Policy Briefing

BBC MEDIA ACTION

POLICY BRIEFING #13 OCTOBER 2014

Making waves

Media's potential for girls in the Global South

Caroline Sugg

Sign up for our newsletter: www.bbcmediaaction.org

Contents

Front cover
A young woman in Nepal takes part in the BBC Media Action TV and radio discussion programme *Sajha Sawal* (Common Questions).
BBC MEDIA ACTION

Introduction 3

Part 1 **The girl generation** 4

A girl's world 4

Part 2 **Media and girls: too much of a bad thing?** 6

Young people critique the media 7

Part 3 **Girls 2.0 – from advocacy to action** 8

Shaping behaviour, changing lives 8

You go, girl: amplifying voice and participation 10

Girls in the spotlight 12

Part 4 **Representation, access and control** 13

Media access and literacy 13

Male-dominated media 14

Making girls visible: media priorities, advertising and regulation 16

Part 5 **Donor strategies and the girl agenda** 18

Focus on girls 18

Generate more evidence 18

Broaden the scope 19

Integrate for impact 19

Shoot for sustainability 19

Address structural constraints 19

Appendix **Interviews conducted** 20

Endnotes 21

CHRIS DE BODE/PANOS PICTURES

Introduction

There are around 600 million adolescent girls living in developing countries.[1] Doubly marginalised because of their gender and age, many live a bleak existence – excluded from access to basic public services, unable to shape the decisions that affect their lives and vulnerable to violence at home and on the street. Their voices often go unheard.

Slowly, this is beginning to change. Over the past two decades, girls have become a growing priority for the international development community. Investing in their health, education and employment prospects is now widely considered to have an important ripple effect on other development outcomes such as economic growth and social equality. As a result, development assistance programmes that support girls' empowerment are now seen by many as not just the "right" thing to do, but a necessity.

Less well understood is where media fits into this equation. The interplay between media and gender norms has long been recognised and a substantial literature explores how media affects girls in the Global North. But against a backdrop of rapidly changing media landscapes – characterised by increasing competition for audiences, sensationalism and expanding access to new technologies – the role that media plays in girls' lives in the Global South demands further examination.

Drawing on expert interviews as well as insights from the media and development literature, this policy briefing seeks to fill this gap. It argues that media — whether traditional or online — matters a great deal in the lives of girls in the developing world. It matters because it has the ability to be harmful to girls' interests and self-esteem, and it matters because it can also be so effective in playing a positive role in girls' lives. Specifically, media can influence girls' aspirations and behaviours around their health and livelihoods, open the door to greater participation in society and ensure that girls' issues move higher up the public agenda. If challenges around media access and control are addressed head on and girls come to be valued as an audience, then media can play a vital role in helping to advance the well-being of adolescent girls in regions of the world where their interests have traditionally been most neglected.

The paper is organised as follows:

Part 1 documents the high level of attention now paid to girls in international development circles.

Part 2 notes the limited consideration given to the role of media within that discourse, especially when compared with similar discussions in the Global North.

Part 3 explores the potentially positive ways in which media can shape girls' prospects in the Global South.

Part 4 highlights some of the systemic barriers that, unless addressed, may limit media's ability to improve girls' lives.

Part 5 concludes by suggesting ways in which media projects could better fulfil their developmental potential for girls.

Above Sarah, 12, practises her interviewing technique near her home in Gulu, Northern Uganda. She dreams of becoming a radio news reporter.

NYANI QUARMYNE/PANOS PICTURES

PART 1

The girl generation

Above Ahjatu Dawuda, Ghana, dropped out of school when she found out she was pregnant.

The 600 million adolescent girls living in developing countries make up the "largest girl generation in history".[2] This diverse population – including girls who are married and unmarried, in and out of school, urban and rural, and from different religions and ethnicities – lives in challenging circumstances the world over. Particularly when they come from the very poorest communities, adolescent girls tend to be socially isolated as a result of both their gender and their age. (See box: A girl's world.)

Historically, adolescence was a time in people's lives that, in the words of Jane Hobson, senior social development

A girl's world

- Around the world, 31 million girls are out of school.[3] Across 47 out of 54 African countries, girls have a less than 50% chance of going to secondary school.[4]
- About 16 million girls aged 15–19 and some 1 million girls under 15 years old give birth every year, most in low- and middle-income countries.[5] Complications linked to pregnancy and childbirth are the second greatest cause of death for 15–19-year-old girls globally.[6]
- Globally, some 30% of girls aged 15–19 experience violence from a partner,[7] and in some places as many as half of reported sexual assaults are perpetrated on girls younger than 15.[8]
- Some 11% of girls are married before they turn 15, jeopardising their rights to health, education and protection.[9] Worldwide, more than 700 million women alive today were married before their 18th birthday.[10]
- In 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East where the practice is most common, more than 130 million girls and women have experienced some form of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C).[11]

advisor from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), simply "dropped off the agenda in international development".[12] But in recent years, greater recognition of the sorts of challenges highlighted above has led to intensive advocacy to ensure that girls see benefits from development programmes. (See box: A girl's world.) The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, for instance, highlights the importance of girls' access to financial services, infrastructure, health services, water and sanitation, and safe learning environments. This report also emphasises the need for girls' land rights to be respected, for a culture of "zero tolerance of violence against and exploitation" of girls and to ensure that girls have "an equal voice in decision-making".[13]

Over and above the moral justifications for investing in girls because it is "the right thing to do", since the 1990s it has been argued that this investment can help to realise broader development goals. Indeed, the term "the girl effect"[14] was coined more recently to describe a movement that focuses on "leveraging the unique potential of adolescent girls to end poverty for themselves, their families, their communities, their countries and the world".[15]

Some commentators feel uneasy about the strength of the claims made by the "girl effect" movement and the implication that girls can "transform the entire world".[16] But data supports the idea that investment in adolescent girls can have a wider, positive impact on things like economic growth and social development:

- When a girl in the developing world receives seven or more years of education, she marries four years later and has two fewer children[17]
- Girls and young women delaying marriage and having fewer children offers a bigger chance of increasing per capita income, higher savings, and more rapid economic growth[18]
- Every extra year of primary schooling increases a girl's individual eventual earnings by 10–20%[19]
- Statistics suggest that women-headed households reinvest 90% of their income into their families, compared with a 30–40% reinvestment rate for men[20]
- Closing the "joblessness gap" between girls and their male counterparts would yield an increase in gross domestic product (GDP) of up to 1.2% each year[21]

Despite this growing recognition of the importance of adolescent girls within international development discourse, only a very small proportion of aid expenditure is spent meeting their specific needs. On the contrary, many youth assistance programmes bypass the very poorest girls altogether.[22] A study conducted in Burkina Faso, for example, found that only 19% of the population served by urban youth centres were girls. Younger girls – those aged 10–14 – accounted for only 3% of beneficiaries, whereas 36% of the "youth" served were men older than 20.[23]

> "There's got to be a plan… there's been a lot of emotion but there hasn't been a plan."

Efforts are now being made to redress this balance and to strengthen the reach and effectiveness of development assistance programmes for girls – moving from advocacy to action. As Judith Bruce, senior policy analyst at the Population Council put it, "There's got to be a plan… there's been a lot of emotion but there hasn't been a plan."[24] The rest of this briefing explores whether and how media should be part of "the plan" for adolescent girls.[25]

Below A South Sudanese girl, who has been displaced by fighting, in a camp for displaced persons in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan compound in Juba.

ANDREEA CAMPEANU/REUTERS

PART 2

Media and girls: too much of a bad thing?

Despite a global focus on the importance of investing in adolescent girls, there is surprisingly little attention paid to how media affects girls' lives. This blind spot is particularly noteworthy given the revolutionary changes in technology in recent years, which have affected even the world's most fragile states. It is also remarkable, given the preoccupation with the impact of media on adolescent girls in richer parts of the world.

> "There is nothing in the [Afghan media] for young people learning about life, learning about themselves… there is a big gap for 10–19 year olds."

The critical role that media can play in shaping women's lives has long been recognised in international development discourse. The Declaration from the first United Nations (UN) Conference for the Advancement of Women in 1975 argued that "media should regard as a high priority their responsibility for helping to remove the cultural and attitudinal factors that still inhibit the development of women."[26] Twenty years later at the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action again highlighted the influence of media in women's lives, noting that "the media have a great potential to promote the advancement of women… by portraying women and men in a non-stereotypical, diverse and balanced manner." But the platform further warned: "global communication networks have been used to spread stereotyped and demeaning images of women for narrow commercial and consumerist purposes."[27]

Below Since the 1990s access to media has boomed in the Global South. Here, television satellite dishes stand outside housing in an impoverished area of Bangalore, India.

MARK HENLEY/PANOS PICTURES

But what about girls? To date, the conversation about the effects of media on adolescent girls in the Global South has been quite limited, and the academic literature is scarce. Engaging with media has rarely been highlighted as a priority when girls' needs are discussed in development circles.

