



Rogers Park Young Women's Action Team

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FINAL REPORT OCTOBER 2008



Introduction

The Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL) at Loyola University Chicago was asked to conduct an evaluation of Girl Leadership U (GLU), a series of six sessions hosted by the Roger's Park Young Women's Action Team (YWAT) in which emerging young women leaders develop skills that can be utilized in efforts to take action and create social change.

CURL is a non-traditional research center that utilizes a community-based, collaborative research model to address issues facing communities and organizations in the Chicago area.

This final report, prepared by CURL, includes an overview of GLU, the main evaluation activities, highlights of findings from all data collected, as well as recommendations for the program. In addition to the final report, the CURL team routinely submitted detailed evaluation briefs of the data collected as a way of reporting evaluation progress to YWAT. These evaluation briefs provide in greater detail the findings from this evaluation.

About the Young Women's Action Team and Girl Leadership U

The Rogers Park Young Women's Action Team (YWAT) is a youth-led, adult-supported social change organization that empowers young women of color to take action in issues that affect their lives, particularly issues of violence against girls and young women. The vision of YWAT is to help young girls to prevent violence in their lives. They believe that through collective action, consciousness-raising, and organizing they can end violence against young women.

YWAT has developed a program called Girl Leadership U (GLU). The purpose of GLU is to guide young women (ages 14-19) through a process to help them understand the importance of building a specific set of skills, including self-awareness, identity, and leadership, that can be applied to taking action and making change. The program provided young women with the opportunity to analyze and explore the nature of leadership, advocacy, and organizing, as well as the opportunity to become more self-aware.

The Girl Leadership U sessions were offered the last Saturday of every month (January-June 2008). Participants were required to submit an application and, if selected, participants received a stipend for attending at least four of the six sessions in the series. In addition to this stipend, participants also received lunch and Chicago Transit Authority passes to allow young women to participate who would have otherwise not been able to do so due to financial hardship.

Each session of GLU focused on building specific skills. It was hoped that by the end of the program, young leaders would have obtained a useful skill set which they can employ to make change in their communities.

The **six session topics** were as follows:

Girl Leadership U Sessions

<i>Self Awareness (Identity)</i>	January 2008
Self-Awareness (Values)	February 2008
<i>Developing Voice/ Communicating Your Ideas</i>	March 2008
<i>Who Are <u>You</u>?</i>	April 2008
<i>Advocacy 101</i>	May 2008
<i>Facilitating Effective Meetings</i>	June 2008



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Session Overview

In Session 1, *Self Awareness (Identity)*, youth created a personal mission statement and spent time identifying their individual gifts and strengths. Session 2, *Self-Awareness (Values-What do you believe in?)*, consisted of youth identifying the core values and social issues that they care about and then connected their values to their mission statement. *Developing Voice/ Communicating Your Ideas* (Session 3) was designed to allow youth to learn the basics of public speaking as well as how to communicate their ideas effectively. *Who Are You?* (Session 4) encouraged youth to become more confident of who they are presently and what they want to become in the future. The goal of *Advocacy 101* (Session 5) was to help youth learn about lobbying, speaking with elected officials, and how to get into contact with people in power.

In Session 6, *Facilitating Effective Meetings*, youth were provided with tips to help create meeting agendas and were taught specific ways to engage people in meetings. This session took place during an overnight retreat. The retreat was an opportunity to discuss what was learned and what the youth still want to know. All participants were able to reflect upon their experience in GLU and conceptualize an action project they want to develop.

"I consider myself to be a leader because it's not all about telling people what to do or say it's about trying to make a change and trying to make others feel good about themselves and encourage them to be a leader too."

