



TEGA

Case study

Technology Enabled
Girl Ambassadors

TEGA Adams County



Location

Adams County, Colorado, USA



Project Partners

*The Youth Initiative of Adams
County*

StriveTogether



Research Type

Training Research



Research Methodology

Qualitative interviews

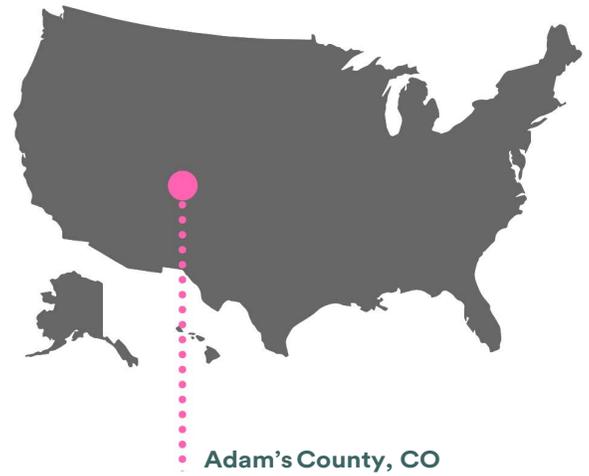
Executive summary

In 2017, StriveTogether and Girl Effect embarked on a journey to see how TEGA could support its Cradle-to-Career networks to better understand its communities. To do this StriveTogether and Girl Effect partnered to launch a network in Adams County, Colorado with the Youth Initiative of Adams County (ACYI), a StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network partner.

Over the last six months, we have worked with ACYI and launched a TEGA network of 12 girl researchers who use the TEGA app to collect authentic insight from community members. Having completed their training research, they are now beginning to conduct research for three of the Community Action Networks (CANs) that ACYI supports: Middle Grade Math, Juvenile Justice and Postsecondary Success. The research they conduct will not only provide these CANs with authentic youth voice to inform their strategies but also inform Girl Effect and StriveTogether's understanding of the unique value that TEGA brings to a StriveTogether partnership like ACYI.

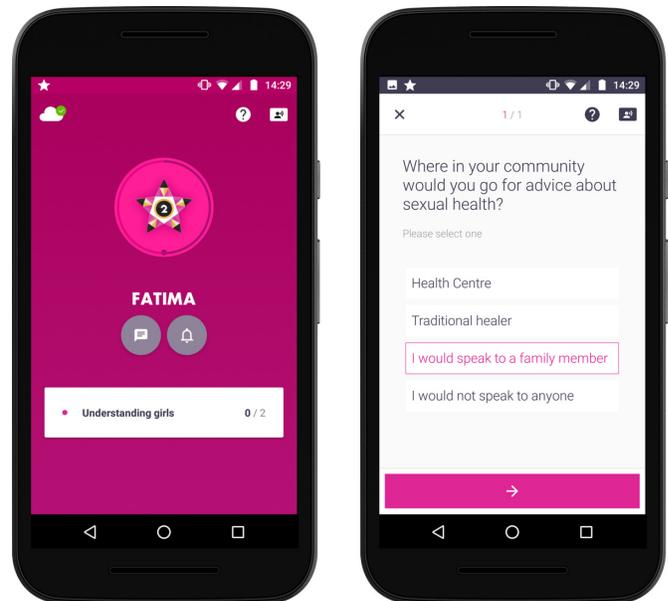
Why TEGA?

As a StriveTogether Cradle-to-Career network, ACYI develops and strengthens the collective efforts of partners across Adams County to dramatically improve key outcomes for youth, with a specific focus on closing opportunity and achievement gaps. Ensuring they understand the perspective of stakeholders it represents (including community members, parents and youth) is critical to its work. StriveTogether and ACYI are exploring ways to access authentic input from these priority populations and see TEGA as a key opportunity to do so. By garnering authentic voice and perspective from key stakeholders, TEGA will help ACYI understand what it is like to be a young person in Adams County, illuminating their perspective and ensuring their input is at the heart of interventions.

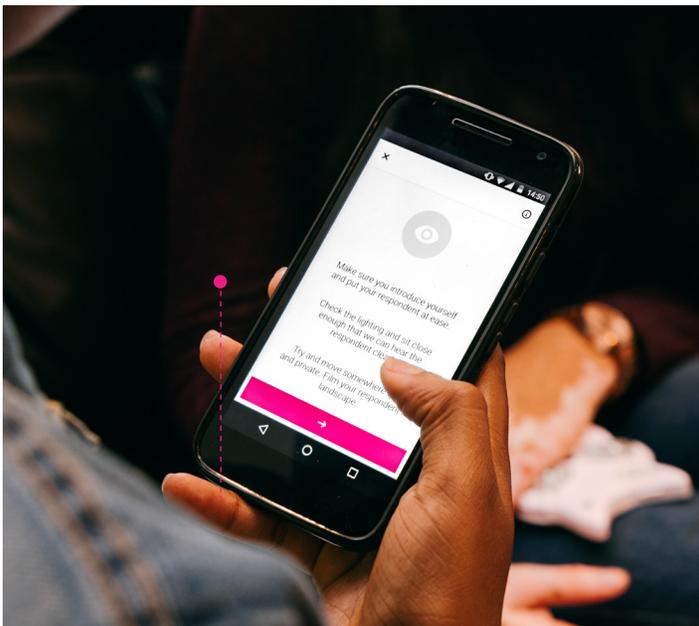


“ Kids listen to kids and what TEGA is providing us is the authentic true voice of the kids that need us most in the places we haven't been able to obtain or identify up until this point.”