In some countries, there are no discernable media interventions for girls at all. Zarghuna Kargar, author and BBC journalist, complains that in Afghanistan, while there are cartoons for younger children and films and dramas for adults, "There is nothing in the middle for young people learning about life, learning about themselves. So there is a big gap for 10–19 year-olds… Afghan media has created a big hole in terms of teaching the younger generation."[28]

Even in India, where significant investments in media and communication for social change have been made, some believe that media can do much more. Anuradha Gupta of the Indian Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Mission Director of the National Health Mission suggests: "It's something that deserves much, much greater attention and much more systematic effort within the government. Allocating more resources for media and communication strategies… is going to be very important."[29]

This is a surprising state of affairs, given the quantity and variety of media platforms that have emerged in the developing world over the past few decades. Since the 1990s, access to traditional broadcast media has boomed in developing countries, typified by the accelerating growth of satellite TV and other forms of independent media.[30] Strikingly, the proportion of individuals with access to the internet in the developing world rose by 375% between 2005 and 2014, compared with 59% in Europe during the same period.[31] Mobile phone use has also mushroomed, with some estimates predicting near-universal mobile phone coverage by 2015.[32] This increase in mobile phone use will invariably accelerate internet access. The leading sectoral organisation for mobile phone operators worldwide – The Groupe Speciale Mobile (GSM) Association – projects that as much as 80% of internet access in poor countries will take place via mobile phones in the coming years.[33]

Girls' access to TV and radio in developing countries varies quite considerably (see Part 4) and data on adolescent girls' access to, and use of, information and communications technology (ICT) in these countries is minimal.[34] However, even if girls' media consumption is low when compared with other segments of the population, one can surmise that their exposure to different types of media is likely to increase in coming years as the cost of technical equipment declines.

QUINN ROONEY/GETTY IMAGES

Above Sexualisation by the media can have negative effects on girls. Here, a girl in Australia protests against child beauty pageants.

And yet, very little has been done to explore what these transformed media landscapes mean for the ability of girls to realise the social, economic and political changes now seen as crucial to securing fairer societies and developmental success. In the Global North, both the academic literature and popular discourse tend to emphasise media's harmful effects, portraying media as one cause of societal problems, such as violence and bullying, early sexuality and body image issues that bring health and psychological risks for girls.[35] A report by the American Psychological Association, for example, found that "virtually every media form studied provides ample evidence of the sexualisation of women… These are the models of femininity presented for young girls to study and emulate." The report concludes that sexualisation by the media has negative effects on girls, including on their cognitive functioning, physical and mental health, and emerging sexuality.[36]

Media is also seen to undermine girls' self-esteem and limit their perceptions of their own potential in the Global North. Research commissioned by the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media examines how women and girls are depicted in American films aimed at young people. A study of G-rated films (i.e. films rated suitable for a general audience) made between 2006 and 2009 found that more than 80% of all working characters portrayed in these films were male. Furthermore, not a single female character was depicted as working in the field of medical science, business, law or politics. The study concludes that "… there is a shortage of diverse and exciting role models for girls and young women. Exposure to these types of depictions may have negative repercussions for some youth."[37] (See box: Young people critique the media.)

In short, by looking at available data and commentary about media's impact on girls, one would expect its impact to be detrimental in the Global South.

But that does not necessarily need to be the case. As Jane Hobson, a senior social development advisor at DFID, points out: "Traditional attitudes may not be created by the media but [they] are definitely perpetuated by it… But equally there's the opportunity for [media] to do something completely different."[41]

> "Virtually every media form studied provides ample evidence of the sexualisation of women… These are the models of femininity presented for young girls to study and emulate."

This briefing builds on interviews with experts, evidence from media programmes and insights from communication for development and social change literature to start reconsidering how media can best be deployed as a positive force in girls' development. It will argue that today – perhaps more than ever – media offers a host of opportunities to affect girls' lives favourably in the Global South, provided that it is managed with care and sensitivity.

Young people critique the media

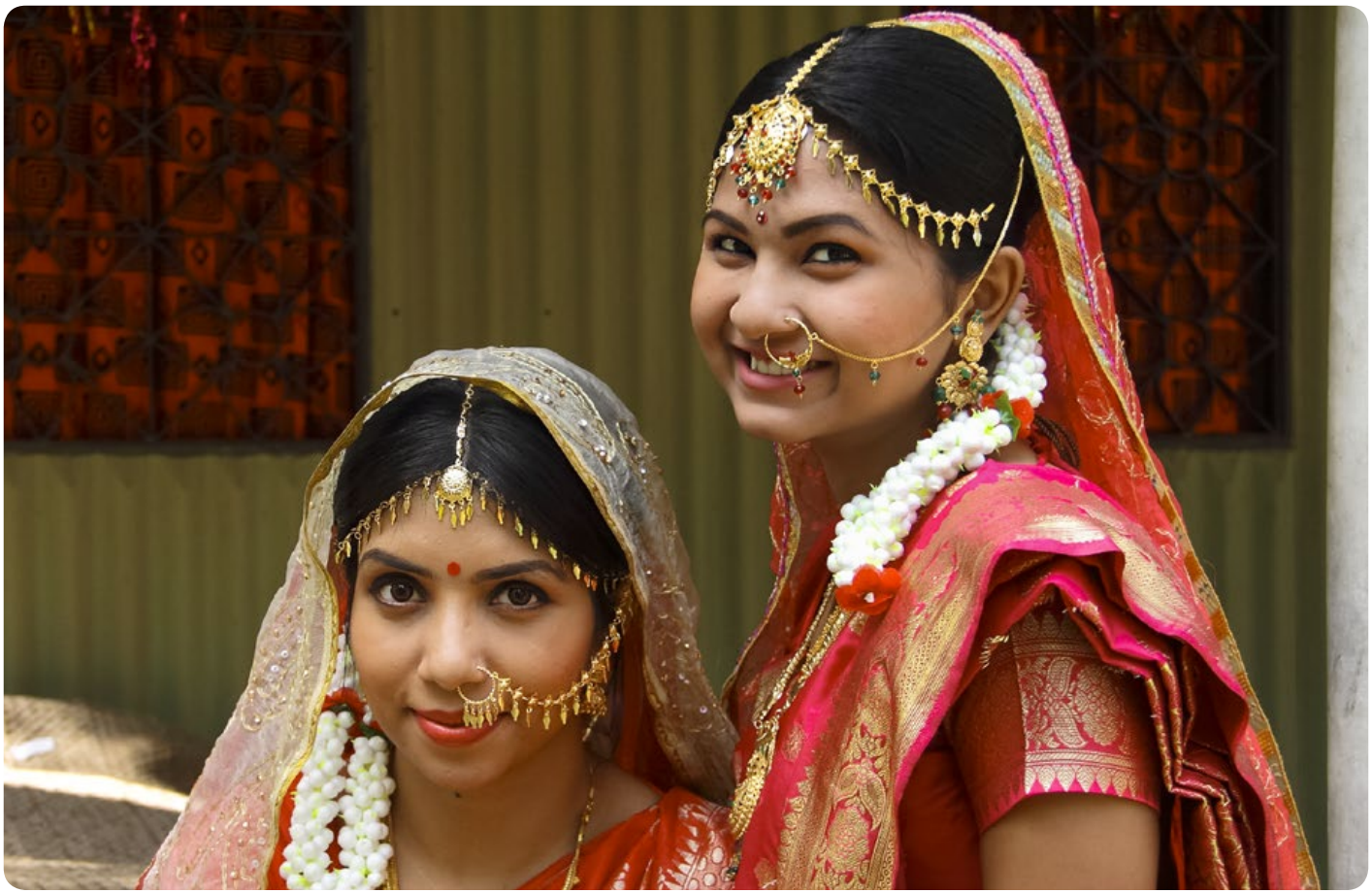
What do young people from the Global South think about how the media portrays adolescent girls in their regions? Youth interviewed during research for this briefing felt that media can lead to dangerous stereotypes about girls.

Victor Moina, the 21-year-old chief executive officer of the Forum for the Development of Young People, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Sierra Leone, observed that media actively disempowers girls in his country by presenting them as lacking agency. As he notes: "They always show you that girls are a vulnerable group of people. Whenever they think about girls' issues, all they think about is that 'they are mothers, they are sisters, and we should help them'… they don't say what they are… doing to help themselves."[38]

Others critiqued the narrow representation of girls in media in the Global South. Seher Ali, a young female student and SPARK blogger born in Oman (but now residing in Canada), for example, reflected on how the narrow range of images of "girlhood" she encountered on TV and other media affected her own self-image: "As a young girl… I grew up not being able to identify – culturally, religiously, physically – with young girls that were on the screen, and sometimes that can create these real identity issues."[39]

> "It would be lovely if a producer out there would make a programme for teenage girls. Just because we're female and young doesn't mean we do not have opinions."

Finally, some expressed concern over the lack of media space devoted to girls' voices and addressing their needs in the developing world. Dee Putri, a student and SPARK blogger from Indonesia, confessed: "I don't even watch Indonesian TV… It would be lovely if a producer out there would make a programme for teenage girls. Just because we're female and young doesn't mean we do not have opinions."[40]



BBC MEDIA ACTION

PART 3

Girls 2.0 – from advocacy to action

Above Media can affect decisions about girls' reproductive health. BBC Media Action's health drama in Bangladesh *Ujan Ganger Naija* (Sailing Against the Tide) explores the effect of early marriage on its heroine Anika (pictured right) who wishes to continue her education.

