



Pathways for Girls:

Insights into the Needs
of Young Women
in Nubian Square

DECEMBER 2019



The American City Coalition

Founded in 1994, The American City Coalition (TACC) is a Roxbury-based 501(c)(3) organization committed to providing thought leadership and technical assistance to advance multi-sector and multi-stakeholder partnerships that focus investments to improve the quality of life for Roxbury families.

With Roxbury as a primary focus area, TACC identifies and develops programming and projects that respond to the neighborhood's assets and needs. TACC's work is grounded in objective research, in-depth resident input, and the expertise of local stakeholders; these data and analyses allow TACC to help partners identify unmet community needs. Using an emergent approach, TACC seeks to increase collective impact by aligning the skills of partners within defined program areas and identifying and engaging complementary partnerships and resources.

Three interrelated programs guide TACC's work and reflect the organization's focus on connecting people to place:

- **Resident Supports:** Connects residents with the essential services and information needed to support health and mobility by working with key stakeholders, including residents, community organizations, housing communities, businesses, and local government, to: 1) conduct research and develop objective data to inform programming; 2) initiate and facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships to support neighborhood transformation initiatives; and 3) develop supportive services that strengthen families and communities.
- **Economic Development and Asset Development:** Advances strategies that strengthen asset and wealth creation pathways.
- **Neighborhood Vitality:** Supports multi-sector partnerships that improve the neighborhood environment and facilitate investment.

Reports, data, and further information can be found at: www.tamcc.org.

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I. Executive Summary

Women are agents of change in their families, communities, and countries.

– Investing in Women and Girls, The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Empowering women results in significant advances for individuals, families, and communities including reductions in rates of poverty and inequality, improvements in the health and well-being of children, and safer, more prosperous neighborhoods.^{1,2} Empowering young women in Nubian Square in Roxbury, a racial and ethnically diverse area of Boston, Massachusetts, is particularly impactful given the significant economic, educational, and health inequities this community and its growing population of young people face.³ The American City Coalition (TACC) is focused on improving the quality of life for low-income families living in Roxbury and, in conducting the Pathways for Girls Study (P4G Study), identifies strategies to provide young women with additional tools to advance their upward mobility.

Buses are a main source of transportation for the city's youth attending the many middle and high schools in close proximity to Nubian Square's Nubian Bus Station (Nubian Station). Nubian Station is one of Roxbury's main public transportation hubs, a place where a confluence of factors impacting residents, both positive and negative, are palpable. Through observations and conversations with the Roxbury community and businesses, TACC learned of a growing concern for the well-being of young women who are exposed to crime and physical and verbal altercations while traveling through or gathering for extended periods of time in the afternoons at Nubian Station. Community leaders' concerns extend to the impact the social dynamics of the bus station have on these young women, an environment which can be marked by unlawful activities and forces, issues that are, in part, the result of the inequities of the larger society.^{4,5}

The goals of the study, conducted in the Spring and Summer of 2019, are to: 1) design and implement solutions that build on the personal assets of the young women traveling through or gathering in Nubian Station; 2) understand the resources available for young women in the Roxbury community in order to empower them and set them on a path to success; and 3) address the gaps while seeking partnerships to positively impact the dynamics in Nubian Station. The survey, a major component of the study, sought to hear directly from the young women and document the:

- assets, resources, challenges, experiences, and interests of 14- to 21-year-old young women from the Nubian Square community; and
- social dynamics in Nubian Station and the impact of these social dynamics on young women.

Given that female empowerment is associated with improved economic development for both individuals and communities and that crime and violence are often the result of disempowerment, empowerment informed the study design and recommendations. Findings from the study will be used to design and implement empowerment programming for young women in Roxbury while addressing the disempowering aspects of the Nubian Station environment.

¹ Empowering Girls and Women. The United Nations. Retrieved on October 30, 2019 from <https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/phlntrpy/notes/clinton.pdf>.

² Investing in Women and Girls, OECD. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/investinginwomenandgirls.htm>.

³ Boston Planning and Development Agency (June 2017). Roxbury. Retrieved on December 17, 2019 from <http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/70aaac6d-0459-4b1f-b91f-fe19ba5437cc>.

⁴ McQueeney, K. & Girgenti-Malone, A.A. (Editors) (2018). *Girls, Aggression, and Intersectionality: Transforming the Discourse of "Mean Girls" in the United States*. Routledge Research in Gender and Society, Book 66.

⁵ van Eerdewijk, A., Wong, F., Vaast, C., Newton, J., Tyszler, M., & Pennington, A. (2017). *White Paper: A Conceptual Model of Women and Girls' Empowerment*. Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute (KIT). Retrieved on December 20, 2019 from https://www.kit.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/BMGF_KIT_WhitePaper_web-1.pdf.

Methodology

This is a youth-led, mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) study. A total of 160 young women who live, travel through, or attend school in the Nubian Square area participated in the study. The majority of the research was conducted utilizing a *Youth Participatory Action Research and Innovation Model (YPAR Model)* (Figure 1), an approach through which local young women play key roles as field experts and youth researchers “trained to conduct systematic research to improve their lives, their communities, and the institutions intended to serve them.” Six local youth researchers were supported by professional researchers to co-create and co-own the research project. Figure 2 summarizes the study timeline as well as an overview of all aspects of the mixed-methods approach and a description of the sample.

Figure 1: YPAR Model

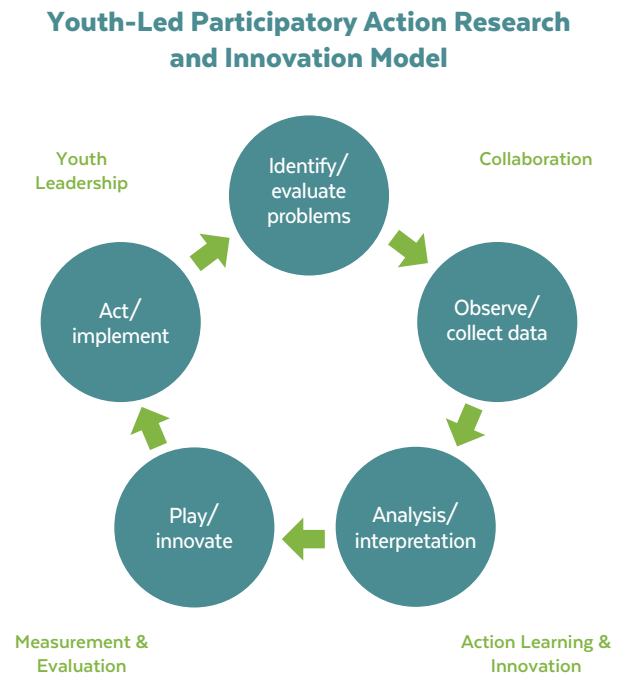
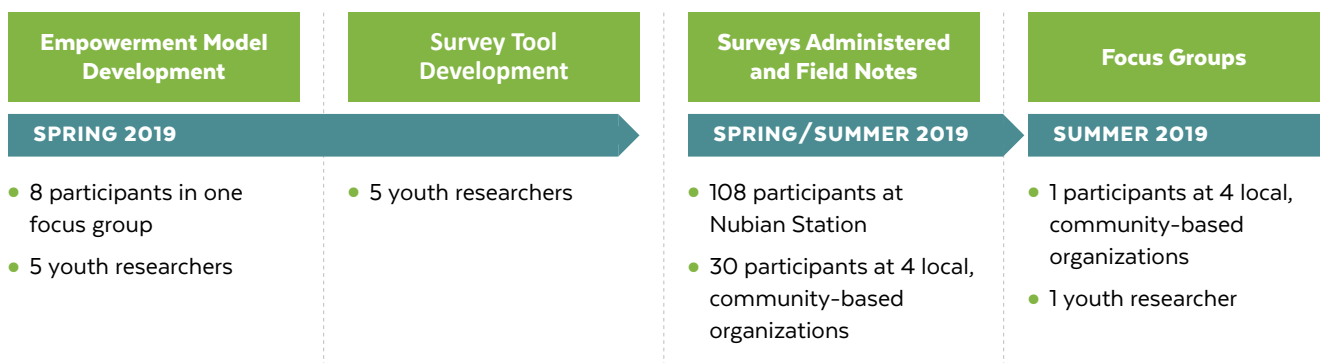


