THE NEW GIRLS'
MOVEMENT:
NEW ASSESSMENT
TOOLS FOR YOUTH
PROGRAMS

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COLLABORATIVE
FUND FOR
HEALTHY GIRLS
HEALTHY WOMEN

THE NEW GIRLS' MOVEMENT: NEW ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR YOUTH PROGRAMS

P. CATLIN FULLWOOD • DANA-AIN DAVIS, PH.D • ELIZABETH DEBOLD, ED.D.

The Ms. Foundation for Women has been creating opportunities for women and girls for almost thirty years. We conduct advocacy and public education campaigns, and direct resources of all kinds to cutting-edge projects across the country that nurture girls' leadership, protect the health and safety of women and girls, and provide low-income women with the tools to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. Creator of the award-winning Take Our Daughters To Work® Day program, the Ms. Foundation is also a recipient of a Presidential Award for Excellence in Microenterprise Development for our longstanding commitment to improve economic prospects for low-wage women, their families and their communities.

PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION RESEARCH: WHY IT'S WORTH IT AND WHAT MAKES IT WORK

For the past several years, many people engaged in on-the-ground work with youth have shown increasing interest in evaluating the effectiveness of their programs. Many more are seeking innovative ways to use evaluation research to advance the work of grassroots organizations involved in social change and social justice. The New Girls' Movement: New Assessment Tools for Youth Programs is designed for youth programs and foundations interested in conducting and supporting a particular research approach—participatory evaluation research.

The Ms. Foundation defines participatory evaluation research as work that builds organizational capacity and is collective in nature—that is, girls, parents and community members are involved in its planning and application. This report specifically focuses on how the partners of the Ms. Foundation's Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women designed and implemented a participatory evaluation research project.

We realize that the reality for most girls' programs is that they are not part of an explicit and intentional evaluation process like the Collaborative Fund. Most youth programs do not even have a budget for evaluation, which is typically considered either a luxury item separate from the "real" work of girls' lives or a seemingly meaningless task required by funders. We hope, however, that the lessons we learned while developing an evaluation process that involves girls as researchers helps show the value of

this work for all youth programs. In this report, we share the design of our research, the new youth program assessment tools developed by the Fund's partners, and our methods of data collection and analysis.

Why Girls Research?

In the early 1990s, the Ms. Foundation for Women embarked on a project to learn more about girls and young women—their lives, struggles, joys and aspirations—and what it took to make a difference in girls' lives as they prepared for adulthood. We wanted to understand what it was about effective programs serving girls and young women that made them work. We also wanted to provide resources to support existing efforts while fostering new ones. After conducting an overview of girls' programs and convening researchers and practitioners concerned about girls' issues, we decided that a large influx of both intellectual and

financial resources was necessary to build and draw attention to the field of girls' and young women's programming. We also realized that we needed to learn with girls' programs as we went along.

The Ms. Foundation convened a number of like-minded foundations and donors to form the Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women, a $4 million fund to provide resources over three years to new and existing organizations with programs focused on girls' empowerment and activism. A substantial part of the Collaborative Fund's resources was committed to a "learning component" created in partnership with program staff and youth participants of grantee organizations. We designed this learning component to answer questions that grantee programs and donor partners felt were critical to building an infrastructure of effective girls' and young women's programming. We knew that to ensure long-term healthy outcomes for girls and to boost the legitimacy and resources available to girls' programs, we had to "prove" that girls and their entire communities benefit from effective girl-centered programs.

The Collaborative Fund's Participatory Evaluation Research Plan

When the Collaborative Fund was first developed, we had a wide range of general questions that we wanted to answer through a research process. Over time, through meetings and discussions, the Collaborative Fund's partners—grantees, funders, researchers and Ms. Foundation staff—agreed on a set of questions and a refined research agenda. **A Learning Team**, comprising researchers, practitioners and graduate students, was appointed to spearhead the creation of the partici-

"At first, learning about research was complicated, but I like that I had to take time and put it together rather than do any old thing..." -Young Woman Researcher

patory evaluation process. At a convening of all the Collaborative Fund partners in January 1999, program staff and girls met with Learning Team members in geographic and thematic clusters to describe what they wanted to know most from the research. As a result

of this process, a research design utilizing qualitative and some quantitative methods was developed to test the hypothesis at the core of the Collaborative Fund, which was:

Girls' involvement in girl-driven programs leads to an increase in leadership skills. Increased leadership skills and qualities lead to an increase in girls' ability to act as agents for social change in four spheres of their lives:

a) *at the individual level (to change attitudes and behaviors of individual girls),*
b) *at the social network level (to create changes in family members and peers),*
c) *at the community level (to create changes in values, attitudes and practice) and*
d) *at the institutional level (to create changes in the institutions that affect their lives).*

Why Participatory Evaluation Research?

Participatory research is grounded in principles of inclusion, equal rights and equal access, ideals that the Civil Rights Movement fought to win for all people. It is about developing a relationship to democracy in which all people have rights. Participatory research stresses fairness and respect, encourages the broadest possible distribution of power and requires that all members of a group share the decision-making. The challenge in any democracy, however, is transforming the ideal of equity into a real structure of shared power.

It is critical in social justice work to develop our capacity for assessing strategies and gauging the efficacy of our efforts. It is just as critical that the process of this assessment take place within a participatory model of evaluation. Participatory evaluation research provides girls with the analytic and research skills necessary to document their lives, thereby giving programs the means to document the impact of their work with girls. It also provides a language for articulating the unique strengths and challenges of our work. Using this research model, we can ensure that the voices and expertise of our constituencies are not lost in our efforts to achieve scientific validity.

The Collaborative Fund's work involved several components, including program development, annual convenings, networking, and on-site technical assistance and capacity-building. These components informed and shaped the participatory evaluation research, allowing program staff and girls to participate fully in the development of the research design, including framing the hypothesis, research questions and data collection methods. Therefore, our research process was truly built from the ground up, based on the real questions and day-to-day challenges and accomplishments of girls' programs. (Please see Appendix A.)

Building Organizational Capacity for Assessment

Consistent with the philosophy and methods of participatory research, a significant focus of our preparation for research phase was building the research skills of program staff and girls as well as the capacity of their programs to collect and utilize data. It is critical that community-based organizations have the capacity to measure their effectiveness in meeting goals and objectives, achieving their program outcomes, and articulating and answering the questions that can inform their work, their programs and the youth fields. To ensure that girls' groups were able to engage as equal partners and that young women had as much voice as the professionals, the Collaborative Fund invested heavily in building the capacity of girls' and young women's programs to undertake participatory evaluation research.

The initial idea of attaching research to the work of the Collaborative Fund was met with some concern by grantee programs. We spent the first of our three annual convenings and follow-up meetings discussing how the members of this Collaborative Fund partnership (grantees, funders, the Learning Team and Ms. Foundation staff) could develop a "learning process" that would be mutually beneficial. **This learning process identified six key objectives for building the evaluation capacity of girls' and young women's programs:**

1. **Assess each program's initial capacity** for evaluation and identify thematic areas that could provide the basis for ongoing research;

2. **Foster grantee partners' interest in the design and implementation of a participatory evaluation research model** in which the program staff and girls are both participants and researchers;
3. **Provide legitimacy** for the participation of program staff and girls in the development of the research model from the ground up by creating a framework for understanding the real work of programs;
4. **Create a consistent way of understanding and articulating program models** based on the Logic Model—to document the development of a program from strategies to objectives to final outcome (see the Program Planning Matrix on page 14).
5. **Create research questions** that are relevant and applicable to the work of girls' programs, and **methods for data collection** and assessment that can be integrated into program models and activities; and
6. **Build the evaluation research skills** of girls and young women to frame and answer the questions that are important to their lives and work.