An emerging body of practice and evidence suggests that media can play a powerful role in helping adolescent girls in the Global South achieve their potential. Media can empower girls by influencing behaviours that affect their lives, by expanding their ability to participate in social, civic and economic life, and by ensuring that their concerns are taken seriously within the public agenda. With its critical ability to operate at scale, media has the added value of simultaneously being able to influence girls' families, communities and their societies at large.

Shaping behaviour, changing lives

By providing information, influencing attitudes and shaping social norms, media can affect the actions girls take to improve their own lives and the actions of those around them. Media can affect everything from decisions about girls' reproductive health and marriage to expectations around girls' education and their place in the community alongside boys.

> "Girls now know their human rights and are claiming them… Now when someone comes to marry them, they've got good arguments about their human right to education and… laws around age of marriage."

In many places, media can be a critical source of accurate information for girls on the issues that matter most to them. This can be particularly important when topics – such as personal health – are not discussed within the family or in schools. As the BBC's Zarghuna Kargar explains: "Information about periods and childbirth is critical for girls. I've done a lot of work campaigning for girls' education but we have to understand that education is not only coming from schools… in daily life, media should play a very important role in providing information for girls."[42] This opinion is supported by analysis showing that alongside age, education levels and place of residence, exposure to mass media is a significant predictor of adolescent girls' knowledge about reproductive health in rural Bangladesh.[43]

Molly Melching, founder and chief executive officer of the Senegal-based human rights NGO Tostan, agrees. The feedback she has received about its radio programmes is that they provide information that has helped girls to defend themselves: "Radio… has been really critical in our work… Girls now know their human rights and are claiming them… Now when someone comes to marry them, they've got good arguments about their human right to education and [they] know the laws around age of marriage."[44]

Media can also present balanced information that helps parents make reasoned decisions about their daughters' futures. Anuradha Gupta sees this public service function of media as critical to countering the growing discourse around child marriage in India as a "solution" to sexual violence against girls. As she notes: "I think the responsibility of media is to… present evidence on… the pitfalls of marrying off your daughter at the age of 12 because those pitfalls are not being brought to the attention of the parent. Whenever there is a debate and there is a skewed response, I think the media really has to shoulder the burden of putting out information very scientifically and very systematically."[45]

Harmful attitudes that shape the way girls are seen and treated can be positively influenced by media. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI)'s recent review of the impact evaluations of 61 communication programmes, including mass media programmes, found "strong evidence… that communication programmes are an effective way to challenge gender-discriminatory attitudes" that affect adolescent girls.[46]

In India, for example, listeners to the radio soap opera *Taru* (a girl's name meaning "small plant") were significantly more likely to support girls being allowed to continue studying as much as they want and to disagree that only boys should be sent to school when resources are scarce.[47] In Nepal, qualitative data suggests that the *Samajhdari* (Mutual Understanding) radio programme produced by the NGO Equal Access encouraged more accepting attitudes towards female children.[48] There is also evidence to indicate that radio and newspaper reports contributed to a change in attitudes towards female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in Senegal and Nigeria.[49] And young Nicaraguans with greater exposure to the NGO Puntos de Encuentro's radio and TV programmes demonstrated significantly more gender-equitable attitudes than those with less exposure.[50]

Closely related to changing attitudes is media's effect in shaping the social norms affecting adolescent girls.[51] Social norms – defined as practices that people follow "because they believe most others in their reference network do, and would disapprove if they don't"[52] – vary by context but may include practices like keeping girls out of school or child marriage. Media can challenge harmful norms by addressing misconceptions about other people's behaviour or, as Margaret Greene, an expert on adolescent girls, phrased it: "introducing into people's minds the idea that, 'well maybe not everybody is doing it the way I'm doing it'… a kind of healthy doubt… so that people are more self-reflective or more questioning of norms that are taken for granted within the family and community."[53] Being aware of what other communities are doing is an important part of the collective change process where FGM/C is concerned. Tostan's Molly Melching notes that when public declarations to end FGM/C are held in Senegal, "there are thousands of people who listen [via]… numerous radio stations, reaching beyond the direct communities affected."[54]

In crowded media markets, even individual programmes can make a real difference by providing an alternative to mainstream media fodder. In Nicaragua, for example, a TV series produced by Puntos de Encuentro that focuses on gender and generational equality and respect for diversity airs only once or twice a week. But Amy Bank, the NGO's co-founder, notes that providing this kind of educational content in a recognised and attractive format offers an alternative to the typical pop culture fare available on other channels. She observes that those programmes can often objectify women, sexualise young girls and promote impossible standards of physical beauty: "Even if [our programme is] only a small wedge, we can see that a lot of things have changed over the years. Social gender norms have shifted, discourse is different. Imagine if there was nothing that provided an alternative."[55]

> "Even if [our programme is] only a small wedge, we can see that a lot of things have changed over the years. Social gender norms have shifted, discourse is different. Imagine if there was nothing that provided an alternative."

Media's ability to shift social norms where girls are concerned is underscored in the recent ODI evidence review, which found that characters and role models in radio and TV dramas can influence real-life behaviour. An evaluation of Unicef's Meena Communication Initiative in South India, for example, found that animations broadcast on TV or shown in specially arranged film screenings had inspired girls to carry out activities seen as "masculine", such as repairing hand pumps. In addition, the films encouraged adult viewers to challenge norms

Below A girl in Ethiopia is interviewed for a family health radio programme produced by BBC Media Action, which helps give information about antenatal care and childbirth.

BBC MEDIA ACTION

ANDREAS RENTZ/GETTY IMAGES

Above Girls' education activist Malala Yousafzai was shot by a Taliban gunman for defying a ban on girls attending school and is now a global advocate for girls' education. Here, she speaks to TV host Günther Jauch in Hürth near Cologne, Germany.

such as giving boys more or better food than girls.[56] And an evaluation of the radio soap opera *Taru* found that listening to the programme had led adolescent girls, previously confined to home, to challenge norms by talking to boys in public and engaging in community problem-solving.[57]

Above all, one real advantage that media has over and above many other strategies for shaping behaviour change is its ability to operate at scale – and in a way that sidesteps interpersonal communication channels that can sometimes reinforce harmful social norms. Mandira Kalra Kalaan of the NGO Population Health India contends that: "Shifting attitudes and perceptions and beliefs – those related to social norms in particular – has to happen at a mass media level and in an entertainment education format. That's where we can reach people at scale, in a way that isn't preachy."[58]

You go, girl: amplifying voice and participation

Expanding opportunities for girls to play an active role in community, civic and economic life can be a critical step to improving their well-being. And elevating girls' voices in local, national and international dialogue and debate is vital if their needs are to be met. As a recent World Bank report on women and girls points out, "having a voice means having the capacity to speak up and be heard and being present to shape and share in discussions, discourse, and decisions."[59]

The role that media can play in getting girls' voices heard is widely acknowledged. As Margaret Greene notes, media can "play a role in making an invisible group visible and publicising their desires and preferences and dreams".[60] The young Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai – who was shot in the head because she persisted in defying a local ban on girls' education to attend middle school – is perhaps the most dramatic example in recent memory. She believes that media – blogs, interviews, news coverage – enabled her and her friends to advance their cause, not just in Pakistan but the world over: "Media was like a messenger, telling what we are saying to the world. We spoke, we wrote and raised our voices. We spoke, and we achieved our goal."[61]

BBC Media Action has found that televised debate programmes designed to reach mass audiences can create a useful space for girls to express their needs, priorities and opinions.

BBC MEDIA ACTION

Right The BBC Media Action youth-focused radio show and TV programme *Loy9* in Cambodia tried to boost civic participation among young women and men.

In Nepal, for instance, adolescent girls are invited to attend recordings of the TV programme *Sajha Sawal* (Common Questions), a nationally broadcast debate programme. Providing a public platform for adolescent girls to ask tough questions of public officials – alongside men and older women in their community – can help role-model the sort of political discussion and inclusive civic engagement that is so crucial to social equality. In the Palestinian Territories, debate programmes that have involved girls through pre-recorded videos or Facebook messages have achieved unexpected levels of audience reach among adolescent girls and helped to bring girls' voices and opinions to a wider public.[62] In Cambodia, BBC Media Action's *Loy9* project – a youth programme aimed at boosting civic participation, which involves TV, radio, online and mobile content as well as live events – reached 62% of 15–19-year-old girls in the country. Some 96% of these girls agreed that *Loy9* "shows youth how to express their ideas and opinions" and 95% agreed that the project made "young people like me more confident to participate in their community".[63]

Mass media projects can also drive greater off-air participation by girls, according to Kate Wedgwood, GirlHub's country director for Rwanda.[64] Wedgwood recounts the story of an employee from the country's labour minister's office who saw a story in GirlHub's *Ni Nyampinga* magazine about a girl who ran carpentry workshops.[65] Inspired by her story, the employee subsequently invited this girl to speak at a regional conference on employment creation: "That was exactly the kind of thing we want really… to give girls a real voice… out there and in the ministers' minds."[66] GirlHub is working to bring girls' voices into the process of revising government policies. Kecia Bertermann, senior monitoring, learning and results manager at GirlHub Rwanda, is hopeful that "we may find that people are more amenable to the policy shifts we're proposing because of the *Ni Nyampinga* [media] platform."[67]

