Research Tool: the Girl-Driven Program Index

The Girl-Driven Program Index (GDPI), like all the measures in the Tool Kit, can be used simply as a tool for evaluation or it can be incorporated into program practice as a tool for self-reflection and assessment. The GDPI was designed to be a one-time assessment of program philosophy and the degree to which a program involves girls in leadership and decision-making. However, program staff report that it provides a useful tool for self-reflection and to determine whether the program participants share staff perceptions of the opportunities available in the program. The GDPI provides a simple means of assessing how responsive a program is to the youth involved. The GDPI can be a useful tool because it inventories a wide range of ways that girls can be involved in program development and leadership.

Purpose of the GDPI
By comparing staff and girl responses, it is possible to see whether girls recognize the opportunities that staff feel are available. This facilitates self-assessment and reflection on how girls experience being in the program. For example, in the Collaborative’s findings, girls said that they were more often formally involved in program leadership and development than staff said they were. This may indicate girls’ sense of inclusion in leadership, or it may be an indication of leadership opportunities they would like to have, or it may indicate both of these. By discovering these differences on the GDPI, programs can identify important issues for discussion.

Administering the GDPI
The GDPI was designed to be completed by the program director. There is also a part for girls to complete – the Girls and Young Women Index. For this, we suggest three girls with different levels of involvement with the program.

There are no particularly innovative ways of administering the GDPI: staff must fill out the checklist and so must the girls. Filling out the GDPI is fairly self-explanatory, and directions are provided for each section. Since the girls’ portion is short, it shouldn’t be too time-consuming or taxing for them to do. Girls should be asked to complete the checklist on their own without
conferring with others. They will need a quiet place in which to do this.

**Creative Applications**

While *doing* the checklist is a relatively inflexible task, there are many different ways that the GDPI can be used:

- **Self-assessment:** The GDPI can be taken once each year as a self-assessment. For one program in the Collaborative the GDPI provided a framework for developing more ways to include girls in program leadership and development.

- **Staff development:** A group of staff might complete the entire GDPI and compare their responses to see if there is a shared understanding of program assumptions and practices.

- **Exploring girls’ experiences:** The entire GDPI might be given individually to girls in more of an interview format so that more of girls’ understanding and experiences of the program can be explored.

- **Program construction:** The GDPI can also be used to guide the construction of a program for girls. The different elements presented in the GDPI provide a framework for understanding what needs to be thought through and included in any girls program.

**Guidelines for Interpreting GDPI Data**

Data from staff and girls in individual programs can be compared with one another to see where similarities and differences are. Keep in mind that differences in responses are not a problem; they can open up discussion and deepen the program’s impact.

Program staff will need to think through issues of confidentiality of girls’ responses. One way to deal with this is for girls’ responses to be tallied together so that each individual girl’s responses are not identifiable.

**Thoughts on Preliminary Statistical Analysis**

- **Using the GDPI to develop program models:** Across a group of programs (like those in the Collaborative), the GDPI can be used as a way of developing different program models. Indices for various components of the GDPI can be developed. Index scores can be related to the forced choice questions that reveal program assumptions and
philosophy.

• *The Safe-Space Subindex:* For the Collaborative, an index was created to assess how the program creates safe space for girls. Girls’ scores were averaged and compared with staff scores on the same sections of the GDPI. In this “Safe Space Sub-Index,” the greater the similarity between staff and averaged girl scores, the higher the safety level indicated.
Girl-Driven Program Index

Program Director Assessment
Girls & Young Women Index
Program Director Assessment

Date: ____________________

Name of Program: ____________________________

Name of Person completing Survey: ______________________________

                           Title: ________________________________

Ages of Girls/Young Women completing Survey: ________, ________, ________

Length of Time with Program: _______ mos., _______ mos.,
                                _______ mos.

Name of Organization where Program Resides (if any): ________________________

Age of Program: ________________

Age of Parent Organization (if any): ________________

Describe Parent Organization or Organization(s) with which you share programming space:

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:** For each section, you will find directions for completing the items in that section. Some of the questions ask that you select only one response from a list; others have you respond to each item. You should answer based on what your program actually does directly with participants. Even though this is in checklist form, please feel free to make comments in the margins if you would like to clarify your response.

A. **Program Structure**

The format of the questions in this section varies. Sometimes you need to answer all the parts of a question. Sometimes you are asked to select only one.

