



**LET GIRLS LEAD'S  
Adolescent Girls' Advocacy  
& Leadership Initiative (AGALI)**

**EXTERNAL EVALUATION  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**LET GIRLS  
LEAD**

Conducted by  
**BLE Solutions, LLC**

## **Executive Summary**

Evaluation of Let Girls Lead's  
Adolescent Girls' Advocacy and Leadership Initiative (AGALI)  
January 2009 - June 2013

## **External evaluation conducted by BLE Solutions, LLC**

**Carlisle Levine, Evaluation Team Leader**

Daniel Selener, International Evaluation Consultant

Annie Jones-Demen, National Evaluator, Liberia

Marta Julia Ruíz, National Evaluator, Guatemala and Honduras

Franklin Yonamu, National Evaluator, Malawi

### **About BLE Solutions, LLC**

BLE Solutions, LLC promotes organizational effectiveness through evaluation, applied research and technology services.

For more information visit: <http://www.blesolutions.com>

**ABOUT  
LET GIRLS LEAD  
AND AGALI**

Let Girls Lead empowers girls and their allies to lead social change through advocacy, education, economic empowerment, storytelling, and strategic partnerships, contributing to improved health, education, and livelihoods for over 3 million girls globally.

Since 2009, Let Girls Lead's flagship initiative, the Adolescent Girls' Advocacy & Leadership Initiative (AGALI), has strengthened the capacity of civil society leaders, girl advocates, and local organizations to promote girl-friendly laws, policies, programs, and funding in Guatemala, Honduras, Liberia, Malawi, and Ethiopia. Through intensive workshops, seed grant funding, and technical assistance, Let Girls Lead's AGALI program has created a global movement of leaders and organizations advocating for girls.

For more information visit: [www.letgirlslead.org](http://www.letgirlslead.org)

**ABOUT  
THE  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
INSTITUTE**

Let Girls Lead and AGALI are based at the Public Health Institute (PHI), which provides fiscal sponsorship, incubates initiatives, partners with foundations and State agencies, and collaborates with other leading organizations on important research, policy, and program interventions. Since its inception in 1964, PHI has overseen an impressive array of projects ranging from individual grants to large, multi-year, multi-site programs with national and international impact.

For more information visit: <http://www.phi.org>

**ABOUT  
THE  
UNITED NATIONS  
FOUNDATION**

The United Nations Foundation (UNF) builds partnerships, grows constituencies, mobilizes resources and advocates for policy changes to support the UN's work to promote individual and global progress. The UNF links the UN's work with others around the world, mobilizing the energy and expertise of business and non-governmental organizations to tackle issues including climate change, global health, peace and security, women's empowerment, poverty eradication, energy access, and US-UN relations.

For more information visit: [www.unfoundation.org](http://www.unfoundation.org)



## An Overview of the Evaluation

In 2013, Let Girls Lead's primary donor, the United Nations Foundation, commissioned an external evaluation of Let Girls Lead's AGALI model. Independent evaluators examined the program's contribution to policy changes, and direct impacts in adolescent girls' lives. The evaluation found that AGALI's innovative approach to advocacy capacity building has enhanced the effectiveness and impact of girl-centered advocacy efforts in the focus countries. Results include the passage of national and local laws, policies, programs, and funding that protect girls from violence, increase their access to education, health services, and economic opportunities, and empower young women to develop their own solutions to the obstacles they face.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF LET GIRLS LEAD & AGALI

Let Girls Lead's Adolescent Girls' Advocacy and Leadership Initiative (AGALI) launched in 2009. Created by the Public Health Institute (PHI) and the United Nations Foundation (UNF), AGALI leverages PHI's experience over the previous ten years leading similar advocacy and leadership capacity building programs for both adults and youth.

Through AGALI, PHI and UNF sought to improve the lives of adolescent girls by developing a network of adult leaders advocating for adolescent girls' rights in priority focus countries identified by the UN Adolescent Girls' Task Force (UN AGTF). The UN AGTF sought to unify the work of UN agencies in order to more effectively address girls' needs through joint programming. UNF originally envisioned AGALI as the civil society corollary to the UN AGTF, strengthening civil society capacity in UN priority focus countries.

One key stakeholder placed AGALI within the context of the global groundswell of actors recognizing adolescent girls as a population requiring concerted attention. She noted that, while many organizations were addressing adolescent girls' issues at a global level, there was a need to increase civil society organizations' push on these issues at national

## BY THE NUMBERS

### LET GIRLS LEAD'S AGALI PROGRAM HAS:

- Created a global network of > 110 advocates
- Advocated for laws & policies benefiting > 3 million girls
- Reached > 40,000 girls with direct services, advocacy training, & empowerment programs
- Built capacity of > 600 grassroots organizations
- Awarded advocacy funding to 23 organizations
- Launched national girl-centered advocacy networks
- Empowered girls to achieve national & local policy wins

and sub-national levels to ensure that policies and programs accurately respond to the challenges facing adolescent girls.

According to its theory of change as articulated in 2010, AGALI has the following vision: “Adolescent girls [10 to 24 years of age] are empowered to realize their full potential through the creation and implementation of programs and policies that ensure their health, education, human rights and socio-economic well-being.”<sup>3</sup> AGALI seeks to improve adolescent girls’ lives by building the advocacy and leadership capacity of individuals and organizations working to improve adolescent girls’ rights.

Since its launch in 2009, AGALI has built the capacity of and provided ongoing technical assistance to 114 Fellows<sup>4</sup> from seven countries, with the majority of its efforts focused in Guatemala, Honduras, Liberia and Malawi. As a result of the advocacy efforts that AGALI Fellows have undertaken with program support, AGALI has claimed a number of national-level and sub-national level policy successes. AGALI has also generated direct impacts on the lives of adolescent girls, thanks to the legal and policy changes that AGALI has helped to bring about.