Participatory media projects can help girls get more involved in influencing how their communities are run. Linda Raftree, an expert in girls, community development and ICT, explains how Plan International's Youth Empowerment through Technology, Arts and Media project in West Africa involved young people identifying what they wanted to talk about in their communities and then creating different types of media to explore these priorities. The young people then used their productions to make decision-makers "better aware of young people's thoughts, needs and rights".[68] Community leaders agreed that the project enabled young people to have a healthy communication channel with them.[69]

Another way in which media supports girls' greater social and economic participation is by helping them aspire to different futures. Many experts believe that seeing or hearing either fictional stories or real-life testimonies of other people "like me" can be an important driver of change in girls' lives. Shakuntala Banaji, lecturer and programme director of the masters' programme in media, communication and development at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), has conducted extensive research with children across India.[70] Arguing that this is a neglected area across much of the Global South, Banaji claims that fictional programming in particular can "enliven and open up imaginaries for children and younger girls, and support them in their learning and everyday life".[71] Indeed, Santosh Desai, managing director and chief executive officer of the Indian marketing firm futurebrands, recognises this dynamic in the feted Bollywood film, Queen. Desai comments: "It allows for people to imagine or reimagine a new kind of possibility that would otherwise have been excluded because of the invisible force field that surrounds and circumscribes the lives of girls in India."[72]

BBC MEDIA ACTION

Above *Sajha Sawal* (Common Questions), a nationally broadcast debate programme, provides a public platform for adolescent girls to ask tough questions of public officials.

> "Time and time again… we heard girls talk of how the 'electrician girl' or the 'girl motorcycle taxi driver' [in the magazine] had opened their eyes to different opportunities available to them in the future."

This view is corroborated by evidence from GirlHub's work in Rwanda, which challenges preconceptions of set pathways for girls: "Time and time again… we heard girls talk of how the 'electrician girl' or the 'girl motorcycle taxi driver' had opened their eyes to different opportunities available to them in the future."[73]

The rise of social media also heralds a new opportunity for adolescent girls to build social networks and connect and take action with their peers.[74] Online networking can enable girls to advance their interests by participating in local, national and global movements for change. Girls from as far afield as Indonesia, Georgia, Jamaica and the United States have collaborated online as part of SPARK – a 'girl-fuelled activist movement to demand an end to the sexualisation of women and girls in media'.[75] The girls communicate and organise via a private Facebook group,

OMAR HAVANA/GETTY IMAGES

Right The rise of social media heralds a new opportunity for adolescent girls to build social networks. Here, a girl in a Cambodian cyber-cafe checks Facebook.

weekly online chats and monthly seminars, working together to write blogs and run campaigns. One successful project involved collecting 80,000 signatures for a petition to Seventeen magazine in the US, lobbying it to stop using photo-editing software to manipulate images of girls and to increase diversity within the images it uses. Dana Edell, executive director of SPARK, notes: "Girls are taking action. In the last five years or so with online communities… girls… who are geographically isolated are able to organise online."[76]

> "Social media has enabled [girls] to forge links with global movements… there is a sense of solidarity and empowerment that comes out of that."

While limited ICT access among poorer adolescent girls in the Global South remains a real issue, this too is likely to change with the gradual proliferation of inexpensive media and communication tools. Sabina Basi of the NGO Restless Development explains that training and access to ICT equipment has "really opened up the world" for girls from the poor rural communities involved with the *Mabinti Tushike Hatamu!* (Girls Let's Be Leaders!) programme in Tanzania. "Social media has enabled them to forge links with global movements like the Bring Back Our Girls Campaign for Nigeria and… there is a sense of solidarity and empowerment that comes out of that," Basi notes.[77]

Girls in the spotlight

Finally, media can play a significant role in increasing the attention paid to issues affecting adolescent girls, and also influence the policies that affect their lives.

In India, for instance, stories about gender-based violence and harassment are appearing more frequently in the press, drawing public attention to these major challenges for girls. Sonali Khan of the NGO Breakthrough India observes: "There is a sustained interest in how to report on these issues, how to be more sensitive… [the media] want to talk about it and their role in accountability." Following training and long-term engagement by Breakthrough, she notes that media have "become increasingly interested in the issue of early marriage… willing to discuss the data and the problem in all its facets".[78]

Media coverage of girls' issues can help to bring about tangible, positive change. Safeer Ullah Khan, programme development and communication manager with the Pakistani NGO Bedari, observes that when the issue of marrying girls to settle disputes was taken up by the media, it helped to reduce politicians' denial of the practice: "When media started highlighting the issue it became really easy to convince the policy-makers that we needed to ban such marriages."[79] A ban is now in place in Pakistan.

Internationally, the BBC's Zarghuna Kargar highlights the contribution of the documentary film Girl Rising to the campaign for girls' education. The film has helped raise the profile of girls' education globally and is now being included as part of school curricula in India and Nigeria. According to Kargar, it is the emotional appeal of the film that has really made a difference – "it makes a big impression… when a person has been through something and is willing to tell their story."[80]

PART 4

Representation, access and control

Despite media's potential, certain constraints can affect whether it actually fulfils a positive role in girls' lives in the Global South. Barriers include limits on how freely girls can access different forms of media, who shapes media content and the extent to which girls are considered to be an audience "worth serving" by media organisations. Where these constraints have been acknowledged, it has sometimes been possible to overcome them through well-designed programming.

Media access and literacy

Before even considering media's potential as a driver of change, the extent to which girls can access media channels and choose what they watch, listen to and engage with must be honestly assessed. Levels of media access vary greatly around the world. In some cases, media is an effective platform for reaching girls. In Bangladesh, for example, 94% of 15–19-year-old girls have access to TV.[81] Elsewhere, the picture is less promising. For instance, only 26% of 15–19-year-old girls in Ethiopia say they listen to the radio at least once a week, with TV viewership even lower.[82] LSE scholar Shakuntala Banaji highlights that, in addition to poor levels of access, the amount of time that girls have available for media consumption can be limited by their other responsibilities and activities.[83]

> "The extent to which girls can... choose what they watch, listen to and engage with must be honestly assessed."

BBC MEDIA ACTION

Left Girls in Tanzania watch a soap opera on a communal television – for many girls, access to media is constrained by a number of economic and social factors.

For many girls, viewing and listening habits are constrained by their parents. Kerry Smith of Plan UK notes that in Egypt and Pakistan, if there is a TV in the house, young girls are told to watch the religious channels: "They don't have control over what they are watching. And controls are placed on their internet usage. We need to better understand issues of control in certain contexts, particularly the more rural, more closed and more 'watched'."[84] Shakuntala Banaji's research in Bombay reveals that children's TV viewing was generally viewed by parents as "a waste of time or even dangerous", competing with doing homework and housework, looking after younger children and playing outside.[85] These cultural factors limiting girls' access must be properly understood and taken into account by those hoping to work with media as a way to empower girls.

"There is a real lack of robust data around media consumption in the markets we are operating in, particularly related to girls' access and consumption patterns. This necessitates commissioning new research and baselines, impacting on costs and timings."

Where girls' access to media is severely constrained, efforts can be made to expand it, for example through public screenings of films, explicitly encouraging girls to to listen to radio programmes on their mobile phones (if they have them) or by providing equipment to groups working with girls. Amy Bank notes how the provision of cheap DVD players to established community groups had "a huge multiplier effect", dramatically expanding girls' access to Puntos de Encuentro's TV programmes in Nicaragua.[86]

Listeners' groups, set up with local partner organisations, can help reach girls who might not normally have access to mass media. In Madhya Pradesh in India, BBC Media Action is distributing its radio drama *Khirki Mehendiwali* (Mehendi Opens a Window) to more than 500 girls' schools and hostels. Working with the Rajya Shiksha Kendra (RSK, the state education council), this project supports weekly listeners' groups so that girls can talk about reproductive health issues raised in the programme. Dr Tanuja Shrivastava, State Gender Coordinator in the RSK, notes that "the initiative has received a phenomenal response."[87] Ruchi, a 13-year-old listener, explains how the programme is motivating girls "to know and develop our understanding of issues like age at marriage, basic and reproductive health and personal hygiene".[88]

BBC MEDIA ACTION

Right Ruchi, 13, is a listener to the BBC Media Action radio drama *Khirki Mehendiwali* (Mehendi Opens a Window).

Elsewhere, it may help to employ specific strategies to ensure that programming for girls also appeals to parents and/or educates parents about the benefits of allowing girls to engage with certain media outputs. In situations where girls' media consumption is highly constrained for cultural reasons, mass media may simply be an effective way to reach adult decision-makers, even if it does not reach adolescent girls themselves.

