

THE NEW GIRLS'
MOVEMENT:
CHARTING
THE PATH

HGHW

COLLABORATIVE
FUND FOR
HEALTHY GIRLS
HEALTHY WOMEN

2

PREFACE

4

THE NEW GIRLS' MOVEMENT: CHARTING THE PATH

14

THE GRANTEE PARTNERS 2000

THE NEW GIRLS' MOVEMENT: CHARTING THE PATH

P R E F A C E

This is not another somber, sobering account of girls "at risk," but a celebratory chronicle of girls "at strength." This report is not based on the premise that girls are problems; rather it proceeds from the belief that girls are assets to their communities. This report presents cutting-edge work by girls and their allies—proof that girls and young women are not on the verge of crisis, but are making positive change in the world around them. This report offers highlights and findings from the Ms. Foundation for Women's Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women, an effort to document girls' leadership and to nurture girls' inherent strengths and abilities by supporting activism by girls and young women.

In the early 1990s, the Ms. Foundation for Women began this work by documenting the dearth of girls' programming and the failure of existing youth programs to serve the needs of girls. It was a call to funders to support programs that foster the healthy development and social activism of girls and young women.

This challenge was taken up through the Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women, designed to redefine and strengthen the field of girls' and young women's programming. The Collaborative is a partnership among researchers, funders, and the girls, young women, and program staff of grantee organizations. These partners set out to discover how girls' programming fosters the inherent strengths, leadership abilities, and health of girls. The Collaborative Fund uses a broad definition of health, which focuses on girls' strengths and interdependence with others. It works on the premise that fostering girls' resilience and activism will greatly

increase their chances of maturing from healthy girls to healthy women. The Collaborative helps fill the vacuum of too little girl-centered programming and almost nonexistent girl-positive research. Through this work we know that:

- *Creating safe space is a "bottom line" issue, both in terms of girls' physical safety and their ability to be themselves and find their voice.*
- *Our understanding of leadership must be refined and redefined to reflect girls' culture, strengths, challenges, and aspirations.*
- *Intergenerational relationships among girls and women are key to the development of healthy girls.*
- *Activism is a critical element of girls' struggle for identity and recognition—girls see themselves as agents of change.*

■ *Participatory research provides the means to develop tools to document the impact of girls' work and a language to articulate their strengths.*

Program staff and the girls and young women program participants were actively involved in all stages of the design. They established program outcomes for which they held themselves accountable, sharpened skills in evaluating their own programs, created a process of feedback and reflection for themselves, and met with other programs within the Collaborative to share knowledge and experience. They put a halt to any notion of researchers studying them; they were studying themselves.

Unfortunately, the message that girls can change the world is still often unheard. When attention has

text. To our grantee partners, program staff and directors, and girls and young women participants, thank you for sharing and modeling what true girls' work is all about. To our donor partners, foundation and corporate staff, and family and individual donors, thank you for believing in this work, and supporting the process of design, grantmaking and learning. To the current Learning Team of researchers and scholars, P. Catlin Fullwood (director of the first round Collaborative Fund), Elizabeth Debold and Dana Davis (co-directors of research), and Pei Yao Chen and Jaicy John, and Beth Richie, Ana Motta-Moss and all the other researchers and scholars who made the research work possible, thank you for designing, implementing and documenting a research model that is truly participatory. To the Ms. Foundation staff who over the years have managed this Collaborative Fund, Brigitte Rouson, Judy Shoenberg, Margaret Hempel, Marisha Wignaraja and Tracie Gilstrap Murray, thank you for your

"The Collaborative has given us the sense of a new girls' movement emerging. It's a movement with common goals, strategies, and shared commitment to change the status quo."

—Nadia Moritz, program staff partner, Young Women's Project

been turned in the direction of girls, it is most often centered on potential problems, aiming to work with girls who are ostensibly "at risk." The challenge today is to move this work to the next step of partnering with positive youth development proponents to enable a movement of girls and young women across the country who are leading youth in their schools, communities and country.

We are proud of where we have taken this work, and know that there is more to look forward to. We would like to thank the partners of the Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women, who made this work possible. Your story, and the names of your

commitment and continued enthusiasm. To all those who contributed to this report, Denise Shannon (writer), Robin Templeton (writing consultant), and Judy Evans (copy editor), thank you for your tireless efforts to help document our girls' work. And finally, to Marie Wilson, Sara Gould, and Carol Gilligan, thank you for your vision and leadership, which will continue to inspire us.