## Country Contexts

In Guatemala, Honduras, Liberia and Malawi, where AGALI has focused most of its efforts, a high percentage of the population is under 19 years of age. High rates of maternal mortality, early pregnancy, and violence, coupled with limited access to education and health services, point to the urgency of establishing laws and policies that protect and promote girls’ health, education and economic rights, as well as prepare them to lead their communities and their countries in the future.

3 “AGALI Theory of Change,” Oakland, CA: Public Health Institute, June 2010.

4 AGALI selects Fellows who are leaders in civil society organizations, government, media and international organizations dedicated to improving the well-being of adolescent girls. AGALI Fellows participate in AGALI-led capacity building workshops, receive ongoing technical assistance and communications from AGALI, and are eligible to apply for AGALI seed grant funding.



### GUATEMALA

- Percent of population, ages 0-14: 41%
- Total fertility rate: 3.9
- Overall HIV prevalence rate: 0.7%
- Percent of births to adolescent mothers, ages 15-19: 22%
- Maternal mortality ratio, modeled estimate per 100,000 live births: 120
- Primary school completion rate: M 88%, F 83%

High percentages of adolescents are pregnant or mothers in all four countries. For them, this means higher rates of maternal mortality and dangerous health consequences resulting from early pregnancy, as well as poor education and economic outcomes, domestic violence, and negative health outcomes for their children.

While HIV prevalence among the population between ages 15-24 remains relatively low where reported, it is notably higher for adolescent girls in Malawi and somewhat higher in Liberia.

It is important to note that these national-level statistics mask sub-national level challenges and challenges that exist within certain population segments.



## An Overview of the Evaluation

As Let Girls Lead's AGALI Program approached the end of its first five years, UNF and PHI sought to reflect on AGALI's model and its accomplishments. UNF commissioned an external evaluation to assess the initiative's effectiveness, capture part of AGALI's story, and provide guidance for Let Girls Lead and other groups working to support girl-centered advocacy around the world.

The evaluation sought to answer four questions:

1. What evidence is there to demonstrate AGALI's contribution to key advocacy and policy results aimed at improving adolescent girls' health, education, livelihoods and human rights?
2. What difference has AGALI made in the lives of adolescent girls who have been involved in the initiative?
3. What evidence is there to demonstrate AGALI's contribution to advocacy capacity building for Fellows, their organizations, and the AGALI-supported networks?
4. Has the AGALI model catalyzed advocacy efforts and policy change? If so, how has this been achieved?

The evaluation focused on AGALI's work in Guatemala, Honduras, Liberia and Malawi.<sup>3</sup> Through an analysis of illustrative cases representing national-level and local-level changes, the evaluation examined the accomplishments of six AGALI-supported advocacy efforts. It captured the breadth of AGALI Fellows' experiences resulting from their participation in the initiative. It also explored the experiences of adolescents (primarily girls but also some boys) who participated in AGALI-supported advocacy efforts and the effects that those efforts have had on the adolescents themselves, their families, and their communities.

## Methods

The evaluation team was comprised of a team leader, an international evaluation consultant and three national evaluators who conducted data collection, analysis and writing in AGALI's four focus countries.

To assess the AGALI model, the evaluation team surveyed the 80 AGALI Fellows who, at the time of the evaluation, had participated in AGALI in the four focus countries,<sup>4</sup> and they interviewed 32 key stakeholders, including Fellows, staff, trainers, and UN Foundation representatives.

To validate AGALI's contribution to six key advocacy and policy results, the evaluation team used contribution analysis, examining the policy changes and AGALI's and its Fellows' roles in influencing those outcomes.

To gather early information about changes in adolescent girls' lives resulting from the policy impacts that AGALI achieved, the evaluation team collected "Most Significant Change"<sup>5</sup> stories from 35 adolescent girls and boys and conducted a meta-analysis of these stories.

---

3 AGALI's work in Ethiopia has been limited by political repression of country-based advocacy.

4 During the evaluation period, AGALI selected a new cohort of Fellows, raising the total number of AGALI Fellows to 114. The newest cohort of Fellows was not included in the evaluation. Another nine Fellows were not included in the evaluation because they no longer live and work in the four focus countries.

5 "Most Significant Change" is an inductive participatory monitoring and evaluation method that focuses on unexpected changes and outcomes.

The evaluation faced the challenges of time and budget constraints, but was, for the most part, able to overcome those challenges through careful evaluation design.

## LET GIRLS LEAD'S AGALI MODEL

### An Overview of the AGALI Model

In each focus country, Let Girls Lead's AGALI program competitively selects visionary leaders and organizations dedicated to improving the well-being of adolescent girls. The AGALI Fellowship is an intensive year-long program that includes capacity building, technical assistance, grant making, and ongoing substantive support. AGALI builds participants' capacities to effectively advocate for policies and practices that benefit adolescent girls, often directly including adolescent girls in their advocacy efforts.

Program staff describes AGALI's advocacy capacity building approach as systematic, experiential, and personal. Their goal is to build on Fellows' significant leadership, expertise, and experience to provide them with the skills, resources and relationships necessary to advocate effectively with and for adolescent girls.

### Advocacy Capacity Building Workshop

Once AGALI has recruited a new cohort of Fellows, the program begins with a one-day introductory workshop that sets the stage for the intensive week-long advocacy capacity building workshop that will follow. While AGALI's model began with regional workshops, in 2011 the staff began conducting national workshops to allow advocacy trainings to focus more specifically on national policy contexts. As a result of AGALI's competitive selection process, participating Fellows are leaders in their fields who bring diverse backgrounds and expertise to the workshop, and leave with a shared understanding of girl-centered advocacy and leadership.