Above all, it is critical that careful formative research exploring media habits and media access is carried out before embarking on media projects for girls. Mark Sanderson from GirlHub argues: "There is a real lack of robust data around media consumption in the markets we are operating in, particularly related to girls' access and consumption patterns. This necessitates commissioning new research and baselines, impacting on costs and timings."[89]

In many cases, it will be necessary to go beyond reporting simply whether or not girls "have access" to traditional media (as much existing research does) and to conduct bespoke analysis that factors in the diverse platforms through which girls access content in today's rapidly changing media landscapes. George Ferguson, country director for BBC Media Action in Sierra Leone, notes that girls probably consume a lot more media than we think, but not through traditional channels: "If you've got a mobile phone you can go and buy content. And music videos, Nigerian movies, local movies, Mexican soap operas are all available on illegally produced DVDs."[90]

But even once access issues have been properly addressed, levels of media and information literacy can still affect how girls consume and make sense of the media to which they are exposed.[91] Girls' ability to take a critical view of media content – and, as Alton Grizzle, programme specialist in communication and information at Unesco, puts it, to "offer counter-narratives to how they are being represented"[92] – will affect whether social norms and girls' self-esteem are positively or negatively influenced by media content. Media literacy training in the US, for instance, has been found to influence how

BBC MEDIA ACTION

Left Gender imbalance in newsgathering affects the stories that are told. In this image, a female journalist in Burma/Myanmar undertakes an interview at the country's parliament.

"the media form images of health and body image".[93] Media literacy programmes like those run by the Arab Women Media Center in Jordan, Ek Lavya in India and the IREX are reaching girls in the Global South and could potentially serve as models for similar initiatives.

Male-dominated media

Male domination of media organisations – whether in programming, technical or management roles – can be another constraint on media's ability to help realise girls' potential. In 2008 the Eastern Africa Journalists' Association reported that fewer than 20% of editorial posts in the region were held by women.[94] Research carried out in 2010 in 108 countries, including in Africa and Asia, found that top positions within media and communication industries were predominantly held by men, and that such gender inequalities affected the content of women's work roles and the career opportunities available to them.[95]

Oisika Chakrabarti, senior communications and media specialist at UN Women, worked as a journalist in India for many years and observes that gender imbalance in newsrooms defines the content that is produced: "Having seen the line-up each day and which stories get dropped… it's definitely to do with fewer women's voices in making those decisions. Even at the grassroots level… [community] radio is dominated by men producers, and the space for women's and girls' issues and their inputs remains limited."[96] UN Women is supporting a number of media development initiatives to address this imbalance.

Media houses can enhance the provision of content that meets girls' needs by fostering gender equality at an organisational level. Strategies may involve workplace training on issues ranging from gender sensitivity and equal pay to how to create a safe working environment for men and women alike. A survey conducted by the Southern African Broadcasters Association (SABA) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), for example, revealed the positive impact of gender mainstreaming efforts at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). SABC is one of only four broadcasters in the Southern African Development Community region with a gender policy that is strongly supported by its senior management and board. At SABC, 44% of senior managers are women, compared with 17% at the state broadcaster in neighbouring Namibia. Gender mainstreaming forms part of SABC's performance management and budgeting systems, helping to shape gender balance in content.[97]

> "Gender imbalance in newsrooms defines the content that is produced… Community radio is dominated by men producers and the space for women and girls' issues and their inputs remains limited."

Improving gender balance in the media more broadly can also be achieved by working with women-focused media organisations. In Sierra Leone's Bonthe District, BBC Media Action supports the radio station Voice of Women. Training focuses on programme-making as well as working with the community to develop inclusive and engaging content. Developing the skills of female journalists is a particular priority. Voice of Women staff felt that the new radio programme they produced as part of the training, *Skirt n' Trosis* (Skirt and Trousers), successfully challenged gender stereotypes within their community: "People's perceptions about 'woman' and

'gender' have changed because of our programmes. Even the paramount chief now has a positive idea about women."[98]

International efforts to support gender equality within media institutions are gathering momentum. These include the Global Alliance on Media and Gender established by Unesco. According to Unesco's Alton Grizzle, the alliance involves 400 stakeholder organisations working on gender and media issues, including a number of organisations focused on youth.[99] Unesco's Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media are a useful tool for those working to address structural issues in relation to the media and adolescent girls.[100] Covering issues of gender equality both within media organisations and media content, these indicators have been adopted by about 20 broadcasters around the world since their development in 2012.[101]

> "There is… no turning to girls for their voice, their thoughts and their opinion on this issue. I don't think people see girls as having a story to tell."

Finally, approaches that amplify girls' voices within the mainstream media can be extended to ensure that girls are featured as contributors in news and other programming. Laura Dickinson from the global civil society partnership Girls Not Brides notes that news coverage on child marriage rarely gives the girls any agency in the story: "There is… no turning to girls for their voice, their thoughts and their opinion on this issue. I don't think people see girls as having a story to tell."[102]

BBC MEDIA ACTION/VOICE OF WOMEN

Right The radio station Voice of Women in Bonthe District, Sierra Leone, produces programmes that challenge gender stereotypes. Pictured, station manager Sarah Rogers.

Making girls visible: media priorities, advertising and regulation

Several of those interviewed for this briefing suggested that in many places, meeting girls' needs is simply not a priority for the media.

In some cases, representing girls fairly in the media may be a low priority compared with selling newspapers or attracting viewers to a TV station. Susan Ajok of the Straight Talk Foundation notes that in Uganda, media is very interested in covering sensational issues: "The screaming headline is what they will go for… people will buy it."[103] Another real constraint is that young male viewers or listeners are often "worth more" to advertisers in commercial terms than girls, influencing the nature of content produced.

In some contexts, public service broadcasters with explicit remits to reflect social diversity in their programming and/or targeted donor funding for girls' empowerment programmes may be critical if media is to really fulfil its potential for girls. However, efforts to support gender balance in commercial media production may also furnish useful models.

The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media has worked closely with commercial entertainment organisations in the US to build understanding of the impact of their work on women and girls. Following workshops with the institute, content creators in film and TV have begun shifting their projects to improve gender balance, reduce stereotypes and create a wider variety of female characters.[104] Given how much content from the US dominates global media markets, targeting media players as far afield as Hollywood may have a significant ripple effect in the Global South.[105]

Commercial content that purports to empower women and girls – such as advertising campaigns for the soap brand Dove – is becoming something of a trend in the US and Europe.[106] DFID's Barbara Hewitt notes how something like the feminine hygiene company Always's #LikeAGirl campaign – which seeks to promote girls' confidence through puberty and beyond – has the ability to "drill into the psychology and expose the issues [of girls' socialisation] beautifully… that's what the commercial sector does really well."[107] Whether these approaches take hold and have real impact in the Global South remains to be seen, but they certainly expand the toolkit available for those interested in reaching girls via commercial media.

NGO-led public advocacy campaigns to support improved media programming for children in Latin America also have some interesting lessons for addressing how girls are portrayed in media in the Global South. Since the early 1990s, for example, the Brazilian organisation ANDI

ALWAYS #LIKEAGIRL CAMPAIGN

Left The Always #LikeAGirl advertising campaign sought to improve girls' confidence during puberty by showing powerful images of girls in action.

and its partners have worked with newsrooms across Latin America to improve coverage of social issues, including children's rights.[108] Strategies employed by ANDI include emailing journalists with daily news story suggestions, developing partnerships with universities to integrate children's issues into media and communication courses and conducting regular reviews of how media covers children's rights issues. Analysis shows that news stories on children and adolescents in Brazil rose steadily from 1996–2004.[109]

Building broad-based movements to lobby for better programming for marginalised groups has proved effective too. In Colombia, media's mandate to produce quality content for children is enshrined within the constitution. But between 1998 and 2004, the way in which journalistic coverage of conflict was affecting children – including adolescent girls – led to a national debate about media's role in their lives. Decision-makers from media, national and local governments, parents' associations, civil society organisations and academia came together to develop a Compromiso Nacional de Television de Calidad para la Infancia (national commitment for quality TV for children). According to Adelaida Trujillo, co-founder of Citurna Producciones/Imaginario, this initiative paid dividends in terms of yielding quality public service broadcasting for children: "You can see the results in terms of the level of funding allocated and the amount of programming being produced with a rights-based approach."[110]

Another potentially useful approach is the regulatory route. Veet Vivarta, former executive secretary of ANDI, believes that child-friendly regulation targeting advertising, ratings and so-called "watershed" systems can improve media content targeted at adolescent girls.[111] ANDI's work in Brazil, for example, has helped to promote more balanced regulatory debates around children and media by providing technical expertise alongside examples of international best practice. Successes include working with the Ministry of Justice to develop and implement a new ratings system to protect children from harmful content. ANDI has also tried to support new legislation around how girls are portrayed in advertisements and the underlying messages that accompany them. Results from this work have been slower to materialise, partly due to the powerful media lobby within the Brazilian Congress. Nonetheless, Vivarta argues: "We need to be patient. Even if [these issues] are not moving forward in the legislature, they are not invisible anymore and that is very important."[112]

> "We need to be patient. Even if [these issues] are not moving forward in the legislature, they are not invisible anymore and that is very important."

PUNTOS DE ENCUENTRO

Right Filming the Puntos de Encuentro drama series *Contracorriente* (Turning the Tide) in Nicaragua.

PART 5

Donor strategies and the girl agenda

This policy briefing has argued that engagement with the media can be a critical tool for those working to empower adolescent girls in the developing world.

Through a careful review of existing programmatic work and extensive interviews with experts, this briefing has shown that strategic, considered engagement with the media can help secure positive outcomes for girls. Media can shape how girls and their communities think, what they believe and how they behave. It can have profound implications for how girls' identities and aspirations are formed. Media can also play a role ensuring that girls' voices are heard and can help open the doors for them to participate more widely in society. As it takes hold in the Global South, social media may increasingly play a key role in enabling girls to network with each other and take action together to change their worlds for the better.