Ms. Foundation for Women
November 2000

THE NEW GIRLS' MOVEMENT: CHARTING THE PATH

"My program has given me the chance to fight alongside others for social change. CAVE has taught me an art and beyond this, the art of teaching and learning."

— Karen Coto, young woman partner, Center for Anti-Violence Education

Girls can change the world. When we heed their voices, give them a safe and validating space to go, and value them for who they are and what they can do, girls and young women are indeed a mighty force for change—in their own lives, in their communities, and in the world beyond. This reality is at the heart of the Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women, a multi-year, multi-round, highly participatory project designed to redefine and strengthen the field of girls' programming. The Collaborative is a true partnership among researchers, funders, and the girls, young women, and program staff of grantee organizations. These partners have been working together to identify ways in which girls' programming can foster girls' inherent strengths, leadership abilities, and health.

Conventional youth development programming has generally not featured a particular focus on girls' and young women's needs. And when attention has been turned in the direction of girls, it is most often centered on potential problems, aiming to work

with girls who are ostensibly "at risk" of such hazards as teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, gang life, and drug abuse. The Collaborative's partners take an approach that instead concentrates on positive aspects of girls' experience and that sees girls as the subjects, not objects, of programs. The Collaborative worked with twelve girl-centered programs across the country, working in diverse low-income communities in both rural and urban settings. Each organization received three years of funding, technical assistance, and networking opportunities. The Collaborative and its wealth of collected data are living proof that healthy girls build healthy communities and that leadership opportunities help girls grow into strong and vital women.

KEEPING GIRLS HEALTHY, MAKING COMMUNITIES STRONG: LEARNING FROM GIRL-DRIVEN PROGRAMS

The Collaborative's partners set out to learn how truly girl-driven programs build girls' leadership skills and strengthen their will and ability to take action on issues

that matter to them. The Collaborative's emphasis on learning provided an opportunity to confirm this premise through research, documentation, and evaluation in the field. This was the chance to answer our key questions: What are the common denominators for effective girls' programs? How do we define, create, and maintain safe space for girls within programs and communities? How do we know that programs contribute to developing girls' strengths, health and leadership? What is the effect on girls and their communities of their involvement in social change work? Or to get right to the heart of it, as the director of the first round of the Collaborative Fund Catlin Fullwood asks, "What do girls need to save their own lives?"

The research work was spearheaded by the Learning Team, a group of researchers, practitioners and graduate students who worked with the partners to develop a participatory evaluation research model for the Collaborative Fund. Together, all the partners of the Collaborative engaged in selecting the programs and shaping the evaluation and data gathering processes to illuminate core themes. The evaluation and data gathering process was a true experiment in participatory approaches and collaboration. Program staff and the girls and young

NEW EVALUATION RESEARCH MEASURES

To measure the power and authenticity of "girls work," the Learning Team created three innovative evaluation research measures:

1 The Girl-Driven Program Index (GDPI) was developed to determine the degree to which a program is girl-driven and to identify the characteristics and assumptions of various programming models. The research question that the GDPI responds to is: How do we define, create, and maintain safe space for girls within programs and communities?

2 VACO captures program staff's observations and participants' self-reports of the incremental skills that reflect

the development of individual and collective leadership. This measure responds to the second research question: How do we know that our program contributes to developing girls' strengths and leadership?

VACO stands for:

- Voice, or girls' ability to speak on their own behalf
- Action, or girls' capacity to act on behalf of themselves and others
- Comportment, or girls' ability to carry themselves with pride, dignity, and respect
- Opportunity, or girls' ability to ask for new chances and experiences.

3 The Intentional Storytelling Measure (ISM) provides program participants an

opportunity to share their knowledge of taking action in difficult situations that confront girls. In the ISM, girls are given six different stories to respond to. This measure helps answer the question: What is the effect on girls and on their communities of their involvement in social change work?

In addition, the use of cutting-edge methodologies, such as **videography** and **ethnography**, provided the programs with new ways of capturing "things that cannot be captured on paper." They also provided a structured, but less obtrusive, way to document activities.

women program participants were actively involved in all stages of the research design. They established program outcomes for which they held themselves accountable, sharpened skills in evaluating their own programs, created a process of feedback and reflection for themselves, and met with other programs within the Collaborative to share knowledge and experience. They put a halt to any notion of researchers studying them; they were studying themselves.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

What does a girl-supportive world look like? Using a range of innovative and participatory evaluation techniques, the Collaborative's partners captured a wealth of research data that paint a picture of how programs recognize girls' voices and foster their sense of empowerment. Following are

"Through ASAP I've learned how to communicate better with people, to speak up more, and to be a leader. I've learned to say what I need to say and how to organize, lead activities and do fundraising."