-GLU 2008 Participant



A Collaborative Endeavor

All evaluation activities conducted represented a true collaboration between the Rogers Park Young Women's Action Team and the Loyola University Chicago Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL). The CURL team consisted of several CURL Undergraduate Fellows (paid research fellows), Loyola Urban Studies students, and Research staff. Early on in the process, the CURL team worked closely with the YWAT Director to ensure that there was a clear understanding of the program, agreement on the evaluation goals, and joint insight into how to meet those goals. *Every step of this evaluation, from the formation of goals and research questions, to the development of instruments, to the data collection and analysis, to the reporting of findings and recommendations was informed and influenced by both the Young Women's Action Team and CURL.* This collaborative effort ensured that every participant's expertise and insight were utilized and that the evaluation is strong in both methodological rigor as well as usability.



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Evaluation Methods

The evaluation team recognized that it was important to gather information from the youth participants, as well as the speakers who were involved in GLU. The data were collected from the following:

GLU Stakeholders:	What was collected:
GLU Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All 23 GLU participants completed surveys at beginning of GLU Program in January 2008.GLU participants were asked to complete a session survey after each of the 6 sessions. Approximately 20 session surveys were completed per session.All 22 GLU participants who attended the retreat completed post surveys and participated in a focus group.
GLU Guest Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All 6 facilitators were interviewed after the session they facilitated.



The thing I do best is...

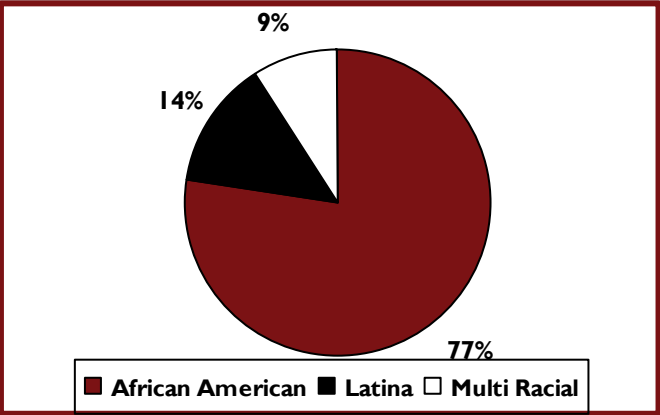
“...helping people, because I find helping people is the right thing to do. If you know you can help someone then you should.”

-GLU 2008 Participant

Who Participated in GLU?

The young women participants ranged in age from 11 to 16, with the majority of the youth (73%) at age 14. While all of the 23 participants completed surveys prior to the start of GLU, only 22 participants reported their race or ethnicity.

Identified Racial Composition of GLU Participants





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Key Sections of This Report:

Leadership: Developing a Voice

- *Becoming More Self-Aware: Identity*
- *Becoming More Self-Aware: Values*

Self-Awareness: Identity & Values

- *Emerging as a Leader*
- *Perceptions of Leadership*

The Young Women's Action Team/ Girl Leadership U Experience

- *Goals & Expectations of GLU*
- *What GLU Participants Most Looked Forward To*
- *Taking Action Before & After GLU*
- *GLU Sessions*
- *Participant Perceptions of Learning*

This evaluation report focuses on the first Girl Leadership U program hosted by the Rogers Park Young Women's Action Team. The data revealed many insights into the program. What follows is a brief overview on three key aspects of Girl Leadership U: (1) **Leadership: Developing a Voice**, (2) **Self-Awareness: Identity and Values**, and (3) **The YWAT/ GLU Experience**.



Why do you consider yourself to be a leader?

"...Because I am responsible, caring, respectful, and I listen... and I have a voice and it matters."

- GLU 2008 Participant

This report is composed of highlights from all data collected. For additional information or questions about this evaluation please contact:

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Rogers Park Young Women's Action Team

LEADERSHIP: DEVELOPING A VOICE



About the Young Women's Action Team and Girl Leadership U

The Rogers Park Young Women's Action Team (YWAT) is a youth-led, adult-supported social change organization that empowers young women of color to take action in issues that affect their lives, particularly issues of violence against girls and young women. The vision of YWAT is to help young girls be free from violence. YWAT believes that through collective action, consciousness-raising, and organizing to end violence against young women.