1. *Complete all of these.* Are current program participants formally involved in/as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>program planning?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>developing activities?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>program implementation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>the board?</td>
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<tr>
<td>an advisory board to the program?</td>
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<tr>
<td>strategic planning?</td>
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<tr>
<td>fundraising?</td>
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<tr>
<td>staff – paid?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>staff - volunteer?</td>
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<tr>
<td>funder site visits?</td>
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<td>budgeting?</td>
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<td>advocating for the program?</td>
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<tr>
<td>leading training - internal?</td>
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<tr>
<td>leading training - external?</td>
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<tr>
<td>evaluating sessions as participants?</td>
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<tr>
<td>evaluating the program as researchers?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. For the questions below, “participants” are the girls/teens/young women who participate in the program. “Older teens” are between 16-19 years old, “young women” are women between the ages of 20-30 and “women” are over 30. Please indicate the age range of the participants in your program: ____________.

   a. *Complete all of these.* We have the following explicit mentoring relationships within our program (that means that the older member of the pair is definitely called a mentor and that there are program activities devoted to making mentoring relationships work):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>participants with older teens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participants with young women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participants with women</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   b. *Complete all of these.* The following intergenerational pairings are an important and intentional part of our program but they are not formally a mentoring component:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>participants with older teens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participants with young women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>participants with women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participants with parents/guardians</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c. **Choose only one:** Between the generations, the persons who learn and benefit most are:

- ____ participants (that means the younger person)
- ____ the older member of the intergenerational pairing
- ____ both generations benefit equally

d. **Choose as many as apply:** In our program, we have structured ways where:

- ____ participants learn from older teens, young women or women
- ____ participants learn from parents
- ____ women or young women learn from younger participants
- ____ parents learn from participants
- ____ participants learn from community members
- ____ community members learn from participants
- ____ participants learn from institutional partners
- ____ institutional partners learn from participants

3. **Select the one that is most often true:** In the last year, when we have changed our program or its activities, we have usually done so because:

- ____ participants made suggestions for other activities that they wanted
- ____ there was a process for participants to give feedback that staff then used to make changes
- ____ lack of participation suggested that changes were needed
- ____ a process is in place where participants and staff assess what’s working together
- ____ we needed to meet specific funding criteria
- ____ parents had concerns that we felt we had to address
- ____ staff felt that the program wasn’t having the effects desired for participants

4. After a girl/young woman has been in the program long enough to master the basic skills that our program offers, she might then move on to the following positions of greater responsibility and leadership in the program or connected with the program: Please list:

- ____________ ____________ ____________
- ____________ ____________ ____________
- ____________ ____________ ____________
- ____________ ____________ ____________
B. Program Content

In this section, check off as many responses as apply to your program. You are also invited to write in additional responses.

1. In our program, we have developed program activities so that participants (age range: _____) can learn to be able to:
   ___ do well in school
   ___ conduct research
   ___ speak powerfully in public
   ___ negotiate
   ___ avoid violence
   ___ improve their communication skills
   ___ stand up for themselves
   ___ experience opportunities outside their communities
   ___ train others
   ___ be advocates for themselves and others
   ___ develop their own program activities
   ___ understand group dynamics
   ___ attend and participate in board meetings or other meetings of adults
   ___ facilitate meetings and groups

Please list other specific skills that participants develop through program activities:

2. In our program, we have created ways for participants to learn about:
   ___ their cultural heritage
   ___ the history of the community
   ___ women’s history or history of the movement for social justice of their people
   ___ how different institutional power structures work
   ___ violence against women and girls
   ___ poverty
   ___ capitalism and class differences
   ___ sexism
   ___ spirituality
   ___ body image
   ___ homophobia/heterosexism
   ___ sexuality and reproductive health
   ___ racism and prejudice against different ethnic communities

Please list any other areas of knowledge that help participants understand and negotiate the complexities of their lives and link their own experience with larger social issues:

Please circle those items above for which you have created structured (rather than organic) opportunities for participants to learn. For example, conducting actual training or discussion
groups are structured activities. Having issues come up in conversation and being discussed as a result is organic.
3. In our program, participants learn to see themselves as being a part of a process of change in which they can make a difference because:
   a. In their individual lives, they learn to:
      ___ communicate better
      ___ be more patient
      ___ take better care of themselves
      ___ be reflective
      ___ have greater understanding of people and issues
      ___ seek help and resources
      ___ provide community service
      ___ be more self-protective
      ___ strategize and develop campaigns
      ___ research and find evidence for their perspectives
      ___ ask authorities to be accountable
      ___ organize with others to make demands
   
