

**LET** **GIRLS**  
**LEAD**



**A N N U A L R E P O R T 2 0 1 3**

## FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### At Let Girls Lead, we empower girls and their allies to change the world.

Let Girls Lead has improved the health, education, livelihoods, and rights of more than three million girls in partnership with visionary leaders and strong local organizations. Let Girls Lead empowers girls and their champions to lead social change through laws, programs, and funds that protect girls from violence and ensure girls' access to quality healthcare, education, and economic opportunity.

Results from the UN Foundation's 2013 external evaluation demonstrate that Let Girls Lead's Adolescent Girls Advocacy & Leadership Initiative (AGALI) is transforming girls' lives by:

- **Ending child marriage in southern Malawi** through girl-led advocacy with village chiefs
- **Guaranteeing girls' health and rights in Liberia** through passage and implementation of the national Children's Law
- **Reducing teen pregnancy and youth HIV infection in Honduras** by improving young people's access to comprehensive education and health services
- **Empowering Mayan girls in Guatemala to advocate for increased funding** for girl-friendly education and health services

Despite this exciting progress for girls, the challenges are still great. In poor countries, 600 million girls still struggle to eat, suffer abuse in their families, and experience violence in their communities. Yet these girls are not victims – girls are powerful leaders and inspiring agents of change.

At Let Girls Lead, we know that girls have the power to transform their lives, families, communities, and the world. Looking ahead, we are committed to ensuring that every girl can attend school, see a doctor when she needs one, and learn skills to lift herself and her family out of poverty.

We are excited to leverage Let Girls Lead's powerful model to launch Champions for Change in partnership with The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. [Champions for Change](#) saves the lives of women, children, and newborns in Nigeria by empowering local leaders and organizations to improve reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health.

We are proud of all we have achieved with and for girls. These successes would not have been possible without our visionary partners and generous supporters.

Thank you,



Denise Dunning, PhD  
Founder & Executive Director



Dr. Denise Dunning leading staff and Fellows through a ropes course in Antigua, Guatemala

## LET GIRLS LEAD 2013 ADVOCACY SUCCESSES

Girl-centered advocacy is at the heart of Let Girls Lead’s programmatic work. Let Girls Lead (LGL) improves girls’ lives globally by investing in leaders and organizations that advocate for girl-friendly laws, policies, programs, and funding. Let Girls Lead provides seed grants to leaders and organizations so they can launch advocacy strategies that improve the legal and policy frameworks that protect adolescent girls’ rights in their countries. We are proud to report that LGL grantees in Liberia, Malawi, Guatemala and Honduras celebrated advocacy wins on the local and national levels, advancing the human rights, health, education, and livelihoods of adolescent girls in their countries. Below, we present a summary of our grantees’ 2013 advocacy successes by country.

### Liberia Impacts

In 2013, Let Girls Lead grantees in Liberia included Helping Our People Excel (HOPE), Touching Humanity in Need of Kindness (THINK), Community Empowerment and Sustainable Program, Inc. (CESP), the Center for Justice and Peace Studies (CJPS), Aiding Disadvantaged Women & Girls (ADWANGA), and Save Lives-Liberia. With funding and technical assistance from LGL, these organizations achieved the following successes in 2013:

- **The Ministry of Gender and Development’s Adoption of the Liberian Girls’ Manifesto as the national advocacy tool for adolescent girls in Liberia.** The Manifesto for the Development and Empowerment of the Liberian Girl Child, written and signed by Liberian girls engaged in HOPE’s advocacy work, has been accepted as the national advocacy tool for adolescent girls in Liberia by the Ministry of Gender and Development (MOGD). The MOGD, HOPE, and key national and international stakeholders have earmarked resources for the development of a three-year national implementation plan for key areas of the Manifesto.
- **Advocacy for full implementation of the Children’s Law.** In January 2012, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf officially launched the Liberian Children’s Law after extensive advocacy led by HOPE and THINK. Continuing to push for girl-friendly implementation of the law, THINK conducted extensive capacity building on the Children’s Law in three counties to develop a community mobilization and awareness strategy. THINK continues to collaborate with partners to ensure effective implementation of the Children’s Law.
- **Creation of the National Steering Committee for Adolescent Girls.** The Liberian Government created the National Steering Committee for Adolescent Girls in 2013 to mainstream girl-focused programs and budgets in relevant government institutions. Two girls from HOPE’s Global Advocacy Forum now serve on the Council.
- **Convening of the First National Conference on the Situation of Children in Liberia.** The first National Conference on the Situation of Children in Liberia was held in March 2013 with the theme, “Recommitment to the Survival, Growth, Development and Participation of Children in Liberia.” At the Conference, the House and Senate affirmed their commitment to fully funding a child protection desk at the relevant ministries.