Figure 2: Study Timeline and Sample



A *Conceptual Model of Women and Girls' Empowerment (KIT/Gates Empowerment Model)* (Figure 3), developed by the Amsterdam Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) in partnership with and for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was identified as a comprehensive, evidence-based model to guide the study.^{6,7}

Youth researchers, informed by results from an initial focus group with local young women, adapted the *KIT/Gates Empowerment Model* to be more meaningful and impactful for young women in Roxbury. The *P4G Young Women's Empowerment Model (P4G Empowerment Model)* (Figure 4) is based on the original *KIT/Gates Empowerment Model*, but emphasizes five key elements of empowerment:

1. **Social Capital** (i.e., social relations with productive benefits):⁸ Support, relationships, networks, and feeling trusted, respected, and valued by others;
2. **Safety and Security**: Safe neighborhood, home, and school;
3. **Knowledge and Skills**: School, life skills, learning, engaged in programs and activities, particularly those that make young women feel good about themselves;

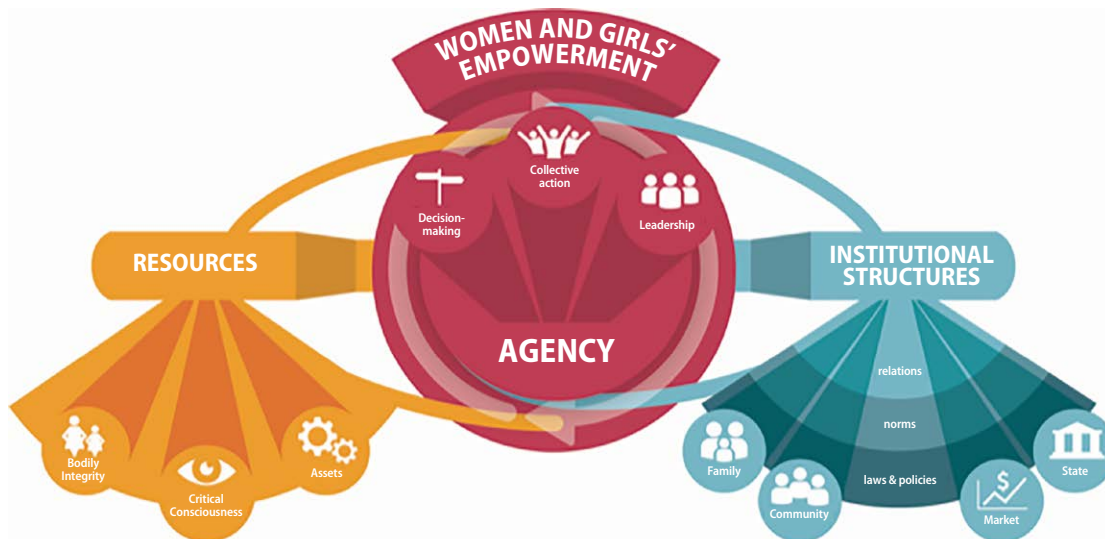
4. **Family**: Love, respect, and support; and

5. **Health**: Focus on mental health.

Other elements included from the original *KIT/Gates Empowerment Model* are health, financial assets, agency, critical consciousness, institutional structures (i.e., school, community), employment, norms, and values.

In order to operationalize and measure the empowerment elements of the *P4G Empowerment Model*, youth researchers developed a survey instrument that included key measures from the Search Institute's *Developmental Asset Profile (DAP)* which is a reliable and valid instrument used to assess the strengths, supports, and social and emotional factors that are essential for young people's success in school and life.⁹ The survey instrument (Appendix A) also includes additional measures youth researchers developed as a group to operationalize important elements of the *P4G Empowerment Model* not measured by the *DAP*.

Figure 3: *KIT/Gates Foundation Conceptual Model of Women and Girls' Empowerment*



⁶ McQueeney, K. & Girgenti-Malone, A.A. (Editors) (2018). *Girls, Aggression, and Intersectionality: Transforming the Discourse of "Mean Girls" in the United States*. Routledge Research in Gender and Society, Book 66.

⁷ van Eerdewijk, A., Wong, F., Vaast, C., Newton, J., Tyszler, M., & Pennington, A. (2017). *White Paper: A Conceptual Model of Women and Girls' Empowerment*. Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute (KIT). Retrieved on December 20, 2019 from https://www.kit.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/BMGF_KIT_WhitePaper_web-1.pdf.

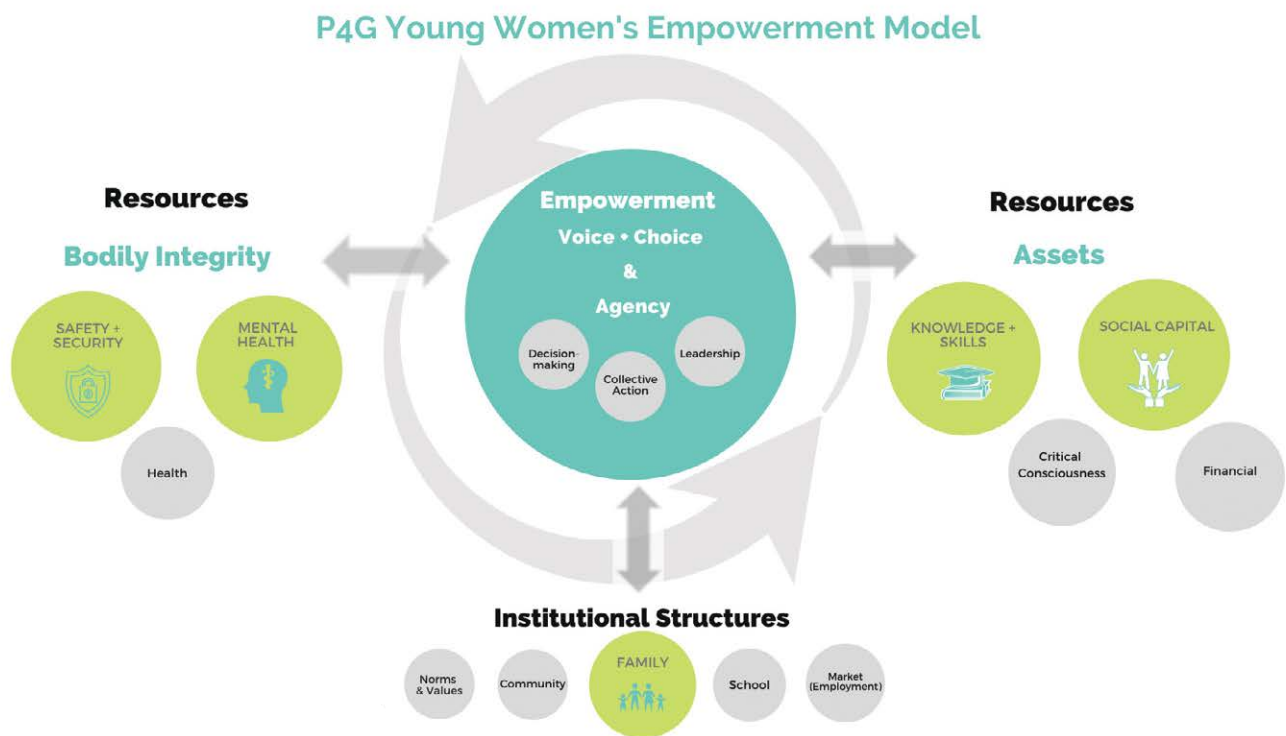
⁸ Social Capital Research and Training (2018). *Definitions of Social Capital*. Retrieved on December 20, 2019 from <https://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/literature/definition/>.

