent's or youth's role as activist, and relating it to roles of men and women in society.

Support and supervision are opportunities for the activists' continued evaluation, and if done systematically, can identify difficulties before they become serious and lead to drop out. Training must also provide circumstances that help girls feel confident and competent. The creation of spaces for girls to congregate in groups can contribute to their continuation in the program and enhance the quality of their work. The group can provide support for the girls, minimizing their difficulties and increasing the courage to participate in activities.

In summary, the data collected and analyzed for the study clearly demonstrates the need to review the way in which the GBP recruits, trains, and provides support to its activists. It also demands changes in the selection and training of technical advisors and trainers. In this way, the tested protocol will incorporate what follows.

Recruitment

- Greater sensitization of parents to encourage understanding and support of the activists' work;
- Clear expectations communicated to prospective peer educators, including the voluntary character of the work;
- Inclusion of criterion related to prior experience;
- Recruiting of girls from existing social and community groups;
- Encouraging recruitment through friends;
- Recruiting more girls than boys.

Training

- Clarification of expectations about roles and obligations, including the nature of peer relationships;
- More emphasis on the concept of gender;
- Less emphasis on biological or psychological determinism;
- Increased opportunities for recognizing girls' achievements;
- Inclusion of practical activities that the activist could develop with his or her peers;
- Participation of parents and guardians.

Supervision and support

- More systematic supervision/more regular and more frequent meetings;
- Emphasis on addressing fears and concerns and building self-esteem and competence;
- Concerted efforts to provide positive feedback to girls;
- Creation of support groups for girls;
- Materials (e.g., leaflets, job aids) more readily available.

Changes related to the technical team

- Refine selection criteria for the GBP staff and training personnel to ensure that program leadership is supportive of gender equity and willing to pursue the GBP's project objectives in these issues;

- Strengthen orientation and training of program staff and trainers so they are better prepared to foster gender equity among the peer activists and assist the activists to undertake gender awareness activities;

- Offer more regular refresher courses and other means to reinforce learning about and sensitivity to gender issues;

- Increase monitoring and observation of trainers and staff as necessary, to ensure a focus on gender equity consistent with program goals.

To reduce the lack of clarity regarding activists' incentives, rights, and duties, the protocol clearly defined the following:

- *Incentive policy:* the activist needs to know which benefits or resources are available;

- *Activist's identification kit:* good quality identification products provided as part of the activist's role and not as a gift;

- *Material resources:* BCC materials, condoms and others should reach the activists in sufficient quantities in order to aid talks, debates, theatre and other forms of communication.

Analysis of the results of the new protocol's implementation

Of central concern to the qualitative portion of the operational research is the extent to which the new protocol actually contributes to improved retention and girls' participation in the GBP. Hypothetically, those locations where the new protocol was applied should present greater retention of female activists. It is necessary to evaluate to what extent the protocol was effectively employed, based on the indicators selected for analysis and their results. To optimize the program's results in their entirety, changes in the quality and intervention capacity that occurred was evaluated in both male and female activists. This derives from the program's commitment to providing effective prevention activities and SRH services that will contribute to the prevention of HIV/AIDS among adolescents and youth in Mozambique.

The study has some limitations. In dealing with a quasi-experimental study, similar to a clinical trial, the following possible biases are inherent to the methodology employed:

- The field researchers know the objectives of the research and, in some way, can influence the results, as they not only know which are the intervention and control sites, but also directly intervene in them;

- There was a methodological choice in controlling the sites in which the program was implemented during the 12 months before the new protocol's introduction. This was due to the possible bias that could occur if the program implementers were simultaneously working in both intervention and control sites.

- On the other hand, there is the question of research ethics—a more structured version of the intervention strategy would be a more effective approach than a less structured one, and therefore it would be unethical to offer a presumably less efficient intervention to one of the groups;

- There is a lack of data in the control group. As this research study had not been envisaged, there was no systematic data collection on several of the established indicators to verify the implementation of the proposed protocol, thus making comparison difficult.

Having exposed the above limitations of the study, one needs to highlight the results. First the extent to which the new protocol's main guidelines were effectively implemented must be determined. The analysis of the results first asks what actions were implemented and then presents both qualitative and quantitative analyses of the main findings.

