

INTEGRATING TRAUMA-INFORMED EMOTIONAL SELF-REGULATION PRINCIPLES INTO GIRLS UNITED CURRICULUM IN RURAL KENYA



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RELEVANT LITERATURE & NEED Flying Kites and Network Schools: Provide community children access to quality education > Girls United (GU): Provides girls grades 4-8 with knowledge, resources & support to make informed choices about their bodies, education & future **Critical ACEs GBV** SGBV Trauma ACEs: Adverse Childhood Experiences, SGBV: Sexual Gender-based Violence **Gender Norms** PTSD Reaction Index given ➤ Education of females neglected → > **2482** Kenyans (11-17yrs)¹ expectation to be housewives² Reported experiencing 1+ • FK reported a 42% rise in school traumatic events within 1 year dropouts due to unplanned Had witnessed people being pregnancies³ shot, assaulted or killed > Patriarchal views, cultural expectations, socioeconomic Who qualified for PTSD inequalities, weak legal protections, & were age 11-13yrs fear of reporting → SGBV⁴ What: Any type of traumatic childhood event **How:** Disrupts body's stress response^{5,6} Toxic stress response, emotional dysregulation, behavioral issues Examples^{1,7} Physical: Being hit, punched, kicked Emotional: Loss of a loved one, witnessing violence, neglect, shaming Key Issues (7): "issues related Affects brain, cardiovascular, to GU" immune & metabolic systems⁶ Non-discriminatory (6):

ACES Sexual: Female genital mutilation, child marriage, rape **Leads** to lifelong impairments in physical & mental health^{5,6,7} **Correlation** between number of ACEs & learning and/or behavioral problems among children & adolescents^{5,8}

29% of female youth had 6+ ACEs⁹

Need

- > GU curriculum needs trauma-informed emotional regulation content
 - Social-emotional learning programs boost academic performance by 13%¹⁰
 - Result: Improved behavior, better stress management, & increased self-esteem¹¹
 - Strengthens individual & community resilience¹

> Incorporate trauma-informed, emotional-regulation education into GU's current curriculum

PROGRAMS PARTICIPANTS

Learning to BREATHE (L2B)

- > Guide teachers in leading evidencebased **mindfulness** activities
- > Improve emotional recognition & self-regulation
- **GU Curriculum**
- ➤ Guide GU Patrons in educating girls on **sexual-reproductive health**
- Uplift & empower girls

GU Patron: Lead GU clubs **Child Protective Volunteer (CPV):**

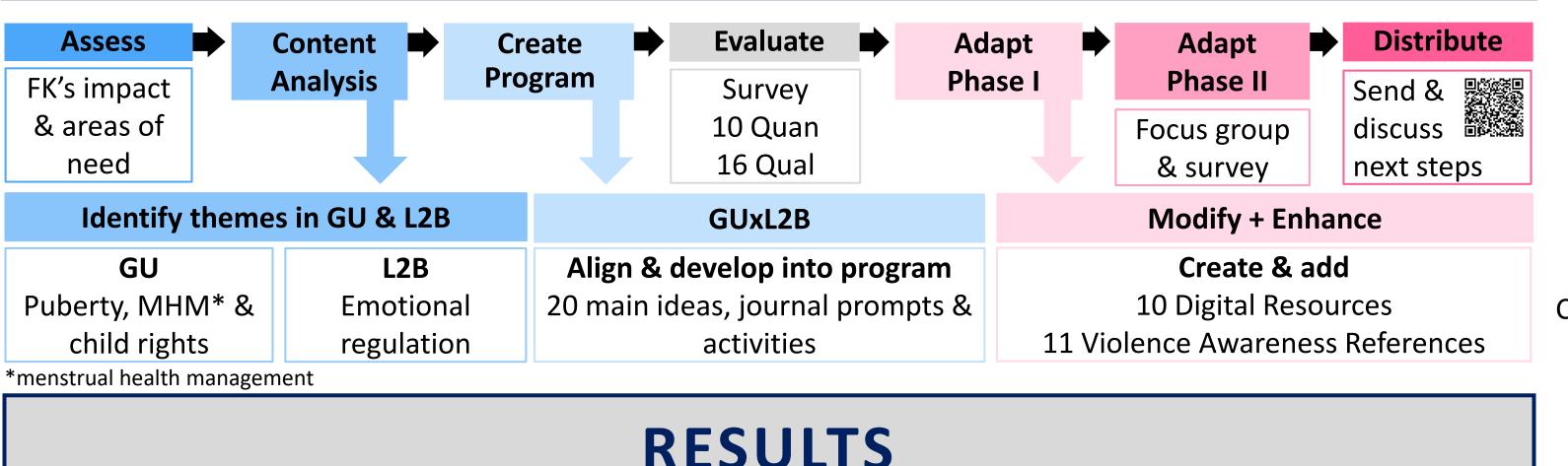
Trained to respond, report, & prevent GBV & support girls who have experienced GBV

