

Taking on the Challenge:

Phase I of the
Hyams Foundation
Girls' Initiative

June 2006

THE HYAMS FOUNDATION, INC.

The Phase I Girls' Initiative Grantees

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

(Generation Excel)
“Do the Write Thing”
215 Forest Hills Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
Phone: 617-524-4510

Bridge Over Troubled Waters

47 West Street, Boston, MA 02111
Phone: 617-423-9575

Boston Urban Youth Foundation

“Building Futures Educational Initiative”
PO Box 1545, Boston, MA 02130
Phone: 617-445-3380

Caribbean U Turn

“Peer Leadership Program”
19 Tesla Street, Mattapan, MA 02126
Phone: 617-296-6789

Dorchester Uhuru Project, Inc.

(d/b/a Ella J. Baker House)
“Exodus Project”
411 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02124
Phone: 617-282-6704

ROCA

“Project Sol” (formerly Project Victory)
101 Park Street, Chelsea, MA 02150
Phone: 617-889-5210

Roxbury Youthworks, Inc.

“Female Focus Initiative”
100A Warren Street, Roxbury, MA 02119
Phone: 617-445-5500 ext. 207

Youth Advocacy Foundation, Inc.

(Youth Advocacy Project)
Girls Intervention Specialist
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ISSUE

Although girls continue to be a minority in the juvenile justice system, their proportion in the system is growing rapidly. From 1995-2005 the number of girls committed to the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS) grew by 168%, far outpacing the rate of increase for boys. African American girls in Boston were particularly affected in this growth, represented in the DHS caseload in 2005 at more than three times their presence in the population.¹ In the status offender system, which is distinct from the delinquency system², girls have long comprised the majority of youth involved with the Juvenile Court and Department of Social Services for running away, truancy and misbehavior.

In these respects, Boston is no different from most communities in the United States. Around the country communities are struggling with a rise in the number of girls in their justice systems³ and the particular needs those girls bring with them. Although they are increasingly penetrating the delinquency system, the literature is clear that these girls are best served in their communities and that they present a constellation of specific needs and strengths that demand unique strategies and specifically tailored programming.⁴

THE FOUNDATION'S CHALLENGE

How can a foundation of modest size impact the development of gender responsive, community based programming targeting an underserved population of girls in the justice system in Boston and Chelsea and, in turn, promote the positive development of these girls?

In struggling with this challenge, the Hyams Foundation (the Foundation) was aware that, in addition to the obvious complexities of working with system-involved girls, the Foundation's approach needed to address:

- Diversity within the Boston population and the recognition that tailored programming must be gender and culturally responsive;
- The range of ways in which girls can be system-involved and the different laws and state agencies that may play a role; and
- A non-profit culture in which programs are often under-resourced, operating in surprising isolation from each other and from the public systems responsible for the youth they serve.

ONE STRATEGY: THE HYAMS FOUNDATION GIRLS' INITIATIVE

The Hyams Foundation's mission is "to increase economic and social justice and power within low-income communities in Boston and Chelsea, Massachusetts." One outcome area within that mission is Teen Development in which the Foundation is committed to making sure that youth who are most vulnerable are not ignored. The Girls' Initiative is a concerted Foundation effort to respond to system-involved girls, one extremely vulnerable, rapidly growing, and under-served population of youth in state systems. The Foundation's decision to concentrate funding on this population was consistent with recent calls in the philanthropic community for focused funding on juvenile justice populations and gender-responsive approaches to service delivery.⁵ This report describes the Girls' Initiative, its successes and challenges, and the lessons the Foundation learned along the way.

THE GIRLS' INITIATIVE

In response to an open request for proposals and review process, the Hyams Foundation awarded \$800,000 over two years to eight community based grantees to focus programming and advocacy on system-involved girls in Boston and Chelsea.⁶ This was Phase I of the Girls' Initiative, which ran from January, 2003, through December, 2005. Based on the success and promise of Phase I, the Hyams Foundation is supporting Phase II of the Girls' Initiative from January, 2006 through December, 2008.

All of the grantee organizations served girls who were under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court, the Department of Social Services (DSS), or DYS as a result of CHINS (Children in Needs of Services) or delinquency petitions in Boston or Chelsea. The eight funded grantees in Phase I were: Boston Urban Youth Foundation, Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Caribbean U-Turn, Ella J. Baker House, Generation Excel of Bethel A.M.E. Church, Roca, Roxbury Youthworks' Female Focus Initiative, and the Youth Advocacy Project (see inside front cover). These programs target girls involved at various levels in state systems and provide an array of services to these girls. When the grants were awarded some of the programs were experienced in gender-responsive programming and others were co-educational programs proposing to develop a gender-responsive component. Girls served by these programs ranged in age from 12 to 18 years old and were predominantly African American and Latina. The services provided by the eight programs included counseling, legal services, case management, mentoring, theatre arts, life skills, and academic support.

Phase I of the Girls' Initiative was based on the following five key principles:

- With opportunity, access, and a focus on strengths, every teen girl can achieve a satisfying and productive present and future life;
- Every teen can contribute positively to the community, and for teens the experience of civic engagement fosters positive development;
- Gender inequities and deficiencies in girls' services are a result of policies and practices, which can be identified and changed;
- Involving girls and their families in planning and implementing systems of care that affect them will achieve better outcomes for both youth and their communities; and
- Active participation in a Learning Community of community-based organizations working toward a common vision will yield collective practice and policy strategies greater than what might be developed by any individual program.