— Lorena Nelson, young woman partner, After School Action Programs/Girl World

some of the key findings from the Collaborative's first round.

- As females, girls live in oft-times hostile environments. Creating safe space is a "bottom line" issue, both in terms of girls' physical safety and their ability to be themselves and find their voice.
- Girls recognize that leadership takes many forms. Our understanding of leadership must be refined and redefined to reflect girls' culture, strengths, challenges, and aspirations.

- Intergenerational relationships among girls and women are key to the development of healthy girls. They are also very challenging for programs to support and structure.
- Activism is a critical element of girls' struggle for identity and recognition by family, peers, and community. Girls see themselves as agents of change.

Safe Space

Through the evaluation processes, girls and program staff identified some of the elements needed to create a safe space for girls. A safe space must provide opportunities for participation by girls in program leadership. It is a place where confidentiality must be expected and respected. In a safe space, girls can handle conflict that arises between girls. And it is a place where girls can learn about difference.

Programs can support safe space in numerous ways. For example, they can help girls explore the political aspects of how body size is

used to divide women, and how media conditioning and other forces around them cause girls to hate and fear their bodies. The programs provide a space where girls can resist these conditions, and, in fact, the girls in the programs demonstrate grace and an easy physicality with each other. Fun—joy and pleasure—are not trivial points that girls want in a program, but crucial aspects for success. Girls' joy in being with each other is often tenuous, or has to be continually worked at, because the larger context of school and culture pits girls against other girls. Within such a world, girls

KEY LESSONS FOR GIRLS AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Effective girl-driven programs are successful in:

- Creating safe space for girls.
- Expanding the definition of and ensuring girls' leadership.
- Fostering intergenerational relationships among girls and women.
- Respecting community context and cultural self-determination.

struggle not to feel the pain of this disconnection with each other. The programs offer opportunities for girls to work through their conflicts and forge solidarity.

Leadership

There are a number of ways in which programs can foster leadership. Some of these include providing ways for girls and young women to develop critical thinking and analytic skills; taking seriously girls' challenges to each other, to staff, and to the world; taking the risk of asking girls and young women what they want—and following through on the answers; ensuring mutual accountability between staff and participants; and encouraging participants to see themselves as important.

Leadership among girls can manifest itself in ways that differ from conventionally recognized leadership skills. Girls' involvement in girl-driven programs leads to an increase in these leadership skills. The girls and young women in the Collaborative defined a new typology of leadership, as follows.

- Cascading—Older girls act as supporters and role models for younger girls
- Collective—Built on the concept of the development of the power of the group
- Survival—Utilizing skills developed in response to adversity as tools for developing leadership
- Cultural—Reclaiming values and customs to help girls claim their place in the world
- Roving—Leadership is grasped intermittently by girls; if it's in the mix, who knows who or when, but it will emerge

“There's no road map for work with girls; its exploratory and the community context is crucial because in each community the work looks different.”

— Que Dang, program staff partner, Asians and Pacific Islanders for Reproductive Health

- Organic—Raw empowerment that grows out of the girls' need for one another

The Collaborative's research found that as girls develop and show leadership, their connection with family members is fostered and tested. Within the programs, there is typically a constant awareness of reframing and renaming who girls are to themselves and to their communities. These programs consider girls to be assets and present the girls, their families, and the community with a very different image of girls than is commonly reflected in the world around them. The result appears to be a positive self-image and a growing confidence in the ability to be an effective person.

Social Change

Finally, the Learning Team set out to answer, “What is the effect on girls and their communities of their involvement in social change work?” The research and evaluation process found the following:

- Girls see themselves as agents of change.
- Girls want to be part of something larger than themselves.
- Girls have a strong sense of responsibility to their families and communities.
- Girls are committed to helping others and making changes in the world.

The Learning Team also found that programs support girls in their efforts to engage in social change by:

- Renaming and reframing who girls are in their own eyes and in the eyes of their communities;
- Identifying girls as assets;
- Bringing awareness of the multiple roles and responsibilities that girls negotiate;

- Having girls represent their communities; and
- Framing social change and activism on a continuum from community service to direct action.

Among the most significant areas of exploration for the Collaborative—with some of the most important implications for the field of girls' development—were the ways in which different programs develop and foster leadership in girls and young women.