⁹ Ibid.

Most (N=108) of the surveys were completed in or near Nubian Station. Youth researchers recruited a random, representative sample of young women at or near the station on weekday afternoons to complete the survey. Survey results were discussed and analyzed with young women at four focus groups conducted at local

community-based organizations. Focus group participants reflected the demographics of the larger community, including immigrants and linguistic minorities. An additional 30 young women completed the survey at the focus groups sessions for a total of 138 survey respondents.

Figure 4: P4G Young Women's Empowerment Model



Adapted from the Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute (KIT)/Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Conceptual Model of Women and Girls' Empowerment

Key Findings

The following key findings from the *P4G Study* provide insights for the successful empowerment of young women in Roxbury and for addressing the disempowering nature of the social dynamics and environment in Nubian Station.

- Key Finding #1** Survey findings show that young women who are employed experience benefits related to **Social Capital** and **Knowledge and Skills**. Nearly half of the young women surveyed are unemployed. Survey findings indicate that 82% of those that are unemployed want to work but are having difficulty finding a job; young women express a desire for more job-readiness related programming.
- Key Finding #2** Survey findings show that participation in programs and activities bring benefits of employment and empowerment, particularly when these activities build and support self-esteem. A large percentage (41%) of young women surveyed indicate that they are not participating in programs or activities. Of those not participating in programs, 22% are also not employed.
- Key Finding #3** Survey and focus group findings show that young women have an expressed need for tools that will assist them with their transition to adulthood including: life skills, college and career planning, job training, financial aid, and paid internships. Overall, more than half of the young women surveyed want to participate in basketball programs. Other popular programs include artistic activities such as dance and photography. Qualitative findings indicate that art is a venue where young women can channel and process their emotions and thoughts.
- Key Finding #4** Key elements from the *P4G Empowerment Model*, including **Social Capital, Safety and Security, Knowledge and Skills, Family, and Health**, were confirmed as essential aspects of empowerment by both survey respondents and focus group participants.
- Key Finding #5** Empowerment takes many forms. Focus group findings indicate that young women want and need programming that includes **health education**, particularly in the area of **reproductive health**. Additionally, participants indicate the need for programming to address issues of **racism, sexism, and self-esteem** in addition to the five key empowerment elements prioritized in the *P4G Empowerment Model*. Beyond the need for mental health services, young women also discuss the need for reproductive health care and education in their lives. Focus group participants note that their schools lack robust health classes and that they are struggling with misinformation or lack of information about their basic health needs. This is one reason why they want empowerment programs that have gender-specific programs and safe spaces to discuss these types of sensitive issues.
- Key Finding #6** Many young women often have positive adult role models in their lives (75%) providing them with **Social Capital**. Survey findings show that many are lacking other elements of Social Capital such as having difficulty connecting with their peers including other young women, not feeling valued, and lacking emotional support.
- Key Finding #7** Young women (~80%) report often feeling safe and secure at home and at work. Many lack the empowerment element of **Safety and Security** in their neighborhoods (49%) and at school (34%) according to survey findings.

- Key Finding #8** At least one-third of young women surveyed are having negative experiences at school, not developing life skills for adulthood, and not participating in programs where they can build self-esteem demonstrating a lack of important educational assets and resources (**Knowledge and Skills**) that foster empowerment.
- Key Finding #9** A large majority of the young women surveyed (80%) have **Family** support in the form of academic achievement. One in three feel they often lack family love and support and experience stress caused by family problems.
- Key Finding #10** More than one-third of young women surveyed report **Mental Health and Emotional Health** challenges and nearly two-thirds are currently experiencing at least one critically stressful life event including trouble with: staying in school, feeling safe, suicidal thoughts, and avoiding fighting. Fewer than half have access to mental health resources posing a challenge to processing and dealing with these stressful life events.
- Key Finding #11** Survey findings indicate that young women get a sense of **community** at home and at school providing an opportunity to integrate these communal aspects of home and school-based experiences in empowerment program design.
- Key Finding #12** Focus group findings on the Nubian Square environment mirror negative experiences such as harassment, fighting, heavy policing, and homelessness shared by youth researchers when fielding the survey. Conversely, the positive aspects—an abundance of diversity, culture, art, music, and positive social interactions—provide opportunities for making the area more youth-supportive and empowering.



Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed from the study's key findings:

1. Nubian Station and Nubian Square

Nubian Station and Nubian Square have the potential to improve young women's sense of well-being and empowerment as they negotiate their way to and from school.

Developed from Key Finding 12 (1.1, 1.2, 1.3)

1.1 Develop a comprehensive safety strategy with a focus on strengthening community policing to make young women in Nubian Station and Nubian Square safer and more secure.

- Young women in the Roxbury community are struggling with issues of safety and security as they describe daily exposure to crime, harassment, and other issues while traveling through Nubian Square and at Nubian Station. Jurisdiction for Nubian Square is with the Boston Police Department while jurisdiction for Nubian Station is with the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA). Since **Safety and Security** is a key impediment to empowerment, it must be addressed with a comprehensive strategy across both departments.
- Stated need was for community policing rather than an increase in an already heavy police presence in the square and the station. Therefore, there must be an intentional effort to increase security and build relationships between officers and the community at large to set a new culture of safety and inclusion.
- Existing technology that allows for real-time reporting of crimes anonymously should be leveraged and promoted.
- This recommendation goes beyond making the area safe for youth and has implications for other vulnerable populations such as people of advanced age and persons with disabilities.

1.2 Upgrade Nubian Station and improve the maintenance.

1.3 Support and conduct research on how to make Nubian Station explicitly youth-supportive and empowering.

- Findings indicate the importance of making a connection between "empowerment" and environments like Nubian Station and Nubian Square where there is a heavy youth presence, and, therefore, an opportunity to engage with large numbers of youth on a regular basis.
- Stakeholders should conduct research on how to make Nubian Station explicitly "youth empowering" as a pilot for other "active" transit hubs. A key research question for the study is: "What does it take to make Nubian Station supportive or empowering to youth who frequent the station?"

2. Short-Term: Empowerment

Developed from Key Finding 4 (2.1) and Key Finding 11 (2.2)

2.1 Invest in amplifying and enhancing gender-specific programming for young women in Roxbury that includes all aspects of the *P4G Empowerment Model* with an emphasis on five key empowerment elements:

1. **Social Capital** to ensure individualized support by staff, key mentors, and social networks;
2. **Safety and Security** is key in all areas of program design;
3. **Knowledge and Skills** that young women want and that will help shape their futures including a mix of life skills, college and career planning, job-readiness, education, arts, and sports;
4. **Family** involvement and support for young women's empowerment; and
5. **Health** prevention, screening, and treatment for mental, behavioral, and physical health disorders.