The Foundation
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To address these principles, the eight Girls' Initiative grantees were funded to provide direct services to system-involved girls and were required to participate in a Learning Community. The Learning Community met regularly over two years and was comprised of representatives of the eight grantees, Foundation staff, and consultants. The Learning Community was central to the design of the Girls' Initiative and its goals were to:

- Develop and share best practices;
- Establish and measure shared outcomes;
- Collaborate across grantees and with relevant agencies;
- Address policy issues affecting the girls' population; and
- Share relevant learning with the program, system, and philanthropic communities.

To accomplish this ambitious agenda, the Learning Community conducted a range of activities and engaged consultants and staff. The Girls' Initiative Component Chart depicts the organization of activities over the two years of Phase I. (See inside back cover.)

Over the course of the two years the Learning Community met twelve times (three times the original estimate). Among its activities was Participatory Evaluation Research (PER) to understand the qualities and dynamics of girls' relationships with peers, programs and families. The Learning Community worked together on PER over the course of ten months developing "findings"⁷ that formed the basis for program re-design, development of outcome evaluation, and creation of a policy agenda. These findings were also shared with the local philanthropic community through a briefing. Other Learning Community activities included outcome evaluation training and development of joint outcome areas, policy discussion, discussion of potential areas for policy reform, and general education about issues affecting system-involved girls.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Girls Initiative was a time-intensive, productive experience which yielded many interesting lessons. Some of those lessons follow.

LESSON 1

Among the grantees, the Learning Community was most valued for:

- What they learned about how to deliver gender-responsive programming for girls; and
- The opportunity it provided for collaboration and sharing with other programs.

Through the Learning Community, the eight grantees developed their understanding of gender-responsive programming primarily from their interactions with each other (both at and outside of meetings) and through the PER they conducted over ten months from June, 2004 through March, 2005.

The PER findings taught the grantees the importance of providing support tailored to girls' needs, providing girls a safe opportunity to express themselves, and developing girl-responsive approaches to programming. For example, in response to the PER findings, the Boston Urban Youth Foundation, a co-educational truancy prevention program,

developed a girl-only space, a program in which older girls tutor younger girls, a topical girls' discussion and research group, an intergenerational female cooking program, and a Girls' Leadership Council. The Female Focus Initiative worked with a "Massachusetts Promise" fellow to develop a methodical, step-by-step program of journaling over time, expanding the journaling that was designed for research into a significant component of its program. When the PER found that girls needed opportunities for intergenerational relationships, Generation Excel implemented work days and life skills programs led by adult working women. Informally, the groups learned from each other as well. The Female Focus Initiative began to use Girls' Circles, which had been practiced for years by Roca, another Girls' Initiative grantee, as a result of casual Learning Community discussions about their value.

Boston Urban Youth Foundation

Gender-Responsive Elements in a Co-Educational Truancy Prevention Program

At the first PER meeting, the Boston Urban Youth Foundation's (BUYF) Executive Director was asked to describe a lesson from the Learning Community that surprised him. In a remarkably candid moment, he said that he finally embraced the idea that educational programming needs to be different for girls than it is for boys. Eight months later Boston Urban Youth Foundation had added three gender-responsive programs directly responsive to the needs of girls in their program identified through the Learning Community's PER.

Responding to the finding that safety is a critical program element for these girls, BUYF has designated a "girl only" space within its co-educational program. In response to the finding that girls see themselves as advice givers who can help other girls, older girls now tutor younger girls and together they have a program of discussions in which girls are given topics ahead of time, required to do research and formulate positions, and then support their positions with the research in discussion. The tutoring and discussion groups also respond to the finding that girls' relationships are critical to their feelings of belonging but that they have difficulty communicating and forging those relationships based on trust.

"Making Bread/Breaking Bread" is an innovative response to the PER findings about culture and the need for greater inter-generational transmission of culture, particularly among African-American girls in the programs. Once a month BUYF girls and a significant female adult (mother, grandmother, and aunt) cook a family or culturally significant dish and share it with the group of girls and women.

"The Learning Community showed us we need female leadership within our organization, which is male heavy," said Emanuel Tikili, BUYF Program Director.

BUYF's newly constituted Girls' Leadership Council grew out of staff's experience conducting research with the girls. In PER focus groups BUYF staff quickly realized that there were dominant girls in the group who had an agenda to move and couldn't engage in the research process until they had been heard on their own terms. The girls and staff decided to form a Leadership Council, empowering those girls to move a girls' agenda forward for the whole program. The Leadership Council is now part of BUYF's overall planning process, generating ideas and acting as a sounding board for staff as they develop the program.

"Things just happen the right way, sometimes" said Emanuel Tikili, "I learned so much personally and gained so much insight and value from working with the Learning Community."

Equal, if not more significant to the grantees, was the network of relationships they developed through the Learning Community. Although the eight grantees all worked with comparable populations of girls in Boston or Chelsea, they knew remarkably little about each other's programs when the Learning Community began and they had few formal interactions (i.e., referrals). Although some barriers to collaboration among programs remain, as a result of the Learning Community the grantees now routinely refer and consult with each other. For example, the Youth Advocacy Project's Ed. Law program has become a routine source of education advocacy for the Boston Urban Youth Foundation, Roca, Generation Excel, and the Ella J. Baker House. In the Learning Community the grantees found a network of like-minded, reliable programs to augment their services. The resulting degree of collaboration among grantees was a by-product of trust and knowledge developed over the course of two years. That depth of relationships would not have developed from more casual or episodic networking meetings.