GETTING STARTED:
DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION PLAN
Using the Evaluation Tools in Mixed-Gender Settings

Girls participate in many kinds of youth programs, including programs that take place in mixed-gender settings. The program assessment tools developed by the Collaborative Fund can be applied to mixed-gender programs as long as you know what it is you are looking for. Power differentials and dynamics between males and females are an important consideration for any program interested in developing fully competent and empowered youth. It is also important to remember that, developmentally, young people may define gender differently than adults. A mixed-gender youth group may be defined as male and female, or it may be defined as lesbian, gay, transgender, gender questioning or gender busting. Each of the Collaborative Fund's evaluation tools should be adapted in terms of language and circumstance to reflect your group's definition of and relationship to gender.

For the purposes of this manual, we talk primarily about working with girls and girl-only programs, but

all of the evaluation methods and instruments can be tailored to mixed-gender groups. Factors to consider when adapting and developing a meaningful evaluation for your program are incorporated throughout this document. In this report, we use the terms "girl," "young woman" and "youth" interchangeably.

Confidentiality

It is critical to assure all participants in your evaluation that their responses will remain confidential. That means that everyone involved must be very careful not to identify particular youth with their responses when analyzing or talking about your findings. If you are tracking youth over time, it is important to use an identifier other than name that only one or two people know. This is called a "unique identifier." It is often some combination of birth date and mother's maiden name or social security number.

Consent

When working with youth it is vital to ensure that they and their parents are fully informed about the research and that they understand what their participation will mean. Youth and parents should understand their role as respondents and peer researchers, and also how the findings from the research are to be used. If there are pictures or videos taken of the girls, how will they be used and who will see them? At a minimum, written parental consent is necessary for all youth who are directly participating in the evaluation activities (not necessarily those who happen to be at a community event). Through our experience, we learned that parental permission and support enhances girls' ability to participate fully. Fully informed parents are more likely to support their daughters' participation in community programs or projects conducted through institutions such as their schools.

Data Content, Ownership and Analysis

In deciding how you want to use the findings from the evaluation it is important to think about who owns the data. Do the girl researchers own it? Does the program own it? Does the parent organization own it? Who will decide how it is analyzed and how and where it will be used? To decide who owns the data and how to use it, you must consider what the final product will look like and who it will serve. Will you use the insight gained in the evaluation to develop educational materials for girls or for parents? Will you utilize the findings to convince schools of the efficacy of your work? These decisions and materials should be developed with girls and other stakeholders as part of the participatory process of the evaluation. Every step of the evaluation is a learning process—the more people you involve in this process, the smarter your program gets.

Training and Technical Assistance

For participatory evaluation to work, people have to feel that they understand the process of research well enough to help shape it and to participate fully in data collection and implementation of the findings. An important part of the capacity-building work of the Collaborative Fund was training staff and girls both at their program sites and in cluster meetings. These trainings focused on the how-to's of evaluation research and were developed with each of the audiences in mind. We did our best to make it fun, demystify evaluation research and highlight the relevance of evaluation research to community work with girls.

Capacity for Data Collection and Maintenance

When designing the evaluation process for your program, make sure it does not exceed your program capacity in terms of financial and human resources, time commitment, and girls' ongoing involvement. Honestly assess what your program can manage. What is realistic for your staff, who may already be overtaxed by the wonderful challenges of working with girls? What is a realistic level of involvement for the girls in your program? Once the excitement of something new wears off, what research activities can girls incorporate into their already very busy lives? One of the challenges that the Collaborative Fund programs faced was how to support and encourage girls participating in the research without it becoming one more thing that staff "nagged" them about. You should also assess what level of support the girls in your program will need from staff to feel that they have been successful in their work.

You should assess your organization's capacity as it relates to technology and time, i.e., time for data collection as well as data entry and analysis. There are also questions of skill capacity. Few of us have extensive training in evaluation and even when we know we need help, we are not always sure what questions to ask to get that help. Finding someone in the community, at the local college or on your Board of Directors to help you think through these issues is an important first step in planning an evaluation for your program. The Collaborative Fund answered this challenge by hiring the Learning Team.

The Role of Funders

There are a number of ways that foundations and donors can help programs to develop their capacity for evaluation:

- Help grantees develop realistic goals and outcomes based on their level of resources and organizational capacity for conducting evaluations (i.e., don't expect a small after-school program for middle school girls to affect graduation rates).
- Provide a percentage of resources to be used specifically for evaluation. For example, offer your grantees an additional 10 percent of their budgets for evaluation.
- Provide programs with opportunities for consultation, training, and on-site technical assistance to help them determine their evaluation desires and capabilities. For example, sponsor program evaluation trainings for all your grantees, and follow up with specific trainings geared to your grantees' unique needs.
- Facilitate connections among participatory evaluation researchers and community-based organizations in your community in order to foster new partnerships and new ways of thinking about and doing evaluation research with communities.

GIRLS AS PARTNERS IN PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION RESEARCH

The Collaborative Fund wanted girls to tell us what they think and want, and how they develop the social consciousness and civic responsibility that leads to activism. As we visited girls in the programs and listened to them talk about their families and communities, it became clear to us that girls were the ones who needed to tell their own stories—in their own voices. We recognized girls' values, perspectives and expertise as crucial elements in the learning process.

This meant that girls were not only the subjects of the research, but also active shapers of it. As such, they were "expert" contributors to the research process of better understanding their own lives. What the Collaborative Fund could give them were some new and useful tools.

By facilitating girls' engagement in participatory evaluation research, the Collaborative Fund actualized its commitment to develop and support young women as social change agents. We did not want girls' involvement to be tokenized, but to function as a meaningful aspect of the research. This kind of engagement, we maintain, will lend itself to encouraging girls' participation in other areas of civil society and their leadership in social change efforts.

Putting Girls at the Center of the Research: The Young women's Action Team Curriculum

After the Learning Team spent four months visiting programs across the country, making site visits, and working with young women to increase their research skills, the young women requested that they be able to participate in the Collaborative Fund's research process. In March 1999, twelve girls representing six grantee programs participated in a Learning and Inquiry Workgroup Meeting to design the research component of the Collaborative Fund. They called themselves the **Young Women's Action Team (YWAT)**.

The Learning Team took the young women through a series of interactive activities so they could understand research concepts and processes with the goal of helping them develop their own research questions and plans for their programs back home. These activities comprised the core of the **YWAT Curriculum** (see attached curriculum).

One of the challenging tasks in working with girls ages 9 to 18 from all over the country, and all walks of life and experiences, was to design a training on evaluation that would be interesting and relevant for all of them. This training needed to be accessible to different learning levels, interactive yet instructive in nature,

deep without being dense, and, above all else, fun. The YWAT Curriculum combines skills building and practice, theory and critical thinking, and tools for problem solving that girls can use in their everyday lives. It was created over a series of trainings with girls from the programs and with young women research assistants who were the "scholars" of the Collaborative Fund. These scholars were closest in age to the girls and served as the primary contacts for the YWAT training and data collection support.