> "This whole area around media and communications at scale is one that we really need to get better at, but that's not going to happen unless we are able to say 'this is the impact'."

At present, however, media is not sufficiently integrated into development strategies seeking to enhance girls' well-being across the Global South, and levels of activity remain low. This is potentially dangerous, as there is evidence from the Global North to suggest that, without concerted effort, media can be harmful for adolescent girls.

At the same time, structural challenges around access to – or control of – media need to be acknowledged and addressed. More work also needs to be done to prioritise girls as an audience for commercial media organisations. These challenges make it all the more critical for those working on girls' empowerment to engage with the media.

Even if donors recognise the benefits of making media a core part of their strategies for girls' development in the future, there is still scope for considerable improvement in terms of the kind of interventions they fund and how these fold into broader empowerment programmes. This briefing concludes with several additional observations about how to make media part of tangible, effective action on the ground to help adolescent girls achieve their potential.

Focus on girls

When investing in media interventions, funders must critically examine whether programmes purporting to influence girls are actually prioritising them as an audience. As the work of Nicaragua's Puntos de Encuentro illustrates, broader approaches focused on gender equity or youth can indeed influence girls' lives. However, careful questions need to be posed about the types of media interventions that are likely to have the most impact within a given context. For example, there is a risk that projects focused on broader audiences may subsume girls' needs beneath those of young men or older women.

Generate more evidence

In addition to funding programmes that seek to achieve immediate impact, new investment could usefully focus on generating a stronger body of evidence around how media affects girls' lives in the Global South. As DFID's Jane Hobson puts it: "This whole area around media and communications at scale is one that we really need to get better at, but that's not going to happen unless we are able to say 'this is the impact'."[113]

The authors of the recent ODI review note that while there is evidence that mass media programmes do shape the social norms that affect girls' lives, few research evaluations have directly involved girls.[114] The ODI paper also cites evidence gaps around the impact of different levels of exposure to media programming, the effectiveness of standalone communication programmes versus those integrated into broader development programmes, and the relative effectiveness of different media approaches. Because the research evaluations give so little detail about the nature of the programmes being assessed, the ODI review concludes that these evaluations offer "very little insight into the process by which change occurs".[115]

Broaden the scope

In addition to the dearth of interventions in some countries, it is striking how many of the girl-focused media programmes that do exist focus on issues of sexual and reproductive health, teenage pregnancy and, increasingly, child marriage. Given the impact of these issues on girls' lives – and on broader societal development – this investment is not unjustified. However, as Part 1 of this briefing sets out, girls' needs are far broader than this. As Judith Bruce of the Population Council argues when speaking about girls' interventions more broadly, "the – sometimes exclusive – focus on health really narrows [girls'] identity and undermines the effectiveness of programming."[116] Some media projects do address education and schooling. But it is striking how little current programming addresses other critical issues for girls, such as economic empowerment, financial literacy or social and civic participation.[117] Current media initiatives focus more on prompting behaviour change than on expanding opportunities for girls' participation in public life. Other potentially critical aspects of media that could receive more attention from the donor community include media's ability to elevate girls' voices (particularly beyond their own peers) and its ability to enable girls to network with and support one another.

Integrate for impact

With some notable exceptions, media interventions too often fail to make the most of the impact – and sustainability – that could be achieved by forming links with other girls' development and empowerment programmes. Several case studies suggest, for example, that integrating media programmes with community mobilisation work can have greater impact for girls on the ground. Despite the success of her own organisation in offering alternative media content for girls, Amy Bank of Puntos de Encuentro acknowledges that "just watching television once a week is not going to change the world."[118] She describes how her organisation brings about change by combining TV drama series, public service announcements (PSAs) and radio programmes alongside community activities like cast tours, educational sessions in schools, local discussion groups and links with service providers on the ground.[119]

Citurna Producciones in Colombia similarly combines media work with strengthening the capacity of youth groups "to act as a watchdog" over local public centres providing health services for youth and adolescents. In addition, this organisation supports and trains adolescent girl "Youtubers" – who have a strong following in the country – to facilitate online hangouts. These girls also establish peer-to-peer conversations with children during visits to schools to tackle difficult conversations about sexual and reproductive health.[120] These multi-pronged strategies are consistent with ODI's finding that approaches that stimulate discussion within a peer group are more likely to have positive results than those that do not.[121]

"It is striking how little current programming addresses other critical issues for girls, such as economic empowerment, financial literacy or social and civic participation."

Shoot for sustainability

Integrating media interventions for girls with other, broader development and empowerment programmes may lead to stronger cross-sectoral support for media interventions. Reflecting on the processes involved with developing the *Revela2* (Revealed) "edutainment" platform in Colombia, Adelaida Trujillo explains how both the Ministry of Health and the President's Office funded the bulk of the project's baseline, formative research and intervention itself, while the Ministry of Education developed a complementary programme for use in public schools. The intervention is now integrated into the work of the government's Intersectoral Commission on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and Teen Pregnancy Prevention programme and has "become a central tool for the Commission".[122] While public sector funding to support this kind of intervention may be more restricted in poorer developing countries, this model of embedding media work for girls into a broader public policy platform may bear fruit elsewhere. In addition, it may increase the organisational and financial sustainability of media programming for girls.

Address structural constraints

While content matters greatly, programmes that address the constraints on media working effectively for girls are critical. With some notable exceptions, current interventions tend to concentrate on the production of media content – not addressing the systemic issues set out above.

There is certainly much more work to be done to improve the lives of adolescent girls in the Global South. This is not only because their needs are so great, but because what is good for girls is also good for society at large. As Judith Bruce argues: "When we effectively reach and build the assets of the poorest girls, we will set in motion a virtuous cycle that will speed the realisation of core health, justice, and poverty alleviation goals."[123] As we begin to understand more about how media affects girls' lives, strategic and practical action will help the largest girl generation in history truly flourish.

APPENDIX

Interviews conducted

1. Susan Ajok, executive director, Straight Talk Foundation
2. Seher Ali, student and SPARK blogger
3. Shakuntala Banaji, lecturer, programme director: MSc in Media, Communication & Development, London School of Economics & Political Science
4. Amy Bank, co-founder, Puntos de Encuentro and executive producer, *Sexto Sentido* (Sixth Sense) and *Contracorriente* (Turning the Tide)
5. Kriss Barker, vice president for international programmes, Population Media Center
6. Sabina Basi, trust and foundation partnerships coordinator, and Rebecca Dove, senior manager, investment & partnerships Africa, Restless Development
7. Walid Batrawi, country director, Palestinian Territories, BBC Media Action
8. Judith Bruce, senior policy analyst, Population Council
9. Oisika Chakrabarti, senior communications & media specialist, UN Women
10. Tiseke Lizineth Chilima, youth volunteer, Plan Malawi
11. Sarah Cornish, senior gender advisor, impact, innovation and evidence team, Save the Children
12. Laura Dickinson, communications officer, and Lakshmi Sundaram, global coordinator, Girls Not Brides
13. Dana Edell, executive director, SPARK
14. Madeline Di Nonno, chief executive officer, Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media
15. Rebecca Emerson Keller, project manager, Middle East, BBC Media Action
16. George Ferguson, country director, Sierra Leone, BBC Media Action
17. Alton Grizzle, programme specialist in communication and information, Unesco
18. Margaret Greene, independent consultant, author and expert on adolescent girls and gender
19. Anuradha Gupta, additional secretary in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Mission Director of National Health Mission, India
20. Jane Hobson, senior social development adviser, Barbara Hewitt, policy adviser, behaviour change, and Lindsay Mgbor #YouthForChange team leader, DFID
21. Mandira Kalra Kalaan, senior manager, advocacy and communication, Population Foundation of India
22. Zarghuna Kargar, broadcast journalist, BBC, Afghanistan expert and author of the book, Dear Zari: Hidden Stories from Women of Afghanistan
23. Farwa Khalil, youth volunteer, Plan Pakistan
24. Safeer Ullah Khan, manager, programme development and communication, Bedari
25. Sonali Khan, vice president, Breakthrough India
26. Ofra Koffman, fellow, Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science
27. Lauren Kogen, assistant professor, Temple University, Department of Media Studies & Production
28. Rachel Marcus, research associate, and Ella Page, research consultant, Overseas Development Institute
29. Victor Moina, chief executive officer and founder, Forum for the Development of Young People, Sierra Leone
30. Molly Melching, founder and chief executive officer, Tostan
31. Ncare Nkang Cherifa, youth volunteer, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) Cameroon
32. Dee Putri, student and SPARK blogger
33. Linda Raftree, principal, Kurante
34. Mity Roy, youth volunteer, BRAC (Bangladesh)
35. Mark Sanderson, global initiatives senior manager, GirlHub
36. Ye Sheng, senior program officer, and Randal Mason, director of strategic partnerships, IREX
37. Kerry Smith, head of advocacy, campaigns and research, Plan UK
38. Rafick Tawakali, youth volunteer, Plan Malawi
39. Adelaida Trujillo, co-founder, Citurna Producciones/Imaginario
40. Veet Vivarta, journalist and former executive secretary, ANDI
41. Kate Wedgwood, country director, and Kecia Bertermann, senior monitoring, learning and results manager, GirlHub Rwanda

Endnotes

[1] United Nations Foundation (no date) Why Invest in Adolescent Girls [online]. Available from: http://www.clintonglobalinitiative.org/ourmeetings/PDF/actionareas/Why_Invest_in_Adolescent_Girls.pdf [Accessed August 2014]. The World Health Organization defines adolescence as "the critical transitional phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood" and an adolescent is defined as a person between ages 10 and 19. World Health Organization (2014) *Health for the World's Adolescents: A second chance in the second decade*. Geneva: WHO Press.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Global Partnership for Education (2014) *Factsheet: Girls Education*.