Relationship building was a key part of the PER. During the third month of PER, as the groups were learning about research methods and refining their research questions, Learning Community members mapped their relationships to the Girls' Initiative and their co-grantees, and described how those relationships affected their work with girls. The Foundation staff was somewhat surprised that grantees had already developed deep professional and personal relationships with each other creating referral and support systems and a professional and social network.

LESSON 2

Because concern over girls in the juvenile justice system was already developing when the Girls' Initiative began, the Initiative's concentrated funding and efforts to educate the community had a greater catalytic impact than it might have had in an area new to the community.

When the Girls' Initiative began, the issue of girls in the justice system was beginning to receive attention in Massachusetts and nationally. The Foundation conducted focus groups and interviews before identifying system-involved girls as the target of its Initiative. This initial exploration brought attention among stakeholders to the Foundation's intention to focus funding on a subset within high risk youth. Once girls were established as the focus of the Initiative, the public nature of the RFP and review process brought further attention to the unique issues faced by girls in the delinquency and CHINS systems. The Hyams Foundation received applications from three times the number of grantees it was able to fund.

In the first year of the Initiative, the Hyams Foundation and Citizens for Juvenile Justice, a non-profit watchdog and advocacy agency, co-sponsored a screening of "Girlhood."⁸ The event, which was followed by a panel and took place at the Museum of Fine Arts, was sold-out. In the second year, the Foundation convened a philanthropists' briefing on the findings from the PER and reported on the Initiative at a city-wide conference sponsored by the Black Ministerial Alliance. The Foundation is incorporating a communications strategy into

Phase II and is planning a larger community meeting to share lessons learned.

While the Hyams Foundation is not alone in supporting programming in Boston for high risk girls, the Girls' Initiative is unique in its explicit focus on girls in the CHINS or delinquency systems. The intersection of high risk girls and juvenile justice remains an under-funded area nationally and may be experiencing some recent decline in attention from funders locally.⁹ However, during Phase I, local funding and programs increased the visibility of issues affecting system-involved girls and seemed to encourage programs to work in this area. In Phase II, the Hyams Foundation Learning Community will collaborate more formally with parallel initiatives to further increase community capacity and develop relationships among a broader cross-section of gender-responsive programs.

LESSON 3

Community based programs are hungry for and welcome substantive opportunities to share their experiences and challenges in a safe, non-judgmental environment, and these opportunities add value to the programs for staff and girls.

Throughout the life of the Learning Community the Foundation was aware of the tension between fostering a non-judgmental exchange of information and the role of the funder as “judge” in grant-making decisions. Grantees were eager for an open, yet safe, forum in which they could discuss the challenges they experienced working with a high need population of system-involved girls.

To address this tension, Foundation staff explicitly told participating programs that, to facilitate everyone's learning, they were free, and indeed expected, to openly share their experiences in the Learning Community. The Foundation was equally intentional during reporting periods about carving out time from the work of the Learning Community to address expectations for grant reporting and funding. In addition, the Foundation staff would speak privately with grantees during site visits, one-on-one meetings, or phone conversations, to discuss the business of grant making so that it did not interfere with the collaborative learning environment fostered in the Learning Community. Finally, Phase I consisted of two years of funding, allowing grantees some breathing room in which to work without fearing loss of resources. When program challenges were discussed, grantees often cited Foundation reporting demands and short funding cycles as impediments to program growth. The two year, Phase I grants (and now the three year Phase II grants) are an effort to address that issue.

Grantees felt that changes in the program staff who attended the Learning Community meetings detracted from the Learning Community experience. This turnover (due to staff changes or the demands of programming) frustrated the other participants who felt compelled to provide newcomers with background, slowing down the group's progress. Because so much of the learning was grounded in the relationships formed in the Learning Community, turnover seemed contrary to the heart of the experience.

In addition, because there was a significant program benefit in the relationships formed among grantees, line staff as well as supervisors needed to participate in the Learning Community. The Foundation was, for the most part, not explicit with grantees about which staff should attend meetings, but it would have been useful either to ask that grantees designate staff from each tier in their organizations to participate or to target participation depending on the particular Learning Community activity.

LESSON 4

Participatory research is a credible, capacity building tool for developing areas to focus programming that reflect the concerns, needs, and interests of girls in the program and that are likely to engage those girls.

Over the course of ten months (June, 2004 through March 2005) the eight grantees and Foundation staff developed a research question, methods, and tools and then collected and analyzed data and developed research findings. The process was Participatory Evaluation Research (PER), designed to promote new ways of thinking about research and incorporate the lives and voices of girls, families, and communities into research, program and policy.

The Learning Community chose to focus on girls' relationships, which they saw as central to developing gender-responsive programs and policies. Consequently, the collective research question was: *What are the qualities and dynamics of girls' relationships within the contexts of programs, families, and other girls?* With the aid of a consultant guiding the group through the process, the Learning Community developed methods and tools and collected data in collaboration with girls in the programs. Grantees chose research methods that best fit their programs and focused their research based on their interests and capacities. Thus, some programs focused on girls' relationships with families, while others focused on girls' relationships with programs and staff. Research methods and tools were designed to engage participants, and for many of the programs the PER actually became programming for a brief period.

