INDIGENOUS ADOLESCENT GIRLS’ EMPOWERMENT NETWORK (IMAGEN)

Intentional Girl-Centered Program Design in Indian Country

Kelly Hallman, PhD (Cherokee)
LeToy Lunderman (Oglala Lakota)

September 19, 2018
Investments in girls lay the foundation for a community’s future well-being or difficulties.
Unique challenges affecting girls

- Puberty “narrows” girls’ geographies
  - “Protecting” girls from trafficking, violence, drugs
    - Limits on social interaction and spatial movement
      - Reduces girls’ access to opportunities
      - Girls build fewer skills

- Increased pressures/desires to help family
  - Cash/savings used for others’ needs
  - More time caring for siblings & other family members

- High school completion ≠ job opportunities

Girls’ physical worlds shrinks at puberty

Different spatial access of 4 sex-age groups in one community

Globally, a large percentage of adolescent girls will become single mothers at some point.
Some American Indian girls will become sole caretakers of a future household


Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, KidsCount Data Center
Within Native communities, females have fewer financial assets/skills
Yet, many schools and programs do not address girls’ realities

- **Current schooling system**
  - May not provide core skills
  - Some girls not able to attend regularly or finish

- **Community programs and services**
  - Limited in availability, scope and funding
  - Focus is on after something bad happens
Native “youth” program scan: only 5 of 79 programs had a gender focus

Source: S. Martinez and K. Hallman, in press.
GIRL ≠ YOUTH (age 15-30)
GIRL ≠ MINOR (age 0-17)
GIRL ≠ WOMAN (age 18 & over)
GIRL ≠ ADOLESCENT (age 10-19)
GIRL ≠ WARD (age 0-17)
GIRLS ARE RESILIENT, HENCE OVERLOOKED BY COMMUNITIES. BY GOVERNMENT. BY NGO PROJECTS.

Boys

Better-off girls

Poorer Girls (cut off from access to services)
But...girls can fall off-track

A GIRL IS BORN

SHE TURNS 10

ABANDONMENT
TRAFFICKING
SCHOOL DROP-OUT

SEXUAL ASSAULT
SUICIDE
HIV / STIs
Girls need support to bounce back

A GIRL IS BORN

SHE TURNS 10

ABANDONMENT
TRAFFICKING
SCHOOL DROP-OUT

SEXUAL ASSAULT
SUICIDE
HIV / STIs
Skills offered earlier could help girls better face challenges

Adapted from Girl Effect 2012/13
Skills and human assets are reinforcing

- Girl-only meeting time & place
- Mentorship
- More friends

Trust
Negotiation skills
Confidence
Communication skills
Self-esteem

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Return to education awareness
Access to health care
Sexual health knowledge

HUMAN/HEALTH ASSETS

Knowledge of budgeting
Savings
Vocational training

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Increased school completion
Delayed sexual debut
Reduced gender-based violence
Fewer unplanned pregnancies
Reduced STI transmission
Reduced HIV transmission

ECONOMIC ASSETS
Indigenous Adolescent Girls’ Empowerment Network (IMAGEN)

VISION:
An accessible, neighborhood-based girl “society” in every rural tribal town and Native urban neighborhood
Pilot Native Girl’s Program:

White Buffalo Calf Women’s Society
What would a neighborhood “society” provide to girls?

- A reliable system of social support (aside from home/school)
- Culturally-informed skills and protective assets
  - Girls better identify and access programs & services
  - Girls more effectively negotiate existing challenges
    - Violence
    - Lack of resources
    - Geographic isolation
    - Racial discrimination
    - Absent family members
Building Assets Exercise
Example topics - annual program cycle

- Self- and cultural-awareness
- Tribal history and traditions
- Stronger support network: mentors, friends, family
- Communication, relationship, self-regulation skills
- Goal-setting, decision-making
- Safety and well-being
- My body, my health
- Financial plan
- Education plan
- Neighborhood project
Anchors to the approach: local female mentors
Five **Wicincila Society** pilot communities
Convene Girl Subgroups to Build and Sustain Protective Assets

Girls age 10-13
Wednesdays 3pm-5pm

Girls age 14-18
Saturday 10am-12pm
1) Select and Establish the Boundaries of the Program Community ✓
2) Enumerate the Universe of Girls ✓
3) Identify Segments for Priority Programming ✓
4) Inventory Community Assets and Assess the Current Coverage of Different Segments ✓
5) Identify Venues for Girl Groups to Meet at least Weekly over an Entire Year/Seasonal Cycles of Risks ✓

6) Identify Meaningful Content Keyed to their Real Lives: Positive, Achievable Protective Metrics 😊
7) Build the Female Infrastructure: Recruiting and Training Mentors to Guide, Deliver Content, and Sustain Results 😊

8) Deliver Protective Assets (health, social, economic, cognitive) through segment specific platforms

9) Monitor Attendance. Track Indicators. Assess Outcomes (IRB submissions)
IMAGEN: A scalable business plan for American Indian girls
Girl-Centered project evidence

- Projects on the ground
- Providing strategic planning and technical support

Countries and regions:
- Belize
- Guatemala
- Haiti
- Honduras
- El Salvador
- Burkina Faso
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Liberia
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Niger
- Rwanda
- Sierra Leone
- South Africa
- Uganda
- Bangladesh
- India
- Zambia
Strategy House:
Protective Asset-Building Approach

- Start with the girls to see the girls
- Segment to find the right girls
- Concentrate on girls’ accessible places
- Establish safe community places for girls to meet
- Build protective assets