2.2 Find ways to build a sense of community in the neighborhood.

- By building on the sense of community young women experience at school and at home, it is important to further understand what community means to young women and how communal benefits can be integrated and leveraged in various programs and settings. Potential research questions include: What aspects of school are community-building? What does the sense of community look like at home with family? How is a sense of community fostered at home replicated in empowerment programming?

3. Short-Term: Employment

Developed from Key Finding 1 (3.1)

3.1 Provide young women with gender-specific empowerment programming focused on job readiness, career planning, and paid internships.

- The high rate of unemployment among the study sample is concerning.
- Young women expressed their frustration with the process of finding a job and planning for a career. Economic self-sufficiency is a cornerstone of empowerment. Therefore, comprehensive job training coupled with long-term career planning where young women can learn the skills they need to improve their employability, earning potential, and create wealth is vital.
- Building Social Capital coupled with career planning and skills training is crucial. Active mentoring should be a cornerstone at year-round jobs and paid internships in career pathways with promising career growth and the opportunity for advancement. Programs should also include a robust discussion of sexism and racism.

4. Short-Term: Programs

Developed from Key Finding 2 (4.1, 4.3), Key Findings 5-10 (4.2), and Key Finding 9 (4.4)

4.1 Respond to the lack of program engagement among young women in Roxbury by piloting programs designed to address their gender-specific empowerment needs and interests while eliminating barriers to program engagement.

- It is essential that young women engage in gender-specific programming that empowers them and prepares them for future success. A large portion of young women in the sample are not engaged in gender-specific programs despite an interest in this type of programming.
- Recruiting young women in groups, as opposed to targeting individuals, will be crucial given that young women in the sample indicate they do not like to engage in after-school programs if their friends are not participating. Recruiting cohorts of young women also allows them to provide support to one another and build Social Capital as they work to achieve their individualized goals.

4.2 Train program staff in evidence-based strategies with training modules on gender-specific approaches to empowerment that include cultural competency and cultural humility,¹⁰ mental health services, and a focus on trauma-informed care.

- Staff training should include gender-specific empowerment training modules on the key elements of empowerment with a focus on the inclusion of Social Capital, Safety and Security, Knowledge and Skills, Family, and Mental Health elements as outlined in this report.
- Given the cultural diversity of this population, cultural competency and cultural humility training is also key and should prepare staff to address issues of racism, sexism, and power.
- Finally, the study findings indicate that young women are struggling with cumulative trauma including mental health, feeling unsafe, and navigating unsafe environments in their neighborhoods and schools. Therefore, staff should also be trained in mental health treatment with a focus on trauma-informed care.

4.3 Foster program engagement by designing user-friendly, cutting-edge, free technology to educate young women about program opportunities that match their interests.

- Young women describe the complexity and difficulty of finding programs that fit their needs. Therefore, a free search tool that provides quick and easy access to key information updated frequently on program information in Roxbury and the surrounding area is essential to educate young women about their options.
- The tool could be designed to collect data on the interests and needs of young women in order to identify gaps and increase offerings in specific programs and internship opportunities. Data collected could provide a much-needed feedback loop for stakeholders to have real-time data to deploy necessary resources.
- The tool should build on the current social media usage of youth and be moderated by youth themselves in order to optimize usage.

¹⁰ Hook, JN, et al. (2013). Cultural humility: Measuring openness to culturally diverse clients. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 60(3):353-366.

4.4 Provide families with support to address family stressors as a key component of empowerment programming for young women.

- Adolescence and the transition to adulthood can be challenging for both young women and their families.
- Empowerment programming can provide much-needed emotional and practical support to buffer these challenges. Eighty percent of

young women say their parents and caregivers often urge them to do well in school. Therefore, using academic achievement as a gateway for engaging families may be a good starting point for beginning the process of integrating family support into empowerment programming.

5. Long-Term

Developed from Key Finding 4 (5.1) and Key Finding 3 (5.2)

5.1 Develop program evaluations and funding based on addressing the five key elements of empowerment outlined in the *P4G Empowerment Model*.

- Funding and program evaluation must be designed to serve the needs of young women by addressing the key elements of empowerment outlined in the *P4G Empowerment Model*. The study findings illustrate the need to provide comprehensive programs that include all aspects of empowerment in the development and evaluation of programs designed to meet

the unique needs of young women. And, as this study demonstrates, there are powerful benefits to empowerment-based programming.

- To incentivize the inclusion of empowerment elements, funders should make the inclusion of empowerment elements in program and evaluation design a requirement for funding.

5.2 Provide young women with a fair share of resources, including funding and respect for gender-specific, inclusive programs designed for them by them.

- Only 1.6% (2016) of total charitable giving in the United States is dedicated to nonprofit organizations focused on serving women and girls.²⁴ In order to implement the bold strategy needed to empower young women in Roxbury and put

them and their communities on a path to success, funding is needed. Not only is it a smart investment in individuals, as outlined throughout this report, it is a smart investment for the Roxbury community and the City of Boston.

²⁴ Women's Philanthropy Institute, Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy and DataLake Nonprofit Research. (2019). Women & Girls Index. Retrieved on December 24, 2019 from <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/2101/wgi-report.pdf>.

Conclusion

Young women from the Roxbury community provided a clear roadmap, identifying the key elements they need now to build a future for themselves where they are empowered, successful, and active members of the community.

Focusing on young women's empowerment in Roxbury by strategically piloting community-based programs with the empowerment elements interwoven into the curriculum will further leverage the community's strengths and provide more immediate benefits to the neighborhood. After-school,

summer, and year-round programs have an integral role to play, especially if programs are modified to include the *P4G Empowerment Model*.

Given that only 1.6% of total charitable giving in the United States is invested in programs for girls and young women, implementation cannot be left to chance and requires intentional action by policymakers, funders, educators, and programs.



II. Introduction and Background

Empowering women results in significant advances for individuals, families, and communities including reductions in rates of poverty and inequality, improvements in the health and well-being of children, and safer, more prosperous neighborhoods.^{1,2} Empowering young women in Nubian Square in Roxbury, a racial and ethnically diverse Boston neighborhood, is particularly impactful given the significant economic, educational, and health inequities this community and its growing population of young people face.³

Nubian Square’s MBTA Bus Station (Nubian Station) is Roxbury’s transportation hub with 43,000 daily riders; here, the confluence of factors, both positive and negative, impacting residents are palpable. Buses are a main source of transportation for community youth attending the middle and high schools in proximity to Nubian Square. Through observations and conversations with the Roxbury community and businesses, The American City Coalition (TACC) learned of the growing concern for the well-being of young women who are exposed to crime and physical and verbal altercations while traveling through or gathering for extended periods of time in the afternoons at Nubian Station.