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“A leader is not only well educated, but they also understand their audience and they want to move forward by helping and teaching others.”

-GLU 2008 Participant

Emerging as a Leader

Consistent with the goals of YWAT and GLU, the data collected revealed many positive insights into how the young women are emerging as leaders. Participation in YWAT or GLU alone is already a clear demonstration of emerging leadership, as the young women are looking to further develop skills that will allow them to stimulate and facilitate change in their communities.

Throughout this evaluation, the GLU participants were asked why they consider themselves to be leaders. The following is a sample of what the young women reported:

I CONSIDER MYSELF TO BE A LEADER BECAUSE...

- *“...I stand up for what I believe.”*
- *“...I’m a smart, not judgmental person [and] when I want something I go for it. I’m confident, and I am a quick learner.”*
- *“...I take charge.”*
- *“...everybody can be a leader if you put your heart in it.”*

In surveys administered at the beginning and end of GLU, participants were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed with a series of statements on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree.” Compared to when they entered GLU, participants’ agreement increased significantly on the following items:

- “People consider me to be a leader,”
- “I am comfortable interacting with young women.”

This significant increase in participant agreement suggests that participation in GLU and YWAT encourages young women to recognize that others acknowledge them as leaders. Furthermore, this may indicate that participation in GLU builds confidence in leadership abilities, such that participants grow more comfortable in their interactions with other emerging young leaders. Consistent with the goals of YWAT and GLU, it is hoped that this will facilitate the young women’s future efforts to work collaboratively to create social change in their communities.



Rogers Park Young Women’s Action Team

LEADERSHIP: DEVELOPING A VOICE

Perceptions of Leadership

In surveys administered at the beginning and end of the GLU program, participants were asked to indicate the top 5 qualities they feel are associated with an individual who is a good leader.

Table 1

Top 5 Behaviors of a “Good Leader”			
Beginning of GLU (N=23)		After GLU (N=22)	
“Inspires others”	66.7% (N=14)	“Listens to other people’s ideas”	81.0% (N=17)
“Influences others”	61.9% (N=13)	“Inspires others”	61.9% (N=13)
“Listens to other people’s ideas”	61.9% (N=13)	“Influences others”	57.1% (N=12)
“Helps people to achieve their goals”	52.4% (N=11)	“Encourages people to speak up for themselves”	57.1% (N=12)
“Encourages people to speak up for themselves”	52.4% (N=11)	“Helps people to achieve their goals”	47.6% (N=10)

In looking at the table to the left (Table 1), it can be observed that the participants selected the same top five behaviors before and after participating in the GLU program, with slight variability in frequency. This suggests that the young women who were drawn to participate in YWAT and GLU already possessed positive perceptions of what it means to be a “good leader.”

Though participants identified the same five behaviors before and after the GLU program, an overwhelming majority indicated “Listening to other people’s ideas” as a behavior of a “good leader” after participating in the GLU program. This suggest that the strong emphasis placed on leadership throughout the GLU program caused the young women to think more critically about what it means to be a “good leader.”

Similar findings can be observed from the table to the right (Table 2). This chart represents what GLU participants indicated were top qualities of a “good leader.” Similar to the table above, participants indicated positive qualities both at the beginning of and end of the GLU program indicating that they came in with strong perceptions of leadership. Unlike responses to the items reported above however, the GLU participants did not identify the same items at the beginning and end of the program. This change in response mirrors the GLU training which encouraged the participants to think more critically about the qualities of leadership and what it means to be a “good leader.” For example, it is important to note that a new item of leadership quality that participants identified after their participation in GLU was “good listener.” This could be related to the overwhelming selection of “listening to other people’s ideas” as a behavior of a “good leader,” which suggests that participants acquired an even better perception of leadership through their participation in GLU.