Recruitment of Activists

From the beginning of the intervention, girls in the intervention group were given more incentives to participate. Out of 89 trained new activists in the control group, 37 (41.6%) were girls. Out of 101 trained new activists in the intervention group, 49[2] (48.5%) were girls, bringing the numbers close to the goal of 50% girls and 50% boys. There was greater recruitment of girls in the community-based site than in the school-based group (56% versus 52.5%), although the difference isn't very large. The school-based program has a smaller number of girls to draw from, given that there are many more boys than girls enrolled in schools, especially in secondary schools. This is reflected in a smaller percentage of girls who were in the recruitment process which precedes selection and training. Thus, we can confirm that the implementing team made a concerted effort to guarantee greater access to the program for girls.

It is important to note that approximately 25% of the girls from the intervention group were captured through preexistent social groups (e.g., members of a drama club). As was identified in the diagnostic analysis, this was a way of promoting greater adherence to the program, as girls would tend to stay with the program if they were among a group of friends. In fact, there were no dropouts among girls enrolled with a preexisting group.

A. Advertising

Advertisement relied on posters in those areas where selection of the GBP activists would take place. Previously, the selection was made by directors, schoolteachers, or by local leaders in the community-based program. There was a discussion about whether the selection criteria were effectively based on the candidates' demonstrated abilities as well as on the expected desire to volunteer.

As GBP is a community-based project, activist selection was based on recommendations by community leaders. However, this sometimes led to the recruitment of activists who were related to community leaders, in hopes of financial gain from participating in the program. The school-based participants were generally selected for their academic performance, even though academic performance does not guarantee communication skills or the ability to relate

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[2] Although there were 55 girls selected for training in the intervention group (see Table II), only 49 girls participated in training. For the purpose of this study, "drop out" was measured as any female peer educator that left the program after being trained and exposed to the new protocol. Therefore this small loss before the onset of training is not included in the reported drop out rate.

to peers in respect to STIs and HIV/AIDS issues. Under the new protocol, activists are selected according to their own motivation and voluntarism.

An average of 6 posters were put up for the school groups and 18 for the community-based groups.

B. Gender Equality and Selection

For all sites, the control group recruited 87 boys and 75 girls for the selection process, while the intervention group recruited 99 boys and 92 girls. Significantly, with the exception of one site in the out-of-school intervention group (35 boys and 22 girls), approximately equal proportions of boys and girls were recruited. The first wave of recruitment was done through advertisement (e.g., posters or contacting social groups) and not through deliberate recruitment efforts by the program managers. Therefore, girls were attracted as a result of their own interest in the program.

According to a government representative, "Before the protocol, we didn't have this orientation to proportional recruitment and selection of boys and girls, so we selected more boys than girls . . . (Now) we have an equilibrium . . . This was a good recommendation from the protocol." This appears to be a consistent message in the various stakeholders' speeches.

The emphasis on female recruitment appears to have influenced the selection of the control group as well. Forty-eight percent of the girls and fifty-two percent of the boys expressed interest in the program during the initial recruitment phase, but the technical team purposely selected more girls than boys to participate in the training (55% of the total selected were girls). In the past, more boys were trained than originally selected because some were trained without having gone through the formal recruitment and selection process.

According to a technical advisor, "In the recruitment process, issues are discussed that allow for a better understanding of who will become voluntary activists." They also consider, "what is expected from an activist, his duties and rights." Besides the numerical issue, a systematization

Table 11
Indicators related to recruitment in the new protocol. Geração Biz Program, 2005.

	Intervention	Control
Rate of parents who participated in the sensitization session, per activist (# parents/# activists)	1.0	0.5
Number of advertisements	49	-
Number of social groups contacted	08	-
Number of girls captured through social groups	12	1
Number of girls recruited & total % of those recruited	92 (48.5%)	75 (45.7%)
Number of girls selected and total % of those selected	55 (55%)	37 (41.6%)

of the selection process occurred, supported by interview and checklist instruments that measured the main characteristics expected of an activist and sought to gauge the extent to which the candidates displayed these characteristics.

C. Parent Participation

Parent participation was of great importance in the implementation of the new protocol, in both qualitative andquantitative terms. During the sensitization phase, an average of one parent per activist was trained, and during training, at least one parent for every two activists was present. It is important to clarify that parents were invited to participate in the first and final days of training, where a session was held to clarify the program's goals and the activists' role in education and prevention.