[4] PLAN (2012) *Progress and Obstacles to Girls' Education in Africa*.

[5] World Health Organization (2014) *Fact Sheet on Adolescent Pregnancy*.

[6] World Health Organization (2014) *Adolescents: health risks and solutions*.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Bruce, J. (2011) *Violence against adolescent girls: a fundamental challenge to meaningful equality*. New York: Population Council.

[9] United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) (2014) *State of the world's children in numbers*. New York: Unicef.

[10] United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) (2014) *Ending child marriage: progress and prospects*. New York: Unicef.

[11] United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) (2014) *No time to lose: New UNICEF data show need for urgent action on female genital mutilation and child marriage* [Press release accessed June 2014].

[12] Interview with the author, London, 16 September 2014.

[13] United Nations (2014) *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty And Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development. The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.*

[14] The term "the girl effect" was first coined in 2008 by the Nike Foundation in collaboration with the NoVo Foundation, the United Nations Foundation and the Coalition for Adolescent Girls. It has now become part of the mainstream development discourse.

[15] The Girl Effect (2014) *About us* [online]. Available from: http://www.girleffect.org/about/ [Accessed August 2014].

[16] Margaret Greene, interview with the author, London/Washington DC, 1 April 2014.

[17] United Nations Foundation (no date) *Why Invest in Adolescent Girls* [online]. Available from: http://www.clintonglobalinitiative.org/ourmeetings/PDF/actionareas/Why_Invest_in_Adolescent_Girls.pdf [Accessed August 2014].

[18] Ibid.

[19] The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (2011) *Girls Grow: A Vital Force in Rural Economies.*

[20] International Finance Corporation (2013) *IFC jobs study: assessing private sector contributions to job creation and poverty reduction.* Chapter 9 on Gender [online]. Available from: http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/1c91a5804e6f1b89aceeacfce4951bf6/IFC_FULL+JOB+REPORT_REV2_JYC.pdf?MOD=AJPERES [Accessed 22 October 2014].

[21] Chaaban, J. and Cunningham, W. (2011) *Measuring the Economic Gain of Investing in Girls: The Girl Effect Dividend.* World Bank Group.

[22] Bruce, J. (2014) *The Adolescent Girl Moment: Passion is Our Fuel But Not Our Plan* [online]. Available from: http://girlsglobe.org/2014/08/29/the-adolescent-girl-moment-passion-is-our-fuel-but-not-our-plan/ [Accessed August 2014].

[23] Lardoux, S. (2006) *Exercice de couverture des activités depaires educatuers au Burkina Faso: Rapport final*. New York: United Nations Population Fund and Population Council.

[24] Interview with author, London/New York, 4 April 2014.

[25] While focusing primarily on media, this briefing recognises that other forms of communication are also important for girls. These might include, for instance, interpersonal communication within girls' clubs or schools, or outreach efforts like community theatre. Projects for girls often integrate work with media with interpersonal communication activities, which can provide opportunities for face-to-face discussion and problem-solving.

[26] UN (1976) *Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year*. New York: United Nations.

[27] UN (1995) *Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action*, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, 27 October 1995.

[28] Interview with the author, London, 11 July 2014.

[29] Interview with Radharani Mitra, national creative director and executive producer, BBC Media Action, New Delhi, 29 April 2014.

[30] See Deane, J. (2013) *Fragile States: The role of media and communication*. London: BBC Media Action.

[31] Calculated from International Telecommunications Union (2014) *Key ICT Indicators for Developed and Developing World 2005–2014*. Geneva: International Telecommunications Union. As one researcher points out, information technology in the "fourth world" is a communal, not individual resource. As a result, many individuals have indirect access to internet-based data and applications through friends and relations. See Heeks, R. (2009) *ICTs and the World's Bottom Billion*. Development Informatics Short Paper no.10. Manchester: Centre for Development Informatics, University of Manchester.

[32] Kharas, H. and Rogerson, A. (2012) *Horizon 2025: creative destruction in the aid industry* [online]. Available from: http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7723.pdf [Accessed 1 October 2014].

[33] Denton, A. (2008) Policy Priorities to Connect Africa. Paper presented at International Mobiles for Development Conference, December 2008, Karlstad, Sweden.

[34] Unicef (2012) *Progress for children: a report card on adolescents*. New York: Unicef.

[35] Some research does focus on how children enjoy media, what they gain from it and how skilled or tactical they are in managing media's role in their lives. See Livingstone, S. (2007) Do the Media Harm Children? Reflections on New Approaches to an Old Problem. *Journal of Children And Media* 1:1, 5–14.

[36] American Psychological Association (APA) (2007) *Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualisation of Girls*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

[37] Smith, S., Choueiti, M., Stern, J. Occupational Aspirations: *What are G-rated Films Teaching Children about the World of Work?* California: Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, University of Southern California.

[38] Interview with Aoife Allen, press, PR and events manager, BBC Media Action, London, 19 July 2014.

[39] Interview with the author, London/Windsor, Ontario, 9 April 2014.

[40] Interview with the author, London/Yogyakarta, 4 April 2014.

[41] Interview with the author, London, 16 September 2014.

[42] Interview with the author, London, 11 July 2014.

[43] Uddin, M.J. and Choudhury, A.M. (2008) Reproductive health awareness among adolescent girls in rural Bangladesh. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Health*, 20:2, 117–128.

[44] Interview with the author, London/Dakar, 28 July 2014.

[45] Interview with Radharani Mitra, national creative director and executive producer, BBC Media Action, New Delhi, 29 April 2014.

[46] Marcus, R. and Page, E. (2014) *Changing discriminatory norms affecting adolescent girls through communication activities: Insights for policy and practice from an evidence review*. London: ODI.

[47] Singhal, A., Witte, K., Muthuswamy, N., Duff, D., Vasanti, P.N., Papa, M., Harter, L., Sharma, D., Pant, S., Sharma, A.K., Worrell, T., Ahmead, M., Shrivastav, A., Verma, C., Sharma, Y., Rao, N., Chitnis, K. and Sengupta, A. (2004) *Effects of Taru, A Radio Soap Opera, on Audience in India: A Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis*. New York: Population Communications International.

[48] Marcus, R. and Page, E. (2014) *Changing discriminatory norms affecting adolescent girls through communication activities: Insights for policy and practice from an evidence review*. London: ODI.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Solórzano, I., Bank, A., Peña, R., Espinoza, H., Ellsberg, M. and Pulerwitz, J. (2008) *Catalysing Personal and Social Change Around Gender, Sexuality and HIV: Impact Evaluation of Puntos de Encuentro's Communication Strategy in Nicaragua*. Washington DC: Population Council.

[51] Marcus, R. and Page, E. (2014) *Changing discriminatory norms affecting adolescent girls through communication activities: Insights for policy and practice from an evidence review*. London: ODI. The report found that, between attitude and practice, change was greater for media-based interventions than for other communication approaches that incorporated dialogue. The report suggests that this "should not be taken as evidence that mass media approaches are ineffective, as this is clearly not the case. Rather… the effectiveness of media- or IEC-based approaches can be increased through inclusion of activities that encourage discussion, whether through audience participation (eg radio phone-ins) or in a community setting, such as media listener groups."

[52] Ting Jiang, Postdoctoral Fellow, Behavioural Ethics Lab/Penn Social Norm Training and Consulting Group, University of Pennsylvania. Correspondence with the author, 15 August 2014.

[53] Interview with the author, London/Washington DC, 1 April 2014.

[54] Interview with the author, London/Dakar, 28 July 2014.

[55] Interview with the author, London/Managua, 11 July 2014.

[56] Centre for Media Studies (2004) *An Evaluation Study of the Meena Communication Initiative (MCI) in India*. New Delhi: Unicef Regional Office for South Asia.

[57] Singhal, A., Witte, K., Muthuswamy, N., Duff, D., Vasanti, P.N., Papa, M., Harter, L., Sharma, D., Pant, S., Sharma, A.K., Worrell, T., Ahmead, M., Shrivastav, A., Verma, C., Sharma, Y., Rao, N., Chitnis, K. and Sengupta, A. (2004) *Effects of Taru, A Radio Soap Opera, on Audience in India: A Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis*. New York: Population Communications International.

[58] Interview with the author, London/New Delhi, 3 July 2014.

[59] World Bank Group (2014) *Voice and Agency: Empowering women and girls for shared prosperity*. Washington DC: World Bank Group.

[60] Interview with author, London/Washington DC, 1 April 2014.

[61] World Bank Group (2014) *Voice and Agency: Empowering women and girls for shared prosperity*. Washington DC: World Bank Group. Malala Yousafzai in conversation with Jim Yong Kim, World Bank Group, Washington DC, December 2013.