Table 2

Top 5 Qualities of a “Good Leader”			
Beginning of GLU (N=23)		After GLU (N=22)	
“Supportive”	78.9% (N=15)	“Caring”	76.2% (N=16)
“Patient”	68.4% (N=13)	“Good Listener”	76.2% (N=16)
“Caring”	57.9% (N=11)	“Supportive”	61.9% (N=13)
“Focused”	42.1% (N=8)	“Open Minded”	57.1% (N=12)
“Organized”	42.1% (N=8)	“Creative”	52.4% (N=11)

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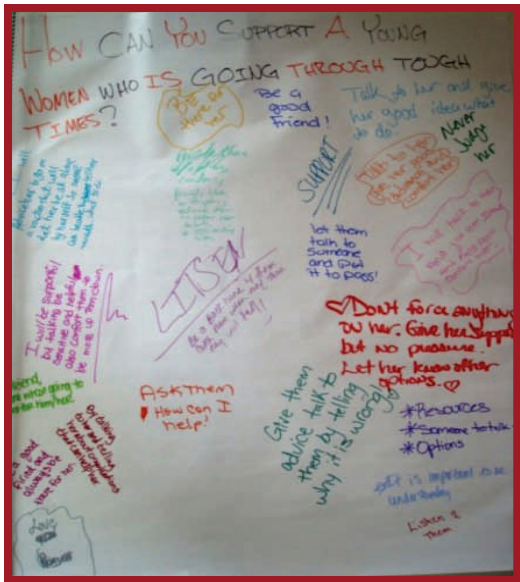


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“You need to learn a little about yourself before you can learn how to help others.”
- GLU 2008 Participant



Becoming More Self-Aware: Identity

An essential component of the content and structure of GLU involved the young women’s exploration of their individual self and how that influences their ability to set goals, emerge as leaders, and develop into agents of change. The following four areas of identity were explored in surveys administered before and after GLU: Collaborative Learning, Positive Sense of Self, Problem Solving, and Leadership Quality. The GLU participants were asked to indicate their agreement with series of items that explored their identity. Items were to be ranked on a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 indicates “strongly disagree” and a 5 indicates “strongly agree.”

Table 1: Collaborative Learning (1-5, where 5 indicates “strongly agree”)		
Item:	Before GLU:	After GLU:
“It is easy for me to express in a group what I am thinking.”	3.16	3.47
“I am comfortable interacting with other young women.”	3.50	3.83
“I feel confident that I am able to express my opinions to people who I do not know well.”	2.84	3.32

Table 2: Positive Sense of Self (1-5, where 5 indicates “strongly agree”)		
Item:	Before GLU:	After GLU:
“I am comfortable speaking in front of a group.”	3.17	3.50
“I am good at seeing both the positive and negative things about myself.”	3.84	4.11
“People consider me to be a leader.”	3.21	3.68

Table 3: Problem Solving Skills (1-5, where 5 indicates “strongly agree”)		
Item:	Before GLU:	After GLU:
“When trying to understand the point of view of others, I try to place myself in their position.”	3.79	4.05
“I tend to solve problems by talking them out.”	3.11	3.63

Table 4: Leadership Quality (1-5, where 5 indicates “strongly agree”)		
Item:	Before GLU:	After GLU:
“I encourage others to speak up for themselves.”	3.58	3.95

Overall, the responses given by the young women suggest that their participation in GLU resulted in increased confidence by working collaboratively, solidified a positive sense of self, and facilitated the development of problem-solving skills and qualities of leadership. Furthermore, the two items for which agreement increased significantly (“I am comfortable interacting with other young women” and “People consider me to be a leader”) are specifically consistent with one of the main goals of YWAT and GLU. Thus, it can be inferred that GLU and YWAT positively impact the identity development of young emerging leaders.