   b. In their social networks (peers and families), they learn to:
      ___ communicate better
      ___ be more patient
      ___ be reflective
      ___ have greater understanding of people and issues
      ___ seek help and resources
      ___ provide community service
      ___ strategize and develop campaigns
      ___ research and find evidence for their perspectives
      ___ ask authorities to be accountable
      ___ organize with others to make demands
   
   c. In their communities, they learn to:
      ___ communicate better
      ___ be more patient
      ___ be reflective
      ___ have greater understanding of people and issues
      ___ seek help and resources
      ___ provide community service
      ___ strategize and develop campaigns
      ___ research and find evidence for their perspectives
      ___ ask authorities to be accountable
      ___ organize with others to make demands
   
   d. In institutions (such as schools), they learn to:
      ___ communicate better
      ___ be more patient
      ___ be reflective
      ___ have greater understanding of people and issues
      ___ seek help and resources
provide community service
strategize and develop campaigns
research and find evidence for their perspectives
ask authorities to be accountable
organize with others to make demands

C. Program Assumptions
Please select only one response even though you may feel that there are several responses that apply. Pick the one response that you feel best captures your program.

1. Our program is based on an understanding:
   a. ___ that girls have strengths that can be built on
   b. ___ that girls need help to understand and overcome the risks and problems that they face
   c. ___ that girls can develop strengths by learning how to deal with the risks and problems in their lives
   d. ___ that girls have strengths but they need support to learn how to deal with the risks and problems that they face in their lives

2. Our program is unique because we believe that:
   a. ___ adult staff who care about girls see and provide what they need to grow into a productive life
   b. ___ girls’ parents or caretakers, and their hopes for their girls, are critical to include in developing the program
   c. ___ girls understand what they need most and have the capability to direct program development
   d. ___ adult staff and girls have to come together to explore what girls want and need

3. Our program was created by:
   a. ___ the founders assessing what girls need based on what they saw in the community
   b. ___ input from parents/caretakers and other leaders in the community
   c. ___ women and girls coming together to find out what girls need in the community
   d. ___ systematically assessing what girls in the program and community need

4. Our program is currently developed by:
   a. ___ adult staff assessing what program participants need based on what they see happening in the program
   b. ___ input from staff, parents/caretakers and others in the community
   c. ___ informally assessing what girls need in the community and program
d. systematically assessing what girls need in the program and community

5. In our program and organization, we believe that the most important function that staff performs is to:
   a. teach girls skills and provide them with knowledge and opportunities that will allow them to have greater options
   b. provide girls with the care and intimacy they don’t often get at home
   c. provide girls with an example of mature, competent womanhood
   d. create an atmosphere where girls are treated equitably and they learn not to compete with each other
D. Program Environment

Please note the directions for each question.

1. **Choose one:** In our program, we keep what girls or young women tell us in confidence:
   - ____ strictly confidential, unless we let the girl know that, by law, we have to notify someone
   - ____ generally confidential because we have a responsibility by law to parents or guardians
   - ____ we assume that parents have a right to be kept aware of what’s happening with their child

2. **Choose as many as apply:** Girls confide in staff about:
   - ____ what’s most important to them
   - ____ what they are afraid of
   - ____ exciting new things that they are doing
   - ____ family troubles and conflicts
   - ____ their hopes and doubts about the future
   - ____ survival issues (housing, safety, food)
   - ____ concerns about weight or appearance
   - ____ sexuality
   - ____ positive relationships they are developing
   - ____ faith/spirituality
   - ____ drugs or alcohol use
   - ____ violence in their lives
   - ____ conflicts with teachers
   - ____ conflicts with friends/other girls in the program
   - ____ concerns about school
   - ____ concerns about dating relationships
   - ____ problems with other staff or persons connected with the program
   - ____ conflicts with others outside the program

3. **Choose as many as apply:** In our program, we do the following to deal with girl-on-girl conflict:
   - ____ have discussion groups where girls learn to know and trust each other
   - ____ teach girls to control their anger and be more polite with each other
   - ____ have a process of team building
   - ____ explore with girls why girls fight and who benefits
   - ____ meet with parents of girls who fight
   - ____ conduct conflict resolution training
   - ____ have peers address the issue
   - ____ create groundrules for fair fighting and respectful interactions
   - ____ don’t allow girls who fight to be in the program
   - ____ suspend girls who fight from program activities
   - ____ have a no-tolerance policy for girl/girl conflict in the program
   - ____ have a no-tolerance policy for girl/girl conflict anywhere