Teacher: At FK or a network school

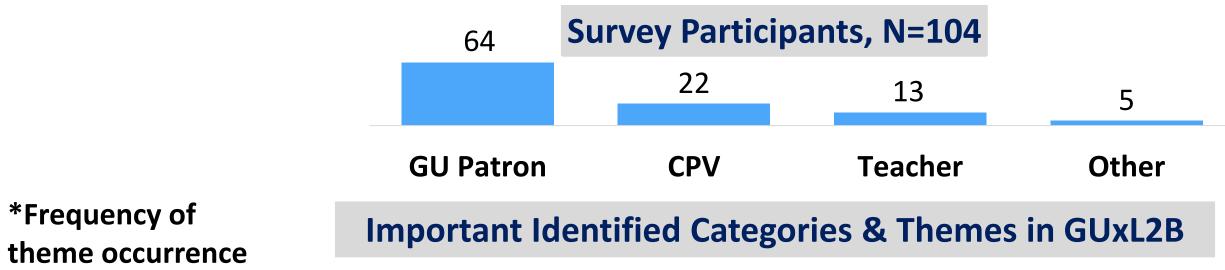
Other: Program manager, coordinator, social workers

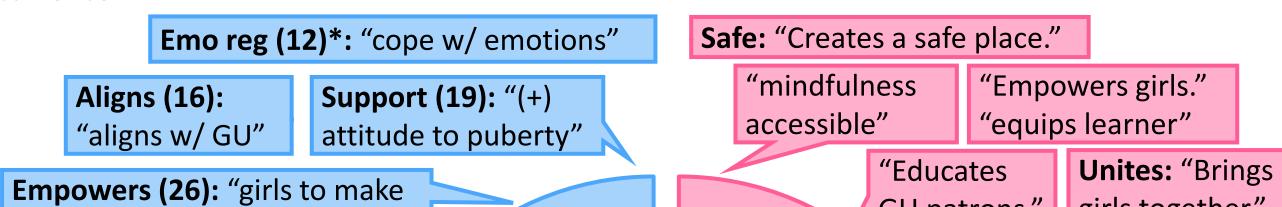
The girls: Primary (grades 1-4) & secondary (grades 5-8)

METHODS



RESULTS





Relevant

Culturally

Appropriate

Equip (7): "[patrons] w/ knowledge to train girls"

healthy decisions"

GU Lives (22): "what they go

through"

"recognized & appreciated other people's beliefs, customs &

values to interact with them without prejudice or judgement" Relatable (9): In line (13): "Things

1-2. Classroom Management Plans

6-7. Emotional Regulation & Process

What is Violence Against Children?

Violence Against Children Resources

Violence Against Children Laws

3-5. Discipline Strategies & Implementation

11. Positive Student-Teacher Relationship

8-10. SGBV, Trauma + Trauma Sensitive Response

Violence Awareness Resources Specific to Kenya

Digital Resources

"Realistic" we've seen or heard.' **Local (14):** "from Relevant (16):

> "Learner centered." local areas"

Lived-Experience (11): "What the girls go through in society."