AGALI's workshops also include activities that foster community to facilitate participants' ongoing collaboration after the Fellowship concludes. AGALI creates multi-sectoral cohorts of Fellows who will continue to support each other's work. Ideally,



Fellows identify common advocacy goals and then work together to achieve them, enabling them to accomplish more than they could separately.

Over the course of the workshop, Fellows map the context for girls in their countries and identify strategic advocacy and policy opportunities that they can leverage to maximize the effectiveness of their advocacy work. AGALI's model is experiential, so Fellows spend extensive time during the workshop applying their new learning by developing concrete advocacy strategies. During the final two days of the workshop, staff members and trainers work with each Fellow or group of Fellows to formalize their advocacy strategies into draft proposals to submit to funders.

Following the workshop, staff provides each Fellow with proposal feedback and intensive technical assistance to create strong advocacy proposals to submit to potential funders.

### Seed Grants

Seed grants, together with the advocacy capacity building workshops, are the core components of the AGALI model. AGALI provides competitively-awarded grant funding – something unusual in advocacy capacity building – enabling approximately 40 percent

of its Fellows to implement the advocacy strategies that they develop during the workshop. AGALI integrated seed grants into the core program model to help Fellows improve the lives of adolescent girls by promoting real changes in policies and practices.

AGALI staff review and select proposals that demonstrate the greatest potential to improve girls' lives in a range of key areas, including child marriage, education, health and violence, among others.

Ideally, AGALI would have sufficient funds to support every promising advocacy proposal over the time period required to achieve its target policy change and monitor its implementation. However, the AGALI team noted that there is extremely limited funding available to support in-country advocacy, including within the program's own annually awarded budget. To maximize potential impact of girl-centered advocacy efforts, the broader funding community needs to more actively address the gap between the need for and the availability of financial support for advocacy.

### Technical Assistance

Another important aspect of the AGALI model is the ongoing technical assistance that staff – both headquarters and country representatives – provide to Fellows, as requested. Often this technical assistance is related to proposal development, fundraising, and implementation of advocacy strategies. In other instances, through its technical assistance grants mechanism that AGALI launched in 2011, AGALI provides financial and logistical assistance to help Fellows identify and contract local experts who can help them with specific skills, such as using video in advocacy or media messaging.

### Institutional Strengthening Workshops

AGALI's intensive advocacy capacity building workshops are followed by institutional strengthening (IS) workshops. These two-day IS workshops occur every six to 12 months, bringing together all Fellows within each focus country to further develop more specific advocacy skills on timely topics selected by the Fellows, and also to fortify relationships and networks among Fellows. These workshops are safe spaces where Fellows can come together to discuss

the challenges they are facing, brainstorm and support each other, as well as share progress. It was within the context of institutional strengthening workshops that Malawian Fellows and Honduran Fellows formed official national networks.

To ensure that the knowledge and resources provided to the Fellows are shared with other staff in their organizations, Fellows are invited to bring another key staff person from their organizations to the IS workshops. This helps embed the advocacy skills AGALI is imparting within Fellows' organizations and increases the commitment and ability of staff to successfully undertake advocacy efforts.

### Dissemination

AGALI offers funding and other resources to its Fellows and alumni to build the capacity of grassroots organizations and adolescent girls in their communities. This strategy strengthens national movements for girls, ensuring that a larger number of people and organizations – both adolescent girls and those who work on their behalf – have greater skills to undertake advocacy.

### Network Formation

AGALI fosters collaboration, mutual support, and the creation of in-country networks by providing ongoing opportunities to bring Fellows together. As of mid-2013, AGALI Fellows had formed official networks in both Honduras and Malawi. In each country, with AGALI's ongoing technical and financial support, these networks are advocating on the national-level policy issues that affect adolescent girls.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*"Thanks to AGALI's technical assistance and financial support, we now have in the country an advocacy coalition working on behalf of the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents. Its position among decision makers is very strong."*

– Key informant, AGALI Fellow

## Policy Briefs

More recently, AGALI has begun strengthening the broader field of girl-centered advocacy by producing policy briefs that summarize laws and policies that affect adolescent girls in all focus countries. AGALI began developing these policy briefs in response to the challenges that Fellows, community organizations, and even policy makers themselves faced accessing information about the relevant laws and policies. In sharing these policy briefs with Fellows and in-country organizations, AGALI strengthens their advocacy strategies and impacts.

