

GIRL SCOUT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

GSRI Quarterly



October 2007 Issue No. 3

Girls' Leadership

While there are many youth leadership programs, little information exists on how girls experience and are impacted by leadership development. The Girl Scout Research Institute has embarked on a body of work to explore how girls understand leadership and what it means to be a leader, and to support Girl Scouting's goal of inspiring girls to develop leadership skills and aspire to leadership.

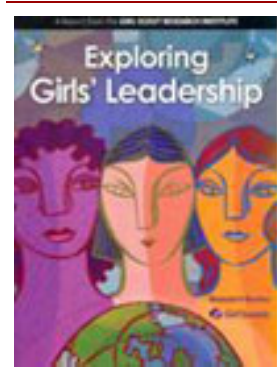
In this issue we highlight the findings in [Exploring Girls' Leadership \(2007\)](#), our latest research review of the current literature from the youth development and youth leadership fields. We bring to the fore and correct common misperceptions held about girls' and youth leadership. We also include what girls online and in focus groups across the nation recently told us about leadership for girls.

This research comes at a pivotal time as Girl Scouting undergoes an historic national transformation that emphasizes a new commitment to girls' leadership development.

Please stay tuned for the release of our national original study on girls and leadership in the spring of 2008 as well as the launch of the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience for girls in kindergarten through high school!

Sincerely,
Michael Conn, Ph.D.
Vice President, Research
Girl Scout Research Institute
Girl Scouts of the USA

EXPLORING GIRLS' LEADERSHIP



Many programs exist to help build youth leadership skills, and youth leadership outcomes are well documented: a decrease in the likelihood of risky behavior; improvement in academic attitudes; improvement in interpersonal and social skills; and evolution of girls' civic engagement and action.

However, very little data exists on how girls experience leadership and what they need to

succeed in this arena.

Questions such as the following arise: How do girls approach leadership? How do adults in the youth development and leadership fields help develop leadership for girls and youth?

Exploring Girls' Leadership reviews the literature of the youth development and leadership fields and answers these questions. Listening to the voices of girls, the review also includes the findings of a small, online survey and focus groups of girls around the country.

An important finding of the survey and focus groups is that girls have a unique definition of leadership that emphasizes developing personal strength and interpersonal skills. Girls also view leadership as a clear means toward an end—to make a difference in the world.

For girls, "leadership is about the *qualities one has as well as about one's actions*." Over 80 percent of girls think being a good leader means having a positive attitude, being a good listener, being confident, and being able to speak well to a group.

Yet, while a majority of girls view themselves as leaders today—at home, at school, and in after-school activities—an important disconnect occurs as girls move to envisioning themselves as leaders later on in life. Only slightly more than a third of girls (36%) are interested in being a leader when they are older.

Girls seek support in facing and addressing their concerns and fears about being leaders. They also need help in overcoming barriers to their development, whether imposed by themselves or others, and maximizing their development.

[Download](#) or [order](#) *Exploring Girls' Leadership* today!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For further information on leadership development for girls and youth and how organizations and communities can support young people in becoming leaders, visit the following Web sites referenced in *Exploring Girls' Leadership* (2007):

- [Corporation for Community and National Service](#)
- [Girls' Coalition of Greater Boston](#)
- [Girls, Inc.](#)
- [Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development](#)
- [Ms. Foundation for Women](#)
- [National Coalition of Girls' Schools](#)
- [National Research Council and Institute of Medicine](#)
- [Search Institute](#)
- [The Forum for Youth Investment](#)
- [Tolerance.org](#)



DID YOU KNOW?

Sixty-nine percent of girls and boys ages 8 to 18 consider themselves to be leaders.

Eighty percent of girls say that girls are just as good as boys at being leaders.

Eighteen percent of girls say that girls are better leaders than boys.

-GSRI, [Exploring Girls' Leadership 2007](#)

ABOUT GSRI

The Girl Scout Research Institute, formed in 2000, is a vital extension of Girl Scouts of the USA.

The GSRI conducts original research, evaluation, and outcomes measurement studies, releases critical facts and findings, and provides resources essential for the advancement of the well-being and safety of girls living in today's world.

The GSRI also informs public policy and advocacy for Girl Scouting.

ABOUT GIRL SCOUTING

Girl Scouts of the USA Mission Statement

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

GIRL SCOUT CORE BUSINESS STRATEGY

TRANSFORMING GIRL SCOUTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Girl Scouts began to develop its [Core Business Strategy](#) in 2004, to ensure that this historic organization continues to be the best leadership experience for girls in kindergarten through high school.

Today, through the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience, girls become leaders by [discovering](#), [connecting](#), and [taking action](#).

[Learn more about the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience for girls!](#)

GIRL SCOUT PROGRAM RESOURCES

[Girl Scout Gold, Silver, and Bronze Awards](#)
[Young Women of Distinction](#)
[Challenge and Change](#)
[The White House Project](#)

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