These efforts are consistent with the new protocol's experience that parents or guardians are partly the determinants of girls' participation. As a government member says, "While the boys go to the pastures, and can immediately return to the program, the girls have two tasks—the field and the kitchen—and only after satisfying those chores are they liberated by their parents."

Girls' required activities leave them less time for socializing. "The parents have taken on an open attitude regarding the girls' activities, I'm speaking of those parents who were trained, and they show greater consciousness in seeing a girl partake in the activities," said a technical advisor who pointed out that parents' participation during the program's different implementation phases facilitates their support and understanding of the importance of girls' involvement in the program. "They feel honored in seeing their children participate," he said.

In the words of a leader activist, "Everything aside, we have noticed a small change. Some manage to leave their children . . . the youth to come and stay here with us. But, it is something that was difficult in the first days. But, now we already have the female youth here to come to meetings." "My parents' reaction was good. They said that I should continue," said an out-of-school girl from the Guijá focus group.

In the words of a government technician, "It (parents' participation) contributed to the girls' participation because from the moment the parent is involved and sensitized, they begin to support their son or daughter. They say 'You didn't go to work, what happened?' So the daughter starts going. Before, the father didn't even know what was happening. Now, the parent knows and they become responsible and give that support. The parent is very important to the girls' participation. For boys, the parents don't even need to motivate them because boys have their place. The girls still need incentives." It seems therefore that the new protocol is gradually altering parents' perception of the program and youth's participation, especially girls.

Training

As the qualitative diagnostic analysis indicated, from the outset, training should empower girls to address the obstacles they will encounter. Training content and methodology should go beyond SRH, HIV/AIDS, and gender and offer a supportive environment, creating space for reflection, so that each participant is able to become a change agent, and has the confidence to deal with difficult moments of confrontation they may encounter when they begin to conduct activities in school or the community. To this end, the entire training process was revised—its content, approaches, methods and duration.

A. Training Curriculum

The content, methodology, and duration of the new protocol's training curriculum was profoundly altered, which presented some problems. The greater length presented logistical difficulties, increased costs and difficulties in acquiring the necessary human resources for the 10 days of training. According to a program advisor, "The trainers are technical staff, and it is impossible for them to stay 10 uninterrupted days in a training locality."

Aside from these difficulties, the results pointed to real quality changes. As a program coordinator says, "[In the past] time was very short because the content was vast and it was necessary to repeat the material several times. [Now] with [80 hours of training time]—10 full days or 15 to 20 half days—we feel secure that the knowledge will remain with the activists [after training]." Even if devoting such a long time for training was an obstacle, it was necessary for activists to be able to perform their jobs, and it stimulated exchange and interaction among activists and their trainers.

B. Quality of the Trainers

The quality of trainers is still a very sensitive point with the introduction of the new protocol. As an advisor says, "We have weak trainers. We have . . . , who is a good trainer, but she's the only one, practically one lone trainer I have in the province." For the intervention group, training was observed by an external trainer, and the following was concluded:

a) In Magude, the school-based training depended on well-prepared trainers, who were prepared according to the protocol with regards to number of trainers, duration, curriculum and approaches. However, the community-based groups were trained by several variously-trained trainers, and the gender issues were not considered in a crosscutting manner nor sufficiently addressed.

"The protocol recommends that we have a maximum of two to four trainers who remain throughout the 10 days in which training occurs. But, in our case it was different, because as soon as we proposed this, it was not accepted as the best way by the Provincial Directorate, who thought that we were excluding some and benefiting others. In some colleagues' view, it wasn't clear what the criteria was for selecting some trainers to the detriment of others. The solution was to take everyone, which was a huge excess compared to what was stipulated. This was corrected by supervising the intervention," said one of the technical advisors.

b) In Guijá, the training was executed according to the protocol, but the quality of trainers needs to be improved. Importantly, throughout the study, the quality of trainers and training were never observed in a systematic manner. "They have limitations because of the introduction of new themes, the approach to certain issues and the lack of continuous and systematic training sessions. . . . That is why we have defended the need for refresher training, because people read during training, then never read again . . . or if they read it, they don't do it with the same tenacity as during training. I don't think this is a difficulty, I think it's a limitation that could be corrected if we maybe had quarterly training sessions, people would feel slightly more obliged," said a technical advisor.