Becoming More Self-Aware:Values

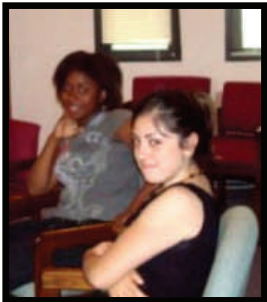
Included in the self-exploration encouraged by GLU, the young women were asked to reflect upon their core values. YWAT suggests that the exploration of core values is essential to growing as a young activist and strong leader. The following two areas of core values were explored in surveys administered before and after GLU: Working Together and Being Optimistic. Again, the GLU participants were asked to indicate their agreement with a series of items that explored these areas. Items were to be ranked on a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 indicates “strongly disagree” and a 5 indicates “strongly agree.”

Overall, the responses suggest that participation in GLU increases participants self-awareness of core values, specifically in terms of helping others, supporting other young women, and optimism that collaborative efforts for change are possible.

In providing the opportunity for young women to engage in self-exploration, YWAT hopes that they will learn how they can best help their community. Thus, the data suggest that encouraging young women to become more self-aware, YWAT and GLU serve as catalysts for raising the social consciousness of not only participants, but also the broader community.

Table 5: Working Together		
Item:	Before GLU:	After GLU:
"I believe it is important for young women to show support for each other."	4.47	4.53
"I always help people who need help."	3.76	3.88

Table 6: Optimistic		
Item:	Before GLU:	After GLU:
"I believe that it is very important to listen to all sides of an argument before taking a side."	4.18	4.47
"Cultural diversity within a group makes the group more interesting and effective."	4.0	4.0
"By working together in a group people can accomplish great things."	4.24	4.47



“My voice matters. It’s one voice, but it matters.”

-GLU 2008 Participant



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THE YWAT & GLU EXPERIENCE

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What GLU Participants Most Looked Forward To

- At the beginning of GLU, participants were also asked what they were most looking forward to. The majority of participants indicated that they hoped to attain their goals through self-improvement. The responses were consistent with the mission of YWAT and GLU. Some of their responses included:
- **Making friends.**
 - **Learning new skills and strategies.**
 - **Learning new ways to help my community and help others.**
 - **Building confidence by becoming a better person.**

“I think through YWAT and GLU you learn to believe in yourself and you learn how to help others.”

-GLU 2008 Participant

Goals & Expectations of GLU

At the beginning of GLU, the young women indicated that they had the following goals and expectations regarding their participation in the program:

Item:	Percent:
“I hope to learn new skills and strategies for taking action.”	65%
“I hope to make friends with other youth leaders.”	55%
“I hope to inspire others with what I learn.”	55%
“I hope to enjoy this experience.”	50%

This suggests that YWAT and GLU attract young women who already share an interest in taking action and making change by means of networking with other youth leaders and sharing knowledge.

Form of Action:	Percent: (N=22)
“Volunteer my time to help people in my community.”	50% (N=10)
“Organize for change in my community.”	45% (N=9)
“Collect signatures for a petition.”	30% (N=6)
“Participate in a protest, rally, march, or demonstration.”	30% (N=6)
“Collect money for a social cause.”	26.3% (N=5)
Run a class on a subject I know a lot about.”	23.8% (N=5)
“Run a meeting on my own.”	15% (N=3)
“Start or join a boycott.”	15% (N=3)
“Take action against violence in my community.”	5% (N=1)

Taking Action Before GLU

In order to gain further insight, the young women were asked to indicate what forms of action they have taken prior to their participation.

As similarly suggested by the participants’ goals and expectations, the data presented in the table to the left further reiterate that GLU and YWAT attract remarkable young women who already have a passion for taking action and creating social change in their communities.



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“I consider myself a leader because not only do I talk about making changes, I act on it. And coming to GLU is a first step I’m taking of many that follow.”
-GLU 2008 Participant



Taking Action After GLU

As mentioned on the previous page, the young women were asked to indicate what forms of action they have taken prior to their participation in GLU. At the end of GLU the young women were asked to indicate the likelihood of taking the same forms of action in the future.