## Case Studies

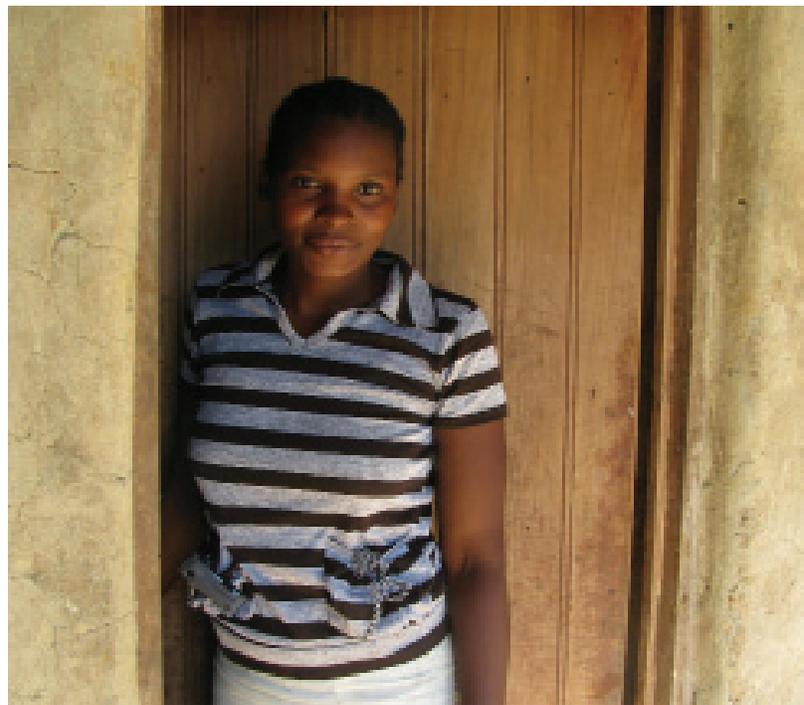
To increase the field's knowledge of success girl-centered advocacy strategies, AGALI has also developed case studies that capture the advocacy successes of its Fellows. So far, AGALI has completed and disseminated three case studies that are focused on Fellows' work in Liberia and Guatemala, and is finalizing case studies on work in Malawi and Honduras. The case studies serve as a capacity building tool for AGALI Fellows and other in-country advocates, and serve as communications materials for the organizations involved, as well as for AGALI.

## Video and Film

AGALI has increasingly used video and film as means to share the stories of AGALI grantees' successes, as well as to capture the stories of adolescent girls engaged in AGALI grantees' advocacy efforts. Early videos focused on the experiences of AGALI Fellows in Guatemala. In more recent years, videos have highlighted the work of Fellows in Liberia and Malawi, capturing the challenges facing adolescent girls, Fellows' success in addressing those obstacles, and policy impacts.

## Resource Sharing

AGALI staff shares resources and information with AGALI fellows and organizations via email approximately once a month. These messages include tools and resources relevant to Fellows' work and information about funding opportunities, capacity building opportunities and events. These messages serve as another means for AGALI to keep in touch



with its Fellows and also to ensure that Fellows have access to information that can help them in their advocacy efforts.

## Strengths of Let Girls Lead's AGALI model

AGALI Fellows and other key stakeholders, through interviews and a survey, reported that the AGALI model has helped Fellows, their organizations, and networks build their advocacy capacities. They also reported that the AGALI model has catalyzed their advocacy efforts and their ability to influence policy change.

Of the survey respondents who participated in each of the components of the AGALI model, a large majority reported increased advocacy capacity as a result of their participation, as well as use of their new capacities to advance their advocacy efforts with and for adolescent girls.

In most cases, higher percentages of African respondents reported increased advocacy capacities and subsequent new capacity use than their Latin American (primarily Guatemalan) counterparts. One explanation for this difference could be that, in Liberia and Malawi, Fellows have less access to capacity building opportunities than Fellows in Central America, making the benefits of participating in AGALI that much greater. This and other possible explanations require further exploration.

Similarly, in most cases, higher percentages of African respondents reported increased collaboration with other organizations, and the development and use of networks as a result of their participation in AGALI. The 14 Malawian and three Honduran survey respondents were part of official national networks created with AGALI's assistance. Others who stated they were part of networks may have been referring to the global network of AGALI Fellows or to networks in which they participated prior to becoming an AGALI Fellow.

For those Fellows who were already part of networks, or who were already collaborating with other organizations that also became part of AGALI, the benefits of AGALI's support to their collaborations or networks may have been smaller. Similarly, several networks already exist in Guatemala, possibly lessening the perceived need for new national networks. This and other explanations also require additional examination.

AGALI Fellows and other key stakeholders highlighted a number of aspects of the AGALI model as critical to its effectiveness. They noted the program's holistic focus on adolescent girls as unique and important, given adolescent girls' particular needs. They appreciated AGALI's focus on national and sub-national advocacy, since it is at these levels that programs are implemented that directly affect adolescent girls' lives. They acknowledged AGALI's efforts to build on local expertise to support advocacy initiatives conceived of and designed by Fellows. For the Fellows, AGALI's focus on local ownership and expertise helps to ensure that advocacy goals and the skills and strategies developed to pursue them are both contextually appropriate and have the greatest possibility for success.

Fellows value AGALI's comprehensive approach to advocacy capacity building. By following the initial advocacy capacity building workshop with regularly scheduled institutional strengthening workshops and technical assistance, AGALI reinforces and further develops Fellows' advocacy skills beyond the first year of their participation. Complemented by regular communications, this ongoing accompaniment provides the technical and moral support that Fellows need to persevere and be effective in their advocacy efforts.

The availability of seed grants to a percentage of AGALI Fellows and provision of assistance to others in finding alternative funding sources plays a key role in allowing many Fellows to implement the advocacy plans that they develop with AGALI's guidance and support.

AGALI Fellows also value the AGALI team. They describe AGALI staff members as having significant expertise in the areas of adolescent girls, country contexts, advocacy, and advocacy capacity building. They note the team members' communication skills and how the team uses these skills to ensure that Fellows are aware of the latest information and resources, and opportunities for capacity building and funding. They acknowledge the team's dedication to the AGALI program and the Fellows, and appreciate the support they receive as a result of this accompaniment approach.

Finally, AGALI Fellows commented positively on the composition of the AGALI cohorts. They observed that cohort members are drawn from civil society, government, international organizations, and the media. They work at both national and sub-national levels and are selected for their expertise in different sectors: education, health, legal, policy and media, among others. With this diversity, they are able to learn from one another's expertise and work together to holistically address the needs of adolescent girls.