## LET GIRLS LEAD'S 2013 PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

We were fortunate to receive extraordinary press coverage this year. From the Social Good Summit to Forbes and The Guardian, Let Girls Lead's media coverage captures girls' power to change the world.

### Press highlights include:

- Forbes - [What Happens When We Let Girls Lead?](#)
- The Guardian - [First The Mayor, Then The World](#)
- The Guardian - [Girl-Centered Advocacy Could Protect 600 Million Girls](#)
- The Girl Effect - [Tailor Economic Empowerment for Girls](#)
- Impatient Optimists - [Let Girls Lead](#)

(For more media coverage please see Appendix A)

- **Development of girl-led advocacy committees to ensure safe educational environments for rural girls.** With training and support from ADWANGA, 40 girls established eight community-level advocacy committees, and one district level advocacy committee, to advocate with the district education office to support a safe environment for girls in schools.
- **Forming alliances with traditional authorities to end child marriage.** SaveLives-Liberia worked with over 200 village chiefs, community elders, women's groups and school authorities to build their commitment to ending child marriage and other harmful traditional practices that impact adolescent girls in Liberia. Traditional authorities in the region have agreed to outlaw child marriages in their communities, and SaveLives will push for formal commitments to this effect in 2014.

### Malawi Impacts

Let Girls Lead's grantees in Malawi – the Development Broadcasting Unit of Malawi Broadcasting Corp (DBU), the Chilimba Women & Orphans Care Group, and the Girls' Empowerment Network (GENET) – received support in 2013 to advocate with and for adolescent girls. LGL also continued to support the Adolescent Girls Advocacy Network's (AGANET) national political advocacy to end child marriage. Below is a summary of the advocacy successes achieved by Let Girls Lead grantees in Malawi in 2013:

- **Implementation of community bylaws to penalize perpetrators of child marriage and other harmful traditional practices.** GENET's girl-centered advocacy efforts to reduce child marriage among rural adolescent girls in the Chiradzulo District led to the passage of new community bylaws that penalize the perpetrators of harmful traditional practices in 22 villages. These bylaws protect thousands of Malawian girls from child marriage, exposure to HIV/AIDS, and early pregnancy. Since the bylaws were implemented in 2013, several cases have been reported of parents being penalized for marrying off their underage girls. Furthermore, one village chief has been removed from power as punishment for violating the bylaws. As a result, community norms are changing and community leaders report that child marriage is no longer considered a beneficial financial arrangement, but rather a shameful practice to be avoided.

## Malawi Impacts (continued)

- **Convening of the National Symposium on Child Marriage.** The first National Symposium on Child Marriage in Malawi's history was held in August 2013 as a result of advocacy efforts by AGANET and key partners. The Symposium identified the causes of child marriage in Malawi, galvanized commitment and support for a National Collaborative Approach, and supported resource mobilization. As a result of the National Symposium, Regional Symposiums will be held throughout 2014 to advance advocacy on child marriage after the national elections. During the Symposium, adolescent girls participated in dialogues with chiefs and religious leaders who renewed their commitment to creating an environment that is safe and supportive for the Malawian girl child.
- **Creation of the Malawian Adolescent Girls' Manifesto.** Inspired by the successful development of a Liberian Girls' Manifesto by LGL Fellows in 2012, AGANET led the creation of the Malawian Adolescent Girls' Manifesto in 2013. AGANET engaged 87 adolescent girls in advocacy capacity building, enabling them to develop the Malawian Adolescent Girls' Manifesto, which is used as an advocacy tool with traditional authorities, religious leaders, and politicians.
- **Collaboration with village chiefs to end harmful traditional practices.** Chilimba worked directly with nine village chiefs to sensitize them about the negative impacts of early and forced marriage for girls in their villages. Thanks to Chilimba's efforts, these traditional authorities affirmed their support to end harmful traditional initiation practices for girls in their communities.
- **Launch of a national radio series on child marriage reaching over 5 million listeners.** DBU produced a series of radio shows to educate decision-makers and communities throughout Malawi about the negative impacts of child marriage. The radio series, broadcast nationwide to an audience of over five million Malawians, also served to educate lawmakers about the need for increasing the legal age of marriage from 15 to 18 years of age.