The goals of the *Pathways for Girls Study (P4G Study)*, conducted in the Spring and Summer of 2019, are to:
1) design and implement solutions that build on the

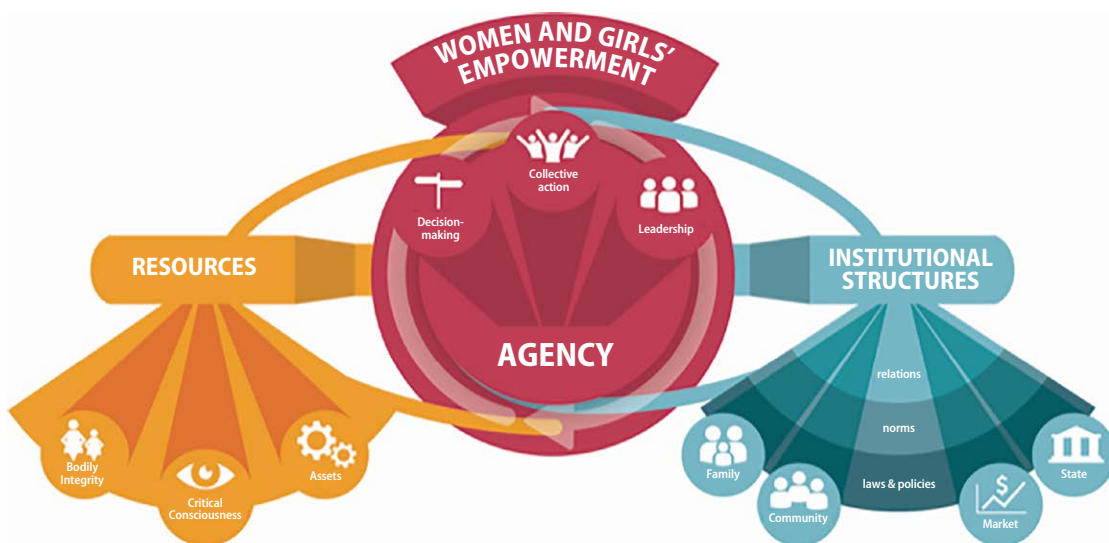
personal assets of the young women traveling through or gathering in Nubian Station; 2) understand the resources available for young women in the Roxbury community in order to empower them and set them on a path to success; and 3) address the gaps while seeking partnerships to positively impact the dynamics in Nubian Station. The survey, a major component of the study, sought to hear directly from the young women and document the:

- assets, resources, challenges, experiences, and interests of 14- to 21-year-old young women from the Nubian Square community; and
- social dynamics in Nubian Station and the impact of these social dynamics on young women.

Conceptual Model: Evidence-Based Guide to Empowerment

A *Conceptual Model of Women and Girls’ Empowerment (KIT/Gates Empowerment Model)*, was identified as a comprehensive, evidence-based model to guide the study. The model was developed by the Amsterdam Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) in partnership with and for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.⁴ This model (Figure 1) maps the constellation of empowerment elements, including resources, assets, and institutional structures, which contribute to women and girls’ empowerment.

Figure 1: KIT/Gates Foundation Conceptual Model of Women and Girls’ Empowerment



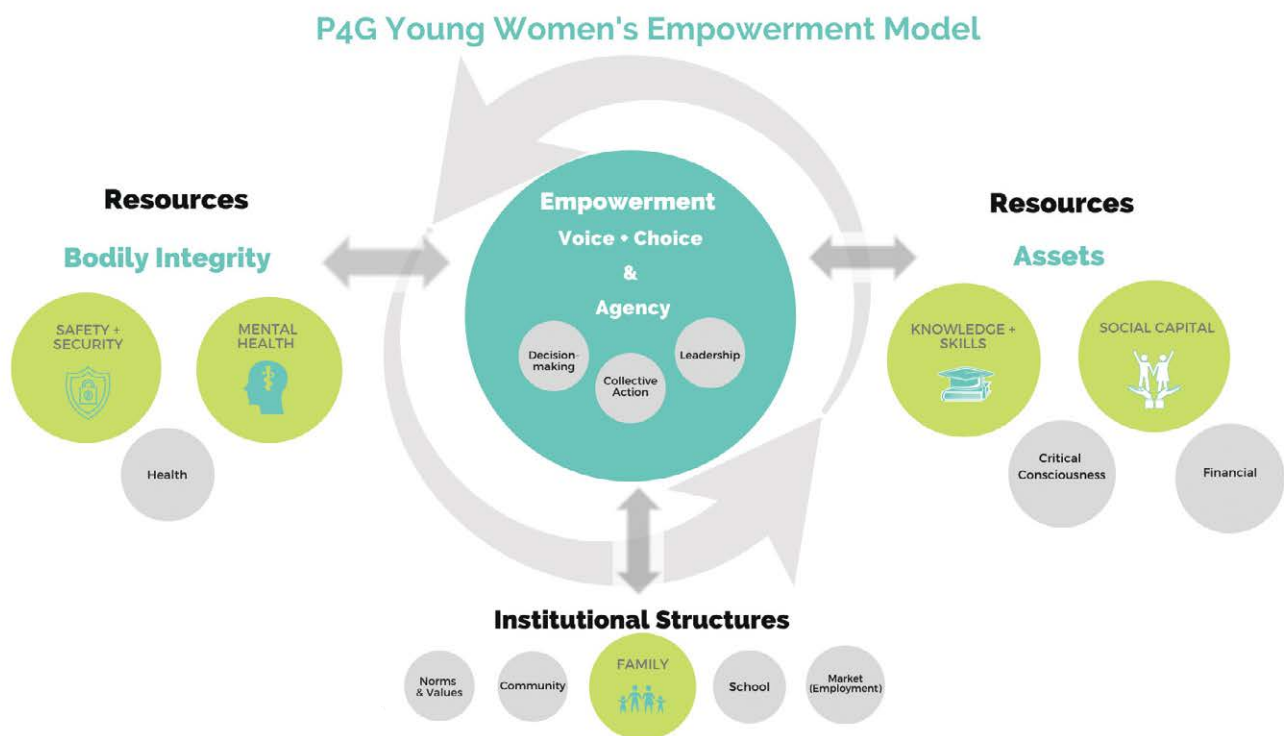
Working with the youth researchers and results from an initial focus group with local young women, the *KIT/Gates Empowerment Model* was adapted to be more meaningful and impactful for the young women in Nubian Square using a *Youth Participatory Action Research and Innovation Model (YPAR Model)*. During the YPAR training sessions in Spring 2019, the youth researchers acknowledged the importance of all elements of the *KIT/Gates Empowerment Model*; thus, nearly all were measured with the study's survey instrument. However, the youth researchers indicated that five key elements should be prioritized and emphasized:

1. **Social Capital** (i.e., social relations with productive benefits):⁵ Support, relationships, networks, and feeling trusted, respected, and valued by others;
2. **Safety and Security**: Safe neighborhood, home, and school;

3. **Knowledge and Skills**: **School**, life skills, learning, engaged in programs and activities, particularly those that make young women feel good about themselves;
4. **Family**: Love, respect, and support; and
5. **Health**: Focus on mental health.

The *P4G Young Women's Empowerment Model (P4G Empowerment Model)*, shown in Figure 2 below, is an adaptation of the original *KIT/Gates Empowerment Model* in that it emphasizes the five key elements; it also includes other elements of the *KIT/Gates Empowerment Model* including health, financial assets, agency, critical consciousness, institutional structures (i.e., school, community), employment, norms, and values.