Through the "Most Significant Change" stories gathered from adolescent girls and boys, there is also evidence that the AGALI model has contributed to building adolescents' advocacy capacity and to the advocacy successes they have been able to achieve. The adolescent girls and boys talked about having greater knowledge of advocacy in general and about

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*"There is a greater support system. Knowing that you have other individuals sharing similar goals and forming this global bond to improve lives has given me the strength to do even more in my work than before."*

– Key informant, AGALI Fellow

developing or improving their public speaking skills and their ability to influence and advocate with others.

Through their participation in AGALI-supported advocacy efforts, the young leaders collected petitions, participated in demonstrations, and attended legislative sessions. Most importantly, the adolescents met with policy makers to advocate for their own needs and discuss how policy changes or improved implementation would address the challenges they face.

In Liberia, adolescent leaders' participation contributed to the passage of the national Children's Law. In Malawi, adolescent girls' participation contributed to the adoption of bylaws prohibiting child marriage in one Traditional Authority.<sup>6</sup> In Guatemala, girls' participation led to the passage and implementation of the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents Law – DECREE 27-2003 (La Ley de Protección Integral a la Niñez y Adolescencia, Ley PINA) in one municipality.

## Suggestions to Strengthen Let Girls Lead's AGALI model

AGALI Fellows and key stakeholders offered suggestions for further improving the AGALI model. What follows is a compilation of all of their suggestions for the AGALI team's consideration. The AGALI team will need to weigh each of these suggestions to determine which ones will be most helpful to enhance the AGALI model's effectiveness and impact.

Many recommended that AGALI invest more funds for longer time periods in Fellows' advocacy efforts, recognizing that advocacy can be expensive and that policy change and subsequent implementation take time. Given that raising more funds may not be possible, some Fellows suggested that AGALI focus its efforts on fewer countries or invest in the advocacy efforts of fewer Fellows in the countries in which



### MALAWI

- Percent of population, ages 0-14: 46%
- Total fertility rate: 5.4
- Overall HIV prevalence rate: 10.8%
- Percent of births to adolescent mothers, ages 15-19: 26%
- Maternal mortality ratio, modeled estimate per 100,000 live births: 460
- Primary school completion rate: M 70%, F 72%

it works. Another suggestion was to offer smaller amounts of funding over a longer time period so that Fellows could count on the availability of those funds throughout the life of their advocacy efforts. Others recommended that AGALI fund all of its Fellows, even if the consequence is lower levels of support to each advocacy effort. These Fellows felt it was important that every AGALI Fellow have the opportunity to practice what she or he had learned during the AGALI advocacy capacity building workshop.

<sup>6</sup> Malawi is divided into three regions and 28 districts. The districts are subdivided into Traditional Authorities, which are presided over by chiefs. The Traditional Authorities are composed of groups of villages headed by a group village heads. The villages are the smallest administrative units presided over by village headmen and headwomen.



it was suggested that AGALI and the UN Foundation discuss this success in Honduras and how it might be replicated in other countries.

A number of Fellows and key stakeholders encouraged AGALI to invest more in network development at both national and regional levels. They felt that greater numbers of advocates working together to advance the same cause would have an increased chance of influencing policy change. In promoting the development of these networks, Fellows suggested that AGALI reach beyond its Fellows to also include other organizations working nationally or regionally. They noted that by building their capacities as regional networks, Fellows would be better positioned to influence policy that is made by regional organizations at a regional level.

AGALI Fellows and key stakeholders encouraged AGALI to build upon existing efforts to include adolescent girls and boys in advocacy capacity building efforts directly or indirectly, as well as in the advocacy efforts the program supports. The

To a degree, some noted that the choice between these two alternatives – provide more funding to fewer Fellows or provide less funding to more Fellows – depends on AGALI’s goal. If AGALI’s primary objective is to contribute to changes in policies and practices, then investing more over a greater time period in fewer advocacy efforts is the logical choice. If AGALI’s primary objective is to build the advocacy capacity of its Fellows, then funding all of its Fellows, although the amounts of funding will be smaller, may be the better alternative.

AGALI Fellows and key stakeholders provided a number of ideas for expanding the AGALI cohorts in order to better contribute to its policy objectives. One key stakeholder suggested that AGALI map all of the actors who play roles in adolescent girls’ lives and aim for their full representation in the cohorts. To better promote local-level change in policy and practice, for example, Fellows and stakeholders recommended including more chiefs, traditional leaders, and leaders of small, rural organizations among AGALI Fellows.

There was recognition that AGALI has worked hard to involve national-level UN agencies in its work, either as Fellows or allies, with notable success in Honduras. To better promote national-level change,



Fellows discussed the value of including adolescents' perspectives in their advocacy efforts, as well as the increased influence their advocacy efforts can have when policy makers hear directly from adolescents advocating for their own needs. One Fellow emphasized the importance of including adolescent boys, along with girls, since the problems that adolescent girls face are societal. Sensitizing adolescent boys to these problems and engaging boys in addressing them contributes to an improved environment for adolescent girls in the future.

One way that Fellows thought that AGALI could both reduce its costs and increase its sustainability was by increasing the capacity of its in-country staff to deliver components of the AGALI program. Expanding the existing role of national trainers would mean drawing more on local expertise. At the same time, AGALI country representatives could play a greater role in monitoring the work of Fellows, providing technical assistance, and identifying appropriate national experts to assist Fellows with their advocacy. With those changes, the AGALI headquarters team could focus on capacity building design, communications, and coordination.

To increase the program's influence beyond its Fellows, their organizations, and broader networks, AGALI Fellows and key stakeholders recommended that AGALI disseminate both its model and its learning. By sharing the AGALI model with other organizations that are working with adolescents or on related topics, AGALI could help those organizations make advocacy an integral part of their work and thus extend their reach beyond the direct participants in their programs. By sharing its learning via documents and video, AGALI can provide other organizations working in the same countries and elsewhere with examples and guidance for successfully influencing policy change.