This is an important issue, since training is the program's entry point. If the trainers do not have a good knowledge base or a great affinity for the program, this will have a negative effect on activists as they begin to apply what they have absorbed in the training.

C. Training Process

Whether it is a result of better recruitment or a result of the profound changes made to the training, the female activists' performance after the new protocol's implementation was significantly superior. Sixty-five percent of female peers passed the post-test in the intervention group, as compared with 32% of those in the control group (Table 12). Notable changes in the training included the content of the training and the more equitable and participative methodology.

The program itself also seems to have gained external credibility for the quality of the training. "It is true that our GBP activists have an interesting course and the training sessions are better organized. That's why other organizations want them, because they know these activists have knowledge [that can be used in] their program's implementation," said a government coordinator.

D. Activists' Support Material

With regard to supervision and support, the program was unable to effectively follow the requirements as stated in the Terms of the Volunteer. "The protocol is well conceived in furnishing the activist's kit, but it was unable to be fulfilled. The activists have knowledge of the protocol, they signed the Terms of the Volunteer that states they have rights and duties and it states that they have the right to receive that material," said a technical adviser. "First, I need preparation [including materials] in order to be a volunteer . . . the program always says, 'we are trying!' Before you can be an activist what conditions need to be in place? 'We have no remuneration or salary. We accept this, that's fine. However, sometimes we finish and realize that everything they (GBP) talked about doesn't meet our reality." explained an activist leader.

These comments reflect the degree to which activists look forward to receiving identification materials (caps, t-shirts, and satchels), and are disappointed when they are not supplied at the appropriate time.

However, the opinions on the quality of the BCC materials are very positive. What attracts the activist is the material, so that he feels he is an activist," said one of the out-of-school boys in the Magude Focus Group. The extent to which other organizations have requested copies of the materials attests to their level of quality and usefulness. "Many organizations want our material in order to duplicate it. I think there is competition because our material is far better than that of many organizations," said one provincial coordinator. Activists use the BCC and data collection materials to gain formal recognition from their peers, to support education and prevention activities, and to record their program activities. In this regard, the program's supply logistics for materials remain a problem. Delayed supplies, stock-outs, and difficulties in accessing peripheral areas make this part of the protocol difficult to ensure. "We have a problem of a shortage of CD's, leaflets . . . many materials. Now we have intake forms but we won't have any by next month," said an out-of-school activist leader.

The BCC materials often arrive in quantities too small to support all the activists' activities. As reflected in Table 12, the number of materials distributed after training remains low, averaging three leaflets per activist. "Being an activist is giving yourself to voluntary work, bringing a new image to help out on the existing risks," said a young activist. In order for the

Table 12
Indicators related to the training process using the new protocol. Geração BIZ Program, 2005.

	Intervention	Control
Number of parents who participated in the activists' training session	0.6	n/a
% of female activists with a score >40%	65	32
Rate of distributed materials after training per activist	3.0	2.9

Table 13
Number of activists with a score of over 40% correct after the training post-test. Geração BIZ Project. 2005

	Intervention	Control
Number of female activists with less than 40% correct	17	25
Number of female activists with more than 40% correct	32	12
Measure of association and 95% confidence interval Odds ratio: 0.26 0.10 0.63 Exact confidence limits of the odds ratio Mid-p: 0.1017 0.6373		

program to effectively support this vision, a sufficient quantity of materials must be provided to allow activists' to adequately perform their jobs.

Supervision and support

Supervision and support included a combination of actions that give activists the necessary technical and logistical support, with special attention being paid to girls. The following are highlighted:

A. Technical Meetings

A minimum of four technical district supervision meetings were held per site, and the Maputo sites conducted a total of eight meetings each. The most important aspect pointed out in technical meetings, regarding group strengthening and technical improvement activities, was the opportunity to dedicate significant time to the girls. The new protocol highlighted this guideline and it seems to have been understood during its implementation. However, the problems were not entirely overcome. As an activist leader says, "There is the gender issue and they (the girls) complain that the boys always laugh at them and that's why they remain quiet. But, after we explained to them that they should not keep quiet, we've seen some changes, and they now discuss as equals. Sometimes they come here with good ideas, and I'm happy for it. So it's worth it and the experience of the practical work teaches us how we can make changes within the program."