Becky Hoffman, CEO, The Youth Initiative of Adams County



The interface of the TEGA app



Action taken

As part of their training, the TEGAs spent two months interviewing more than 180 youth, parents and community members from diverse backgrounds, about their daily lives in Adams County. They explored topics like livelihood, education, safety in home and at school, peer relationships and power dynamics. The interviews enabled us to understand context around the lives of youth in Adams County and also build their capacity as researchers and their understanding of the TEGA technology. Now having finished the training, the TEGAs are conducting research for the Middle Grade Math, Post Secondary Success and Juvenile Justice CANs.

Findings

Our training research identified three main themes that will inform our future research and provided ACYI and its partners with meaningful insights into the behaviors, attitudes and needs of Adams County youth.

School Safety and Bullying

Safety was the most salient topic among respondents who described their neighborhoods as safe, saying that neighbors look out for each other. Youth see the home as a place of familiarity and trust. In contrast, schools are perceived as less safe with 80 percent saying they feel safer at home than school. This is for a host of reasons including fear of physical violence, school shootings, bullying and harassment.

Education

Youth are very vocal about the school system, the perceived value of education as well as the lack of funding. They feel government should do more to alleviate the cost of education and are stressed by the cost of a post-secondary education and the pressure to get a scholarship.

Youth Services and Activities

Youth in Adams County want more places just for them, where teens can spend time safely together and discuss more personal matters. In addition to social activities, they want more guidance on youth services (specifically mental health) - what's available and how to access them. They currently see these outlets as lacking in their community.

“ We cannot work on juvenile crime or juvenile justice work in Adams County from a distance, but proximity to youth, proximity to their families, proximity to the imprisoned and mistreated and hurting will help us tackle this issue! The TEGA project is really invaluable.”

Levon Hupfer, Director of Diversion, 17th District Attorney's Office

Impact

TEGA and the findings from the training research have already helped inform and accelerate the work of partners in Adams County in three main ways.

Informing resourcing conversations

Chris Wilderman, the Director of School Safety for Adams 12 School District struggled to engage students to understand their perspective on school safety. TEGA was able to quickly, and in an agile way, incorporate questions on school safety into our training research and pull together an executive summary. The research showed that students did not feel as safe at school as at home. It also indicated that students think schools are doing a good job in planning and communication for active threats. Conversely, students and their families aren't actively discussing safety together. Wilderman and his team used the findings to appeal for additional funding for support staff and new parent trainings and communications to better inform them on safety procedures happening in and around schools.

Informing current state assessment

ACYI recognizes that juvenile delinquency can have future consequences on an adolescent's college and career choices and has been working to set up a CAN focused on Juvenile Justice for some time, but lacked the proper methodology to understand the current state of the system. Using TEGA to interview youth, law enforcement and child service personnel, will give CAN members a more authentic perspective of how the juvenile justice system works as a whole, and how youth engage with it, and therefore better prepare them to set targets and objectives for the CAN.

Driving youth engagement

The Mayor of Westminster invited our team to present the findings to his Westminster Youth Advisory Panel. The findings validated some of their own feelings about being a youth in Adams County and gave them a tool to advocate for improvements to their city based on youth-led insight. This TEGA research is helping to inform the program for their Youth Summit later this year.



About TEGA

Girl Effect, an international NGO, developed TEGA to ensure the voices of youth are heard by some of the world's most powerful organizations. Girls aged 17-24 are employed and trained using bespoke smartphones to become Market Research Society (MRS) qualified researchers and Technology Enabled Girl Ambassadors (TEGAs). TEGAs conduct interview research within their own communities - a unique approach that unlocks the open and honest conversations that occur between youth that might otherwise be lost or not included when collecting data in traditional ways. TEGA is live in seven countries including the US.

About StriveTogether

StriveTogether leads a national Cradle to Career Network of over 70 communities in every corner of the country working to realize a simple but ambitious vision: supporting the success of every child, cradle to career. To do this, cradle to career partnerships in every community bring together education, business, non-profit, philanthropic, civic, and government leaders to work together more effectively to improve educational outcomes. StriveTogether's network members have prioritized seven education outcomes that they are dedicated to improving and have built the civic infrastructure needed to organize and align work across their community.

About the Youth Initiative of Adams County

ACYI works to mobilize and support a collective partnership of stakeholders focused on improving educational outcomes by leveraging student-level data, community expertise and continuous improvement best practices to measure what matters, identify best practices, and spread what works. By developing and strengthening the collective efforts of Partners to dramatically improve key cradle to career outcomes on behalf of youth, with a specific focus on closing opportunity and achievement gaps, ACYI works to ensure the success of all young people throughout their cradle to career journey.



Contact our team

Contact our team to find out more about how TEGA can inform your work with young people:

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or tega@acyi.org