Though the findings are limited by the small sample size and narrow demographics (girls and staff in the eight grantee programs), they are consistent with literature about gender-responsive programming and the needs of system-involved girls.¹⁰ As a basis for program development, they have credibility both because they are genuine expressions of the girls' perspectives and are consistent with the broader literature.

The PER data raised the themes of safety, culture and the quality and dynamics of girls' relationships. These themes cut across girls' relationships with programs, families and other girls. The grantees developed the following findings along each of these themes:

Roca & Girls' Relationships: Integrating Research and Practice

Roca is a well-established community based program for youth in Chelsea. Roca began the Girls' Initiative with a sophisticated and well-thought out set of values and an evaluation design to measure progress. As a member of the Learning Community it contributed a great deal, introducing the group to the use of Girls' Circles, its tireless approach to outreach and empowerment, and its advanced thinking about program evaluation.

Roca's experience demonstrates the value of the Learning Community and PER for a well-developed program. Although its Project SOL's girls' programming was established when it began the Girls' Initiative, over the course of Phase I Roca integrated lessons learned from the PER, making Project SOL more responsive to the needs of the girls it serves.

Project SOL places greater emphasis on transformational relationships for the girls with caring adults. It hires female staff who are bilingual and recent immigrants (like the community of girls they work with), and all staff better support the girls, challenging them to set and reach ambitious goals. The staff better understands the value girls place on respect, trust, and loyalty in their relationships and that girls see themselves as advice givers. Project Sol has created safe opportunities for girls to express these values and build relationships with staff and each other.

Although Roca, which works with a primarily Latino population, has always been sensitive to the role of culture in the lives of youth in its programs, the PER findings inspired staff to further emphasize culture. They now deliver programming focusing on how culture influences respect between youth and adults, and particularly between older males and younger women. Responding to the cultural roles young women assume in their community, they have added a focus on young mothers and girls who have child care responsibilities for their siblings to their program.

Roca's program description for Project SOL is laced with lessons about girls' relationships from the PER, which are a true reflection of the needs of girls in their program and which provide the foundation for their gender-responsive programming.

○ *Safety*

- Safety is a critical program element for girls, who define it as a non-violent, drug free environment with trusted, consistent individuals who will treat them with respect and without violence.
- Programs' expectations and standards for girls' behavior contribute to their sense of safety, helping them gain confidence, self-respect, and the ability to maintain healthy relationships.
- Violence influences every aspect of the girls' lives and underlies their relationships, which are often based on the girls' needs for protection.

The themes of safety, culture and the quality and dynamics... cut across girls' relationships with programs, families and other girls.

○ *Culture*

- Program staff believe that they share the culture of being a woman with girls in the programs and they rely on their past experience as girls to guide them in their current program work.
- Girls define culture in terms of race and ethnicity, and it has varying meanings to them according to their racial and ethnic backgrounds.
 - Girls of Caribbean descent express a strong connection to their ethnic immigrant culture, while at the same time they experience cultural dissonance, pulled in opposing directions by the traditional Caribbean and the US cultures.
 - African American girls feel the absence of intergenerational transmission of cultural identity in their families, and their sense of cultural identity comes from their neighborhoods, music, and the media. These girls deeply feel the absence of transmission of culture from their mothers, and this diminishes the strength of connections they feel to their mothers.
 - Latina girls have a strong connection and respect for their mothers who they see as role models.

○ *Qualities and Dynamics of Girls' Relationships*

- Prompted by fragmented family relationships, girls seek relationships in all areas of their lives. They seek surrogate family relationships with program staff and, because family relationships are fragmented, they are driven to spend more time in the public, making it more likely that they will get into trouble.
- Problems with communication and conflict resolution at home make it more difficult for girls to set boundaries and navigate conflict in their communities and to know how to sustain strong, meaningful relationships. This, in turn, results in their fragile and ever changing relationships and perpetuates their failure in the systems.
- Girls strongly value loyalty, trust, respect and protection in friends. However, girls hold their female friends to higher standards of trust and loyalty than they do their male friends and are willing to excuse disloyalty or breaches of trust on the part of their male friends.
- Girls value resilience, self reliance, and trusted friends. They see themselves as advice givers who have life experience and can help other girls navigate the systems and avoid the mistakes they have made.
- Although girls believe in their abilities to overcome obstacles, they have difficulty recognizing what it will take for them to achieve their goals. When faced with opportunities, girls become afraid of giving up the familiar for the unknown and are reluctant to take on challenges presented by opportunity.
- There is a disconnect between girls' perceptions and the reality of their situations, with girls tending to idealize their families and their futures.

LESSON 5

Focusing an Initiative on girls across the status offender and delinquency systems promotes education across programs and a holistic understanding of girls and state systems, but also makes it difficult to develop and measure collective outcomes.

