



IDELA, UBONGO AND AKILI AND ME

Background

Ubongo is a Pan-African social enterprise that creates localized edutainment to empower kids to reach their full potential. Ubongo used IDELA to develop and test 52 episodes of a new television series, *Akili and Me*, designed to offer young children access to early childhood education concepts even if there were not enrolled in formal ECE programs. The creation of *Akili and Me* was a response to Ubongo's desire to create beneficial and adaptable content for little learners across the continent. The Ubongo team used a human centered design process to prototype content, characters and concepts, test them with young children for engagement and comprehension, and then iterate upon the content to improve its efficacy. Central to the show's creation was its testing to ensure that it was effective at achieving early learning outcomes.

Research

Its efficacy has been evaluated through quasiexperimental and randomized control trials in Tanzania and Rwanda, using IDELA. In Morogoro, Tanzania, 568 children (mean age – 4.8 years) participated in IDELA assessments before and after four weeks of viewing the show. A control group viewed alternative cartoons, but did not have access to *Akili and Me*. Controlling for the child's sex, age, and baseline skills in the assessed follow up outcome, exposure to *Akili and Me* significantly improved drawing skills, shape knowledge, number recognition, counting, and English skills. A similar study was conducted in Rwanda, with content adapted to Kinyarwanda, and results are currently pending publication.

Results

So far, 52 episodes of have been produced, and *Akili and Me* broadcasts on free television in eight African countries with a monthly audience of 8.2 million viewers. *Akili and Me* is currently available in three languages (with seven others currently in development). In addition to the TV series, *Akili and Me* is also available on radio, interactive voice response (for basic mobile phones), apps and YouTube. Ubongo is currently developing the third season of *Akili and Me* which expands topics covered to include health and nutrition, in addition to early cognitive and social emotional development.

Contact

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