



Annual Report 2024



Image: Developing the USA boy's puberty book

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Board of Directors

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2024 Field Teams

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USA girl's book:	Angela Nguyen & masters of public health students

Website(s):	www.growandknow.org www.agirlsguide.org
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Introduction

This year was spent developing our USA boy's puberty book, focusing on translation of our existing books, and conducting activities in the USA and other countries to build more understanding about the best ways to reach girls and boys (and adults in their lives) with our puberty books!

Key accomplishments from 2024 included:

- Finishing up the participatory activities with adolescent boys across the USA and beginning development of our USA boy's puberty book!
- Disseminating our learning about the impact of our USA girl's puberty book and the best ways to reach girls with puberty info!
- Partnering with the New Jersey school district to conduct puberty education with our USA girl's book for school nurses and guidance counselors!
- Continuing to receive requests from around the world for our many puberty books!

And most important...
transforming girls' & boys' lives!

Background

We launched *Grow & Know* in 2010 after the great success of a girl's puberty book project in Tanzania. The Tanzania girl's book received an overwhelmingly positive response from girls and their mothers, aunties, grandmothers, teachers, and even fathers and male peers. Convinced that the Tanzania girl's puberty book, *Growth & Changes (Vipindi Vya Maisha)*, had tapped into an unmet need of girls around the world, *Grow & Know* was established with the aim of replicating the Tanzanian success story for girls and boys in other countries in need of guidance about growing up.

Grow & Know develops books that are grounded in the local social, cultural, and economic context, and that capture the real perspectives of girls and boys growing up today. Young people's written stories are incorporated alongside factual and appropriate guidance about the physical and emotional changes of puberty. Recognizing the importance of authenticity in pictures and language, we work with high quality local illustrators, translators, and publishers in each new country, and each book includes English and the local language, to enhance literacy.

Our Approach

We continue to use a very successful, low budget model to develop each new book (or books) in a country. Our books are never just translated to a new country as that would not lead to sustained uptake. Rather, we first engage with key country stakeholders, and then conduct participatory research with girls and boys to capture their own questions and stories to develop the content of the books. Check out @ www.growandknow.org or @www.agirlsguide.org for more info!

Highlights of Activities in 2024

USA: Finalizing the draft of the boy's puberty book!

We spent much of 2024 conducting participatory research with adolescent boys across the USA! In particular we focused on boys from low-resource backgrounds, meeting with groups of adolescents in Cleveland, New York City, and the East Bay Area. The boys spent time writing anonymous stories about their confusing body changes, the peer pressures they felt transitioning into young adulthood, and their experiences of conflict or violence as boys or young men in US society. The adolescent boys also shared with us their anonymous questions about puberty and growing up, and the information that they think other boys might want to know as well. This helped to guide us on what content was most important to include in the future USA boy's puberty book.

Some of the questions asked by adolescent boys:

"When will I start growing hair on my body in new places?"

"Can a man have emotions?"

"How tall will I be?"

"When will I get muscles?"

We also spent time interviewing adults who interact in boys' lives, such as coaches, teachers, parents, and staff at youth-focused non-profits, to get a deeper picture of what boys need to know. Together, all of this learning enabled us to begin to develop the USA book, filled with boys' own stories, their questions, and illustrations. [More on the USA boy's puberty book when it's completed in 2025!](#)

But a sneak peek at the *DRAFT* table of contents on the next page!