Although the PER was successful in community building and generating ideas about gender-responsive programming, when grantees were asked to report their program outcomes after the first funding year, it became apparent that the majority of them were struggling to identify and measure realistic outcomes. Many of the grantees lacked ways to gather and keep program data and had not thought through program outcomes, making it difficult for the Foundation to evaluate their successes and hold them accountable. Though the PER formed a research base for meaningful objectives and programming, it became clear that turning that research into measurable program outcomes was a significant leap which the grantees had not accomplished.

In addition to the challenges individual grantees had translating their knowledge and plans into measurable outcomes, the Foundation was also seeking outcomes across programs. Outcome evaluation common to all Learning Community grantees would determine whether the Initiative had an impact on girls beyond the impact of funding for each individual grantee.

To address these issues, the Foundation engaged a consultant in outcome evaluation to train Learning Community grantees as a group and in targeted individual sessions and to help develop collective outcomes. As a result of this process, the Learning Community grantees selected four collective outcome areas (see Appendix):

- Progress in School and/or Career Preparation;
- Increased Sense of Self-Worth and Hope;
- Maintaining Healthy and Positive Relationships with Family Members; and
- Developing Effective Interpersonal, Communication, and Social Skills.

All grantees agreed that these outcome areas reflected individual program goals, were gender-responsive, and reflected what they learned from the PER. However, there was a range among the grantees in the degree to which they had thought through their individual program goals, their capacities to achieve long term outcomes, and their abilities to measure their outcomes. Three of the eight grantees had developed systems for gathering and maintaining program data and the remaining five had systems ranging from basic paper to nothing at all. Moreover, because the grantees had different program foci, the outcome areas were not equally applicable to all the grantees. For example, while each program included some career planning or educational encouragement, education is the primary focus of programming for the Boston Urban Youth Foundation, a middle school truancy prevention program. As a result, it should have particularly strong outcomes in the area focusing on girls' progress in school while the other programs may have more limited outcomes in that area.

Because the grantees had not all developed individual program logic models and had varying capacities, the collective outcome evaluation was designed as strands of progressively more ambitious outcomes rather than as specific short, medium and long-term outcomes. These "outcome strands" accommodate the range in program capacity, allowing individual programs to measure their success at the beginning of the outcome strand or further up toward the collective long-term goals. Moreover, the Foundation helped build individual program capacity for outcome evaluation through some technical assistance. Ultimately, the grantees chose outcome areas (e.g., communication, self-worth) both because they are fundamental and because, in their youth development focus, they cut across the programs in the Learning Community.

In the end, the grantee programs believe the Learning Community had an impact on outcomes for girls in their programs. They believe that, over the two years, girls in their programs are:

- Friendlier and less aggressive with staff and other girls;
- Requesting activities and workshops;
- Providing appropriate feedback to staff;
- Achieving academic goals (e.g., girls are passing classes and the MCAS);
- Staying out of the systems (e.g., girls in programming are reentering DYS at a lower rate and are decreasing their rate of re-offense); and
- Dreaming about their futures and taking ownership of their lives.

Grantees attribute these successes to program strategies and expanded service networks, much of which they developed as a result of their experiences within the Learning Community. For example, since the start of the Initiative grantees report increasing their efforts to improve the quality of relationships between adults and girls and between girls and their peers. Moreover, as a result of the PER, grantees said they address girls' feelings of safety and connection, knowing that girls who feel connected and safe are more likely to believe in themselves and each other, are more likely to appropriately express themselves, and are more willing to participate in leadership opportunities. In addition, relationships formed among grantees in the Learning Community allow programs to expand skills training and advocacy offered to girls, which, in turn, improve girls' skills and opportunities.

LESSON 6

Although the Learning Community built grantees' confidence in their expertise about the individual and policy needs of the girls they work with, collective policy advocacy remains difficult for under-funded community based programs.

From the beginning, one of the goals of the Learning Community was to accomplish policy reform that would have a positive impact on system-involved girls in Boston and Chelsea. All of the grantees identified policy issues from their ongoing work with girls in the community, and their collective experience in the Learning Community gave them confidence that their perceptions were correct. Over the course of the two years the Learning Community engaged in structured discussions to identify broad areas for policy reform. These included:

- Reducing the number of residential transitions experienced by girls in the systems;
- Increasing the role of families in the lives of girls in the systems;
- Addressing the lack of focus on gender-responsive services for system-involved girls;

- Reforming the CHINS system to be less punitive, more family focused, and more gender-responsive;
- Addressing the lack of safe programming for sexually exploited girls in Boston; and
- Addressing disproportionate minority contact of girls in the juvenile justice system in Boston.

In each policy discussion Learning Community members expressed clear and passionate views about the needs of girls and the ways in which current policies fail them. Moreover, they could envision policy reforms targeting these issues. However, the grantees became concerned about the commitment of time and resources involved in an issue campaign. They were understandably concerned about the impact that that level of investment of energy and personnel would have on their programs.

Phase I ended with a consensus within the Learning Community about areas the group might target for policy reform and an agreement to examine opportunities to work with other like-minded groups, which are more experienced and have greater capacities for policy advocacy.

LESSON 7

Initiatives with broad goals, like the Girls' Initiative, should be planned for five years; two years was not enough time to accomplish the range of goals established for the Girls' Initiative.

When a Girls' Initiative grantee was asked at a funders' forum how funders could assist girls' programs, she said that they should fund for longer periods of time. She explained that the relative brevity of each funding cycle distracts programs, which are continuously preoccupied with identifying and obtaining the next round of funding. This was an important lesson from Phase I of the Girls' Initiative.