The AGALI team is currently finalizing the publication and dissemination of the full AGALI curriculum. As the first girl-centered advocacy curriculum of its kind, AGALI's curriculum will be an important asset to country-based and international organizations working in the field of girl-centered advocacy.



## LIBERIA

- Percent of population, ages 0-14: 43%
- Total fertility rate: 4.9
- Overall HIV prevalence rate: 0.9%
- Percent of births to adolescent mothers, ages 15-19: 38%
- Maternal mortality ratio, modeled estimate per 100,000 live births: 770
- Primary school completion rate: M 72%, F 60%

## AGALI's Contribution to Policy Outcomes

Of the 23 organizations that AGALI has funded in Guatemala, Honduras, Liberia and Malawi, UNF and Let Girls Lead asked the evaluation team to validate AGALI's contribution to the policy change claims made by six of the most illustrative case examples. Four of these claims related to national-level advocacy, while two related to local-level advocacy. The six specific cases included in the evaluation are summarized below.

### Liberia

In Liberia, AGALI grantees Touching Humanity in Need of Kindness (THINK) and Helping Our People Excel (HOPE) reported that their contribution to the advocacy effort of the Child Protection Network (CPN) played an important role in the passage of the national Children's Law. External stakeholders and the adolescents who participated in the advocacy effort attested to this claim, describing HOPE's and THINK's contribution as invaluable to ensuring the law's passage.

HOPE, THINK and other stakeholders recognized AGALI's contribution to HOPE's and THINK's advocacy effort. AGALI provided capacity building, technical assistance, and funds to HOPE and THINK to strengthen their advocacy strategies. While other organizations also provided significant financial resources to aid the advocacy effort, AGALI's support came at a critical time when advocacy for the Children's Law was losing momentum. Critically, with AGALI's funds, HOPE and THINK were able to engage the Children's Parliament and other youth in the advocacy process.

AGALI's initial regional African advocacy workshop allowed the grantees to learn from Fellows' experiences in other countries. The grantees reported that the AGALI team also provided meaningful technical support via emails, as well as hands on support during site visits in Liberia.

### Malawi

In Malawi, AGALI grantee the Girls Empowerment Network (GENET) stated that its efforts contributed significantly to the drafting and enactment of bylaws to eliminate the practice of child marriage in Traditional Authority Chitera in Chiradzulu district in Malawi's Southern Region. GENET's key role in community-based advocacy was confirmed by local authorities, other external stakeholders, and the adolescent girls who participated in GENET's advocacy efforts.

GENET noted that AGALI trained its organizational leaders in advocacy, thus helping GENET design an advocacy strategy that proved effective in influencing key stakeholders. AGALI also provided GENET with financial resources that supported advocacy activities that brought about the policy change. Also in Malawi, AGALI grantee the Adolescent Girls Advocacy Network (AGANET) achieved intermediary successes in advocating for changing the minimum marriage age in Malawi's Constitution, which would increase the legal age of marriage from 15 to 18. AGANET members influenced a number of policy makers to commit to either promoting or supporting the reintroduction of the Age of Marriage bill within the national Parliament, although they have not yet achieved the reintroduction and passage of the bill. At the same

time, AGANET members demonstrated growth in their advocacy capacity and their knowledge of the policymaking process. External stakeholders validated AGANET's contribution to date to this advocacy effort.

Malawi's AGANET members met, strengthened their advocacy capacity, and decided to form an advocacy network through their participation in AGALI. With AGALI's financial and technical support, the loose network of advocates for adolescent girls transformed itself into a registered non-governmental network organization in January 2012, developing a nationally recognized mandate to advocate for girls and a change in the marriage age.

### Guatemala

In Guatemala, AGALI grantee the National Association against Child Abuse (CONACMI) reported that it contributed to the development and implementation of two national protocols aimed at preventing and treating sexual violence: one focused on adults and the other on children and adolescents. CONACMI's advocacy resulted in the passage and implementation of a protocol guaranteeing specialized care and treatment for adolescent girl victims of sexual violence.

The evaluation team found concrete evidence of CONACMI's contribution to the national policy changes through acknowledgement of CONACMI within the two protocol documents. In addition, external stakeholders corroborated information about CONACMI's specific role in the advocacy initiatives.

CONACMI stated that it benefited from new ideas and the ongoing technical assistance it received from AGALI during the implementation of the advocacy strategy. It reported that AGALI's funding, albeit small, was timely, and that with AGALI's assistance, CONACMI was able to connect with other organizations that contributed to its efforts to successfully advocate for the sexual violence protocols.

Also, in Guatemala, AGALI grantee the Research, Development and Comprehensive Education Association (Asociación IDEI or IDEI), stated that, in Concepción Chiquirichapa in Quetzaltenango, it influenced the passage and funding of public

policies resulting in the creation of the Municipal Commission for Comprehensive Attention for Children and Adolescents. IDEI's advocacy led to the opening of the Municipal Office for Children and Adolescents, which promotes and fulfills the mandate of the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents Law – DECREE 27-2003 or Ley PINA. The office responds to children's and adolescents' needs through individual casework and organizing activities related to health, education, culture, and recreation. Policy makers, other external stakeholders and the adolescents who participated in the advocacy campaign confirmed IDEI's important role in this policy success.

IDEI credited AGALI with helping the organization's staff develop advocacy skills and providing needed motivation through ongoing capacity building and technical assistance. AGALI's financial support was the first funding that IDEI received to begin this advocacy effort. IDEI used AGALI's funding not only to launch its advocacy initiative, but also to help build the capacity of the Municipal Commission for Comprehensive Attention for Children and Adolescents to sustain their work after IDEI's support had ended.