Programs exhibited three different frameworks for their leadership work, with several using a combination of approaches: some were based on feminist ideologies or a strong commitment to reconnecting girls and young women with their cultural roots; others had a collective power ideology; and the third used more traditional achievement measures to foster girls' leadership. For example, girls and young women in programs rooted in collective power were more likely to engage in creating community leadership. Collaborative research identified the three approaches to developing and fostering leadership, as shown in the table to the right.

ORIGINS

A look back at the Collaborative's history and into its strategies and processes illuminates the path to these critical lessons learned. The

project's roots were established some ten years ago, when the Ms. Foundation began to focus attention on research findings documenting a disturbing phenomenon: while pre-adolescent girls were confident, strong, and clear-minded, their entrance into the teen years—with the increased interaction with the forces of sexism, racism, violence, and other challenges—strips away these qualities, sapping girls' strength and eroding their health. While research and programming had traditionally focused on girls' problems, none had dealt with how to prevent them by helping girls retain their health and strength. The Ms. Foundation and a group of researchers and activists, including Carol Gilligan, Elizabeth Debold, and Catlin Fullwood, began considering what it would take to sustain young girls' hardiness. What, they asked, can help girls—particularly girls in low-income communities, who face extraordinary pressures and often have the fewest resources—maintain their resilience into womanhood? How can community-based programs successfully promote girls'

and young women's health, well-being, and prospects for the future?

The Foundation commissioned a report, published in 1993, documenting the dearth of girls programming and the failure of existing youth programs to serve the needs of girls. *Programmed Neglect: Not Seen, Not Heard* points to the need to create space for girls to be heard, to develop to their full potential, and to form positive relationships, especially with adult women and the communities in which they live. In 1994, the Foundation convened the Healthy Girls/Healthy Women Research Roundtable, a meeting of leading researchers, practitioners, and heads of girl-serving organizations, to explore these questions and

“The Collaborative added another layer to the Gaea Foundation's grantmaking. We had the opportunity to learn about different girls programs that would have been difficult for us to find out about on our own. I've also learned so much from the other donors who are part of the Collaborative.”

— Cindy Clay, donor partner, Gaea Foundation

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES		
Voice/Culture Ideology: Cultural/Feminist	Action/Social Change Ideology: Collective Power	Comportment/Achievment Ideology: Tradition/Achievement
Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reclaiming voice/tradition ■ Politicizing perspective on dominant culture ■ Opportunity ■ Leadership skills ■ Protective staff 	Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Activism ■ Development of social consciousness ■ Creating expression ■ Opportunity ■ Power sharing with staff; group coherence 	Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Literacy development ■ Opportunity ■ Working within the institution/system ■ New experiences ■ Strong connection/role models in staff
Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Self-empowerment, self-esteem ■ Sense of possibility ■ Personal development ■ Community leadership ■ Reclamation of culture/society 	Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Survival ■ Transforming status quo ■ Personal development ■ Creating community leadership and connection 	Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Individual achievement ■ Careers ■ Pride in self ■ Individual leadership and enhancement of contribution to community

to begin to shape a project to pursue some answers. The Roundtable's published report, *Body Politic: Reframing Adolescent Girls' Health* combined with *Programmed Neglect* informed the Foundation's development of an innovative strategy to support the healthy development and social activism of adolescent girls: the Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women.

STRATEGIES

The Foundation and the Collaborative's partners were determined to employ a model of girls' programming that focused on girls' strengths and positive potential, that listened to what girls and young women themselves

wanted to change in their lives and in their surroundings, and that saw girls and young women as co-authors of the program's design, implementation, and evaluation.

The Foundation wanted the project to be collaborative in another important way, too. Building on the work of an earlier collaborative process on women's economic development, the Foundation decided to seek donor partners to maximize the funding potential for programming for girls. In all, 38 donor partners participated in the Collaborative's first round—8 individual donors, 6 family foundations, and 24 private, public and corporate foundations. Each institutional donor contributed a minimum of \$150,000 over three years; individual donors contributed a minimum of \$75,000 over three years. But these donors did not simply write checks and wait on the sidelines for outcomes; instead they have acted as partners alongside the Foundation, researchers, and the grantee programs and the girls and young women in them.