Phase I lasted two years, which was not enough time to accomplish the ambitious agenda of learning, program development, sharing, and policy advocacy. Five years is a more realistic time frame for comprehensive initiatives of this sort.

This is particularly true because many of the grantee programs added gender-responsive elements under the Initiative, which could not be realistically evaluated until they had been operating for at least six months. These programmatic changes suffered implementation problems such as staff turnover, which interfered with grantees' ongoing delivery of gender-responsive program, further prolonging meaningful outcome evaluation. The PER alone, which formed the basis for the outcome evaluations, took ten months to complete. Finally, because there were many general policy issues but no one clear area of policy focus, a policy agenda was discussed throughout Phase I, but a policy campaign was not developed. Influencing policy remains a goal of the Girls' Initiative in Phase II.

LESSON 8

Managing a targeted Initiative like the Girls' Initiative requires specific expertise from consultants, an outside intermediary or staff.

Managing Phase I of the Girls' Initiative was time-intensive for Foundation staff and required specialized expertise from three consultants. While the Foundation considered contracting with an outside intermediary, there was no local group with the breadth of expertise needed in program, policy, and administration in the substantive areas of juvenile justice and girls. Moreover, managing the Girls' Initiative "in-house" had the advantage of developing a deep understanding and commitment to the issues among Foundation staff. Foundation staff were then able to communicate this depth of understanding to the Trustees.

However, because the Girls' Initiative was at the intersection of juvenile justice and girls' programming and the Initiative's goals were ambitious, outside expertise was needed. The Foundation worked with a lead consultant throughout the initiative to assist in the initial research and development of the RFP, proposal review, ongoing agenda for the Learning Community and all the Learning Community activities and meetings, and to help develop the policy agenda. An additional consultant with expertise in PER was retained to guide the Learning Community through the development of its research question, tools, data collection and findings. Finally, a third consultant assisted the Learning Community in developing its outcome areas and logic models and worked with individual grantees to build evaluation capacity.¹¹

LESSON 9

Building community capacity for gender-responsive programs and policy reform is a long-term project which may be seeded by funders but must be sustained by the community.

Over the two years of Phase I, the Hyams Foundation served as the glue binding the eight grantees into a network. While those two years generated many worthwhile lessons and by-products, if gender-responsive programming and policy reform are to become fixtures of the Boston landscape, community based organizations must have the capacity to sustain a network without Foundation organizing.

Developing the capacity to sustain this network is a challenge for the Girls' Initiative grantees (and most similar community based programs), which lack stable funding and struggle with administrative limitations that impact delivery of their core program. As a result, stimulating that capacity is a central goal of Phase II of the Girls' Initiative. For example, in Phase II the Learning Community is expanding to include other, similar initiatives (e.g., The United Way's, Today's Girls...Tomorrow's Leaders initiative) and will continue to reach out to community based programs serving system-involved Boston girls. Moreover, the Learning Community is likely to reach beyond its membership to collaborate with juvenile justice and youth serving organizations on policy reform. The Foundation may directly stimulate community capacity by identifying and funding a promising community based organization to serve as the organizing intermediary for Phase II.

EPILOGUE

As a result of the work summarized in this report, in December, 2005, the Hyams Foundation Trustees voted to fund seven of the eight original grantees for three years in Phase II of the Girls' Initiative. In Phase II the Foundation will work with an intermediary organization to manage the Initiative. During Phase II, the Initiative will also be closely tied to the United Way's Today's Girls...Tomorrow's Leaders, another funding initiative for girls in Boston, and will develop collaborative projects with other related foundation initiatives. The Girls' Initiative will continue to focus on common learning and developing community capacity to continue this work, and will proceed with its policy agenda in collaboration with existing Boston organizations working on juvenile justice and girls' policy. In approving Phase II, the Trustees were impressed with the learning and potential for future change demonstrated in Phase I. In approving Phase II, the Trustees are pleased to build on lessons learned in the initial phase and to be a part of the ongoing effort to improve the lives of girls in our community.

ENDNOTES

¹ Girls in the Massachusetts Juvenile Justice System, Citizens for Juvenile Justice, Fact Sheet (June 2005).

² Girls in the delinquency system are charged or found delinquent for an offense which would be a crime if they were an adult. The age of adult jurisdiction in Massachusetts is 17, however, if you are found delinquent in the Juvenile Court and committed to the Department of Youth Services (DYS), you remain in their care (the "system") until age eighteen or age twenty-one (if you are found to be a youthful offender). DYS has responsibility for delinquent youth and youthful offenders. A status offender is a youth who has been found to be truant, runaway or "stubborn" (unwilling to obey the lawful command of a parent or guardian). These findings are made in the Juvenile Court but the Department of Social Services (DSS) works with these youth. DSS also has responsibility for abused and neglected youth.

³ Snyder, H., *Juvenile Arrests 2002*, Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2004.

⁴ See e.g., Maniglia, R., Albrecht, L., "Female Responsive Services and Positive Peer Culture: Thoughts for Consideration," *Women, Girls & Criminal Justice* Vol. 7 No. 2 (February/March 2006); Sherman, F., "Detention Reform and Girls: Challenges and Solutions," Annie E. Casey Foundation (2005).