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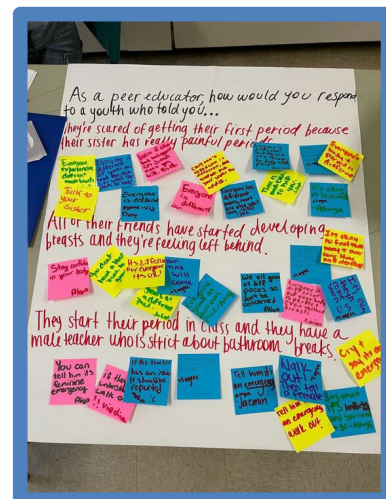
USA: Promoting and training on "A girl's guide to puberty & periods"

Two years ago we launched "*A Girl's Guide to Puberty & Periods*", our USA girl's puberty book, after conducting participatory research with girls across the country and the adults in their lives (parents, teachers, coaches, school nurses). We self-published the book so that we could control the content and keep the price at print cost. Although this meant not having a marketing team or dollars as a publishing company would have, our book still landed in an article in *The Washington Post* in 2024! This caught the eye of a New Jersey school district coordinator, who in turn asked if we could organize a puberty training for school nurses and guidance counselors and share our book!

So, we partnered with an adolescent medicine doctor collaborator, and he conducted a hugely successful training for 75 nurses and counselors, and distributed 60 copies of our girl's book to the group. Subsequently the school district ordered 75 English and 75 Spanish copies to distribute in school libraries and school nurse offices!



During the summer of 2024, we received a request to conduct a puberty "peer educator" training for a youth-focused non-profit in New York City! Partnering with Master of Public Health (MPH) graduate students at Columbia University, we conducted a peer educator training for 15 young women who went on to mentor and train early adolescent girls in their youth programs! We also provided 55 copies of our book for the girls!



Ethiopia boy's book regional approvals!



Although it took over a year, with lots of local politics creating challenges, we finally received approval from three regional education bureaus (REB) across Ethiopia to begin translating our boy's book to use in their regions! Our colleagues in the federal government advised us that a regional approach would be more viable, and so our publisher in Addis Ababa, Shama Books, has begun to work on the translations that will enable our boy's book to be distributed in the Sidama, Tigray, and Somali regions!

Continued scaling of our existing puberty books!

Although our orders were more limited last year per lower funding levels globally and weakened economies countries where we have books, we continued to receive requests for orders of book copies, particularly in Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia! And the Canadian non-governmental organization, CODE, our partners for the Sierra Leone puberty books, adapted our book for a pilot distribution in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)!

Book Distributions

As we have over 2 million* girl's and boy's books distributed across 10 countries, it's a lot to list out in the annual report! Detailed numbers available, but please note that in many countries the publishers just continue to take orders with no need to update us.

**Note: Numbers do not include digital copies.*

Given in-country reports that describe the distribution of the books, we strongly believe that each copy reaches 5-10 girls and boys. **We thus guesstimate that we have reached five to ten million girls and boys** through the copies printed and distributed by *Grow and Know* and our in-country partners.

Projects for 2025

In 2025, we will continue to focus on expanding the distribution of the existing books through on-going advocacy with donors, NGOs and governments, noting that global health and education funding are very depleted at the moment, along with continuing to explore new models for delivery. We are exploring doing a book in Egypt in partnership with UNICEF, hope to publish copies of our Ethiopia boy's book once the translated approved versions are complete, and hope to finalize our USA boy's puberty book.

Financials 2024

Balance January 1, 2024		\$418,182
Cash Income		
Foundations	\$69,917	
Board & Advisors	\$15,750	
Individuals	\$12,101	
Total Income	\$97,768	
Expenses		
Research-related fieldwork, local illustrators, translators, publishing costs	(\$18,551)	
Administrative	(\$3,761)	
Total Expenses	(22,312)	
2024 Net Income	\$75,456	
Balance December 31, 2024		\$493,748

The financials for 2024 are presented on a cash basis. Total revenues raised by *Grow & Know* source are given in the table above. Expenses included the research-related fieldwork and travel of the country team staff developing books in new countries, the costs of local illustrators, translators, and publishing companies in various countries, the

President's travel to conduct advocacy for new girl's books and boy's books with donors and governments, and specific administrative costs (e.g. accountant, web support). Revenues raised in 2024 are intended for use in 2025 and expenses related to this revenue and the program activities will fall under *Grow & Know* in 2025.

Grow & Know
...onward to 2025!