Although these words concern equality, the activist leader seems to indicate that he has the power to influence the girls' behavior. In other words, for the girls to be vocal, the boy needs to mediate and to encourage them. However, because the activists reveal an understanding of the differences between male and female activists that is not only biological, it would appear that the gender concept is being more intensely discussed and absorbed during training and technical meetings.

It is also interesting to observe how the gender issues are understood and discussed amongst activists. This is evident in one female activist leader's speech:

"A leader should be exemplary. Sometimes men don't honor the woman's expectations— women are more open with other women. Sometimes it's not easy being a leader, because we're different people. Some others don't accept what I have to say, especially boys. They have difficulties in understanding my position, but, I have made an effort to try and make them understand that that doesn't change things here, because we can even help each other to facilitate our work. Because I am a woman, many of the female activists like it, because I listen to what they have to say and there is also trust between us, we can talk about various things, even problems at home or other things.

Before, the boys didn't like me being a leader, but since we had training, now they accept it more and even help with some things. I like the work, I think we can actually do a few things to develop our mentality too, because here in the community, there is still a lot of prejudice and we go on doing our work whichever way possible. Being a leader is important, because the work is better organized and we can do our work better."

Table 14
Indicators related to supervision and support using the new protocol. Geração BIZ Program. 2005.

	Intervention	Control
Number of technical meetings conducted	24	27
Number of supervision activities	35	44
Number of girls in income generation activities	23	n/a
Number of girls exposed to socially positive activities	20	n/a
Number of boys exposed to socially positive activities	26	n/a
Number of girls participating in study tours	25	2
Number of boys participating in study tours	25	17
Number of female leaders	4	5
Number of male leaders	6	7

B. Opportunities: study tours and public appearances

During the diagnostic analysis, considerable discussion focused on whether activities that foster positive social exposure favor girls' retention and increase parents' acceptance of the program. A very similar number (20 girls and 26 boys) participated in activities such as radio shows, theatre and others. Although there are no correlating numbers in the control group, as they were not systematized, there seems to have been an increase in the girls' participation. As for the study visits, the girls' participation was significantly higher in the intervention group than in the control group given that an equal number of boys and girls had access to this activity (25 of each) in comparison with the past, when 2 girls and 17 boys benefited.

C. Incentives, subsistence and volunteerism

Significant barriers remain, particularly the expectation that children should bring home some income after working at the GBP. "Thus, they compare. Because she's here at home, she helps, she cooks, washes clothes, she helps. But when she goes to work as an activist and comes home with nothing, this creates a certain type of problem and has impeded the program's development," said an activist.

It is understood that a greater emphasis is placed on the girl's participation in these activities, as she is expected to help out at home and contribute to the family's economy. The incentives issue, though not necessarily money, continues to be a very important point in the mangers' and activists' opinions. "We need this little lunch not because we want it, it's an incentive, even if it's ten 'contos' (ten thousand meticals). Some people come here and spend the whole day at the YFS site and then return home and their parents ask them 'didn't they give you anything where you went to work?!'" said an activist

The relationship between parents' expectations and the need to bring some income home is very important. Many believe—particularly in resource poor situations—that any job should generate some portion of the family income. The reason one works is for subsistence. Work, just for the sake of doing something meaningful, does not hold any social value. Although this study does not intend to conduct an in-depth analysis of social and economic dynamics, one needs to try and understand the logic of most parents.

For example, the boy is expected to work away from home and fight for his social position, and the girl is expected to do the domestic chores. The boy's absence from the family nucleus might even be considered a problem to the family, when he doesn't bring anything home. The girl is considered to be in debt if she joins the program, because she stops contributing to the family economy by dedicating herself to something that brings in no income. In reality, girls are not expected to contribute to income. At the most, one could say that the boy's balance is zero in the family's economy, while the girl is in deficit.

One government technical advisor suggested some possible ways to deal with this, "Furnish youth centers with computers, promote training in micro-enterprise and [ensure that] these incentives and financings [continue], right? In this way we would attract and maintain participants and other youth would learn information technology or learn to sew." The issue of incentives is central to many provincial stakeholders' speeches. "When I arrive at the

hospital I have to pay. We should at least not pay in [the] hospital," said a member of an out-of-school focus group. Many activists feel they should not have to pay for services at health facilities with which they are associated. According to this girl, the important things are the incentives gained from participation in the program.