Strengths

Areas for

Improvement

"Alumni

patrons more

Adaptations Made

follow-up"

Trainings: "to equip

"This is something that can be incorporated in the day-to-day learnings in class or even outside. The program will really help teachers, patrons, CPVs & social workers to manage & regulate both the children in distress & their own emotions." - Social Worker

Primary stakeholders approved program for piloting

GU patrons." girls together."

Comprehensive: "Teaches

Mentor: "Raising women

out of girls." "helps make

"Accommodate those w/

learning difficulties."

parents & community to

"More

pictures."

support at home & life."

Meetings: "extra

Age range: "high

school programs"

time for hard topics"

Community: "Involve

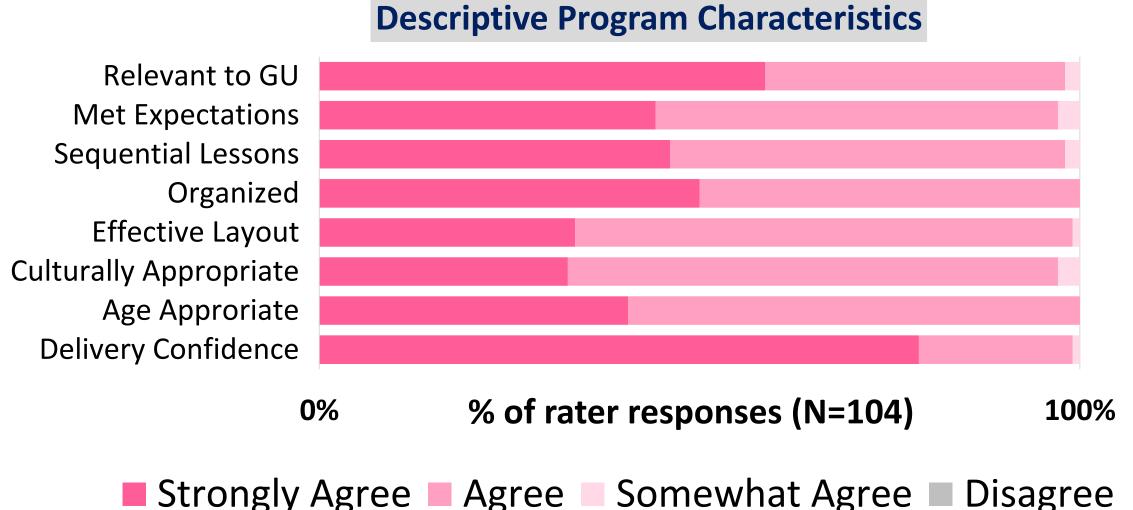
whole body, handling

emotions, & rights."

wise decisions"

"I find it easy to understand & implement with ease." Program Director

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION



DISCUSSION

Strengths

- > Comprehensive: Educates about physical, mental, emotional, & social wellness
- > User-friendly: Easy to implement & understand
- > Engaging: Captures attention & interests of instructors/students
- > Interactive: Encourages participation & thoughtful learning
- > Adaptive: Adjustable to different age levels/learning environments
- > Student-centered: Focuses on learner's needs and interests
- > Empowering: Builds students confidence & independence

Limitations

- > Time: Not enough time to cover all topics in depth
- > Cultural barriers: Difficult to address topics such as LGBT+ education

Future programming considerations

- ➤ **Big Sister program:** Peer mentorship opportunities
- > Community engagement: Mobilize families, caregivers, & peers of all genders & generations—particularly men & boys—as advocates in supporting girls.
- > Professional development: Train educators in evidence-based practices (e.g., emotional-regulation, trauma-informed responses, SGBV) & develop supplementary resources as needed

CONCLUSION

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> The GUxL2B program is ready to be implemented as it was found to be relevant, comprehensive, clearly organized & tailored to cultural and age considerations.

Next steps

- > Pilot program in 2025-2026 school year at Flying Kites Academy
- > Partnering with an stakeholders in Kenya who can dive deeper into more culturally relevant examples
- > Accommodating different learning styles & making program accessible for those with disabilities

REFERENCES & CONTACT INFO

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the staff at Flying Kites, who participated enthusiastically.