## Guatemala Impacts

In 2013, LGL provided advocacy grants to five organizations in Guatemala: Asociación Generando (ASOGEN), the Center in Pastoral Integration (CEIPA), the National Association Against Child Abuse (CONACMI), the Association for Child Health and Reproductive Health of Guatemala (FERSIGUA), and the Association for Development and Comprehensive Education Research (IDEI). Girl-centered advocacy successes in Guatemala for 2013 include:

- **Expansion of comprehensive protections for indigenous adolescent girls.** In 2013, IDEI continued to advocate for the comprehensive development of indigenous adolescent girls. Building on their LGL-supported girls' democratic participation work, IDEI worked to expand girl-friendly public policies to additional towns in Guatemala's Western Highlands to ensure the rights, safety, health, and education of indigenous girls. Their successes were captured in the Let Girls Lead's film PODER!, which was filmed on location in Guatemala in 2013 and will premiere in March 2014 for International Women's Day.
- **Strengthening the Center for Women Survivors of Violence.** In 2012, ASOGEN successfully advocated for the approval and launch of the Chimaltenango Center for Women Survivors of Violence, which provides comprehensive physical and mental health support to women and girl survivors of violence. In 2013, ASOGEN advocated with the Ministry of Governance to enhance services at the Support Center, and developed a plan to integrate specific programs for girls into the Center's activities.
- **Improved implementation of the national Plan to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women.** ASOGEN advocated successfully with the Guatemalan government to protect girls from sexual violence through improved implementation of the national Plan to Prevent and Eradicate Violence against Women (PLANОВI). ASOGEN also strengthened the leadership of more than 30 adolescent girl leaders through intensive capacity building that empowered the girls to advocate for their sexual and reproductive health and rights. ASOGEN engaged these girl leaders in advocacy strategies to promote effective implementation of PLANОВI and to hold their local authorities accountable for their commitments to the Plan.

- **Formation of the national Technical Board for the Rights of Girl Victims of Sexual Violence.** Building on previous work to ensure passage of the Protocol for Adolescent Girl Survivors of Violence in Guatemala, CONACMI scaled up advocacy for national implementation of the Protocol. CONACMI secured approval for creation of a multisectoral Technical Board to oversee 11 districts of Guatemala where the Protocol is being implemented. The Board is made up of representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Secretariat Against Sexual Violence and Exploitation, UNICEF, UNFPA, APROFAM, and CONACMI.



- **Establishment of the Municipal Office of Youth in Comalapa, with an approved strategic plan and budget.** In 2013, FERSIGUA advocated successfully with the Municipal Office of Youth and the Municipal Advisory Board in Comalapa, Guatemala, to develop a strategic plan to strengthen the knowledge and skills of adolescent girls, and to develop strategies to improve the quality of life for indigenous girls. FESIRGUA also successfully advocated for The Office of Youth's budgetary assignment to implement their work.
- **Alliance-building for comprehensive health services for working adolescent girls.** CONACMI continued to push for improved protections and health services for adolescent girl factory workers in 2013, organizing six forums with municipal authorities and the Ministry of Health to ensure that working adolescent girls are not denied their rights to education and fair employment. CONACMI has gained political backing of the Municipality of Women and other municipal authorities to support girl workers' rights through direct advocacy and provision of technical assistance to municipal authorities, while building the leadership capacity of young female factory workers to advocate for their own rights.

## Honduras Impacts

Let Girls Lead's 2013 grantmaking in Honduras focused on the Honduras Coalition for Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Rights. Created by LGL Fellows in 2011, the Honduras Coalition is a network of 12 organizations that advocates collectively for the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people. LGL provided seed grant funds to two Honduran NGOs that are members of the Coalition's Steering Committee – The Honduran Family Planning Association (ASHONPLAFA) and the National AIDS Forum (FOROSIDA). With LGL's funding and technical support, the Honduras Coalition achieved the following successes during 2013:

- **Improved implementation of the Ministerial Declaration "Prevention through Education."** Coalition representatives advocated with the Minister of Health and the Minister and the Vice Minister of Education for full implementation of the Ministerial Declaration "Prevention through Education," signed by the Honduran Ministers of Health and Education in 2008 to provide universal access to comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services for young people.



#### Honduras Impacts (continued)

- **Engaging the grassroots and the grasstops.** The Coalition engaged the Ministry of Health, teachers, and over 100 municipal mayors throughout the country to support comprehensive sexuality education and services for young people through implementation of the Ministerial Declaration.
- **Formation of the Honduras Coalition’s Youth Platform.** In November 2013, 24 young leaders from organizations participating in the Honduras Coalition formed the youth arm of the Coalition, called the “Youth Platform.” Within the Coalition’s focus on adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, the Youth Platform will also focus on implementation of the Ministerial Declaration.
- **Capacity building for adolescent girl advocates.** The Youth Platform conducted a workshop on leadership, advocacy, and sexual and reproductive health and rights for 30 young people, 26 of whom were adolescent girls. These young leaders from San Pedro Sula and La Ceiba will continue to work with the Youth Platform to advocate for girl-friendly health services and education in Honduras.
- **Representation and strategic participation in the Political Forum in San Pedro Sula.** Coalition members implemented a high-level forum on youth sexual and reproductive health and rights, attended by Representatives from most major political parties. During the Forum, three adolescent girl members of the Coalition advocated for youth participation as an integral component of the national response to HIV, and highlighted the importance of comprehensive sexuality education to decrease adolescent pregnancy rates.