The YWAT curriculum has four strategies for developing girls as peer researchers:

1. Keeping it real - demystify evaluation by making it understandable and concrete.
2. Making a case - make evaluation relevant to girls' everyday lives by applying the rules and the skills to real-life challenges.
3. Taking it to the street - combine real-life practice with skills building for youth to feel comfortable doing evaluation.
4. Tools of the trade - engage girls in critical thinking and decision-making about research questions and data collection methods, and what to do with the information they collect.

> "I want everyone to remember me as the girl who wanted to know everything, and who now knows how to use her research skills whenever she wants to understand something better."
>
> *-Sharita Stinson, young woman researcher, Research for Action*

Girls' Research Question and How They Answered It

Over the course of their trainings, the YWAT used their own experiences as a guide to develop the research question, *"How does being in a girl-centered program impact girls' lives?"* To answer this question, the girls decided to use, and received training on, two methodologies: structured interviews and photojournaling.

Interviews were used to capture the experiences of girls in the programs. The interviews were to be conducted twice, once at the beginning of the six-month data col-

lection period, and once at the end. The first set of questions for girls included the following:
- What is your goal for the future?
- What are some things that affect you just because you are a girl?
- How does your cultural background, economic situation, gender and/or sexuality affect your goals?

The second set of questions was asked of girls six months later and included:
- What are some actions you can take, big or small, to reach your goals?
- Has this program helped you to reach your goals? If yes, in what ways?
- Has this program offered opportunities that you never knew existed before? If yes, in what ways?
- Does being in a girls-only program differ from other parts of your life? If yes, in what ways?

Photojournaling was used as a way for girls to gather, record and analyze data in order to answer questions about their own lives. This method was specifically used to collect pictures of girls involved in program activities that could be analyzed as evaluation data. YWAT girls were able to turn their photographic data into photo-novellas and exhibits to present to the public.

At the final convening for all the Collaborative Fund's partners in July 2000, the YWAT developed a yearbook that would tell the story of their experiences as participants in their programs and in the Collaborative Fund. The YWAT Yearbook features the first graduating class of the Collaborative Fund. It tells the story of how girls from all over the country—White girls from rural Appalachia, African American girls from urban communities, Laotian, Cambodian, and Vietnamese girls who are first- and second-generation immigrants, Latino girls, and Native American girls living on a reservation—came together to say something about their programs and what their world looks like. The YWAT experience gave them new tools for documenting their lives and got them thinking about ways to use their new evaluation skills.

Results of the YWAT Research

Over the course of six months, YWAT members took over 250 photographs and conducted 59 interviews with young women in their respective programs. The young women interviewed came from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and ranged in age from 11 to 20 years old. Some of their findings included:

- *The young women agreed that their programs offered them opportunities to reach their goals by exposing them to new opportunities and more choices.*
- *As a result of being in girl-only programs, girls feel more equipped to realize their own potential.*
- *The connections between girls and other females create a sense of safety. Girls enjoy being able to express themselves and share who they are with other young and adult women.*
- *Nearly 90 percent of the girls interviewed said that going to college is a primary goal for their future.*
- *Almost all of the girls experienced gender inequity. They pointed out that stereotypes of girls and women attempt to confine and control them. They said that parents, adults and young men perpetuate these stereotypes.*
- *The girls feel that their economic situations and racism will be factors in their ability to achieve their goals. However, they do not think these factors will prevent them from reaching their goals and are optimistic about their futures.*

"I was given a chance to research how young women are affected when they participate in a girl-only program. It has been an invaluable opportunity to show society how we as young women can and are capable of making positive change. If given the time, respect, space and skills we can do incredible things." *-Karen Coto, young woman researcher, Center for Anti-Violence Education*

Principles of Working with Girls as Researchers

Based on the YWAT experience, the following operating principles were developed to guide efforts to include girls and youth in conducting research in a manner which is real and ensures their development as documenters of their own lives and experiences:

- Develop fun, interactive training sessions for girls to give them skills and deepen their understanding of the basics and uses of evaluation (see the YWAT Curriculum for specific examples).

- Involve girls in all phases of the work, including the development of the evaluation, making decisions about the focus of the evaluation, methods to be utilized, and how the data will be used, and confidentiality issues and reporting.
- Showcase the results of the evaluation in ways that involve family and community. Provide validation for the girls and their involvement in and ownership of the evaluation research process as well as the other activities of their program.
- Set realistic goals and expectations for girls' involvement in the process, including a realistic timeframe for involvement in line with the time spent in the program, as well as availability of resources and levels and methods of accountability.
- If necessary, broker relations with community or institutional partners who could otherwise prevent girls from completing their evaluation activities.
- Be mindful of literacy and language issues in choosing training methods and data collection tools. Writing is an important tool for girls' expression, but it is not the only one. It is important to balance reading- and writing-based evaluation with other mechanisms that girls can use to document their world.
- Be sure that there is a match between the evaluation design and the capacity of the girls' organization in terms of financial resources and people power.

Challenges When Working With Girls as Researchers

Ongoing challenges for YWAT and the Collaborative Fund made it difficult to "manage" the collection of data, including maintaining adequate resources and support to carry out the research and the geographic distance between the programs and the Learning Team. Throughout the YWAT's discussions and planning, girls addressed the issue of the programs' vastly different levels of access to resources and the practical limitations of being researchers. Girls asked the Collaborative Fund's Learning Team to check in with their programs on a monthly basis to make sure everyone had the equip-

ment, resources and support they needed to proceed. To ensure maximum impact and consistency, girls also built in a mechanism to replace themselves by training other girls in their programs as researchers to carry out the data collection activities.

Another major challenge that girls faced was utilizing their newfound or newly refined voice in the systems that encourage their silence. Girls from a number of the programs reported trying to exhibit their new skills in the school setting only to find themselves ridiculed or punished by adults who saw their assertiveness as resistance and defiance. It was a challenge for program staff to educate institutions by helping them understand the importance of what the program was doing and what it meant for girls and the school.

THE TEN STEPS TO PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION RESEARCH

There are ten steps that we recommend you consider before beginning a participatory evaluation of your program, outlined here in a step-by-step format. Accompanying this report, we also offer three program assessment tools developed by the Collaborative Fund as prototypes for application or adaptation to meet your program's unique needs. The YWAT Curriculum is also included as a guide to train girls as researchers.

Step 1.	Assess the Capacity of Your Youth Program
Step 2.	Define Your Program's Model According to Your Goals and Activities
Step 3.	Determine Which Outcomes You Want to Evaluate
Step 4.	Develop Evaluation Questions
Step 5.	Choose Methods for Gathering Data
Step 6.	Decide on Your Data Sample
Step 7.	Collect and Organize the Data
Step 8.	Analyze the Data
Step 9.	Interpret the Findings
Step 10.	Apply the Findings to Your Work

STEP 1

Is My Program Ready for Evaluation?