DONOR PARTNERS

The Collaborative Fund brings together a wide variety of funders to consider the needs of girls and to create a partnership that will raise the level of understanding of girls' issues, increase the amount of money available to support their organizations, and build cooperative working relationships. These donor partners are:

Anonymous Donor
 Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation
 Arthur M. Blank Foundation
 Susie Tompkins Buell Foundation
 Bruner Foundation
 California Wellness Foundation
 Chicago Foundation for Women
 Ford Foundation
 Fund for the City of New York
 Gaea Foundation
 Girl's Best Friend Foundation
 George Gund Foundation
 Polly Howells
 Gioconda and Joseph King Foundation
 Barbara Levy Kipper
 Liss Foundation
 John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
 Moriah Fund
 Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
 Ms. Foundation for Women
 National Mah Jongg League
 Open Society Institute
 Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceutical
 Proctor and Gamble
 Remmer Family Foundation
 Joseph and Florence Roblee Foundation
 Sara Lee Foundation
 Caroline and Sigmund Schott Foundation
 Shaler Adams Foundation
 Lindsay Shea
 Andrea Stern and Judith Stern Peck
 Levi Strauss Foundation
 Starry Night Fund
 Tides Foundation
 The Westchester Fund for Women and Girls of the Westchester Community Foundation
 Whirlpool Foundation
 Women's Foundation of Colorado
 WPWR-TV Channel 50 Foundation

This level of partnership represented a pioneering process for both individual and institutional donors. Individual donors usually have few opportunities to meet and share ideas with colleagues. And most foundations work individually, assessing their grant applications according to their own internally created criteria and with sole control over what organizations they fund, how much is spent, and how the project is evaluated. The Collaborative provided a unique opportunity for both these groups to experience a more participatory approach to funding.

During this education and development phase, the donor partners, researchers, and Foundation staff observed presentations by girl and adult consultants. They went on site visits, and came together to discuss particular ideas relating to girls and social change. Through the Collaborative Fund process, participants work through consensus decision-making in an effort to equalize power among and across donors, programs, girls, and the Learning Team.

The donor partners worked from premises established by *Programmed Neglect and Body Politic* the reports that resulted from the earlier efforts. They included the following points, which formed the cornerstone for the Collaborative:

- Violence is rapidly changing girls' health prospects and hopes for the future.
- Girls are far too often unprotected by the institutions and persons who are supposed to be there for them.
- Girls are not the problem; our society and cultures create problems for girls, and girls end up having to cope by making the best choices they can—choices that are often self-destructive.
- Integration is needed across all the divisions and dichotomies our culture presents—divisions between health research and services, between research and practice, across academic disciplines, across genera-

tions, and among agencies charged with protecting and treating our children.

- A climate of backlash against feminism is making it increasingly difficult to address issues affecting girls.

Perhaps the most critical moment of understanding for participants came from young women consultants at the meeting of funders in March 1996. It provided a context for thinking about girls' programming in general and for developing the criteria for funding. In their presentation, the five young women shared their experiences in programs that had made a positive impact on their lives. These programs had helped in building their self-esteem and in nurturing their abilities to withstand negative forces that might have derailed their progress toward becoming self-confident, self-knowing young women with plans for the future.

The young consultants, aged 15 to 20 years old, presented a mission statement they had written in a preparatory meeting to decide on the kind of advice they wanted to give the funding partners. It read as follows:

Speaking from the perspective of young women from diverse cultural backgrounds in today's society we feel that programs funded should be holistically presented—holistic in the sense of dealing with the whole issue of young women's lives. This means that programs should ideally exist that encourage young girls to develop a strong voice and think critically to have the skills needed to overcome sexism, racism, and all the ills of society in order to change the world.

The reading of the mission statement by these girls and young women was one of the pivotal, powerful moments through which the Collaborative Fund was guided by girls themselves and began to move forward with a clear vision of its mission, strategies, and possibilities.

THE PROGRAMS

The Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women was now ready to begin its program aimed at building on girls' natural strengths and abilities. It would focus on promoting activism for and by girls and young women on issues of importance to them such as self-esteem, healthy body image, and safety issues. In 1996, after the phase of donor education, the Ms. Foundation distributed a "Call for Letters of Intent," seeking program partners for the Collaborative. "We are interested," one section read, "in supporting programs that intentionally serve girls and build on their strengths. We seek programs that involve girls directly in program development and leadership roles to create change in their own lives, in their social networks and communities, and in other institutions that directly affect their mental and physical health and well-being, such as schools. We seek grantee partners who have an understanding of how change happens in girls' lives and in communities and have clearly articulated strategies to translate that understanding into practice and policy."

The Foundation received 562 letters of intent from girls' programs all across the country. (Just the act of carefully reading each of these hundreds of letters provided an enormous amount of information about the

STRUCTURAL OVERVIEW

The first round of the Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women comprised five sequential elements:

Planning and partnership development. In this phase, a joint venture was created that aimed to raise the level of understanding of girls' issues, increase the amount of money available to support girls' organizations, and build cooperative working relationships among funders and between funders and grantees. This phase included presentations by girls and young women, a review of the literature on girls' development, the use of youth service providers as resources, and the development of selection criteria for grantmaking.