4. **Choose as many as apply:** In our program, girls learn about differences by:
   - ____ exploring different cultures
   - ____ exposure to different racial and ethnic groups of girls
   - ____ creating ways for girls of different backgrounds to spend time with each other
learning to be more tolerant of others
working on issues together
talking about differences
realizing that we share being girls and women together
understanding systems of power and the ways they divide us
5. **Choose as many as apply:** In our program, staff members:
   - _____ bring participants home with them
   - _____ develop close personal relationships with participants
   - _____ see participants in their free time, outside of program activities
   - _____ take participants places, not during program activities
   - _____ give and accept gifts from program participants
   - _____ typically develop a unique relationship with one special girl

6. **Choose as many as apply:** Within the program, we feel:
   - _____ supported by the organization that sponsors us
   - _____ supported by parents of the participants
   - _____ that there are leaders in the community who will go to bat for us
   - _____ that we are looked to within the community for leadership
   - _____ that we have significant credibility with institutions in the area

7. **Please circle your response:**
   - Our programming space is exclusively ours: Y N
   - We share physical space in our programming with men and boys Y N
   - We conduct co-ed activities: Y N
     How often? ______________

8. List the outside institutional pressures that affect the program:

   Example:
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

THANK YOU!!
Girls & Young Women Index

This is a checklist that is an easy way to tell some things about your experience in the program. Read each question and check off your answers. Some questions ask for only one check and some you give as many answers that are true for you.

If you have any questions or if something is confusing, ask about it.

If you want to add something or make a comment, you can write it in the margins.

**Key words:**

“program” means the organization or project that you and other girls and young women come to afterschool, on weekends or in the summer

“staff” means the women who are leaders and who have as their job to run the program

1. **At this program, I can...**
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>help plan activities and events</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can create activities for us to do</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can make our plans happen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can be on the board of directors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can be an advisor to the program</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am part of long-term planning</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do fundraising</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can work here for pay</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can be a leader as a volunteer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I participate in funder site visits</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I develop budgets for projects</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I speak to groups and others about how important the program is</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can lead training in the program</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can lead training in other places</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I give feedback to staff about things Yes____   No____
I can be a researcher and evaluator Yes____   No____
2. Pick the one that is most true for you.
   When I tell a secret to a staff person,
   _____it is kept very secret, unless they say they have to tell someone
   _____sometimes told to my parents or guardian
   _____it isn’t kept a secret

3. I tell the staff what’s most important to me
   Yes___  No___
   I tell staff all the exciting new things I do
   Yes___  No___
   I tell them what I hope for or doubt about my future
   Yes___  No___
   I speak to staff about worries I have about weight
   Yes___  No___
   I tell them about good, new relationships
   Yes___  No___
   I talk with them when I take drugs or drink
   Yes___  No___
   I talk to them about fighting with teachers
   Yes___
   I tell them about fights with others
   Yes___  No___
   I tell staff about worries I have about school
   Yes___
   I talk to staff about things I’m afraid of
   Yes___  No___
   I tell staff about troubles in my family
   Yes___
   I share with staff my worries about living
   Yes___  No___
   I talk with staff about my sexuality
   Yes___  No___
   I speak with staff about religion and faith
   Yes___  No___
   I tell staff about violent things that have happened
   Yes___  No___
   I talk to staff about conflicts with girls in the program
   Yes___  No___
I talk with them about dating relationships
Yes___ No___

I speak with them about problems with other adults in the program
Yes___ No___

4. **Check all the ones that are true for you.** In our program, I’ve learned how to handle conflict and fights with other girls because
   - We learn to know and trust each other by discussing things
   - I’ve learned to control my anger and be polite
   - We’re learning how to build a team
   - We talk about why girls fight and who benefits
   - I know that staff will meet with my parents if I fight
   - I’ve had conflict resolution training
   - We work things out together
   - We have groundrules for fair fighting and respect
   - Girls who fight aren’t allowed to stay in the program
   - Girls who fight are suspended from activities here
   - We have a no-tolerance policy for girl/girl conflict here
   - We have a no-tolerance policy for girl/girl conflict anywhere
5. **Check as many as are true for you.** In this program, I’ve learned about differences between girls (like race, ethnicity, class, religion) because:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestion</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We explore different cultural traditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>We meet different racial and ethnic groups of girls</td>
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<tr>
<td>I get to spend time with girls who are different from me</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’ve learned to be more tolerant of others</td>
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<tr>
<td>We all work on issues together</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>We talk about our differences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We realize that we share being women/girls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We understand how society works to divide women</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**THANKS A LOT!**
Acknowledgments:

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