Figure 2: *P4G Young Women's Empowerment Model*



Adapted from the Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute (KIT)/Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Conceptual Model of Women and Girls' Empowerment

The *KIT/Gates Empowerment Model* defines empowerment as “the expansion of choice and strengthening of voice through the transformation of power relations so women and girls have more control over their lives and futures.”⁶ In developing both the *P4G Empowerment Model* and the measures to operationalize the elements of this model, all aspects of the *KIT/Gates Foundation Empowerment Model* were examined and included. Voice, choice, power, and control are recognized as both the foundation and outcome of empowerment work with young women; they were captured and prioritized in this study through the five key elements—**Social Capital, Safety and Security, Knowledge and Skills, Family, and Health**. In reviewing both the *KIT/Gates Empowerment Model* and *P4G Empowerment Model*, the following terms are important to understand as they are central to the study’s findings and implications:

- **Empowerment:** Empowerment is defined as “the expansion of choice and strengthening of voice through the transformation of power relations so women and girls have more control over their lives and futures.”⁷
- **Agency:** “The capacity of women and girls to take purposeful action and pursue goals, free from the threat of violence or retribution.”⁸
- **Voice:** A young woman’s ability “to speak up and be heard in discussions and decisions that shape her life and future in both public and private settings.”⁹

- **Choice:** Expanding young women’s choices allows them to make life decisions that can positively impact their lives and futures.¹⁰
- **Power:** “Expanding young women’s choices and strengthening their voices lead to empowerment through a transformation of power relations”¹¹ including:
 - **Power to:** “a woman or girl’s ability to make decisions and act on them.”¹²
 - **Power within:** “a woman or girl’s sense of self-esteem, dignity, and self-worth.”¹³
 - **Power with:** “a woman or girls’ strength gained from solidarity, collective action, or mutual support.”¹⁴
- **Critical Consciousness:** Recognizing, questioning, and affirming their rights in the face of inequalities and power differentials is the way that young women acquire critical consciousness improving their “power within.”¹⁵

The study recognizes that the process of empowerment is ongoing and experienced across many different sectors of young women’s lives including in their homes, their families, their schools, their workplaces, and their communities.¹⁶



III. Methodology

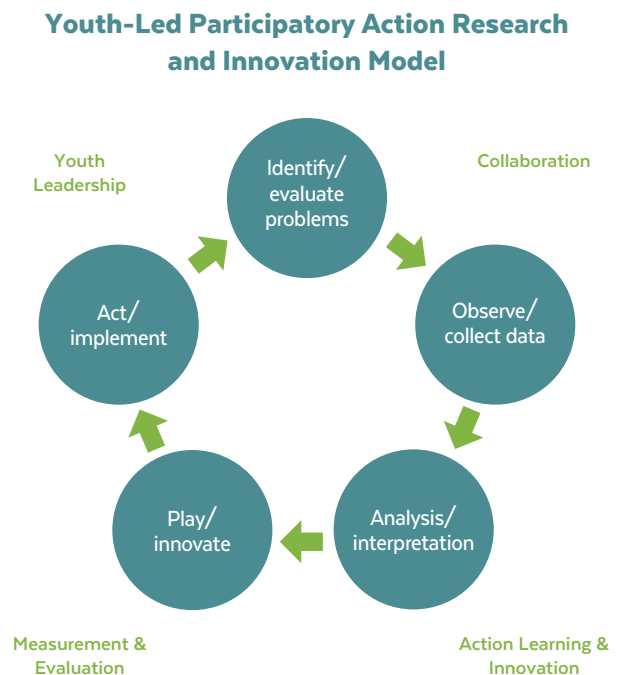
To ensure that the study encompassed a comprehensive, robust, and inclusive approach, a mixed-methods methodology was used and included the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data through surveys, field notes, and focus groups.

As a place-based and population-specific study, TACC centralized the lived experience of young women in Roxbury, so as to develop a relevant and contextualized model of empowerment, with a deep understanding of the assets and challenges specific to the study population within the local environment. Thus, the majority of the research utilized a *YPAR Model* “in which young people are trained to conduct systematic research to improve their lives, their communities, and the institutions intended to serve them.”¹⁷ By placing youth and their lived experience at the center of the research, YPAR “provides a deeper contextual understanding of the problem, helps ensure that recommendations are relevant and realistic, promotes greater participation in the research and in solutions when implemented, and elevates the voices of the community.”¹⁸ Figure 3 below provides an overview of the *YPAR Model*.

Following the *YPAR Model*, six youth researchers, who reflect the demographics of the study population of young women in Nubian Square, were recruited and hired by TACC for the study. Four of the six youth researchers lived in or attended school in the Nubian Square area; one youth researcher had previous experience with the *YPAR Model* and was hired as a junior supervisor. To learn the basics of YPAR and to design and implement the research project, youth researchers participated in a series of trainings and activities, led by a YPAR consultant. Trainings occurred over the course of four weeks and were designed around achieving specific YPAR-process milestones, such as forming a strong team, understanding the issue(s) of focus, identifying research questions, developing research protocol, and understanding research ethics. The youth researchers were supported by professional researchers.

As a foundation to their experience, youth received an orientation to TACC and an introduction to the project’s goals and origins. They also participated in activities to identify issues of importance to them and more generally, young women in Nubian Square, and were challenged to think critically about the causes and effects of such issues.

Figure 3: *YPAR Model*



This information was used to create issue maps which guided the adaptation, development, and contextualization of the *KIT/Gates Empowerment Model* to create the *P4G Empowerment Model*.

Youth were given relevant sets of measures related to the *P4G Empowerment Model* to evaluate for use in creating the survey instrument. The youth researchers identified some of the existing measures and crafted additional measures. The survey instrument (Appendix A) was then created, tested, edited, and finalized. Youth also received interactive training on research ethics, creating a survey introduction, conducting a survey, using the survey software to collect surveys on tablets, and safety. Youth researchers randomly approached and recruited a diverse group of young women for the survey in Nubian Square in or near Nubian Station in May 2019 on weekdays during after-school hours, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Using Survey Gizmo, an Enterprise online survey software tool, loaded on Samsung tablets, respondents took the ten-minute confidential survey; youth researchers stayed in proximity to assist with clarifications or technological

issues. Several participants who had to catch their bus received an anonymous link to take the survey on their phone or computer.

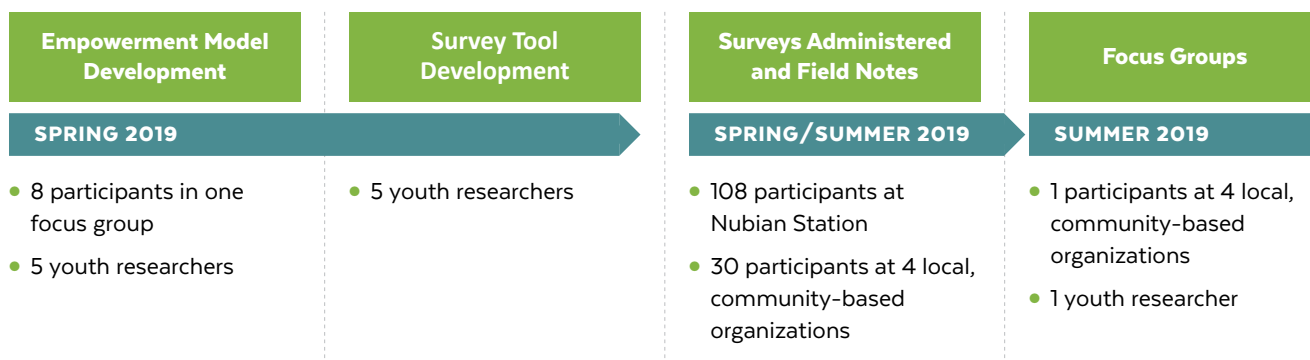
Upon completion of the data collection, under the aegis of TACC’s professional researchers, the youth researchers discussed the findings for each survey section as a group to provide their insights; provided further context and meaning to the findings; and developed preliminary recommendations for many of the key findings. Additionally, the survey findings were discussed and analyzed with young women at four community-based organizations in Summer 2019 where the demographics of the community, including immigrants and linguistic minorities, were represented. Thirty young women who attended the focus groups at four community-based organizations also completed the survey.