Grantmaking. This phase centered on identifying and supporting select, holistic models of girl-driven programs that support the healthy development of girls and young women. It included a consensus decision-making process, a Call for Letters of Intent, site visits, and the selection and funding of 14 programs.

Capacity Building. In this stage, the Collaborative focused on building grantee programs' organizational capacity for assessment and research, determined thematic areas for research, promoted self-assessment, and enhanced the evaluation research skills of girls and program staff. It included a survey of programs, formation of work groups, the development of a capacity-building process, the design of self-assessment instruments, site visits, and identification of cross-program themes.

Learning and Inquiry. In this phase, lessons learned were captured. It included a mid-course convening, the development of research questions, the design of a participatory evaluation research model, cluster meetings and site visits, data collection and management, data analysis, and the impact convening.

Impact and Dissemination. This stage focused on developing and disseminating technical assistance tools and products for a wide audience, including parents and community members, practitioners, researchers, funders, educators, the media, and policy makers.

"I have been very impressed by the tremendous level of sharing of information and strategies among the girls' organizations. Actually seeing the girls in their programs helped us better understand the work that they do."

– Karen Zeitlin, donor partner, formerly of the Moriah Fund

ORIGINAL PROGRAM PARTNERS

After School Action Programs/Girl World, Chicago, IL	The Center for Anti-Violence Education, Brooklyn, NY	Native Action, Lame Deer, MT
AIDS and Adolescents Network of New York, New York, NY	Center for Young Women's Development, San Francisco, CA	Sisters in Action for Power, Portland, OR
Asian Pacific Environmental Network, Richmond, CA	Cool Girls, Atlanta, GA	Research for Action, Philadelphia, PA
Asians and Pacific Islanders for Reproductive Health, Long Beach, CA	Girls' Resiliency Program, Lincoln County, WV	White Buffalo Calf Woman Society, Mission, SD
	Mi Casa Resource Center for Women, Denver, CO	Young Women's Project, Washington, DC

field of girls' programming.) Staff narrowed down the pool to a group of 35 programs, and asked them to provide full proposals. With the proposals in hand, staff, researchers and donor partners then culled the group down to 22 possible grantees. Collaborative partners visited each of these programs, and then the decision makers came back to choose, through consensus, a final group of 14 remarkable, community-based, girl-driven programs that were opening the doors for girls to shape their lives and work to change the world around them. Through the entire selection process, the group kept an eye

toward building a group of programs that reflected myriad diversities, including race and ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, and a range of challenges faced by girls and young women.

The Collaborative Fund has distributed approximately \$2 million in grants to these local organizations, with each program receiving grants ranging from \$30,000 to \$50,000 per year for three years. These grants provided general support to the programs. In addition, the programs received capacity-building grants and program development technical assistance through site visits, and special workgroup and annual meetings focused on fundraising, community education, and skills building through self-assessment, peer-to-peer learning, and cross-program work.

CONVENING

The Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women is all about partnership. From the Fund's invention and design through its realization and reflections, all of its elements have been the product of teamwork by grantee program staff and girls, funders, researchers and Ms. Foundation staff. The power of working together, of networking, of sharing information and ideas on girls' and

partners came together for the three large convenings held once a year from 1997 to 2000. These meetings were a true testament to the challenges, and also the ultimate power, of bringing diverse actors together as equal partners. Each meeting was planned by a workgroup of program staff and girl participants, donor partners, and Ms. Foundation staff. Skill-building sessions were interspersed with program planning and group assessments of the Collaborative process.

WORKSHOP NOTES

The Impact Convening was host to a half dozen workshops on an array of topics, including grantmaking, evaluation, and media and marketing. First round Collaborative Fund Director Catlin Fullwood and Terri Lewis from Project Reach Youth led the program development skill-building session. Following is a brief look at that workshop, designed as a forum for exploring the development alternative identified by the Convening Planning Workgroup.

The program partners of Collaborative find themselves at a critical crossroads. After three years of initial funding for their innovative approaches to working with girls, they must decide how, building on the foundation of learnings from the Collaborative, to continue to develop their programs. Program staff thought strategically about three areas of development: replication/adaptation, expansion, and program enhancement. In each of these areas, they looked at infrastructure,

stages of organizational development, girl leadership, and technical assistance. Each program explored its strengths and challenges, the current trends within their communities, and the particular niche to be filled by their programs. Finally, they discussed ways to utilize the research findings to develop their program plans, engaging girls and the community, and making the case to funders and other markets.