“The most important thing that I learned in AGALI was that advocacy must lead to real policy change and that it’s not the same thing working for girls as working with them.”

—Angelina Gonzalez, 2013 LGL Fellow

## STRENGTHENING THE LET GIRLS LEAD NETWORK

In 2013, LGL invited a new cohort of 25 visionary Central American leaders to join the network. LGL's principal capacity building efforts in 2013 included an intensive advocacy workshop for the new Central American cohort, Institutional Strengthening (IS) workshops in Guatemala, Liberia, and Malawi, and provision of technical assistance and funding to Fellows and their institutions.

### Let Girls Lead Advocacy Workshop in Guatemala

In July 2013, Let Girls Lead staff selected 25 Central American Fellows to join the network, following a competitive recruitment process that generated over 120 applications from high-level civil society leaders. Through intensive capacity building and grant-making, LGL amplified the ability of 14 new Fellows from Guatemala and 11 new Fellows from Honduras to advocate with and for adolescent girls and young women.

To set the stage for Let Girls Lead's intensive seven-day advocacy workshop, Guatemalan and Honduran participants attended day-long orientation meetings, where they developed a shared understanding of girl-centered advocacy and began pre-work to prepare for the program.

The week-long workshop incorporated a range of topics, including:

- Social, legal, cultural, and religious factors affecting girls
- Adolescent Girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Strategies to combat child marriage and harmful traditional practices
- Political mapping, policy formulation, and SWOT analyses
- Media advocacy, outreach, and interviewing
- Best practices for ensuring girls' democratic participation

The workshop incorporated guided facilitation in which each LGL Fellow developed a complete girl-centered advocacy strategy, integrating goals, objectives, activities, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and budgets. During the workshop, participants adapted their strategies into draft proposals to solicit funding from Let Girls Lead and other donors to launch their advocacy initiatives.

Let Girls Lead collaborated with Eugenia Lopez Uribe, an international advocacy expert from Mexico, and Guatemalan advocacy expert Dr. Mirna Montenegro, to implement the workshop in Guatemala. These facilitators provided invaluable expertise concerning effective advocacy strategies for girls and shared their own concrete experiences and lessons learned from decades working in the field. In addition to collaborating with LGL staff to adapt the program's methodology to the unique social and political contexts of Guatemala and Honduras, these experts continue to serve as a resource to LGL alumni as they implement their new advocacy strategies.

The new cohort of Fellows from Guatemala and Honduras are improving adolescent girls' lives through their ongoing girl-focused work and implementation of their new advocacy strategies. New Fellows from both countries are also actively engaging with the existing regional network of alumni Fellows from past years.



Honduran leader Fernando Reyes presents during 2013 Let Girls Lead Workshop

## New Advocacy Strategies Launched in 2013

During the Central American advocacy workshop, LGL launched a competitive call for proposals to support new girl-centered advocacy initiatives in the region, providing all Fellows with technical assistance to develop their strategies and proposals. Following a competitive selection process, Let Girls Lead funded four new advocacy strategies in Central America, including projects led by School of the Street (EDELAC), Rebirth Association (Asociación Renacimiento), the Association for the Wellbeing of the Guatemalan Family (APROFAM), and the Trans Network of Tegucigalpa (Red Trans). Pending evaluation results, LGL will award additional years of funding to sustain the following new initiatives:

### Guatemala

#### **School of the Street (EDELAC)**

EDELAC is increasing adolescent girls' access to education and information to prevent early pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and sexual abuse. With LGL's funding for 2014, EDELAC will advocate with municipal authorities in city of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala's second-largest, to approve a girl-friendly Adolescent Health Center serving the city's poorest neighborhood. EDELAC is working with a group of girl leaders in Quetzaltenango to advocate for this landmark health center that will provide comprehensive health services and information to some of the city's poorest girls. Anticipated outcomes include creation of a health center that will provide sexual and reproductive health services and information to underserved girls in Quetzaltenango, and become a national model for comprehensive health services.

#### **Association Rebirth (Association Renacimiento)**

The new LGL-funded Renacimiento project will build on CONACMI's success establishing a national protocol for adolescent survivors of sexual violence by advocating for local implementation of the protocol in high-need indigenous communities. Renacimiento is working with girl leaders in indigenous communities in Guatemala to ensure that girls who have been victims of sexual violence receive the care they need at the grassroots level in high-need rural areas. Anticipated outcomes include increased implementation of the protocol to better serve the most marginalized indigenous adolescent girls in rural communities.

