



Annual Report 2025



Image: Ongoing distribution of our Cambodia girl's and boy's puberty books

Table of Contents

1-2	Introduction/Background
4 - 5	Drafting and illustrating the USA boy's book
5 - 6	Distributing the USA girl's puberty book
6	Ethiopia boy's book regional translations
7	Continued scaling of existing books
7 - 8	Book distributions and Projects for 2026
8 - 9	Financials 2025

Board of Directors

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Vice Chairman:	John Walker
Secretary/Treasurer:	Bridget Boyle

Staff

President:	Marni Sommer
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2025 Field Teams

USA boy's book:	Sarah Blake, Angel Ornelas, Stephen Oduro, Brian Villa
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Website(s):

www.growandknow.org

www.agirlsguide.org

www.aboysbook.org (coming soon!)

Introduction

This year was spent continuing to develop our USA boy's puberty book, getting governmental approval of our Ethiopia boy's book translations, 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!

Although it was a very challenging year globally, with many of our local international partners and country governments losing funds, activities, or shutting down, we still managed to persevere and make a difference!

Key accomplishments from 2025 included:

- Writing, illustrating and designing the USA boy's puberty book, and content testing with 9-14 year old boys!
- Sharing our USA girl's puberty book with new possible partners, including those working in health clinics in low resources areas of the country!
- Gaining translation approval from the Ethiopian government for our new boy's book to be disseminated in three languages!
- Exploring the development of books in new countries!
- 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, www.agirlsguide.org, and www.aboysbook.org (coming soon!) for more info!

Highlights of Activities in 2025

USA: Writing, illustrating, and content testing the boy's puberty book!

We spent much of 2025 writing the USA boy's puberty book, along with illustrating the content, doing the graphic design, and content testing the final draft with 9-13 year old boys and parents/caregivers across the USA! The content of the book came from a combination of the participatory research that we conducted with adolescent boys across the country, interviews conducted with youth nonprofit staff and other adults in boys' lives, and basic puberty health information that is important for boys to know!






During the content testing, we received all sorts of feedback from boys and parents, including the below from one parent/caregiver:

"Great book! I really appreciate the comic book style - it makes complex information easy to understand and engaging. I love how you normalize all the changes which can feel overwhelming for boys and even scary. The illustrations are clear and relatable, and I especially liked the inclusion of the section about girls - it adds empathy and helps boys better understand what their peers are going through as well. I also appreciate that you emphasized, multiple times, the importance of speaking to a trusted adult."

We will be launching the USA boy's puberty book in 2026 so more updates coming soon!

However, a peek at the updated *DRAFT* table of contents on the next page!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

 <p>CHAPTER ONE: BODY CHANGES!</p> <p>Introduction 8 Stages of Change 12 Anatomy 14 Growing Hair & Muscles 16 Voice Changes and Erections 18</p>	<p>CHAPTER FOUR: BODY CHANGES, PEER PRESSURES, + CONFLICT: STORIES FROM REAL GUYS</p> <p>Trouble Spots 52 New Sizes & Smells 54 The Cafeteria Crowd 56 A New Class Problem 58 Holy Smokes! 60 Drums of Change 62 Help Your Brother Out! 64 Recess Rumors 66</p>
 <p>CHAPTER TWO: HORMONES, EMOTIONS, AND OTHER STUFF TOO</p> <p>Hormones 22 Big Feelings 24 Emotion Potions 26 Dealing with Anger 28 Finding Your Calm 30 Peer Pressure 32 Let's Talk 34</p>	 <p>CHAPTER FIVE: ALL THE FACTS!</p> <p>Myth Busters 70 Q&A 72 What's Going on in Her Body? 76</p>
 <p>CHAPTER THREE: LEVEL UP: CARING FOR YOUR BODY</p> <p>Growth Spurts 38 Exercise 40 Hygiene Products & Underwear 41 Pimples & Smells 42 Shaving 101 44 Sleep & Screens 46 Wet dreams 48</p>	 <p>GLOSSARY</p> <p>Glossary 80</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; display: inline-block; background-color: #e0f0e0;"> <p>CHECK IT OUT! Look for words marked with "G" They are explained more in the glossary at the back of the book!</p> </div>

USA: Exploring new dissemination for "A girl's guide to puberty & periods"

In 2022, 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 we do not have a marketing team, the book continues to gain attention and when we checked in late 2025, there were over 14,000 books sold around the world!

More recently we have been finding opportunities in the US to donate our book, such as sending a few hundred copies to a pediatrician working in an area of West Virginia that has been hit hard by the generational impacts of the Opioid epidemic. He sees many children with very young parents or grandparents as their caregivers, and was hugely grateful to have a supply of girl's books to hand out!

And, more recently, the New York School Based Health Clinics (SHBC) Foundation supported the distribution of our book to a school serving low-income girls which was organizing a puberty event!



Feedback that the school principal heard from one parent below!

"I'm so happy you guys are having this conversation with girls, because I don't really have anyone who I can go to, to help with my child, so it's overwhelming. Hopefully her having this conversation will help her to understand where I am coming from as a mom."

Ethiopia boy's book regional translations!



Although it took much of the year, with lots of local politics, we finally received translations from three regional education bureaus (REB) across Ethiopia! Our publisher in Addis Ababa, Shama Books, can now focus on approaching additional regions (in 2026) and we hope to distribute copies to many NGOs and the REBs soon!

Continued scaling and use of our existing puberty books!

Although our orders were more limited last year per the drastic cuts in funding levels globally in countries where we have books, we continued to receive requests for orders of book copies, particularly in Tanzania and Ethiopia, along with the USA!



Book Distributions

As we have over two 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, we strongly believe that each copy reaches 5-10 girls and boys. We guesstimate that we have reached five to ten million girls and boys through the copies printed and distributed by *Grow & Know* and our in-country partners.

Projects for 2026

In 2026, 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. Our plan in addition includes:

- Publishing initial large batches of the Ethiopia and the USA boy's puberty books, to build interest and engagement with the content among non-profits, schools, libraries, government, United Nations agencies, and others!

We are also exploring doing a book in the Caribbean and a book in Egypt (politics depending!) and potentially adapting our Cambodia puberty books for the government's new digital platform. That may take a bit more time though!

Financials 2025

Balance January 1, 2024		\$492,648
Cash Income		
Foundations	\$33,750	
Board & Advisors	\$10,825	
Individuals	\$12,567	
Total Income	\$57,142	
Expenses		
Research-related fieldwork, local illustrators, translators, publishing costs	(\$10,518)	
Administrative	(\$5,302)	
Total Expenses	(15,820)	
2025 Net Income	\$38,322	
Balance December 31, 2025		\$533,970

The financials for 2025 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 2025 are intended for use in 2026 and expenses related to this revenue and the program activities will fall under *Grow & Know* in 2026.

Grow & Know
...onward to 2026!