The first step in conducting an evaluation, large or small, is assessing your organization's capacity for evaluation, or the "evaluability" of your program. In doing this assessment it may be helpful to discuss the following points with staff, girls and other program stakeholders:

1. Do we have a clearly articulated program model with measurable objectives and outcomes?
2. Do we know what we want to know? In other words, do we have statistical or descriptive information about the program?
3. Who do we want to know more about? For instance, the community, the girls, or a particular program activity?
4. What method might we use for collecting information or data (e.g., focus groups, interviews, ethnographic observation or community mapping)?
5. How will we understand or analyze the data once it is collected?
6. Do we have a plan for using the evaluation findings from our data analysis to build our organizational sustainability? In other words, how will we incorporate our evaluation into program development, grant writing or community education?

If the answer to some or all of these six questions is **no** – read on– this guide is for you!

Remember that the goal of evaluation research is to engage your stakeholders, including the program's girl participants and their parents. They should be engaged in answering these questions hand-in-hand with program staff.

It may also be helpful to think about core principles that will guide how your program conducts its evaluation. Here are a few principles to consider:

- **One size does not fit all** – evaluations must be designed to suit the specific capacity of your organization.

- **Participation is key** – program stakeholders, especially girls and parents, should have input in the design, process and implementation of the evaluation.
- **Evaluation should either be based on your program's model** or methodology of youth development or it should **provide basic information for building a model** for your program.
- If you are using an outside evaluator, **program evaluation should be viewed as an equal partnership** between the evaluator and the program stakeholders. Both seek answers of relevance to the program and both are responsible for maintaining the integrity of the evaluation.
- **Training in evaluation skills should be provided to stakeholders in the program**—both those who are participating in the program now and those who may participate in the future.
- **Understanding the evaluation results** and their application is the job of all members of the program.

STEP 2

One way to think about program models is to explore how your organization and its activities encourage social activism and social change. You may be able to determine the model that your program uses by assessing at which levels, or spheres of influence, your program creates communities of support for strong, healthy girls. The four levels are:

- The **individual level:** strategies focus on increasing individual girl's knowledge and skills, self-esteem and self-confidence.
- The **social network level:** strategies create stronger relationship among girls, with their families and friends, and with women in the programs and in the community.
- The **community level:** girls' programs focus on creating new and broader opportunities for girls and challenging the values and belief systems that create negative experiences for girls.
- The **institutional level:** strategies focus on social change activities that impact institutional and systemic practices and norms that affect girls.

At each of these levels of intervention, girls acquire skills that make

them more confident, assured and better positioned in their worlds. In the Collaborative Fund, a number of programs focused their strategies on the individual and social network levels—developing girls' individual leadership skills or abilities to engage their peers in educational or organizing efforts. Other programs focused on the community and institutional levels—conducting door-to-door campaigns to challenge transportation system inequities or conducting surveys in schools aimed at identifying and changing sexual harassment practices.

It is the combination of these strategies that makes for real change in girls' lives and provides girls with tools to actualize change. You should design your program's evaluation process to capture data at each of the levels at which you work with girls to make change in their lives and to support girls as agents of social change.

Using a logic model can help you clarify the spheres on which your program activities focus by making connections among strategies and outcomes, and goals and objectives. The Collaborative Fund used a

Program Planning Matrix to develop the logic model and to create a uniform format for the twelve grantee programs. We designed the Program Planning Matrix as a outcome-based approach in order to allow community members, participants, and program staff to flesh out the strategies their programs use to achieve their goals and objectives. The practical point of evaluation is to get program participants to think about how and why they do what they do. Each program in the Collaborative Fund developed a planning matrix by involving girls in the assessment of how their program works based on the following categories:

- **Strategy** = an approach to a particular problem or dilemma
- **Assumption** = an underlying belief that may be based on theory, individual experience or community perception that determines the approach to a particular issue or situation
- **Domain** = the location or configuration that the overall program activity or intervention is designed to affect (i.e., school, family, neighborhood)
- **Goal** = the big picture object or end of the intervention

- **Objectives** = the goals of the intervention stated in terms of who is involved and what is accomplished, by when and where
- **Activities** = the mechanisms used to engage individuals, communities, and systems in the intervention
- **Outcomes** = the projected effects of an intervention on an individual, social network, community, or institution
- **Evaluation** = potential measures, instruments and methodologies for determining the effectiveness of the intervention

PROGRAM PLANNING MATRIX

	Individual (Example)	Social Network	Community	Institution
Strategies	To train girls to do ethnographic observation.			
Assumptions	Girls observe and feel things in ways that either alienate them or move them to action.			
Domains	Girls in school setting.			
Goals	To see the world as girls see it.			
Objectives	To conduct ethnographic observation once a month in four sites in the school setting (gym, assembly, halls, classroom) to observe female-to-female interactions and communication.			
Activities	Observation, writing up field notes, conducting debriefings with staff, conducting focus groups to discuss findings.			
Outcomes	Depiction and analysis of female-to-female interactions and communication in the school.			
Evaluation	Identify five themes emerging from the observation to be further explored with girls in the focus groups.			

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STEP 3

Often youth programs are engaged in more activities than they know how to manage, much less evaluate. Some activities have a real effect and some don't, and we may have a hard time deciding whether to keep doing them or not. Connecting strategies with measurable outcomes will help us make good decisions and ensure that resources and energy are being focused where they can have the most effect.

The work that programs do often has multiple outcomes—some anticipated and some not anticipated. These outcomes stem from certain program beliefs and goals. Programs for girls often want to impact girls in terms of leadership development. For the purposes of evaluation, it is important to be able to break down concepts like leadership development into its most basic elements. Programs should ask questions like: What would leadership look like for this particular group of girls? Do we want to know what we are doing to build leadership? Do we want to know how we are developing leadership? Do we want to know the effect that our leadership building strategies are having on girls? Once you define these large outcome concepts, you will be better able to determine what it is you want to know. There are many ways of thinking about outcomes. Here are two general categories:

1) Process Evaluation: Are we doing what we planned?

Process evaluation focuses on how the program or strategy is actually operating and what resources, such as staff time and money, are going into the program component being evaluated. These effort questions link program resources to outcomes. Do resource expenditures, program objectives and activities, and staff skills match what was originally planned? Do they support the program's goals?

2) Outcome Evaluation: What effect are we having and how well are we meeting our goals?

Outcome evaluation helps answer questions of program effectiveness. Are we achieving the outcomes we have defined for the program? This kind of evaluation helps you to know whether a particular strategy is leading to the desired result, or whether something else might make your program more effective.

STEP 4

DEVELOP EVALUATION QUESTIONS

One of the most important steps in developing an evaluation for your program—and one of the steps most often missed—is simply deciding what it is you want to know. What stage of program development are you in? The question that directs your research could be formative, such as, "Who is our target population for this project?" Or it could be a summative question, such as, "How has our target population been affected by our strategies?"