#### **Association for the Wellbeing of the Guatemalan Family (APROFAM)**

With LGL's funding, APROFAM is advocating with national lawmakers for passage of the National Law for Youth. This legislation would, for the first time in Guatemala's history, guarantee comprehensive protections and dedicated programs for young people. APROFAM's advocacy strategy integrates policymaker education, media engagement, facilitation of dialogues between adolescent girls and elected representatives, and strengthening of inter-institutional alliances. Anticipated outcomes include increased access to girl-friendly sexual and reproductive health services and information and decreased rates of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

### Honduras

#### **Trans Network of Tegucigalpa (Red Trans)**

Transgendered adolescent girls and young women in Honduras struggle with persistent violence and discrimination on a daily basis. They are unable to use public transportation for fear of assault, are often denied formal employment, and are often victims of police brutality. Red Trans Honduras' pioneering advocacy project will strengthen the capacities of transgendered and transsexual young women to advocate effectively for their rights. Anticipated outcomes include increased awareness among decision-makers about gender identity and drafting of a law to prevent gender-based discrimination in employment and education in Honduras.



“My goal is to advocate for programs that build girls’ capacities in communities throughout Guatemala.”

--Maria Tiniguar Argueta,  
2013 LGL Fellow

## LET GIRLS LEAD PARTNER ORGANIZATION 2013 PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

LGL grantees from Guatemala, Honduras, and Malawi continued to receive great press coverage in 2013.

Press highlights include:

- Forbes - [A Teen Girl’s Secret to Finding Real Power? Fix Something That’s Broken](#)
- Women Deliver - [Raising Our Voices: Young Leaders at the International Conference on Family Planning](#)
- La Prensa, Guatemala - [Youth Receive Training on Sexual and Reproductive Rights](#)

(For more media coverage please see Appendix A)

### Institutional Strengthening Workshops

In addition to successfully building the capacity of a new cohort of Fellows from Central America, Let Girls Lead continued to implement a series of Institutional Strengthening workshops for all LGL alumni. These IS workshops provide LGL Fellows, alumni, and key staff of their organizations with the opportunity to network, share advocacy successes and lessons learned, and also build new advocacy skills in important topics related to girls’ rights. In 2013, LGL conducted IS workshops in Malawi, Liberia, and Guatemala for 62 Fellows, key staff from their organizations, and representatives from government and UN agencies.

### Institutional Strengthening Workshops on Proposal Writing

LGL Fellows and grantee partners requested additional capacity building on proposal development for girl-centered advocacy. As a result, Let Girls Lead supported workshops on resource mobilization and proposal development in Liberia and Malawi. LGL Country Coordinator and advocate Howard Kasiya led the workshop in Malawi, which brought together 14 Malawi Fellows, five members of the Adolescent Girls’ Advocacy Network (AGANET), and four adolescent girls. In Liberia, LGL Country Coordinator and advocate Aisha Cooper Bruce worked with national experts to provide hands-on skill-building in the areas of proposal development and fundraising for 20 Fellows and staff of their organizations.

### Institutional Strengthening Workshop on Network-Building

After the intensive week-long advocacy workshop in Guatemala, many of the LGL Fellows and alumni expressed interest in building an adolescent girls’ advocacy network in Guatemala, similar to the AGANET model from Malawi. Responding to this request, LGL staff worked with the Guatemala Country Coordinator and LGL Alumna Veronica Buch and Guatemalan advocacy expert Dr. Mirna Montenegro to start the planning process for developing a Guatemalan national network. A total of 19 Fellows, alumni, and representatives of government and UN agencies participated in the meeting. Building on the results of the IS workshop, participants are continuing the strategic planning process needed to develop an advocacy network for adolescent girls, and plan to formally launch the network in 2014.



### **Technical Assistance**

LGL provided technical assistance (TA) and TA funding to Fellows and grantee organizations throughout 2013 to enhance the impact of their advocacy strategies and build capacity of their organizations to effectively advocate for adolescent girls.

### **Proposal Development**

During the advcoworkshop for the new 2013 cohort, LGL staff and facilitators provided TA to Fellows as they developed their advocacy strategies, and also offered extensive TA by email and phone as the Fellows and their organizations finalized their proposals. Staff members also provided ongoing technical support to the four organizations that received grants to ensure the success of their new advocacy initiatives.