This comment points to many limits faced by this type of program. To create a culture of volunteerism and making a difference in other's lives requires constant dialogue about social responsibility, commitment and citizenship. Current social practices in Mozambique are still based on a network of extended family and not the wider community. Social responsibility and membership require an understanding of concepts such as citizenship, rights, and responsibilities. "The problem is that the incentives aren't very good and I'm just here because my friends tell me not to leave. If it wasn't for them, I would have left a long time ago," said a female activist.

This statement can give us a measure of the issue at hand, coupled with another activist leader who states that parents "only complain, because they say we're always out . . . we don't bring anything home. Many girls say they want to leave because of this. Now, the boys, there's no problem. The parents don't say anything, but they also complain that there's no help."

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the words "perception as volunteers" seems more frequent in the intervention group's responses than in the control group. This might be the best reflection of the new protocol's implementation, as it presents clear information about rights and duties of the activist, as well as the program's responsibility, complemented by the activists' signing on to the Terms of the Volunteer.

According to a group of male activists, one "has to be a volunteer, a person with the will to work." All of the trained activists signed the volunteering terms, accepting all the conditions of the peer educators' activities. Even if the program cannot meet demands for incentives, due to ethical, strategic, or sustainability issues, it has at least taken a clear stand on this point, while stimulating discussion among activists and coordinators.

Changes in retention and performance based on the introduction of the new protocol
Retention of girls has improved under the new protocol, compared with previous program interventions (see Table 15). The attrition in the control group was 64.9%, more than twice the average found in the first pilot conducted in 2003 (30.5%). But, in the intervention group, attrition was only 20.4%.

The new protocol appears to have involved more people in the program, who are part of the activists' lives. This has contributed to an increase in retention. Girls also seem to have developed strategies for continuing in the GBP regardless of the obstacles. "Now, the parents are very bad and don't even let me go to school or anything! And they don't even want me to go to school, they don't let me participate in meetings, for example GBP, but I'm trying everything to make them understand. For example, now it was very difficult for me to leave and come here. That's why I was late. It's difficult because what's happening to me is against my will and it's very difficult to be an activist, that's why I give myself strength to continue," said a female activist.

"Once a boy made me see that he was disturbed by the girl's position in the program, but that's part of the change."
Government Advisor

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Table 15
Number of activists trained during the operations research study, per retention scenario. Geração BIZ Program, 2005.

	Intervention	Control
Number of female activists lost after 12 months	10	24
Number of female activists who remained after 12 months	39	13
Measure of association and 95% confidence interval Odds ratio: 0.14 0.05 0.37 Exact confidence limits of the odds ratio Mid-p: 0.0519 0.3705		

The investment made in promoting girls' empowerment through the new protocol gradually seems to be achieving the desired results. Girls report that they want to participate in the social environment. "They only want me to stay at home working continuously. They're the type that does not give women priority, and they still have the old thing from our ancestors. For me to be able to leave there, I have to make my own tricks. I have to wake early in the morning, do the cleaning, and prepare breakfast and then lunch. Sometimes I avoid saying I'm going out. I say I'm going to a cousin's house and that's the only way I can go out," said a female activist.

Even allowing for the improvement in data collection during the study, there was still a substantial increase in productivity among the intervention sites. Female peers in the intervention group conducted five times more SRH and HIV prevention activities than those in the control group (Table 16). Individual girls' participation also increased—only 26.5% of female peers from the control group were involved in program activities, compared to 56.7% in the intervention group. An increase in the number of condoms distributed from female

Table 16
Indicators related to supervision and support using the new protocol. Geração BIZ Program, 2005.