In determining what you want to know about your work, remember to break your question down into manageable pieces and to avoid broad questions like, "Are we making a difference?" In developing the questions that guide your research, it is important to think about the following elements:

What/who does your program want to affect?
- Target population (i.e., African American 14-year-old girls or middle school girls)
- Environmental factors/domains (i.e., family interaction or peer relationships)
- Behavior/ knowledge (i.e., What is the relationship between environment, education and violent behavior?)
- Social or cultural conditions (i.e., teen pregnancy)
- Institutions (i.e., school-based efforts)

How does your program approach making changes?
- What are the strategies that your program will employ to effect the changes it wants to have on the lives of girls?
- What are your program's assumptions, goals, measurable objectives and activities for each of its strategies? (See Program Planning Matrix)

What does your program want to learn from what it is doing?
- Do you want to know if you met your objectives?
- Do you want to know what it meant for the girls involved?
- Do you want to know how girls' behaviors changed as a result of the program?
- Do you want to know how a school perceived your efforts? Or what did this or another institution do to hinder or facilitate your strategies?
- How will what you learn from the evaluation process affect your program? How will the information gathered be used in planning future programs, educating the community, or responding to a donor request?

Remember to keep your evaluation project small and manageable. You should only ask a few questions; otherwise you will not complete the project. This might be an ideal project in which a graduate student from a local university can get involved. And girls should be involved in the evaluation project every step of the way.

It is critical that you answer these questions at the beginning of your evaluation effort. If you spend time figuring this out on the front end of your evaluation and revisit your questions throughout the process, your evaluation will give you better and more focused data.

STEP 5

CHOOSE METHODS FOR GATHERING DATA

You will want to choose a method or methods for collecting data according to the evaluation questions you have asked. If what you want to know how the girls act and interact in the program or how the community interacts with girls and the program, you will want to use contextual methods like ethnography and videography. If you want to capture the perspectives of girls in your program, journaling, photojournaling and interviews are good vehicles for data collection. Community stakeholders like parents and teachers have important, and sometimes different, perspectives about program activities. These might be best collected in focus groups.

If, however, you want to record information about the quantity, frequency, rate, level of effort, or utilization of information or change, your methods should be quantitative in nature. For the most part, the Collaborative Fund's research was qualitative in that it was designed to illustrate the context and content of programs and girls' experience in those programs.

Ethnography and Videography
Ethnography and videography are examples of qualitative research that capture the context of your program—the setting, "live" activities, staff—participant relationships and observations of girls' experiences.

In ethnographic observation, the staff person or researcher observing young people engaged in program activities acts as the "eyes" of the evaluation. For example, in conducting ethnographic observation at a school, the young women researchers might identify four themes regarding interpersonal communication among their peers: unfriendly behavior; girls ganging up on other girls; girls supporting each other in sporting activities; and girls just hanging out together. The purpose of this observation is to capture the "real" interactions of girls and young women as they develop, maintain, break and rebuild relationships. At a minimum, for ethnographic observation you need resources such as log sheets, worksheets for field notes, an outline for debriefing with staff and a protocol to conduct focus groups.

With videography the camera acts as the "eyes" of the evaluation. The purpose of this form of observation is to reveal the real day-to-day workings of the programs and the girls in the programs—not staged activities. The trick to ethnography and videography is to "keep it real" and to show how and if girls' relationships and experiences in their program change over time. At minimum, for videography you need resources such as a video camera and a VCR.

Journals, Interviews and Focus Groups
The best way to find out what girls think about their program and their experiences is to ask them. Yet this isn't necessarily straightforward—girls can often give frustratingly short answers to questions. To conduct data collection and research through journals, interviews and focus groups, you will want to think carefully about what you want to know, the right questions to ask and in what sequence and format to ask them.

For the purpose of evaluating girls' perspectives in the Collaborative Fund, we developed a series of questions related to the issues of safe space, leadership, and social change. These questions served as a frame for girls' journal writing, and interviews and focus groups

with girls. Some of the questions we asked of girls included:

- What are some of the things in the program that make you feel safe?
- What are the spaces outside the program where you feel safe?
- Are your values and your families' values the same or different?
- If you could change your community, what would you change about it?

Photojournals and Interviews

Photojournaling can be a particularly effective way to involve young women in the documentation of their programs. Photojournaling is a method of recording data that utilizes a camera to capture images while girls keep brief journal notes to document what each picture is meant to capture. To help guide girls in this process, you should meet with them to decide in advance what they will be focusing on with their photography. This discussion should also involve an explanation of how to answer questions with photos. For example, one program created photojournals as a way to capture the lives and experiences of young immigrant women. Through the photojournals they were able to analyze what

it meant to be immigrants in the United States, what it meant to be young immigrants, and what it meant to be supported by other young women in the program.

The point of photojournaling is not to produce a photo collection of girls at events but, rather, to collect pictures of girls involved in program activities that can be analyzed as evaluation data. Further, when photos are targeted toward a goal, they can more easily be turned into photo-novellas and exhibits to present to the public.

There are many other methods your program can use to collect data in order to answer the evaluation and research questions you have posed, including **surveys** and **community mapping**. (Please see Appendix B, Methods of Evaluation.)

The Collaborative Fund's Program Assessment Tools

The Collaborative Fund's evaluation research process created three new program assessment tools to gather data and answer its research questions—the Girl-Driven Program Index (GDPI); the Voice, Action, Comportment, Opportunity Checklist (VACO);

and the Intentional Storytelling Measure (ISM). The tools were based on the experiences and questions formulated by the staff and youth participants of the twelve grantee programs. For that reason, they are very specific in their focus. They may be applicable to your program as they are, or they may need to be tailored to meet the unique characteristics and questions posed by your program (see the GDPI, VACO and ISM for instructions on how to use the tools and for tips on how to analyze and interpret your findings).

The Collaborative Fund developed these specific tools because, at the time, there were no evaluation tools that could answer our questions about the creation of safe space for girls, the growth of leadership skills over time, and the impact of social change work on girls. In addition, the development of new tools was a critical and integral part of the whole participatory process as all the partners to the Collaborative Fund were deeply invested in developing tools that reflected the "real" life experiences of the girls and young women, and program staff in the grantee organizations.

STEP 6

In developing a plan for evaluation, it is important to decide in advance how much data you are going to collect and how the data collection process will proceed. There are many considerations, including the number of participants needed to get enough data to answer your questions, the timeframe for data collection and analysis and the frequency of data collection. By thinking about these things ahead of time, you can make some decisions about resources and support that will be important in keeping girls engaged and keeping everyone's interest in the evaluation.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is crucial to decide in advance who will be responsible for collecting what data. This has to be factored into program staff's job responsibilities and hours at work, into girls' program time and into your budget if you are bringing in an outside evaluator.

Deciding on the Sampling

In developing a plan for evaluation research it is important to know ahead of time how you are going to manage the data collection. There are a number of things to consider, including number of participants, timeframe for data collection, and analysis and frequency of data collection activities. The Collaborative Fund chose the following:

■ **Number of participants:** Data was gathered on 75 percent of the girls enrolled in each program, but not less than 10 girls per program.

Many programs that serve girls are small, so it may be important to include all the girls in order to have an adequate number for your evaluation findings.

■ **Timeframe:** The time frame for collecting data was six months.

In order to document change over time it is necessary to sequence evaluation methods. This time frame will depend on how long the girl/youth participants are in the program.

■ **Frequency of Methods Used:** Three focus groups, or sets of interviews (Method C) were conducted, one with girls, one with parents and one with community or institutional stakeholders. The journaling method was done by girls for six months.

In deciding how often to collect data it is important to think about program/staff/participant capacity. You do not want to over evaluate programs so that everyone feels like they are always being measured.

■ **Applications of the Tools:** The VACO was administered by staff and three girls three times in six months; the ISM was administered twice during the six-month period; and the GDPI once at the end of the six-month data collection period.