### **Technical Assistance Grants**

In addition to directly providing Fellows with technical assistance, LGL awards small grants to partner organizations to hire expert consultants to strengthen their advocacy strategies in specific areas. In 2013, LGL competitively awarded two TA grants to partner organizations in Liberia and one TA grant to a partner organization in Honduras. SaveLives-Liberia used the TA funds to build staff capacity to conduct media advocacy in Grand Buchanan County. CESP used their TA grant to strengthen staff capacity in the areas of social media, budgetary advocacy, and marketing to better disseminate project information to national leaders and the general public. The Trans Network of Tegucigalpa used TA funds to hire a consultant to guide their advocacy work plan for the year, and to develop specific strategies to mitigate safety and security risks facing gay and transgender advocates in Honduras.

### **On-Demand Technical Assistance**

Throughout the year, LGL staff provided on-demand TA to Fellows and alumni from all focus countries in the areas of media advocacy, fundraising support, network development, and facilitating connections to relevant resources and opportunities. LGL's support resulted in partners securing additional funding for their advocacy projects, Fellows' selection for international fellowships and conferences, and enhanced connections between the program and its five generations of Fellows and alumni.

### **Dissemination and Outreach**

LGL strengthens girl-centered advocacy movements in each focus country by supporting Fellows to engage and build the capacity of community-based organizations and groups of adolescent girls. Fellows facilitate half-day or full-day workshops using LGL's methodology, receiving financial compensation for their efforts. In 2013, Fellows implemented a total of 19 dissemination workshops, engaging 145 girls and 405 total participants in girl-centered advocacy movements.

## BUILDING THE FIELD

In 2013, Let Girls Lead continued to act as a thought leader in the field of girl-centered advocacy by creating cutting-edge advocacy tools including articles, policy briefs, case studies, research reports, and curriculum resources. Program evaluations demonstrate that Fellows, alumni, and other civil society partners are using these new resources to support their ongoing advocacy and their outreach and dissemination efforts.

### Girl-Centered Advocacy Curriculum

Drawing on five years of advocacy capacity building successes, LGL completed our pioneering Girl-Centered Advocacy Curriculum in 2013. Let Girls Lead will field test and publish the full curriculum in 2014, the first curriculum of its kind specifically focused on girl-centered advocacy. Responding to requests from Fellows and other organizations needing resources to strengthen their own work with girls, this curriculum will provide in-country advocates and community-based organizations with needed tools and methodology to enhance their advocacy with and for adolescent girls. This publication will improve girls' lives by enhancing the quality of civil society programs and services provided to girls, and by building the field's knowledge of effective approaches to advance girl-centered advocacy and empower girls as leaders.

### Policy Briefs and Case Studies

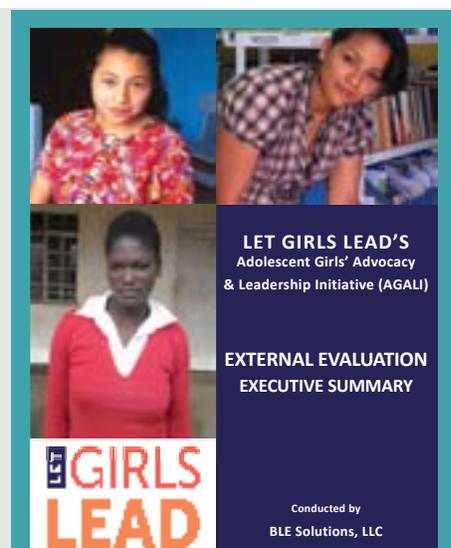
Responding to requests from Fellows and other civil society partners, LGL staff developed policy briefs about national laws and policies that impact adolescent girls, translating them into local languages to make them more accessible to grassroots organizations. These policy briefs are used by Fellows in their own advocacy with policymakers, and LGL has disseminated them to local, national, and international institutions. In Malawi, for example, Fellows have already begun using the policy briefs as a tool to build broader understanding about existing policy and legal frameworks for girls.

### Girls' Economic Empowerment Research

In the field of economic empowerment, LGL conducted research on girl-centered programs globally, and investigated economic empowerment initiatives in Totonicapán and Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, and in Quintana Roo, Mexico through country mapping studies. This research reveals that very few global initiatives effectively integrate economic empowerment for girls, and that there are currently no economic empowerment initiatives focused on adolescent girls in Quintana Roo, Totonicapán, or Quetzaltenango. This landmark research illuminates the lack of dedicated economic empowerment programs for adolescent girls in Central America, highlighting the need for future investments in this area.

## LGL EXTERNAL EVALUATION

The United Nations Foundation commissioned an external evaluation of Let Girls Lead's Adolescent Girls Advocacy & Leadership Initiative (AGALI) to examine the program's impacts from 2009 through 2013. The evaluation demonstrates that Let Girls Lead has contributed to improving the health, education, livelihoods, and rights of more than three million girls globally. The evaluation also shows that investing in country-based advocates and organizations is an effective strategy to ensure that laws, policies, and programs respond to girls' needs. The full external evaluation can be downloaded here: [2013 External Evaluation](#).