⁵ *A Blueprint for Juvenile Justice Reform*, Youth Transition Funders Group (2005); *Grantmaking with a Gender Lens*, Grantcraft (2004).

⁶ The Hyams Foundation funds exclusively in Boston and Chelsea.

⁷ The results of the Learning Community's Participatory Evaluation Research are limited due to small sample size, qualitative methods, and self-selection of girls and staff in eight programs in Boston and Chelsea. Therefore, one cannot generalize from the "findings," which must be understood as related specifically to these programs at this time.

⁸ "Girlhood" is a documentary tracking girls in the juvenile justice system in Maryland. Directed by Liz Garbus, Produced by Liz Garbus and Rory Kennedy, (2003).

⁹ Wheeler, K.A., Oliveri, R., Towery, I.D., Mead, M. (2006) *Where are the Girls? The State of Girls' Programming in Greater Boston*. The Girls' Coalition.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Taylor, J.M., Gilligan, C. & Sullivan, A.M. (1995) *Between Voice and Silence: Women and Girls, Race and Relationship*. Cambridge, MA; Harvard University Press. Ms. Foundation for Women.(2001) *The New Girls' Movement: Implications for Youth Programs*. New York, NY: Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women. Ms. Foundation for Women.

¹¹ The three consultants were: Francine Sherman, Clinical Professor and Director, Juvenile Rights Advocacy Project at Boston College Law School; P. Catlin Fullwood, On-Time Associates, Chicago, IL; and Kim Comart, Comart and Associates, Boston, MA. In addition, the Foundation hired Rolanda Ward, MSW, MDIV, to provide a brief assessment of Phase I at the end of the two years.

A P P E N D I X

OUTCOME AREA:

GIRLS MAKE PROGRESS IN SCHOOL AND/OR CAREER PREPARATION

Sub-Outcome	Indicator(s) (Examples only. Programs can select their own indicators.)
Buy into program structure and “trust the process” to be able to develop plan for academic improvement and/or career preparation plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Show willingness to work with staff to complete educational, job preparation or other “self-sufficiency” plan ● Express commitment to fulfilling the plan ● Follow through on appointments ● Understand link between own actions and achievement of personal goals
Successfully enroll or reintegrate into school, alternative education program, or job preparation program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enroll or re-enroll in program or school ● Attend program
Develop academic and/or job preparation skills to succeed in school and in securing and retaining a job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading, writing, and verbal communication skills improve ● Participate in tutoring or other academic support ● Develop job interview skills (i.e., dress, eye-contact, handshake, etc.) ● Develop job readiness skills (i.e., resume writing, time management, etc.) ● Complete homework assignments ● Draft resume ● Complete mock job interviews
Academic attendance and performance improves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receive positive reports from teachers, guidance counselors, program instructors, and or parents ● Grades improve ● Attendance improves ● Begin to plan for their academic future
Complete a job preparation program and begin to search for a job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete job preparation program ● Receive positive feedback from job preparation program ● Secure a job ● Retain a job ● Able to articulate employment plan

OUTCOME AREA:
GIRLS INCREASE SENSE OF SELF-WORTH AND HOPE

Sub-Outcome	Indicator(s) (Examples only. Programs can select their own indicators.)
Increase sense of optimism connected to their efforts and accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Express desire to work hard (or invest) in various aspects of their lives (i.e., school, family, program, community, etc.) ● Develop healthy social relationships
Increase self-confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take pride in physical appearance ● Take pride in personal achievements ● Display greater understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage ● Identify times when used “inner voice” (advocate for themselves) ● Identify personal strength
Increase sense that they can make meaningful contributions (self-worth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take leadership roles in program ● Take leadership roles outside of program (i.e., family, community, school, etc.) ● Actively participate in program activities ● Actively participate in outside program activities (e.g., school, job preparation program, family, etc.)
Increase sense of safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish “safety plan” with program staff ● Make decisions to place themselves in safe situations and places ● Identify safe relationships ● Identify characteristics of safe relationships
Increased sense of hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discuss plans and goals for the future ● More likely to smile and willingness to have fun ● Articulate plan for the future ● Develop a plan with steps to achieve future goals

OUTCOME AREA:
GIRLS DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN HEALTHY AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