The three-and-a-half-day gathering was a forum for all partners to share their experiences as participants in the Collaborative and to think about next steps. All the partners shared their learnings about girl-driven programs and working with girls, and the girls and young women in particular reflected on the skills, qualities and experiences they had developed as a result of their work in the programs. In addition, a number of skill-building and evaluation sessions were held, with

"For all of us from the twelve groups who have been a part of the Collaborative, there's a personal investment now in one another as people and in our programs because we know how this work has changed all of our lives."

– Lakita Logan, program staff partner, Sisters in Action for Power

young women's development is the driving force of the Collaborative. There is no question this high degree of collaboration adds an extra challenge to the work; there is also no question it yields immeasurable richness, relevance, and meaning for those involved, and for its outcomes and implications.

One of the most visible manifestations of this partnership model came when all the

The girls and young women were active participants, often challenging the adults both on a substantive level and in a way that encouraged fun and enjoyment. The last convening, "Impact Convening 2000," was held in Santa Cruz, California. Demonstrating the trust and energy developed over three years, this convening was highly participatory and rewarding.

each falling under at least one of three overarching themes: developing girls' leadership, building program sustainability, and disseminating learnings. The workgroup planned general sessions on media and marketing, fundraising, program development, community education, and documenting the process of participatory research. These were co-taught by Collaborative partners, including girls and young women, or by key resource people from the field of girls programming and youth development. Last, but by no means least, the planners incorporated into the agenda a course of fun, relaxation, and celebration.

The Convening was a great success. Attended by 24 girls and young women and

program directors and staff from the 12 grantee programs, donors, Learning Team members, Ms. Foundation staff members, and resource people, or outside experts, the meeting was filled with stimulating discussion, interactive learning opportunities, and lots of enjoyment and laughter. The Convening began with highlights from the evaluation research, and ended with honoring all the partners who participated in the process of engagement, learning, and research over the last three years. Collaborative partner Lateefah Simon, executive director of the Center for Young Women's Development (CYWD), gave the keynote address. It was a passionate call to action to strengthen the youth movement and a powerful validation of the Collaborative's girls' and young women's leadership work. Speaking of CYWD and the Collaborative, Lateefah said, "In the last three years we have built communities. We have pushed the envelope. We have confronted our legislators. We have created change. We have turned around the status quo. We have told folks that young, poor women, women of color, young lesbians, women who've been on the streets can change the world."

As the final Convening, this participatory meeting was a kind of official end to the

first round of the Collaborative. But it was also the beginning of a dialogue about what is ahead for this enormously important and promising partnership that is building the field of girls' and young women's programming.

CONCLUSION

Within the fields of youth development and research on children, youth, and families, the voices of girls and young women are too often unheard, and the abilities of girls too often unrecognized. The second Collaborative Fund, now in the development phase, will work to rectify that omission by continuing to support, research, and evaluate successful and effective girl-driven programs in youth-serving organizations. Round One partners have strongly recommended keeping the focus on girls' and young women's leader-

ship and social activism, while exploring links to the larger youth development field.

The upcoming work, for which the Ms. Foundation is seeking support from current and new partners, will also take into account the dollars raised, lessons learned, and current trends and needs in the field.

The researchers and Foundation leaders who initiated the first Collaborative set out to invigorate the fields of research and development work with girls. But the girls and young women to whom they reached out did more: they ended up sparking a movement. As one program director said about the girls in her program, "They began to believe that they can and do make a difference and that their voices matter. We're working to have this sense so embedded that the girls take it with them everywhere they go."

"The Collaborative has given me so many opportunities and connections I would not have had. You get to meet all these women who've done amazing things. It's inspiring to see older women who have struggled successfully. It makes you feel like you can do anything, and like you're part of something larger."

– Desi Rodriguez, young woman partner, Native Action

GRANTEE PARTNERS 2000

After School Action Programs (ASAP)/ Girl World

Chicago, IL

Founded in 1993, ASAP is a network of thirty community-based organizations devoted to working with youth and bringing about change in youth programs, resources, and leadership. Girl World provides girls with educational, athletic, mentoring, and advocacy and community organizing activities through girl-centered programs, including 'Girl University,' 'Girl World Builders,' 'Girls Month,' 'Girl's Organizing Institute,' 'Girl Resource Pool,' and 'Girl Sporting Days.'

Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN)

Richmond, CA

APEN was founded in 1993 to unify and empower Asian American and Pacific Islander communities to achieve multicultural environmental justice and address issues such as economic development, racial and social equity, and community empowerment. Through the Youth Initiative, APEN works with Laotian girls to create strategies for ongoing youth and community advocacy. The program addresses key issues in their lives including violence, poverty, pregnancy, education, and pollution while focusing on cultural identity and pride.

Asians and Pacific Islanders for Reproductive Health (APIRH)

Long Beach, CA

Established in 1989, APIRH is committed to the self-determination of Asian and Pacific Islander immigrant women and girls through community action research, health advocacy, outreach, and public education programs. The H.O.P.E. (Health, Opportunities, Problem-Solving and Empowerment) initiative offers Cambodian girls in Long Beach an alternative to gang affiliation through training on reproductive health, and environmental and economic justice issues that foster community empowerment and build girls' individual strengths.

Center for Anti-Violence Education (CAE)

Brooklyn, NY

Founded in 1974, CAE is a women-led, community-based organization that develops and implements violence-prevention programs.

With self-defense and martial arts as the foundation, the Children's Empowerment Project and Teen Women's Initiative combine physical training, leadership opportunities, and community activism. Participants have fun, increase self-confidence, get to know people of diverse backgrounds, and learn skills for coping with the epi-

Center for Young Women's Development (CYWD)

San Francisco, CA

Established in 1993, CYWD is a community-based organization run by and for young women. The center addresses the lack of youth sensitive services, leadership opportunities and advocacy for young women who live on their own, have dropped out of school, and/or work in the street economies. Through the Street Survival Project and the Girls-in-Charge project, CYWD conducts peer outreach and education and provides skill building and employment training opportunities to young women.

Cool Girls

Atlanta, GA

Cool Girls, founded in 1989, is dedicated to the self-empowerment of girls in low-income communities, with an emphasis on girls in public housing. Through mentoring relationships and leadership development, Cool Girls encourages girls to make positive choices and redefines the meaning of "cool" by helping them stay in school, learn about business enterprise, and express themselves in healthy and creative ways.

Girls' Resiliency Program

Lincoln County, WV

The Girls' Resiliency Program, started in 1996, is based in rural Appalachia. The project works to effect change in the social welfare and school system by building girls' strengths and connections to other girls and women in the community. This is accomplished through girls' resiliency support groups, story anthology and theater production, mother/daughter mentoring workshops, and the development of a rural girls' agenda.

Mi Casa Resource Center for Women

Denver, CO

Since its founding in 1976, Mi Casa Resource Center for Women has offered programs to move women in poverty to greater self-sufficien-

cy through opportunities for enterprise, employment, and education. Through the Mi Carrera program, Mi Casa works to build economic independence for girls by providing young women with after-school workshops on leadership development, cultural and community service activities, and entrepreneurial skills training.

Native Action

Lame Deer, MT

Founded in 1984 and located on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, Native Action is nationally recognized as a model for citizen empowerment. The Cheyenne Stars, in which elders pass on cultural knowledge and tradition to girls, is the first comprehensive program for Cheyenne girls. The program builds on the successful efforts of young women on the Reservation who helped develop tribal laws against child sexual abuse, and who established the first local high school on the Reservation.

Sisters in Action for Power

Portland, OR

Sisters in Action for Power is a multi-issue membership organization that promotes gender and race equity by developing leadership and organizing skills among low-income women and girls. Building on its success in initiating system-wide changes in the Portland public schools to prevent violence against girls, Sisters provides girls with opportunities for sociopolitical and economic transformation, adult role models, a peer support base, and an organizational structure that enables them to assume positions of power and leadership in their communities.

Young Women's Project

Washington, DC

Established in 1992, YWP is a national multicultural organization founded by a diverse collective of young women. YWP develops and supports girl and young women as leaders through intergenerational leadership training, mentoring, technical assistance and school-based community action. Through Teen Women in Action and the Girls Project, girls and young women participate in after school and summer training that culminates in school-based action projects.

The Ms. Foundation for Women, the national women's fund, has supported the efforts of women and girls to govern their own lives and influence the world around them for over 25 years.

Creator of the award-winning Take Our Daughters to Work® Day program, the Ms. Foundation funds cutting-edge projects across the country that nurture girls' leadership skills, protect the health and safety of women and girls, and provide low-income women with the tools to move themselves and their families toward self-sufficiency. For more information, visit the Ms. Foundation for Women at www.ms.foundation.org.