[62] In some country contexts, social restrictions can prevent girls from travelling to studios or debate locations. Teams have explored alternative ways to facilitate adolescent girls' participation in live debates, such as going "on the road" with shows, recording special debates in schools and covering the costs for chaperones to accompany female audience participants.

[63] BBC Media Action survey, Cambodia, August 2013.

[64] GirlHub is a strategic collaboration between the UK Department for International Development and the Nike Foundation, focused on improving the lives of adolescent girls.

[65] According to GirlHub, the magazine title *Ni Nyampinga* can be translated as "a girl who is beautiful inside and out and who makes good decisions".

[66] Kate Wedgwood, interview with the author, London, 28 July 2014.

[67] Interview with the author, London, 28 July 2014.

[68] Interview with the author, London/New York, 8 April 2014.

[69] Groupe Stratégies et Leadership (2011) *Assessment of the Impact of the Youth Empowerment through Technology, Arts and Media Project: Final Report*. [Shared by Stefanie Conrad 27 July 2014].

[70] Interview with the author, London, 7 July 2014.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Interview with Radharani Mitra, national creative director and executive producer, BBC Media Action, New Delhi, 16 September 2014.

[73] 2CV/GirlHub (2013) *Exploring the impact of Ni Nyampinga and opportunities for development: Summary report*. 2CV/GirlHub.

[74] Unicef (2013) *Integrating Information and Communication Technologies into Communication for Development Strategies to Support and Empower Marginalized Adolescent Girls*. Unicef.

[75] SPARK (2014) *About us* [online]. Available at: http://www.sparksummit.com/about-us/ [Accessed August 2014].

[76] Interview with the author, London/New York, 2 April 2014.

[77] Interview with the author, London, 12 August 2014.

[78] Interview with the author, London/New Delhi, 13 June 2014.

[79] Interview with the author, London/Lahore, 4 June 2014.

[80] Interview with the author, London, 11 July 2014.

[81] BBC Media Action baseline survey, December 2012.

[82] Central Statistical Agency (Ethiopia) and ICF International (2012) *Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2011*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Calverton, Maryland, US: Central Statistical Agency and ICF International.

[83] Interview with the author, London, 7 July 2014.

[84] Interview with the author, London, 8 July 2014.

[85] Banaji, S. (forthcoming) Chapter 3: South Asian Media Cultures: Audiences, Representations, Contexts. In Banaji, S. *Adverts Make Me Want To Break The Television: Indian Children And Their Audiovisual Media Environment In Three Contrasting Locations*. London and New York: Anthem Press.

[86] Interview with the author, London/Managua, 11 July 2014.

[87] Interviewed by Sanjeev Persai, IPC officer, CARE India, 10 September 2014.

[88] Interviewed by Abhinay Garg, district project officer, CARE India, 10 September 2014.

[89] Interview with the author, London, 28 July 2014.

[90] Interview with the author, London, 9 July 2014.

[91] These skills include things like the ability to recognise and articulate a need for information and media, to find and access relevant information and to critically evaluate information and content. See Grizzle, A. Enlisting media and informational literacy for gender equality and women's empowerment. In Unesco (2014) *Media and Gender: A Scholarly Agenda for the Global Alliance on Media and Gender*. Paris: Unesco.

[92] Interview with the author, London/Paris, 2 July 2014.

[93] Kamerer, D. (2013). Media Literacy. *Communication Research Trends*, 32:1, 4–18.

[94] International Federation of Journalists (2009) *Gender Equality in Journalism*. Brussels: International Federation of Journalists.

[95] Global Media Monitoring Project (2010) *Who Makes the News?* Toronto: Global Media Monitoring Project.

[96] Interview with the author, London/New York, 8 August 2014.

[97] Unesco (2012) *Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media: Framework Of Indicators To Gauge Gender Sensitivity In Media Operations And Content*. Paris: Unesco. These results are likely supported by the fact that SABC is a parastatal organisation bound by the Affirmative Action Act, which requires it to submit yearly reports to the Equal Opportunities Commission.

[98] Interview with female journalist at Voices of Women, conducted by Ben Kallay, research officer, BBC Media Action, Mattru Jong, Bonthe District, March 2014.

[99] Email correspondence with the author, 29 July 2014.

[100] Unesco (2012) *Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media: Framework Of Indicators To Gauge Gender Sensitivity In Media Operations And Content.* Paris: Unesco.

[101] Interview with the author, London/Paris, 2 July 2014.

[102] Interview with the author, London, 2 April 2014.

[103] Interview with the author, London/Kampala, 26 March 2014.

[104] Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media (2012) *Summary of study by Ipsos MediaCT's Motion Picture Group* [online]. Available from: http://seejane.org/wp-content/uploads/geena-davis-institute-gender-in-media-impact-survey-2013.pdf [Accessed August 2014].

[105] This ripple effect is not always positive. One consequence of globalisation is the shocking effect that western pornography is having in parts of the developing world. See http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/aug/30/pornography-corporate-responsibility-developing-world [Accessed 10 October 2014].

[106] See for instance the Always #LikeAGirl campaign [online]. Available at: http://www.always.com/en-us/likeagirl.aspx [Accessed August 2014]. Or see Dove's Patch campaign [online]. Available at: http://www.dove.co.uk/en/Tips-Topics-and-Tools/Latest-Topics/dove-patches.aspx?utm_source=youtube&utm_medium=instream&utm_campaign=GB-Patches-09_04_2014-PPC-CoreVideo-FALSE&gclid=CNK79rTLs8ACFa7KtAodXRoA2A [Accessed August 2014]. There are mixed views about what these branded media campaigns actually accomplish for girls and women, with questions being asked about whether they distract attention from the deeper, structural causes of gender discrimination or help to alter deep-seated societal attitudes, perceptions, behaviours and practices around gender.

[107] Interview with the author, London, 16 September 2014.

[108] Outside Brazil, this work is carried out in close association with the NGOs that are part of the ANDI Latin America network. See: http://www.andi.org.br/infancia-e-juventude/publicacao/andi-latin-america-network [Accessed October 2014].

[109] ANDI (2006) *Facing the Challenge: Children's Rights and Human Development in Latin American News Media*. Brasilia: ANDI.

[110] Interview with the author, London/Bogota, 11 July 2014.

[111] Interview with the author, London/Brasilia, 11 July 2014. In broadcasting, the "watershed" is the point in time after which programmes with adult content may be broadcast.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Interview with the author, London, 16 September 2014.

[114] Rachel Marcus and Ella Page, interview with the author, London, 31 July 2014.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Interview with the author, London/New York, 4 April 2014.

[117] This need not be the case. An early evaluation of GirlHub's *Ni Nyampinga* project in Rwanda noted, for example, that although girls have little money and find messages around "saving" or "spending" confusing, there is ample scope for providing information on issues such as "getting access to money safely, being prudent financially and building up from limited resources". See 2CV/GirlHub (2013) *Exploring the impact of Ni Nyampinga and opportunities for development: Summary report*. 2CV/GirlHub.

[118] Puntos de Encuentro (2013) *En la Casa, la Cama y la Calle* (At home, in bed and on the street). Documentary available online from: http://vimeo.com/68455406 [Accessed August 2014].

[119] Ibid.

[120] Adelaida Trujillo, interview with the author, London/Bogota, 11 July 2014.

[121] Marcus, R. and Page, E. (2014) *Changing discriminatory norms affecting adolescent girls through communication activities: Insights for policy and practice from an evidence review*. London: ODI.

[122] Interview with the author, London/Bogota, 11 July 2014.

[123] Bruce, J. (2014) *The Adolescent Girl Moment: Passion is Our Fuel But Not Our Plan* [online]. Available from: http://girlsglobe.org/2014/08/29/the-adolescent-girl-moment-passion-is-our-fuel-but-not-our-plan/ [Accessed August 2014].

Acknowledgements

BBC Media Action would like to thank all of those who agreed to be interviewed, and those who made valuable comments on this briefing. In addition to those acknowledged in the endnotes, thanks go to: Aoife Allen, Catharine Buckell, Josephine Casserly, Grace Davies, Sally Gowland, Anne Liedloff, Cameron Lockhart, Radharani Mitra, Caroline Nursey, Adrienne Testa, Pam Vallance and Prudence Willats.

BBC Media Action is the BBC's international development charity. The content of this briefing is the responsibility of BBC Media Action. Any views expressed in this briefing should not be taken to represent those of the BBC itself, or of any donors supporting the work of the charity.

This policy briefing was prepared thanks to funding from the UK Department for International Development which supports the policy and research work of BBC Media Action.

Author: Caroline Sugg
Commissioning editors: Delia Lloyd and James Deane
Copy editors: Lorna Fray and Sarah Chatwin
Picture research: Ayesha Baker
Designer: Lance Bellers

BBC MEDIA ACTION

UKaid
from the British people

BBC Media Action is registered in England & Wales under
Charity Commission number 1076235 and Company number 3521587.

Registered office: Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London W1A 1AA.

Tel +44 (0) 20 8008 0001
Fax +44 (0) 20 8008 5970
Email media.action@bbc.co.uk
Web bbcmediaaction.org

©BBC Media Action 2014

Printed on paper from recycled and sustainable sources