With AGALI's support, IDEI was also able to leverage financial support from the UN Foundation to replicate its efforts in other municipalities. The alliances IDEI developed with other AGALI Fellows' organizations, such as CONACMI, facilitated exchanges in which these organizations have been able to share their knowledge and experience and support one another's advocacy initiatives.

## Honduras

In Honduras, AGALI Fellows launched the Coalition for the Sexual and Reproductive Rights of Adolescents in Honduras (the Coalition). AGALI supported the Coalition through grants to the National Association for Family Planning (ASHONPLAFA) and the National AIDS Forum (FOROSIDA).

The Coalition reported that they contributed to the Ministry of Health's implementation of the National Strategy for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancies. Through their advocacy, Coalition members encouraged the Ministries of Health and Education to ratify the Ministerial Declaration



## HONDURAS

- Percent of population, ages 0-14: 36%
- Total fertility rate: 3.1
- Overall HIV prevalence rate: 0.5%
- Percent of births to adolescent mothers, ages 15-19: 22%
- Maternal mortality ratio, modeled estimate per 100,000 live births: 100
- Primary school completion rate: M 98%, F 100%

“Prevention through Education,” thus fulfilling the State's commitment to implementing health and education strategies to reduce adolescent pregnancies. Policy makers, other external stakeholders, and the adolescents who participated in the Coalition's advocacy, attested to the Coalition's valuable contributions to national advocacy efforts prioritizing teen pregnancy prevention.

The Honduras Coalition was formed and its workplan developed by AGALI Fellows within the context of an AGALI-hosted workshop. Members of the Coalition credited AGALI with helping them develop their advocacy skills, since they had little previous advocacy experience. The Coalition used AGALI's financial support to sensitize local-level decision makers and to support the launch of the National Strategy for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancies, among other advocacy efforts. According to Coalition members, these activities could not have taken place without AGALI's support.

Most importantly, Coalition members and other stakeholders appreciated AGALI's ongoing technical assistance and accompaniment. AGALI headquarters and national staff provided technical assistance both remotely and in person, offering the Coalition the guidance and encouragement it needed to persevere in its efforts and overcome obstacles that arose during their advocacy efforts. Currently, with their new advocacy capacity and encouragement from AGALI, the Coalition is building the capacity of youth in advocacy so that they can formally join the Coalition's advocacy effort.

## AGALI's Contribution to Changes in the Lives of Adolescent Girls

It is too soon to measure population-level changes in the lives of adolescent girls resulting from the legal and policy changes to which AGALI has contributed. However, the adolescent girls and boys who have participated in AGALI grantees' advocacy efforts are already reporting changes in their own lives and in their communities as a result of their advocacy involvement and their work to achieve desired policy changes.

### Liberia

In Liberia, AGALI grantees HOPE and THINK and the adolescents who joined forces with them contributed to the passage of the Children's Law. A number of the adolescents interviewed report that they strengthened their own leadership and advocacy capacity as a result of their involvement with AGALI. Further, they report that passage of the Children's Law and subsequent awareness-raising has led to reductions in physical punishment for children in the communities in which they live and work.

### Malawi

In Malawi, AGALI grantee GENET and the adolescent girls involved in its advocacy effort contributed to the passage of local bylaws prohibiting child marriage in one Traditional Authority. The adolescent girls interviewed reported increased support from their families and peers and greater capacity to advocate with local leaders. They also described many cases of girls leaving marriages, deciding to not enter a marriage, and returning to or staying in school, as a result of the new bylaws and with support from their parents and community leaders. More broadly, the

girls noted that the penalties imposed by the bylaws, as well as community disapproval associated with the new bylaws, are now discouraging men from entering into child marriages.

### Guatemala

In Guatemala, AGALI grantee IDEI and the adolescent girls participating in their work contributed to the implementation of the Ley PINA. AGALI-supported advocacy also led to the funding and creation of the Municipal Office for Children and Adolescents. As a result of their awareness raising regarding the Ley PINA and children's rights, almost all of the adolescent girls reported that, in their communities, there is now greater respect for children's and especially girls' rights and responsibilities. Some also stated that parents, school directors and teachers are better prioritizing children's and particularly girls' needs and well-being.

### Honduras

In Honduras, the Coalition, with support from AGALI grantees FOROSIDA and ASHONPLAFA and the adolescents who work with them, contributed to the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration "Prevention through Education," and the National Strategy for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancies. Adolescents who participated in the external evaluation reported numerous outcomes resulting from their advocacy.

Specifically, as a result of the Coalition's advocacy, classes or training in sexual and reproductive health are now being offered in a number of school settings and institutes. Officials have also agreed to establish centers or clinics dedicated to educating adolescents about sexual and reproductive health and to providing young people with comprehensive services and treatment. Despite promising indications of these policy changes and improved implementation, it is still too early to examine population level changes in adolescents' lives, given the recent timing of these policy changes.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*"AGALI teaches Fellows to speak with one voice and to work toward one goal."*

– Key informant, AGALI Fellow

## Recommendations

This evaluation is focused on Let Girls Lead's AGALI program, and is not intended to evaluate the work of AGALI Fellows and their organizations. Thus, the recommendations presented below only relate to AGALI's design and implementation of the AGALI model, and not to the work by AGALI Fellows and their organizations to affect policy change and improve adolescent girls' lives.

Based on the findings of this evaluation, it is clear that Let Girls Lead's AGALI program has established an effective model to increase individual leadership, organizational effectiveness, and advocacy capacity and impacts. The following recommendations, grounded in the evaluation findings and conclusions above, are intended to help Let Girls Lead increase the reach of the AGALI model, ensure the sustainability of its efforts, and increase the field's knowledge of successful advocacy interventions.