When using specific tools it is important to administer them consistently — often with the same people in the same way — for the sake of consistent data.

STEP 7

Just about the last thing anyone wants to do in their busy day is collect data, so it is important to simplify the process whenever pos-sible. For example, Collaborative Fund programs that kept cameras in an easily accessible place with clear assignments and schedules for taking photos had the most suc-cessful photojournaling projects.

Once you have your sampling plan in place, you need to decide how you are going to organize and store the data. This may seem like a small thing, but lost or misplaced data is demoralizing for people who have worked hard to collect it. So plan ahead for where you are going to store videotapes, and cassette tapes of

interviews or journals. It is also important to have a simple system in place to keep track of data as it is gathered (e.g., maintaining a log sheet that includes informa-tion about who, what, when and where data was collected). One person should be responsible for this task, writing down the necessary information.

STEP 8

Data analysis can be intimidating for people involved in programs who are not researchers and who may feel that they don't have the necessary skills. The truth of the matter is that all the work of program development, evaluation and collecting data is data analysis. Determining the best strategies for making a difference in the lives of a particular group of girls is a process of analysis that is based on experience, practice, feedback from girls and knowledge of the characteristics of the particular culture in which the program takes place.

Girls' involvement in data analysis is not something that can be appended at the end of the process, but rather it should be embedded throughout the evaluation. When preparing to meet with girls and to bring them into the evaluation process as equal partners, staff must consider:

- The role of girls in defining and refining the research questions and data collection methods.
- The role of girls in collecting the data and determining what is significant to them in relation to their research questions.

Simply defined, analysis is a process of understanding data in relation to a particular set of variables, such as age, gender, situation, behavior or cultural context. It is a dialogue between a set of data and a set of variables. Analysis begins with the formulation of your hypothesis, your underlying program assumption or ideology, and continues through the development of your evaluation questions and the collection and organization of your data.

In order to extract the critical elements and themes that emerge from your data, you will want to develop a **unified coding theme** that will help you categorize the data in a way that helps answer your research question. For instance, if you are looking for examples of leadership such as a girl speaking in public, facilitating a meeting or solving a problem, you can look at data from multiple methods or data collected at different points in time to see if the same or different themes emerge.

Another example of data analysis is how the Collaborative Fund used videography to answer questions about safe space. Over and over

again in the tapes we saw that if girls were physically interactive with each other, then their connection was emotional as well as physical. Girls' comfortable physical contact was an indicator that they were in a safe space. This theme was also evident in girls' journals and in ethnographic observations of girls in the programs. All of these observations were included in the coding scheme to analyze "safe space."

Coding

The following steps were taken to analyze the data that was generated by the Collaborative Fund's program assessment tools:

- First, the Learning Team met to analyze the research questions and the data gathered to that point. The purpose of the meeting was to come up with crosscutting sub themes or codes that were relevant and universal to the key themes of the three research questions: "Safe Space," "Leadership" and "Social Change." Some crosscutting themes included the cultural and community context in which programs exist and operate, negotiation of or resistance

to the backlash against girl-only programs, and the impact of girls on being in the program.

■ The Learning Team then convened a small workgroup comprising program staff and girls to discuss and further refine these codes.

■ A code book and coding sheets were developed based on the key ideas and themes recurrent in the data so we could integrate the diverse types of data that the programs generated.

■ Coding guidelines were developed to make sure that the qualitative and quantitative data was analyzed consistently. At least two people looked at each set of data and compared their coding.

You can use these and other steps to develop your own coding scheme.

Analyzing Data Generated by Focus Groups

Focus group data can provide you with the perspectives offered by program participants. The data can be coded to tell how often a particular response was given. This can give you a sense of the most important themes. For instance, in reviewing the focus group transcript you might note that having a safe space for girls is mentioned as important by four of the seven participants fifteen times. From these responses, you glean that safe space is important to program participants. The next step might be to analyze the different perspectives that girls and staff may have on safe space so that you can assess how well the program is doing at creat-

ing and maintaining safe space. Focus group responses could be used to modify a tool like the Girl Driven Program Index, which provides a checklist of elements that make a program a safe space for girls. This type of evaluation process ensures that adults and young people in a program are, literally, speaking the same language.

Analyzing Data Generated by Photojournaling and Interviews

Prior to analyzing the data gathered from photojournaling, meet with the young women researchers to decide what to focus on in the photography and how to answer questions with photos. Remind them that the purpose of photojournaling is to capture what the program means in girls' lives. There are two basic ways of doing this that staff should consider before meeting with the girls:

■ Having the girls be the "lens" or the instrument for the research by asking them to record what is most significant, what they have learned or whatever you decide you want them to focus on. In this way, each girl's photos are a record of her experience.

■ Ask the girls to document specific things about the program, such as the development of close relationships with staff or examples of girls' leadership or the program's relationship with the community through community work. This way the girls' own experience is not being captured as much as they are recording what happens in the program

in a specific area.

■ Develop a clear question that you can post in the girls' work area and also that girls can keep in a notebook with their photo journaling log sheets. Girls should record why they took each photo or each series of photos. They should explain what the photo is about and how it answers the research question. The question that you and the girls develop should:

■ Refer to something that can be seen. So, for example, to take photos of how girls' ideas of themselves change through being in the program would not make sense.

■ Involve activities and events that are part of program life so that the photos are interesting and engaging.

Interviews were used by the YWAT to capture the experiences of girls in the programs. The interviews were to be conducted twice—once at the beginning of the six-month data collection period, and once at the end using two sets of predetermined questions. The purpose of these questions was to provide qualitative data from the girls' perspective on the experience of being in these programs. The data collected through these interviews was coded using the thematic codes developed by the Learning Team and compared with the findings from the other methods to see whether it supported or contradicted these findings. In this way the comparison data served as a

test for the validity of the overall research findings.

Analyzing Data from Ethnographic Observation and Videograpy

To analyze the data gathered through **ethnographic observation** or **videography**, you can follow these steps:

1. Identify several themes that are important for you to analyze more deeply. For example, girls' connections with one another or girls' participation in meetings.

2. Looking at the initial video-tapes, write down examples from the tapes that show the particular theme you are looking for. Do the same thing for later tapes. This is an ideal exercise in which to involve girls.

3. Compare what you see. Are there any changes over time? Ask girls what they see as the differences.

4. You can write this up into a paragraph that describes both scenes and the differences between them. Or, if you are using videotape, edit together the "before" and "after" examples and have girls narrate an explanation of what the differences are. Be creative with this — it could make a great short piece for a presentation in the community or to funders.

STEP 9

As you analyze and code the data you have collected, you will begin to see trends, themes and nuggets of information that relate to your evaluation questions. The interpretation of these findings includes a process of reflection and engagement in a "dialogue with the data." Evaluation is a living process, not a static one. It provides you with glimpses of insight and understanding in relation to your work at different points in time. That is why evaluation and the process of analyzing and interpreting data and findings is an ongoing process. It is important to collect new data so that you can keep up with the quickly changing "world" that is your youth program. Each time you see new data or reflect on previous data, you will see nuances of information that you may not have seen the first time. You may also see some findings that are repeated, which will affirm your primary themes and help you talk about the effect of your program even more strongly. The persistent emergence of these themes will help you represent your program more effectively and make more clear decisions with other members of your program.