OVERCOME EXCLUSION
Tools for Intentional Girl-centered Program Design

- Reach the girls with greatest needs
- Early enough to make a difference
- With the appropriate content

Photo Credit: Alex Potter, Al Jazeera America
Define content for girl subgroups with Building Assets Cards©
IMAGEN BRIEFS SERIES

INDIGENOUS ADOLESCENT GIRLS’ EMPOWERMENT NETWORK (IMAGEN)

IMAGINING A NETWORK FOR NATIVE GIRLS

Adolescent Native American girls are distinct from every other segment of young people in the U.S., from the assets their ancestors have passed down to them, to the unique challenges they face as a result of historic, systemic oppression. The IMAGEN network seeks to equip Native-serving organizations with tools to intentionally reach this overlooked group of girls with sustained, on-going (not merely one-off or summer-time) locally-designed programs that draw on girls’ capabilities, allowing them to thrive as Native persons and future leaders in their communities.

RECOGNIZING THE UNIQUENESS OF GIRLS

The Indigenous Adolescent Girls’ Empowerment Network (IMAGEN) was conceived as a means of bringing together Native American-serving organizations that have the enthusiasm and capacity to adopt, document and share evidence from programs that build on Native girls’ innate talents, while addressing the multiple challenges they face. The first steps towards building this network were taken during IMAGEN’s inaugural workshop at the GIRL Center headquarters in New York City on March 7-8, 2017.

A scan conducted in preparation for the meeting of programmatic initiatives serving Native young people strongly suggested that Native youths are neglected most drastically by donors. Many programs did not differentiate the multiple human development stages between age 12-24 years, opting to use age parameters (if any at all), and frankly distinguished the needs of girls versus boys. In short, many existing programs for Native young people are not systematically built to address the specific needs of a 10-year-old girl versus a 19-year-old boy – and this is problematic.

Identifying and working with segments of adolescent girls is a touchstone of the GIRL Center’s work, making it well-suited to partner with organizations that are focused on Native girls.

LIVING WHILE GIRL & NATIVE AMERICAN

National data and other evidence reveals the particular situation and needs of Native young people, but especially adolescent girls, in the U.S.

- According to the National Center for Education Statistics, American Indian and Alaska Native youth rank lowest in high school graduation, falling behind their white, black, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2013-2014).
- In 8 American Indian and Alaska Native youth reports having been forced to have sexual intercourse (CDC, 2012).
- In 3 Indian women reports having been sexually assaulted in their lifetime. These assaults are often perpetrated by non-Native attackers (Fulcomer & Thorellin, U.S. Department of Justice, 2006).
- The highest rate of teen births nationwide are found among Native girls, at a rate of 11.5 per 1,000, versus 6.4 per 1,000 for white teens (CDC, 2016).
- Growing evidence suggests that Native girls face high rates of addiction (Pierce, 2015).

A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND PARTNERSHIP

In July 2017, the White Buffalo Calf Woman Society (WBCWS) and the GIRL Center came together for a workshop on Girl-Centered Program Design, the GIRL Roster, and how these two could be adopted and adapted into the organization’s future programmatic work. Held at Her House on WBCWS’ campus on the Rosebud Reservation in Mission, South Dakota, the workshop training came on the heels of the inaugural meeting of the Indigenous Adolescent Girls’ Empowerment Network (IMAGEN) in March 2017 in New York City. That meeting was a first conversation between the GIRL Center and organizations such as WBCWS that work locally with Native American communities to understand the specific needs of adolescent girls in Indian Country. It opened the door for collaborations such as the workshop described in this brief, and laid the groundwork for the IMAGEN Approach to supporting Girl-Centered Program Design among organizations looking to effectively meet the needs of Native American girls.

THE IMAGEN APPROACH

The members in the IMAGEN network bring a wealth of insight concerning the needs of the Native communities they serve, and the GIRL Center brings myriad programmatic tools and resources that have been tried and tested in global settings for several decades. The IMAGEN Approach is an adaptable process that links these two worlds, with the overarching goal of helping these organizations who are ready to incorporate girl-centered programming do so in a sustainable and impactful way. The partnership builds on an opportunity for the two organizations to adapt, test, and apply tools specifically created for facilitating Indigenous Design, with a long-term vision toward incorporating girl-centered programming into an organization’s work.

STEP 1:
An organization joins the IMAGEN network

STEP 2:
A partnership forms, and the organization and the GIRL Center collaboratively workshop tools, such as the girl roster, for local use

STEP 3:
The network member is now equipped to incorporate girl-centered program design into their organization’s work, and has insight to share with the rest of the IMAGEN network
The Indigenous Adolescent Girls’ Empowerment Network presents:

**DATE**
October 29-30, 2018

**VENUE**
Sheraton Minneapolis Midtown
2901 Chicago Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55407

---

**Girl-Centered Program Design**

**In Indian Country**

---

**EVENT REGISTRATION & DETAILS**


Questions? Please reach out to Dr. Kelly Hallman at (212) 339-0687
khallman@popcouncil.org

Hotel scholarships and meals (Monday: breakfast, lunch & dinner; Tuesday: breakfast & lunch) provided by organizer.

Mileage and ground transportation (excluding rental car) costs eligible for reimbursement with documentation.
LEARN MORE:
https://tinyurl.com/IMAGEN-signup

SIGN UP FOR MINNEAPOLIS WORKSHOP (Oct 29-30, 2018):
https://tinyurl.com/IMAGEN-MSP2018