## LGL GIRL PROFILE - IN HER WORDS

*UNF's evaluation of Let Girls Lead integrated Most Significant Change interview methodology. These direct interviews explored LGL's impacts for 35 girls involved in the program. Below is the story of Thokozani Kazembe, a girl who participated in LGL's work with GENET in Malawi.*

My name is Thokozani, and I live in Chitera village, in Southern Malawi. I am proud to be one of the pioneering girls in the Girls Empowerment Network's (GENET's) advocacy project. In Chitera, we have a history of practicing girls' sexual initiation as soon as a girl reaches puberty, which often leads to girls dropping out of school.\*\* In our community, all this was normal.

GENET first worked with us girls on our low self-esteem, lack of confidence, and assertiveness. GENET training sessions challenged my perception about myself. They made me question why girls have to participate in initiation ceremonies, and why they leave school. As a typical girl of Chitera, my ambitions used to be low. I did not work that hard in school because there was no certain future built on the foundation of education. I looked forward to my initiation day and to eventually getting married. But after going through GENET training sessions, this perception changed. I became motivated. I developed confidence in myself. I wanted to take actions without looking down upon myself.

I and my friends have been sharing with other girls what we have learned through our involvement with GENET. Together, we have been counseling and encouraging girls to work hard in school. When I became of age to be initiated, I refused to go through it. Now that my younger sisters see that nothing has happened to me for having refused to be initiated, they are also following suit. High self-esteem and the ability to resist pressure are the most important things I've gained through this project, because through that I have managed to stand up against a forced initiation.

\*\*Girls' initiation in Malawi includes the practice of kusasa fumbi, in which girls are forced to have unprotected sex with a man to rid themselves of their 'sexual dust'. This sexual cleansing often leads to unwanted pregnancy and HIV infection.



**Thokozani Kazembe receiving an award of excellence from Malawian Deputy Minister of Local Development Godfrey Kamanya**

## GIRL-CENTERED MEDIA ADVOCACY

In 2013, Let Girls Lead continued to pioneer innovative media advocacy approaches for girls, including creation of a short documentary film, launching of a global girls' video contest, and numerous thought leadership articles in international publications.

### PODER

LGL staff worked with Emmy award-winning director, Lisa Russell, to create PODER, a short documentary about girl-led advocacy in Guatemala. PODER tells the

story of Elba Velasquez and Emelin Cabrera, two indigenous girls who overcame widespread discrimination to transform their own lives, families, and community. Through the support of 2009 Fellow Juany Garcia Perez, Elba, Emelin, and 13 other indigenous girls convinced their town mayor to invest in girls' development, ensuring that girls can go to school, stay healthy, and learn important skills to lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

The film will serve as a global advocacy and awareness-raising tool about girls' power to lead social change. LGL completed a successful Catapult campaign to raise funds for the film's production, and is collaborating with several high-level partners on distribution, including Girl Rising, the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, Women Deliver, and Latino Public Broadcasting. The global film premiere took place at the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 2014 for International Women's Day, with additional events planned in San Francisco and Guatemala.

### Global Girls' Conversation Video Contest

At the 2014 Social Good Summit, Let Girls Lead launched the Global Girls' Conversation video contest. The contest highlights the power of girls to create change by sharing their own solutions through short video submissions. LGL received 142 video entries from girl leaders in 26 countries sharing their inspiring stories of change. The winner will be selected by a panel of expert judges including: Former Chair of Liberia's Children's Parliament, MaHawa Ngwire; Riddhi Shah, Editor of The Huffington Post's Social Impact Column; Madeline Di Nono, Executive Director of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media; Martha Adams, Creative Director of Girl Rising; and Riya Singh, Girl Up Teen Advisor. Winners will receive \$10,000 in training, funding, and equipment to produce a short documentary about their solutions to the challenges facing girls in their countries. LGL is hosting the videos on our website, and also partnered with The Huffington Post to disseminate girls' powerful stories through a weekly video blog on the Global Motherhood column.

Throughout 2013, Let Girls Lead's role as a thought leader in the girl-centered advocacy space has grown drastically through blogs, articles, photos, and videos about our work and partners. Our Facebook and Twitter followers more than doubled in 2013, enabling us to more efficiently share relevant news about adolescent girls around the world. Our media coverage includes publications in The Guardian's Adolescent Girls Hub, Impatient Optimists, Revue Magazine, and Forbes.com.