### Put greater focus on promoting collaboration and network formation.

- Adjust the AGALI model to include a greater focus on promoting collaboration and network formation. The evaluation demonstrates that AGALI-supported networks launched by Fellows in Malawi and Honduras have expanded the collaboration and impact of girl-centered advocacy. Increasing support for network creation AGALI's impacts in the other focus countries. During AGALI's July 2013 advocacy capacity building workshop for Fellows from Guatemala and Honduras, AGALI has already begun to do this.

### Lengthen the grant periods for seed grants.

- AGALI provides up to four years of funding for advocacy seed grants, when possible. However, AGALI's own support is awarded on an annual basis, limiting the possibility of awarding multi-year commitments. Therefore, AGALI could work with donors to identify ways to offer seed grants that cover longer time periods. This approach might

mean multi-year commitments with annual disbursements. It might also mean fewer seed grants per year, but with projects funded only once, rather than annually.

### Ensure the sustainability of the AGALI model.

- The AGALI team can lower its costs and increase the model's sustainability by further strengthening national capacity to lead capacity building workshops and provide ongoing technical assistance.
- The AGALI team can also use positive findings from this evaluation to persuade funders of the value of investing in the model's expansion. Let Girls Lead could implement the AGALI model in new focus countries to expand girl-centered advocacy globally. Alternately, Let Girls Lead could adapt the model's core components of advocacy capacity building, leadership development, and organizational strengthening to advance new thematic areas, such as maternal child health, economic empowerment, and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights.

### Ensure all influential actors are represented among AGALI Fellows and their allies.

- Further broaden AGALI cohorts by mapping all actors in adolescent girls' lives and ensuring their representation among AGALI Fellows. This will mean bringing in more traditional leaders and chiefs, among others.
- Work with the UN Foundation to replicate AGALI's successful inclusion of United Nations country staff in Honduras in additional focus countries.

### Expand efforts to include adolescent girls and boys as advocates.

- Build on existing efforts to include adolescent girls and boys as leaders in AGALI-supported advocacy efforts. Successfully increasing youth advocates' involvement will require

AGALI to ensure that Fellows have the capacity to effectively engage adolescents in advocacy. Further, building on AGALI's ongoing focus, it will include encouraging adolescent girls' involvement in advocacy strategy development and implementation, where appropriate.

### **Ensure the AGALI model is optimally designed for Latin American and African Fellows.**

- Hold conversations with Latin American and African Fellows, regional trainers, and other experts who are familiar with the AGALI cohorts and their experiences, to better understand the differences between Latin American and African Fellows' survey responses. Use this information to adjust the model, if necessary, to respond optimally to diverse regional realities and better meet the needs of Fellows across different country contexts.

### **Help others replicate AGALI's successes through sharing experiences and lessons learned from the AGALI model.**

- Produce more documents capturing learning and results from AGALI Fellows' advocacy efforts to serve as guidance for other leaders and organizations engaged in advocacy efforts. Continue to explore multiple media options, including written documentation and videos, to ensure that the information is widely accessible to a broader audience at local, national, and global levels.
- Share the AGALI model with other organizations dedicated to improving the lives of adolescent girls and other vulnerable populations. Disseminating results from the AGALI model can enable country-based leaders and organizations to integrate advocacy into their work, expanding the reach and impact of their programs.



## **Acknowledgements**

This evaluation owes much of its success to the strong support it received from many members of the AGALI team, UN Foundation staff, AGALI Fellows, and others affiliated with AGALI. They provided essential logistical support, while allowing the evaluation team to maintain the independence and integrity of the evaluation. Particular thanks go to Let Girls Lead's AGALI headquarters team: Denise Dunning, Emily Teitsworth, Lorena Gomez-Barris, and Josie Ramos; Miguel Ángel López (CONACMI), Juany García (formerly IDEI), Veronica Buch (AGALI Country Representative) and Mirna Montenegro in Guatemala; Suyapa Pavón (ASHONPLAFA) in Honduras; Aisha Cooper Bruce (AGALI Country Representative and HOPE) and Rosana Shaack (THINK) in Liberia; and Howard Kasiya (AGALI Country Representative), Faith Phiri (GENET) and Joyce Mkandawire (GENET) in Malawi.

## DATA SOURCES

World Bank, UNAIDS, Population Reference Bureau, World Health Organization

## PHOTOS

Cover Photos: Greisy Cabrera Sánchez, IDEI, Guatemala; María Ángela García, FOROSIDA, Honduras; Grace Mtogolo, GENET, Malawi

Page 4: Adolescent girls at THINK's safe house for girls  
Monrovia, Liberia

Page 5: Greisy Cabrera Sánchez and Elba Graciela Velásquez, IDEI, Guatemala

Page 6: Grace Mtogolo, GENET, Malawi

Page 7: Mayra de León Izara, IDEI, Guatemala

Page 9: Catherine Kauka interviewing for AGALI's documentary Lifting our Voices: Ending Child Marriage in Malawi

Page 11: Girl leaders in Malawi participating an AGALI digital storytelling workshop

Page 12: (Photo 1) Guatemalan Girl Leaders, Quetzaltenango - (Photo 2) Rosanna Schaak, THINK

Page 13: Oretha Yeagan, HOPE and THINK, Liberia

Page 15: Tatiana Andara Acosta, youth member of ASHONPLAFA, Honduras

Page 18: AGALI 2013 Guatemala Fellows

Photo credits: Annie Jones-Demen, Marta Julia Ruíz, Franklin Yonamu