In order to operationalize and measure the core components or empowerment elements from the *P4G*

Empowerment Model, key measures from the Search Institute’s *Developmental Asset Profile (DAP)*, a reliable and valid assessment of the strengths, supports, and social and emotional factors that are essential for young people’s success in school and life,¹⁹ were used. The *DAP* grows out of research in which millions of young people provide information on strengths and supports across many life contexts including personal, family, school, and community.²⁰ The survey instrument also includes additional measures youth researchers developed as a group to operationalize important elements of the *P4G Empowerment Model* not measured by the *DAP*.

Figure 4 summarizes the study timeline as well as an overview of all aspects of the mixed-methods approach. A total of 160 young women who lived, traveled through, or attended school in the Nubian Square area of Roxbury participated in the study.

Figure 4: Study Timeline and Sample



Study Limitations

Key information about empowering young women emerged from this study, providing stakeholders with a comprehensive empowerment model designed by and for young women with three limitations. First, the vast majority of survey respondents and focus group participants were attending school or an educational program potentially biasing the sample as these young women may not represent the views and needs of those not enrolled in school or an educational program. Second, survey responses are self-reported and not verified by other means. And finally, this study focused on young women in one geographic area and may not be generalizable to other young women.



IV. Survey Demographics

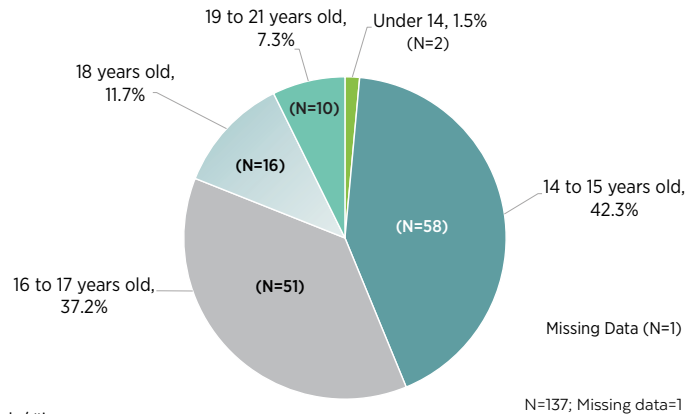
An analysis conducted by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) at TACC’s request estimated that approximately 1,500 students make the daily round trip through Nubian Station to travel to school. Given that females make up about 52% of Boston’s population, there are approximately 765 female students traveling through Nubian Station daily. A representative sample size was 100 girls, or 13% of the population. The final total sample was 138 for an 8% margin of error with a 95% confidence interval.



Age of Respondents

Eighty percent of survey respondents are 14 to 17 years old with a median age of 16.

Figure 5: Survey Question:
How old are you?



Residential Neighborhoods of Respondents

Most of the young women in the sample reside in Roxbury (33%) and Dorchester (30%).

Figure 6: Survey Question:
Where do you live?

Neighborhood	N	%
Roxbury	46	33.3
Dorchester	41	29.7
Jamaica Plain	9	6.5
Hyde Park	7	5.1
Mattapan	6	4.3
Boston	2	1.4
Brighton	2	1.4
Charlestown	2	1.4
Roslindale	2	1.4
South End	2	1.4
West Roxbury	2	1.4
Outside Boston - Randolph	2	1.4
Outside Boston - Brockton	2	1.4
East Boston	1	0.7
South Boston	1	0.7
Other (Not Specified)	4	2.9
Missing	7	5.1
Total	138	100.0



Gender Identity of Respondents

Nearly 96% of respondents identify as female, 2.2% do not identify as female or transgender, and 1.4% identify as transgender. One respondents chose not to answer this question.

Figure 7: Survey Question:

How do you describe yourself?

	N	%
Female	132	95.7
Do not identify as female or transgender	3	2.2
Transgender	2	1.4
Prefer not to answer	1	0.7
Total	138	100.0



Sexual Orientation of Respondents

Approximately 74% of the sample identify as straight or heterosexual. About one in five (21.2%) respondents do not identify as straight or heterosexual; about 16% of these respondents are bisexual, 3% are gay, and 2.2% identify with a sexual orientation that is not heterosexual, bisexual, gay, or lesbian. About 5% of young women in the sample preferred not to answer this question.

Figure 8: Survey Question:

Do you think of yourself as...

	N	%
Straight or heterosexual	99	73.0
Bisexual	22	16.4
Gay or lesbian	4	3.0
Not listed above	3	2.2
Prefer not to answer	6	4.5
Total	134	100.0

N=134; missing data=4



Race/Ethnicity of Respondents

Nearly three quarters (72%) of young women identify as Black/African American, approximately one in four (24%) identify as Latinx. Of these, 13% identify as multi-racial, primarily Black and Latinx (N=11). Note: In Figure 9 below, percentages do not total 100% given that respondents could check more than one answer.

Figure 9: Survey Question:

What is your race/ethnicity? Check all that apply.

	N	%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	1	0.7
Asian	6	4.4
Black/African American	100	72.4
Hispanic/Latinx	33	23.9
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1	0.7
White	4	2.9
Cape Verdean	5	3.6
Arab	1	0.7
Caribbean Islander	1	0.7
Portuguese	1	0.7
Other	1	0.7
Multi-Racial (Black and Hispanic/Latinx = 11)	18	13.0

N=138



School/Educational Programming Attendance

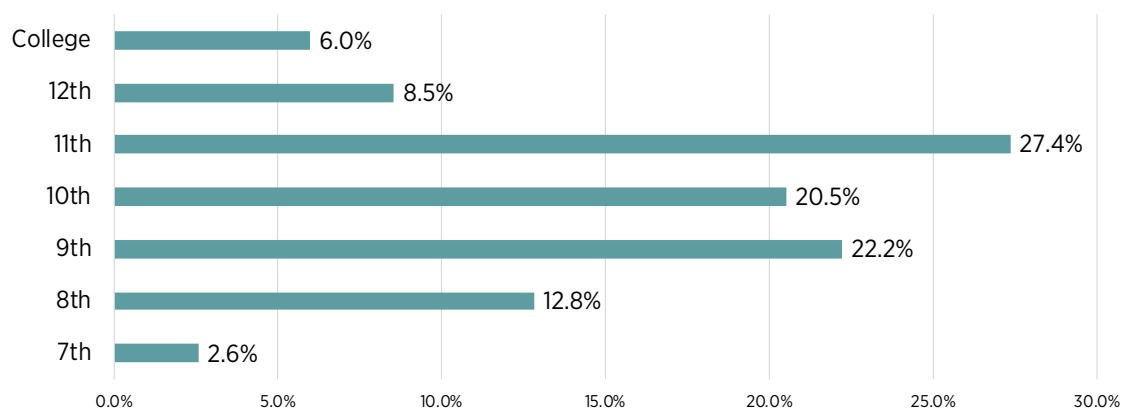
Surveys were conducted in the late afternoons after regular school hours. Therefore, Figure 10 shows that most of the survey participants were in school or in an educational program (95%); the majority were in grades 9 through 11.²¹

Figure 10: Survey Question:

Are you attending school or an educational program?



CURRENT GRADE



N=133; Missing data=5

The survey participants were queried about what they do during their free time when they are not in school, participating in programming, or working. About 40% of the young women who answered this question said they are home during their free time. Some participate in or watch youth sports (14%), others sleep (12%) or go to tutoring (9%), mostly for math. Eight of the young women said they spend time with their families, several participate in extracurricular activities in school, go home to take care of siblings, or go home to complete chores.