## APPENDIX A: 2013 PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

### LGL Program Coverage

- The UN Dispatch - [Investing in Girl Power at the Social Good Summit](#) - Kimberly Curtis, 9.23.2013
- The Guardian - [First the Mayor, Then the World – The Power of Telling Stories](#) - Juany Garcia Perez, Emily Teitsworth, 9.18.2013
- Forbes – [What Happens When We Let Girls Lead?](#) - Denise Restauri, 9.18.2013
- Gates Foundation Impatient Optimists - [On Film: Two Girls Launch Change In Guatemala](#) - Farhana Ali, 9.15.13
- Women Deliver - [Celebrate Solutions: Guatemalan Girls Advocate For Change](#) - Lindsay Menard-Freeman, 9.9.2013
- Revue Magazine Guatemala - [Lights, Camera, Advocacy](#) - Linda Conard, 9.2.2013
- Gates Foundation Impatient Optimists - [Let Girls Lead](#) - Dr. Denise Dunning, 8.1.13
- The Guardian - [Vocational Training for Young Women: What Works and What Doesn't](#) - Dr. Denise Dunning, 7.16.13
- The Guardian - [Girl-Centered Advocacy Could Protect 600 Million Girls from Violence](#) - Dr. Denise Dunning, 6.11.13

### LGL Video Contest Coverage

- Huffington Post - [Maricela Lopez Catarina Tum, Guatemala](#) - 12.23.13
- Huffington Post - [Obinna-Njoku Somtochukwu, Nigeria](#) – 12.16.13
- Huffington Post - [Camille McGirt, USA](#) – 12.9.13
- Huffington Post - [Emmanuela Alimlim, Kenya](#) – 12.2.13

### LGL Fellow Coverage

- Women Deliver - [Raising Our Voices: Young Leaders at the International Conference on Family Planning](#) - Ms. Makda Mikre Tessema, Let Girls Lead AGALI fellow, YWCA Ethiopia, 12.11.13
- La Prensa, Guatemala - [Youth Receive Training on Sexual and Reproductive Rights](#) - This article highlights the work that the Honduras Coalition is doing to train young leaders on sexual and reproductive rights, 11.14.13
- Dialouges for Health - [My Unforgettable Experience in New York](#) - Guatmalan girl leader - Emilia Yeimy Chojolan Sacalxot and 2013 AGALI Fellow Maria Luisa went to New York in October to participate in the Day of the Girls “Speak Out Summit”; this is the second of the two part blog highlighting Yeimy’s experience, 11.6.13
- Forbes - [A Teen Girl’s Secret to Finding Real Power? Fix Something That’s Broken](#) - Denise Restauri, 10.9.2013
- NPR - [Guatemala’s First Female Attorney General Takes On Country’s Biggest Criminals](#) - AGALI 2011 Guatemala Fellow Danessa Luna was interviewed for this very informative piece about the changing political landscape, 3.28.13
- Malawi Voice - [Girls Call for Their Incorporation in Policy Making](#) - 2.12.13

## ABOUT LET GIRLS LEAD

Let Girls Lead is building a global movement of Champions who protect girls from violence, and ensure they can attend school, stay healthy, and learn skills to escape poverty. Let Girls Lead empowers girls and their allies to lead social change through advocacy, education, storytelling, economic empowerment, and strategic partnerships. Since 2009, Let Girls Lead’s proven model has contributed to improved health, education, livelihoods, and rights for more than 3 million girls through the passage of national laws, implementation of programs, and distribution of funds to ensure access to quality healthcare, education, and economic opportunity. Let Girls Lead’s sister initiative, [Champions for Change](#), leverages this proven model to save the lives of women, newborns, and children by empowering leaders and organizations to advocate for reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health in Nigeria.

Champions for Change and Let Girls Lead are headquartered at the Public Health Institute in Oakland, CA, a leader in global health and development for over 30 years.



## **ABOUT LET GIRLS LEAD & CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE**

Let Girls Lead is building a global movement of Champions who empower girls to attend school, stay healthy, escape poverty, and overcome violence. Let Girls Lead invests in girls and their allies to lead social change through advocacy, education, storytelling, economic empowerment, and strategic partnerships. Since 2009, Let Girls Lead's proven model has contributed to improved health, education, livelihoods, and rights for more than 3 million girls through the passage of national laws, implementation of programs, and distribution of funds to ensure access to quality healthcare, education, and economic opportunity.

Let Girls Lead's sister initiative, Champions for Change, leverages LGL's proven model to save the lives of women, newborns, and children by investing in Nigerian leaders and organizations. Champions for Change empowers Nigerian leaders and organizations to improve reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health through advocacy, education, storytelling, and strategic partnerships. Champions for Change and Let Girls Lead's model drives change through the passage of national laws, implementation of programs, and distribution of funds to ensure access to quality healthcare, education, and economic opportunity.

**TO LEARN MORE, VISIT:**

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