	Intervention	Control
Number of activities conducted in a 12-month period	10,243	1,896
Number and % of total activities conducted in a 12-month period by female activists	5,805 (56.7%)	526 (26.5%)
Number of personal contacts conducted in a 12-month period	9,240	1,769
Number and % of total personal contacts conducted in a 12-month period	5,164 (55.9%)	n/a
Number of condoms distributed	22,709	8,904

activists was also observed. As the quotation below reveals, female activists work from home providing information to their relatives and friends, as well as in public places. "In my case, I've done that at home and many adolescents have been coming to [learn] the correct use [of] the condom. I take a condom from here and use a stick I have at home. I also talk about unwanted pregnancies and abstinence, as I spend a lot of time at home, I speak right there," said a female activist, in the Guijá focus group.

The data show that, in general, the new protocol brought about a significant improvement in the program's performance indicators, as well as in the girls' participation. A greater number of activities, even though not necessarily of high quality, meant that a higher number of people were reached and in a more intense manner.

However, challenges remain, especially related to the girls' retention as leaders and their shyness when participating in activities with public exposure, such as theatre or public debates. "I tell my grandparents not to go around a lot because HIV/AIDS exists and this illness has no cure. I teach my brothers, uncles about condom use so that they can know about the diseases. I ask my grandparents if they have heard of HIV/AIDS and they say yes so, I give him a condom," said a participant in a girls focus group in Guijá. "I work anywhere, I have no problem. I talk to students at school, at the market, on the street, I speak anywhere. I speak with manners," said another participant.

Conclusions

The implementation process of the OR generated several unanticipated sub-products that brought qualitative improvements to the GBP as a whole. These include strategic changes in the operationalization of the program and the development of management tools. Examples include:

- Systematization of the activists' recruitment, training, and support processes;
- Improvement of the program's monitoring system; and
- Greater exposure of gender bias inherent in the program's functional structure.

In relation to the application of the new protocol and interventions conducted to increase girls' participation in the program, especially in terms of conducting more outreach activities, the following can be pointed out:

- The new protocol results in greater retention of girls in the program (about five times more than earlier procedures).
- The improvement occurred not only in girls' participation, but among all activists, with increased productivity.
- Gender issues persist in the female activists' actions. However, implementation of planned interventions could enable empowerment to be built and enhanced throughout the program's lifespan.
- Lack of incentives, whether financial or other, is still a big issue and the activists point to the need to receive something in return for their efforts. This is consistent with Mozambican social customs and norms.
- The program's central level has not yet succeeded in solving problems related to identification and educative materials available to the activists. The lack of t-shirts, caps and satchels, as well as BCC material, is constantly mentioned in the activists', leaders', government advisors', and TAs' speeches. There is a clear policy on incentives, whether activists agree to it or not, but the promise to provide materials is not being effectively fulfilled. This may contribute to activists' becoming demoralized and abandoning the program.

> *"I see the new protocol as an instrument to standardize the practices. The issues there are very clear; it helps to document, to plan and to see what phases have occurred. Today we know how many [girls] appear for recruitment, how many are in training. It is well systematized and should be distributed and adopted by other organizations that implement youth programs."*
>
> *Technical Advisor*

- The established practices that should guide the recruitment of activists appear to have been well conducted, and this attests to the extent in which the protocol was effectively implemented. The same occurred regarding training. Problems remain in the implementation of the new protocol's guidelines for supervision and support. Issues relating to the quality and frequency of technical meetings, supervision visits, the lack of materials and the creation of a favorable environment in the community still lack systematization.

- The perception of gender issues seems to have changed significantly among those interviewed. Participants have begun to discuss gender issues as more than biological differences, and have begun to see the impact of history and culture on the perception of gender.

- The new protocol, and consequently GBP, was strongly associated with girls' issues. This element allowed for a reconstruction of the program's mission and values. Female activists became more vocal in technical meetings, exchanged visits, participated in income generating activities and took advantage of other opportunities to which they had previously less access.

"Sometimes I have to meet and talk to the girls, because they are a bit embarrassed to talk. So we sit and talk. The girls say, 'ahh! The boys don't want to hear what we say sometimes, so we keep quiet…'
So I tell them not to keep quiet, because if we want to be respected, we also have to talk. There cannot be different ways to treat activists here. Besides everything, I get along with the activists. When they have a complaint, it's mostly due to lack of material, I try to see how the issue can be resolved. We present all our problems at technical meetings. But, they have been able to resolve very few things to date. I cannot lose morale. I cannot separate the more active from those less active. Or else the less active may lose morale. Losing morale is losing the will to be an activist."

Activist leader in a Guijá School

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