

# Reaching girls through technology: lessons learned from **SPRING**



**SPRING was an accelerator programme that helped businesses develop products and services to improve girls' lives.**

SPRING businesses targeted girls aged 10-19 in nine countries. In order to understand what works to reach girls, we carried out in-depth case studies with 28 businesses. The experiences of these businesses offer valuable lessons on what works to reach girls through technology in different contexts. It's especially hard to reach the most side-lined groups, such as girls living in rural areas or girls who dropped out of school.



## How did SPRING businesses use technology to reach girls?

Out of the 28 business in our sample, 12 SPRING businesses developed technology-based approaches to reach adolescent girls. Some businesses offered tech-based products to girls. Others used technology to enable or improve the delivery of a product or service to girls.

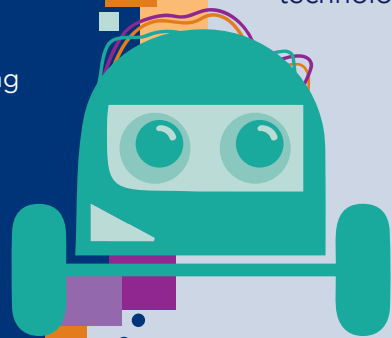
## Reaching girls through tech-based products

Businesses that offered tech-based products for direct use by girls created apps, platforms, websites or campaigns to provide services or information to girl users directly. Most of these businesses focused on girls living in urban areas, who typically have access to smartphone technology and internet connectivity.

### PAKISTAN

**LearnObots** reached girls (and boys) with a highly innovative tech-based product. Its E-Learning platform (RobotWala) in combination with a hardware robot "Buddy" aims to guide and encourage STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) sessions in schools.

[www.learnobots.com/](http://www.learnobots.com/)



## Reaching girls through technological solutions

Some businesses used technological solutions for the delivery of a product or service to girls. Often, these businesses targeted marginalised communities. Technological solutions helped businesses overcome cost and distance constraints that make it challenging to reach these groups.



## PAKISTAN

**RIZO**, through SPRING, developed a website and mobile app that connects food donors to food insecure households through a network of foodbanks, soup kitchens and school feeding programmes. SPRING also supported the development of an IT backend to improve food donation and beneficiary management. This helped the businesses reach a greater number of girls because they were able to serve more households and schools.

[www.sharerizq.com/en](http://www.sharerizq.com/en)

## User engagement over time: a key challenge

Technology helped SPRING businesses reach more adolescent girls (mostly wealthier, urban girls). Combining a digital approach with in-person outreach made technology more accessible to users. Businesses were able to engage with girls through digital and social media platforms, especially for advertising.

Even though most technology products were able to reach high numbers of people (including girls), it was difficult to keep users engaged. Some tech-based products and services were not sufficiently user friendly or appealing to customers to encourage continued use. It's important to fully understand potential users, their needs and familiarity with technology.



## Key lessons and recommendations



Building trust in technology will encourage continued use, especially among groups less familiar with technology. This can be done through communicating benefits, face-to-face engagement (training and in-person support), and regular follow-up.



Apps and smartphone technology are not always the right solution, especially when trying to reach younger girls, or girls living in more remote, poorer areas. They are more effective with urban, wealthier, and more technologically savvy girls.



Careful research on the target group should be a priority. Businesses should tailor technology to users' specific needs and constraints. This means adapting the product based on girls' user behaviour and preference.