The young women participants of GLU expressed a moderate to high likelihood of taking the vast majority of the forms of action listed in the table. They were most likely to take the following three forms of action in the future:

- “Take action against violence in my neighborhood.”
- “Volunteer time to help people in my community.”
- “Organize for change in my community.”

Though all of the forms of action listed are strongly encouraged and facilitated by many community organizations, these three specific forms of action are deeply rooted in the goals and mission of GLU and YWAT. Furthermore, participants indicated overall that they were likely to take specific forms of action in the future to a higher degree than they indicated prior to participating in GLU.

It can be inferred from both of these findings that participation in the GLU program encourages emerging young leaders to deepen their interest in and commitment to taking action in their communities, which in turn increases the likelihood that the actions will be carried out.

Form Of Action (N=22)	Likelihood of Taking This Form of Action in the Future (N=22)		
	“I am <u>unlikely</u> to do this in the future.”	“I am <u>not sure</u> if I will do this in the future.”	“I am <u>likely</u> to do this in the future.”
“Take action against violence in my neighborhood.”	4.8% (N=1)	9.5% (N=2)	85.7% (N=18)
“Volunteer time to help people in my community.”	0% (N=0)	14.3% (N=3)	85.7% (N=18)
“Organize for change in my community.”	14.3% (N=3)	4.8% (N=1)	81% (N=17)
“Run a class on a subject I know a lot about.”	4.8% (N=1)	23.8% (N=5)	74.4% (N=15)
“Collect money for a social cause.”	0% (N=0)	30% (N=6)	70% (N=14)
“Run a meeting on my own.”	19% (N=4)	19% (N=4)	61.9% (N=13)
“Participate in a protest, rally, march or demonstration.”	4.8% (N=1)	38.1% (N=8)	57.1% (N=13)
“Collect signatures for a petition.”	0% (N=0)	42.9% (N=9)	57.1% (N=12)
“Run my own social justice organization.”	9.5% (N=2)	47.6% (N=10)	42.9% (N=9)
“Start or join a boycott.”	9.5% (N=2)	66.7% (N=14)	23.8% (N=5)



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THE YWAT & GLU EXPERIENCE


GLU Sessions

As noted earlier, GLU consisted of six sessions, where each session focused on building specific sets of skills. It was hoped that by the end of the program, emerging young leaders would have obtained a useful skill set which they can employ to make change in their communities.

Overall View of the GLU Sessions

In addition to the surveys administered before and after the GLU program, participants were asked to complete a survey at the end of every GLU session. The table below summarizes the responses provided by the participants when asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the session they attended.

Session 1 (N=22) Self-Awareness (Identity)	Excellent	59% (N=13)
	Good	41% (N=9)
Session 2 (N=16) Self-Awareness (Values)	Excellent	50% (N=8)
	Good	31% (N=5)
Session 3 (N=22) Developing Voice/ Communicating Your Ideas	Excellent	91% (N=20)
	Good	4% (N=1)
Session 4 (N=20) Who Are <u>You</u>?	Excellent	35% (N=7)
	Good	13% (N=13)
Session 5 (N=18) Advocacy 101	Excellent	17% (N=3)
	Good	33% (N=6)
Session 6 (N=22) Facilitating Effective Meetings	Excellent	50% (N=11)
	Good	46% (N=10)



All except one of the GLU sessions received mainly “excellent” or “good” ratings, with participants indicating more “excellent” than “good” ratings. Session 5 received an equal amount of “excellent/good” and “fair/poor” ratings. Through open ended survey questions and the focus group conducted by evaluation staff, the young women expressed that they found Session 5 to be the most challenging in terms of session content and stimulating critical thinking. As one GLU participant expressed, “Even though I found it challenging, the main thing that attracted me was that she talked about it being possible for young activists to take action.”