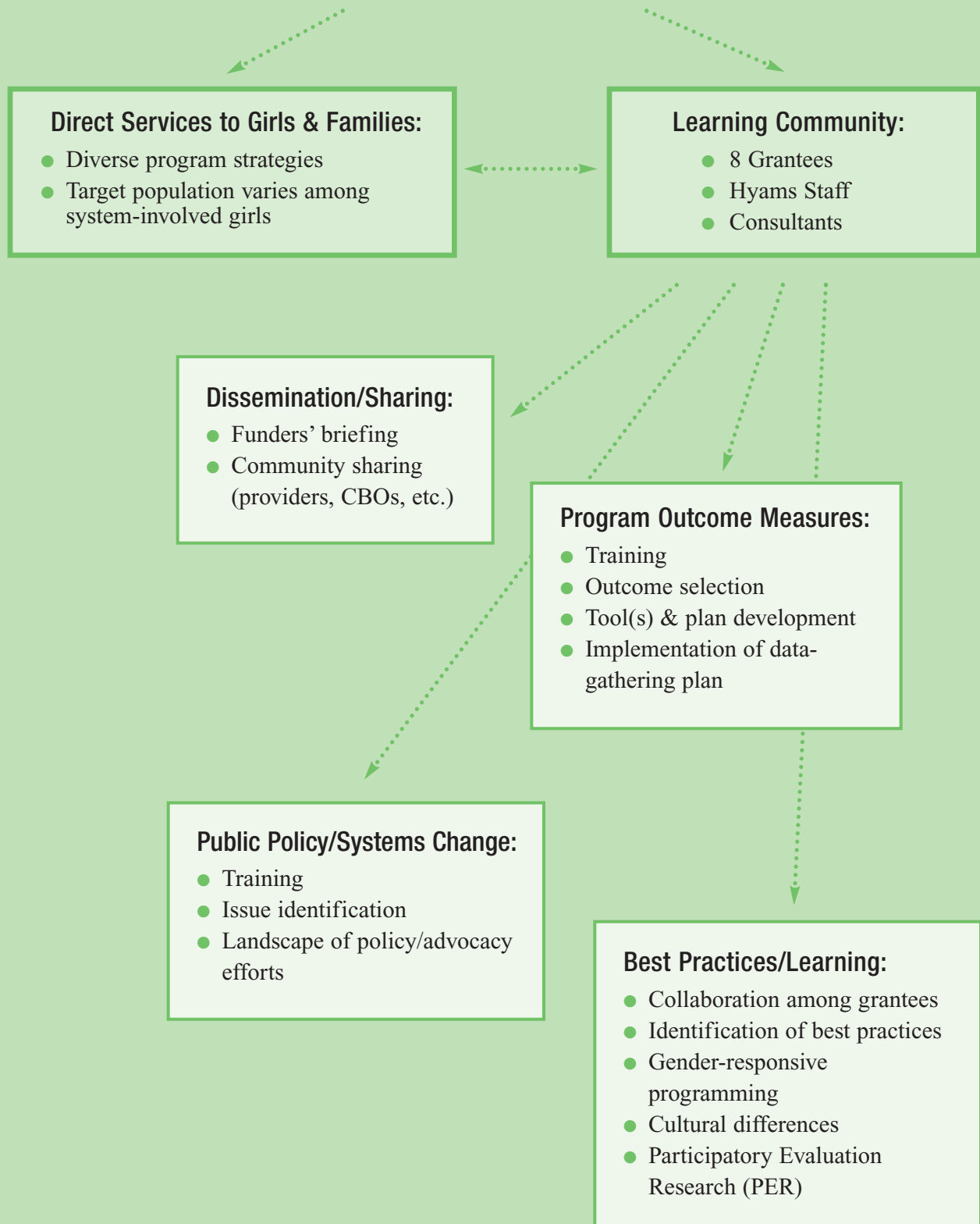
Sub-Outcome	Indicator(s) (Examples only. Programs can select their own indicators.)
Develop and maintain a positive relationship with program staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Respond positively to initial efforts by staff to establish a relationship ● Develop sense of trust of the program and staff
Develop and maintain a positive relationship with program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attend program regularly ● Actively participate in program activities and discussions ● Begin to use program as a resource ● Begin to articulate the benefits of the program
Express desire to establish positive relationships with family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Speak with longing or affection about family members ● Take responsibility for their role in family relationships ● Express desire for family and program to connect ● Express desire to learn how to mend broken relationships with their family
Develop and maintain positive relationships with “family” members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take steps to repair damaged or estranged relationships with family members ● Work with staff to identify relationships with family members they would like to work on ● Increased contact with family members ● Celebrate significant family events and reunions ● Stay in contact with parents, siblings, etc. ● Program staff and family connect regularly ● Develop a “strategic mending plan” to assist them in repairing broken family relationships
Develop and maintain positive relationship with peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand the characteristics/qualities of positive peer relationships (friends, significant other, etc.) ● Increase number of positive peer relationships ● Identify a close friend they can share a problem with ● Assess quality of peer relationships ● Decrease contact with harmful or abusive peer relationships

OUTCOME AREA:
**GIRLS DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE INTERPERSONAL
 COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL SKILLS**

Sub-Outcome	Indicator(s) (Examples only. Programs can select their own indicators.)
Develop anger management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use less aggressive and rude language ● Talk about anger and demonstrate understanding of what motivates anger ● Control, manage language, and prevent conflict from escalating
Develop conflict resolution skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access adult or outside support to resolve conflicts ● Have fewer on-site conflicts ● Report fewer family-conflicts ● Increase number of resolved conflicts ● Have fewer consequences related to conflicts ● Able to identify behaviors that will promote conflict resolution (i.e., appropriate language, moderated tone, etc.)
Increase level of self-awareness and capacity for effective self-expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use emotional language that demonstrates sense of introspection and self-understanding/awareness ● Express feelings and needs effectively at program ● Express feelings effectively at home ● Express feelings and needs effectively in dealing with school, community agencies, and other institutions – increased capacity to “navigate” these worlds effectively ● Express feelings and needs effectively with peers ● Express feelings and needs effectively in public
Increase use of improved interpersonal, communication, and social skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Act appropriately in program ● Act appropriately with family ● Act appropriately with friends/peers ● Act appropriately in dealing with school, community, agencies, and other institutions

Phase I Girls' Initiative Components

Eight Grantee Organizations



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