The issue of girl-on-girl conflict, for instance, was a consistent theme throughout the various methods employed by programs in the Collaborative Fund. It appeared in girls' journals, in videographies and observations and in interviews with girls. It was a constant theme in the VACO, GDPI, and ISM data. Each of these methods helped us understand more deeply the many levels of conflict among girls and the debilitating effect it was having on their emotional and physical well being. This data allowed program staff to consult with and support one another to resolve the root causes of tensions and conflicts—often the results of external social pressures that girls in the program internalized and/or displaced onto one another.

If you ever get stumped, just return to the primary question: **What do we want to know?** Think about your evaluation and research questions. Think about your hypothesis or the underlying assumption of your efforts. What do the evaluation findings tell you? Be open to the data and findings. Unexpected results can be powerful and help strengthen your program.

STEP 10

APPLY THE FINDINGS TO YOUR WORK

With the tools and skills that you develop collecting data, you can continue evaluation work to learn more about your program, how it works and how it can be improved over time. Evaluation research can also give you new ways of thinking and talking about what you do as part of program development, community education and resource development. There may be additional core research that you want to do to show others the positive effects of your program on girls. This might mean, for example, finding a way to document the development of leadership through videography or adapting the ISM and VACO assessment tools for your program. The best way to show that your program has an effect is to demonstrate real changes in girls' lives over time. Simple data collection methods are critical in order to achieve and sustain this.

Each year, at a staff or board retreat, you might think about what program evaluation or documentation you want to achieve in the coming year. Because it is a time-consuming process that should involve all of the stakeholders in your program, planning out the research in advance is essential. Keep in mind that collecting information over time to show how girls change and grow in their program is an important way to "prove" to others the value of your program. This means that assessment tools like the VACO must be applied consistently or that the same journal questions must be asked of girls on a regular basis.

The final thing to think about is how you are going to communicate clear messages about your evaluation research results to the audiences you want to reach. Strategic messages about your findings will help you effectively approach funders, work with parents, develop relationships within the community and recruit girls to your program.

- The trick is to determine one or two major messages that will work best for each of the different groups with which you want to communicate.
- Identify the audience you most want to affect—for instance girls, parents or teachers—and write the findings in language they can relate to.
- Make a case for the effectiveness and value of your program based on the "evidence" of your evaluation. For instance, explain that changes in girls' knowledge or differences in the ways girls connect with one another are a direct result of your program's trainings and team-building exercises.
- Choose the best vehicle to communicate your message to the specific audience you want to reach. For instance, parents might respond best to a letter or brochure while girls may respond best to an interactive presentation or skit.

GIRLS AND PROGRAM STAFF—
BECOMING OUR OWN EXPERTS

Participatory evaluation research enables girls to be the subjects of their own lives and the experts on what works and does not work when it comes to developing their capacity for leadership and ability to understand social change actions. The Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women put girls and young women at the center of our research process for two reasons. First, far

dards, it was easy at times to lose sight of what it means to keep girls at the center. Girls and young women were quick to remind us if they were not being treated as equals. Through this process we learned that "participatory" means reciprocal and that equality requires consistency, patience and letting go of assumptions that there is one right way to conduct research.

"Research is important to use because it may unlock many things you thought you knew, but didn't — using research can help you find the true answers." -Young Woman Researcher

too often, girls are not given the opportunity to speak their truth to those who pose as authorities on what's wrong with them. Most research on girls, especially low-income girls, girls of color and immigrant girls, highlights their problems and risks and downplays their assets and strengths. Too much research on girls and young people asks only those research questions related to deficiencies and dangers. Too little research asks questions that address what resources girls and young people need and deserve to manifest their strengths and provide leadership in their communities.

The second reason we made girls equal partners in our participatory evaluation research is also an asset-based rationale. Girls really are extremely effective gatherers, organizers and analysts of the data that document their lives. Girls are honest, relentless and closest to the sources of authentic data. Because we wanted to conduct research that stays true to girls, it only made sense to thoroughly involve girls in the research process.

But even in the Collaborative Fund's own research process, under the pressure of deadlines and the influence of "professional" training and academic stan-

Evaluation research does not have to be academic, formulaic or bureaucratic. Rather, it can be fun and engaging even as it legitimates and empowers our work. Evaluation research can provide us with a scientific method for documenting the real and powerful results of working with young people to change the world. It is also a tool we can make our own and translate into a language that bridges gaps of age, culture and experience.

The results of participatory evaluation research can and should be shared with local media, foundations and other non-profit organizations and community-based projects that need to know the significance of working with youth. The results allow us—girl-centered and other youth projects—to speak for ourselves instead of letting others speak for us.

Most importantly, effective research tells us what youth programs are doing right and what they need to improve. Evaluation research can tell us with authority that youth development and engagement work with girls is having an impact toward changing the world. And when girls are involved in documenting this impact, we know that the changes will be sustained and increased as girls carry the message of their work and their worth to the world.

APPENDIX A

THE EVALUATION RESEARCH DESIGN OF
THE COLLABORATIVE FUND FOR HEALTHY GIRLS/HEALTHY WOMEN

Hypothesis: Girl involvement in girl-driven programs leads to an increase in girls' leadership skills and qualities, which leads to an increase in their ability to take action, resulting in strong and healthy girls.

Methods	Learning Question #1 How do we define, create and maintain girl-driven programs which provide safe space for girls within programs and communities?	Learning Question #2 How do we know that a program contributes to developing girl's leadership qualities and strengths? And how do the values and activities of the program conflict with, or enhance, the values of their culture or community?	Learning Question #3 What is the effect, on girls and their communities, of their involvement in social change work (e.g., organizing, community service, policy advocacy, community activism)?	YWAT Learning Question How does being in a program impact girls' lives?
Method A Videotaping Ethnography Fieldnotes Participant observation (choose one)	Videotaping Ethnography Fieldnotes Participant observation	Videotaping Ethnography Fieldnotes Participant observation	Videotaping Ethnography Fieldnotes Participant observation	
Method B Quantitative Instruments	Girl-Driven Program Index	VACO Checklist	Intentional Storytelling Measure (ISM)	
Method C Interviews Focus Groups Journaling (choose one)	Interviews, Focus Groups, Journaling	Interviews, Focus Groups, Journaling	Interviews, Focus Groups, Journaling	
Method D YWAT		Photojournaling and Interviews		Photojournaling and Interviews

Hypothesis:

Girls' involvement in girl-driven programs leads to an increase in leadership skills and qualities, which leads to an increase in their ability to act as agents for social change in four spheres of their lives:

a) at the individual level (to change attitudes and behaviors of individual girls),

b) at the social network level (to create changes in family members and peers),

c) at the community level (to create changes in values, attitudes and practice) and

d) at the institutional level (to create changes in the institutions that affect their lives).

Developing Research/Learning Questions

The following three broad questions were designed to test this hypothesis. Each question corresponded to one piece of the hypothesis this study was attempting to test. For each question, there were a series of sub-questions that further described and defined the question.