Though the youth found some aspects of GLU challenging, the majority expressed finding GLU an enjoyable process of self-exploration. They were given the opportunity to interact with peers undergoing the same process while building the essential skills to create social change. Thus, overall, the GLU participants expressed a positive view of the GLU sessions.

*Missing percentages in this table are from “fair” and “poor” ratings.

Participant Behaviors During GLU Sessions

Through the session surveys, GLU participants were asked to indicate behaviors they may have performed during the GLU sessions. In the session surveys, participants were asked to indicate what behaviors they may have exhibited from a list of provided items. Each session survey contained a list of behaviors that was relevant to the session. The table to the right lists behaviors the participants most frequently carried out through their participation in GLU.

The data reveal that most frequently in the GLU sessions, the young women listened attentively to peers and instructors, learned about something new, actively participated in the discussion, and showed respect for their peers. GLU and YWAT provided the opportunity for guidance and support in which young women could begin to do what is necessary to learn, grow, and develop as leaders and activists in their communities.

Session 1 (N=22)	“Pay attention to the instructor.”	95.5% (N=21)
	“Learn something new.”	72.7% (N=16)
Session2 (N=16)	“Pay attention to the instructor.”	75% (N=12)
	“Listen to others.”	75% (N=12)
Session3 (N=22)	“Pay attention to the instructor.”	86.4% (N=19)
	“Listen to others.”	90.9% (N=20)
Session 4 (N=20)	“Pay attention to the instructor.”	90% (N=18)
	“Actively participate in group discussion.”	70% (N=14)
Session 5 (N=18)	“Listen to others.”	83.3% (N=15)
	“Show respect for other girls.”	77.8% (N=14)
	“Pay attention to the instructor.”	77.8% (N=14)
Session 6 (N=22)	“Pay attention to the instructor.”	95.5% (N=21)
	“Listen to peers in the group.”	86.4% (N=19)



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Participant Perceptions of Learning

At a survey administered after the GLU program ended, participants were asked to assess how much they felt they had learned during the GLU sessions. The table to the right consists of participants' perceptions of what they had learned during the GLU sessions.

As is indicated by the data presented in the table to the top right, young women expressed overwhelmingly that they learned a lot from the GLU sessions. This was supported during the focus group facilitated by evaluation staff. The GLU participants expressed that they very much enjoyed the valuable knowledge shared by their instructors and peers. As was the intended goal of GLU, the participants reported feeling confident that they were leaving with a useful set of skills that they intend to employ within and outside of YWAT. From their instructors, participants reported having recognized their leadership abilities and their intent to act on what they wish to change in the near future. Participants also reported possessing the confidence, motivation, and focus to stimulate and facilitate social change in their community. Through their self-exploration throughout GLU, the young women raised their own social consciousness and became more aware of how they could raise the overall social consciousness of their community and end violence against young women.

Session 1 (N=22) Self-Awareness (Identity)	<i>I learned a lot.</i>	66.7% (N=14)
	<i>I learned a little.</i>	14.3% (N=3)
Session 2 (N=16) Self-Awareness (Values)	<i>I learned a lot.</i>	45% (N=9)
	<i>I learned a little.</i>	20% (N=4)
Session 3 (N=22) Developing Voice/ Communicating Your Ideas	<i>I learned a lot.</i>	77.8% (N=14)
	<i>I learned a little.</i>	11.1% (N=2)
Session 4 (N=20) Who Are <u>You</u>?	<i>I learned a lot.</i>	81% (N=17)
	<i>I learned a little.</i>	4.8% (N=1)
Session 5 (N=18) Advocacy 101	<i>I learned a lot.</i>	22.2% (N=4)
	<i>I learned a little.</i>	16.7% (N=3)
Session 6 (N=22) Facilitating Effective Meetings	<i>I learned a lot.</i>	81% (N=17)
	<i>I learned a little.</i>	14.3% (N=3)

62% of GLU participants indicated that if given the opportunity, they would participate in another YWAT program.

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