

SPRING

Investor toolkit with a focus on girls and young women

Venture Examples

Box 1: The range of girls and young women impact ventures

There is a wide spectrum of girls and young women impact ventures, as highlighted by the following examples. Identifying such ventures can be straightforward where the focus is exclusive, as in the case of FightBack (Box 2, page 2). In other cases, the focus on girls and young women may be less obvious, particularly where benefits are gained only indirectly – and yet with positive, disproportionate impact.

1. Koe Koe Tech is a tech company in Myanmar which reaches women and girls with information and resources on sexual and reproductive health. However, when SPRING met Koe Koe Tech, girls were not their target audience. SPRING scouted them actively and helped them to focus on girls and young women. Now 67% of their employees are female and it is intentional.

2. KadAfrica is a passionfruit company in Uganda, and unless investors seek to find out their social mission, it may be difficult to understand their girl focus. While the entrepreneurs saw the market opportunity in passionfruit, they also saw the social need to train out-of-school girls to do productive things and attain life skills. Furthermore, the entrepreneurs had links to local churches, mosques and landowners, which provided an affordable way for girls to have access to land. KadAfrica is profiled in further detail in SPRING's Rural vs Urban case studies.

3. SafeBoda is a community of motorcycle taxi drivers; but the entrepreneur spotted an opportunity to target girls and young women, to provide safe transport. It increases girls' mobility, and in Uganda, parents put their daughters on motorbikes to go to schools, so it increases girls' participation in schools. SafeBoda is profiled in further detail in SPRING's Rural vs Urban case studies.

4. EarthEnable is an affordable flooring company targeting a high-growth market for home improvement in Rwanda. While a home's flooring can affect the health and well-being of all household members, dirty floors actually pose a particular threat to the well-being of girls and young women. Adolescent girls are much more likely than boys to spend long days inside the house, increasing their exposure to bacteria, parasites and other potential hazards often present in the dirt floor of the home. The sealed and sanitary floors that EarthEnable provides also reduce the time required household cleaning, a task often assigned to adolescent girls. Hence, EarthEnable creates indirect impact on adolescent girls in two ways: (1) reducing incidence of pathogen-borne and respiratory disease, and (2) creating more time for non-cleaning activities such as education, rest or income generation. Though indirect in its approach, EarthEnable is a great example of a venture creating positive impact on girls and young women.

5. Orkid Studio is a construction company with an explicit (though not exclusive) focus on women to disrupt the male-dominated construction sector. Construction may be a less obvious area compared to education or health, but the company has seen clear opportunities to promote 'social change through building'.





Box 2: Venture spotlight – FightBack

Problem: Adolescent girls face the real and perceived risk of sexual harassment, physical abuse and rape, leading families to restrict their mobility and girls to be victimised, harming their physical and mental health and confidence. In 2016, the global cost of violence against women was estimated by the UN³⁷ to be US\$1.5 trillion, equivalent to approximately 2% of the global gross domestic product (GDP). According to UN Women, in Nepal, 25% of women have experienced physical and/or Sexual Intimate Partner Violence.

Solution: Paritran is a private company that provides security solutions that focus on risk management. FightBack is its flagship product, which provides unique self-defence training to women and girls as part of its education programme. Aiming to reduce the risk of sexual harassment and violence, the programme is a powerful and sensitively designed intervention using vocal, mental and physical training. It enables women and girls to identify potential risks, de-escalate and pro-actively protect themselves.

Business outcomes:

- A new trademarked, flagship product which accesses a new market of customers interested in the wellbeing of young women and girls; e.g. schools and public sector procurers.
- Revenue for FightBack grew five-fold within a year of introducing a scalable model to train large groups of girls in schools.

Social impact:

- Positive change in norms, values and behaviours among parents on how violence against women and girls should be addressed (shame/blame).
- Girls gain confidence as well as physical, mental and vocal skills that help make them less vulnerable to sexual assault.
- Girls gain mobility as a result of the above two outcomes, enabling them to learn and earn.





Box 3: Venture spotlight – Sehat Kahani

Problem: There are two market failures in Pakistan which Sehat Kahani aims to address: i) limited access to high-quality healthcare for women and girls in low-income communities, and ii) low inclusion of female doctors in the workforce.

Solution: Sehat Kahani provides low-cost, high-quality healthcare to marginalised communities in peri-urban Karachi and in rural areas of Sindh and KPK, through bringing back non-practising female physicians into the workforce and allowing them to practise from home. It is an example of leveraging an untapped labour market (women doctors who have left or not formally joined the workforce) and addressing an underserved customer base (girls and young women who face barriers to leaving homes or local rural communities to access health care).

Social impact:

- Girls (and their families) exposed to a community awareness campaign will increase their awareness/knowledge of girl-focused health topics (e.g. risks associated with early marriage and childbirth, importance of good nutrition)
- Availability/convenience of clinical care at home and nearby clinics, coupled with a better in-clinic experience, will lead to increased care-seeking and use of Sehat Kahani services by adolescent girls
- Girls' improved knowledge/awareness and increased use of healthcare will lead to greater use of contraception and improved diets. These behavioural changes will result in improved nutritional status, improved overall health and well-being of girls, as well as delayed marriage and childbirth.