Question 1: (regarding characteristics and involvement in girl-driven programs) *"How do we define, create and maintain girl-driven programs which provide safe space for girls within programs and communities?"*

Question 2: (regarding acquisition of leadership skills) *"How do we know that a program contributes to developing girl's leadership qualities and strengths?" and "How do the values and activities of the program conflict with, or enhance, the values of their culture or community?"*

Question 3: (regarding ability to act as agents for social change) *"What is the effect, on girls and their communities, of their involvement in social change work* (e.g., organizing, community service, policy advocacy, community activism)?"

Method of Data Collection

In choosing the multiple methods that would be used to answer the research questions posed by the Collaborative Fund, both qualitative and quantitative methods were chosen. The twelve grantee organizations chose one method each from categories A and

C. All programs administered all three measures in Method B, and girls from each program participated in Method D (which was designed and implemented by girls).

Method Category A: Open-ended, experiential-based methods were used to describe the programs and the context in which they happen within geographic, familial and cultural communities. The method options were:

- **Videography** - videotaping and cataloging of program and community activities
- **Ethnography** - participant observation and field notes of program and community activities seen through the eyes of program staff and girls

Method Category B: Quantitative survey instruments were developed by the Learning Team and the program staff to capture what change in girls requires and what it looks like when it happens.

- **Girl Driven Program Index (GDPI)** - which focused on defining and creating safe space
- **Voice, Action, Comportment, and Opportunity Checklist (VACO)** - which described incremental change in girls' leadership skills and qualities
- **The Intentional Storytelling Measure (ISM)** - which explored the development of girls' ability to act as agents for change

Method Category C: These interview-based approaches focused on gaining perspectives of girls and parents about the program and what it means in girls' lives.

- **Journaling** by girls based on a set of prepared questions.
- Individual **interviews** using prepared questions.
- **Focus groups** using prepared questions.

Method Category D: These methods were chosen by the Young Women's Action Team (YWAT), representing the twelve programs, who were trained in evaluation, and who designed their own evaluation process. Two methods were employed by girls across the program sites:

- **Photojournaling** - taking pictures and talking about what the pictures meant in relation to the YWAT research question
- **Interviews** - girls interviewing other girls in the program using a set of questions created by the YWAT members

Deciding on the Sampling

For the Collaborative Fund evaluation, the following sampling was chosen:

1. **Number of participants:** Data was gathered on 75 percent of the girls enrolled in each program, but not less than 10 girls per program.
2. **Timeframe:** The time frame for collecting data was six months.
3. **Frequency of Methods Used:** Three focus groups, or sets of interviews (Method C) were conducted, one with girls, one with parents and one with community or institutional stakeholders. The journaling method was done by girls for six months.
4. **Applications of the Tools:** The VACO was administered by staff and three girls three times in six months; the ISM was administered twice during the six-month period; and the GDPI once at the end of the six-month data collection period.

Methods of Data Analysis

Each method of data collection requires a particular method of analysis. For Methods in category A, the data will be analyzed using techniques of content analysis (identifying themes and patterns within the data in order to understand patterns of information). For methods in category B, appropriate statistical analyses (understanding numerical data that is assembled, classified and/or tabulated so as to present significant information about a given subject) will be utilized to indicate the variance between respondents. For Method C, the analysis will be according to themes that emerge from the interview findings. Methods A and C require qualitative approaches. Method B will require quantitative strategies. A codebook was developed to ensure consistency in coding among the researchers. This codebook was developed with program staff and girls identifying relevant themes as they emerged in the data and relating those to the

research questions. For instance, in viewing the hours of videotape taken as a part of the videography we looked for visual expressions of unity, connection among girls, self-expression, power sharing among girls and between girls and staff. These themes were identified as a part of the unified coding scheme that was used across all the data as a way of integrating diverse types of data that the programs generated. The coding scheme is designed to respond to the three major research questions as well as capture responses to themes that were significant across all three questions.

Developing the Program Assessment Tools

Three assessment tools were developed with the youth programs funded by the Collaborative Fund, under the direction of the Learning Team. They were created in response to specific questions that program staff and participants had about their programs. Through this process, certain questions and themes emerged repeatedly as core to the programs' experience and concerns about their effectiveness. One measure per research question was developed to gather quantifiable information. The research questions arose out of an intensive period of capacity building, technical assistance, meetings of program representatives and a convening of representatives of all programs.

1. The **Girl-Driven Program Index (GDPI)** is a one-time assessment of program assumptions, structure, and content, and the degree to which a program involves girls in leadership and decision-making. The GDPI provides a simple means of assessing how responsive a program is to the youth involved. The research question that the GDPI responds to is: *How do we define, create and maintain safe space for girls within programs and communities?*

   The GDPI was designed to be used as a one-time assessment of program philosophy and the degree to which it involves girls in leadership and decision-making. The GDPI provides a simple means of assessing how responsive a program is to the youth involved.

2. The **Voice, Action, Comportment & Opportunity Checklist** (VACO) is a pre-test, post-test (with an

additional administration halfway through the programming cycle) measure to assess the everyday, incremental development of leadership skills in girls. The VACO was originally developed for staff to use as an observation tool. It was also found to be effective as a tool for girls' self-reflection. This measure responds to the second research question: *How do we know that our program contributes to developing girls' strengths and leadership?*

The VACO was developed to give program staff and girls a way of chronicling girls' development as it happens day to day. Some programs have used it as part of staff development and evaluation for young women moving into staff positions in the organization.

3. The **Intentional Story-Telling Measure** (ISM) is a series of scenarios that require girls to think about how they would respond to challenging situations in their day-to-day lives. The intent is to measure the development of leadership and social change skills such as critical thinking skills, problem solving, and the ability to advocate on behalf of self and others. It is designed to see whether girls perceive themselves as capable of acting as agents for change with their peers, families and communities. This measure helps answer the question: *What is the effect on girls and on their communities of their involvement in social change work* (e.g., organizing, community service, policy advocacy and community activism)?

The ISM was developed to try to understand how girls develop their sense of efficacy and agency in taking on the hard issues that confront them on a daily basis. Some programs have developed their own scenarios based on the lives of the girls in their programs to be able to track their responses and to use this information in determining next steps in program development.

APPENDIX B

EVALUATION METHODS

Evaluation Method	Type of Data	Target Group	Purpose of Data
Community Surveys	Quick and dirty information on how people feel about a particular issue.	Man/woman/youth on the street or in congregate settings.	Get an idea of general attitudes and beliefs of community members without filter.
Interviews	More in-depth understanding of people's experiences of particular issues in their own words.	People who have some personal experience that has relevance to the issue you want to know about.	Use in development of educational campaign or activities, development of engagement strategies, development of services.
Focus Groups	Feedback on perspectives of individuals within a group context that leads to deeper discussion and illustrative interaction.	Groups of people with shared characteristic or experience (i.e., of a particular community, parents of girls in program, teachers).	Provides insight into how your program/issue is perceived by a particular group of constituents that can help shape program activities or educational approaches.
Videography/ Ethnography	A visual or descriptive look at the issue/program, framing it within an environmental context. Gives information about how the culture of the group works.	Participants in activities, people in the community.	Provides an understanding of the frame in which an issue or program functions.
Community Mapping	Maps the terrain and interactive patterns of a community or group, including transportation patterns, access, congregate settings, public behaviors and gatekeepers.	Gatekeepers and stakeholders, people in community.	Provides a cultural blueprint for understanding a group or community that informs outreach, organizing and educational or program services.

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