V. Focus Groups

To ensure a large and diverse group of local young women were included in the analysis, 41 young women from four local community-based organizations were also interviewed during August 2019. The purpose of the focus groups was to provide context and insights on the quantitative survey findings. The focus groups were conducted as round table discussions with a conversational format facilitated by TACC staff. One youth researcher took notes and coded the themes.

Focus group notes were analyzed and coded by the youth researcher. The coding and focus group notes were also reviewed and analyzed by TACC’s Director of Research and common themes were developed.

Focus Group Demographics

Figure 11 provides an overview of the focus group demographics which are, in many ways, similar to those of the overall sample.

Focus Group Feedback

The focus group participants were asked to share their ideas about what young women need in an empowerment program. Their answers confirmed many of the findings outlined in the following chapters but also provided new insights not previously considered.

The following questions were shared with participants to guide reflection:



- *What do you want in an empowerment program that will help you to be successful?*
- *Here is the list of the top ten most popular programs and activities mentioned by girls and young women in our study. Does this list surprise you? How is this list the same or different from your program needs and wants?*
- *We conducted this study in Nubian Square in Roxbury, mainly in Nubian Station. Are you familiar with the area? What are your thoughts about the area?*

Figure 11: Focus Group Demographics: Local voices in the findings and recommendations

Participants Ages	Neighborhoods	Race/Ethnicity	Recruitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 to 21 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/3 from Roxbury • 1/3 Dorchester • Jamaica Plain, Hyde Park, and Mattapan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2/3 Black/African American • 15% Latinx • Balance were mostly Cape Verdean and Caribbean Islander 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 focus groups totaling 41 girls from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Freedom House (N=11) – Madison Park Development Corporation (N=10) – Cape Verdean Association of Boston (recruited by Dorchester Bay Development Corporation) (N=10) – African Community Economic Development of New England (N=10)

VI. Findings: Employment

To build a brighter future, invest in women and girls.

– Jin Yong Kim, President, World Bank, International Women’s Day 2018

Adult female empowerment and wealth building is fostered and enhanced when one of the building blocks—jobs—are thoughtfully built into the lives of young women. Therefore, a set of survey questions focused on understanding interest and levels of participation in employment. Bivariate analysis identified the connection between specific empowerment elements and challenges.

Key Finding #1

Survey findings show that young women who are employed experience benefits related to Social Capital and Knowledge and Skills.

Nearly half of the young women surveyed are unemployed. Survey findings indicate that 82% of those that are unemployed want to work but are having difficulty finding a job; young women express a desire for more job readiness related programming.

Employment provides positive experiences contributing to the empowerment elements of **Social Capital** and **Knowledge and Skills**. Yet, nearly half (48%) of young women in the sample are unemployed.

Young women who are employed report positive experiences; of those who are employed, 82% indicate they like their job. When asked what they like about their job, many mention empowerment elements in the areas of **Social Capital** and **Knowledge and Skills**. **Social Capital** elements include: people, teamwork, relationships, and support. **Knowledge and Skills** elements include: leadership, autonomy, flexibility, and new experiences. Several young women like their jobs because of the income and three say they like their work environment and the opportunities the job provides for them. Several indicate that they like to work because it is “fun,” “interactive,” and “easy.” Some note that their jobs give them a voice with one young women noting, “I’m able to speak my mind and fight for what I believe in.” Figure 12 provides a breakdown of what young women like about their jobs ranked by frequency of response.



Figure 12: Survey Question:

What do you like about your job?

- People (i.e., coworkers) (N=21)
- Money (N=5)
- Voice (N=3)
- Teamwork (N=3)
- Work Environment (N=3)
- Relationships (N=3)
- Support (N=2)
- Leadership Opportunity (N=1)
- Autonomy (N=1)
- Flexibility (N=1)
- New Experiences (N=1)
- Fun (N=1)
- Easy (N=1)

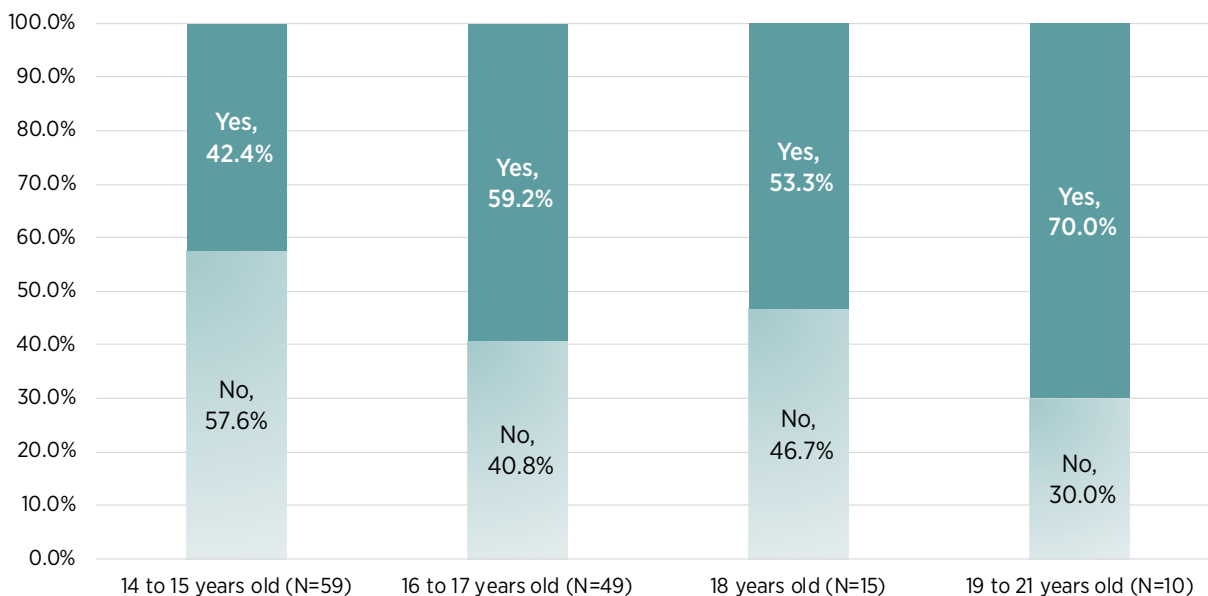
The majority (82%) of unemployed young women in the sample want to work. However, barriers to employment for this subset of young women include: trouble finding or getting a job (32%), focused on education (24%), not old enough to work (21%), not having enough time because of other activities (9%), and parents not allowing them to work (9%).

These survey findings were reinforced by focus group participants who recognize the need for **Knowledge and Skills** through the precursors to employment such as resume building, interview skills, conversations about career ladders, and mentorship. Many employed participants could not clearly map out their next employment step and want support and assistance on life and career goals.

Employment varies by age with younger females less likely to work given that Massachusetts law restricts the number of hours 14- and 15-year-olds are legally allowed to work. Half of those who were unemployed are 14 to 15 years old and nearly one-third (31%) of the unemployed are 16 to 17 years old. The bar chart in Figure 13 provides another breakdown of employment status by age.



Figure 13: Survey Question:
Are you employed? Answer by age.



N=133; Missing data=5

VII. Findings: Program Engagement

Research demonstrates that effective after-school and summer programs bring a wide range of benefits to youth, families, and communities. After-school and summer programs can boost academic performance, reduce risky behaviors, promote physical health, and provide a safe, structured environment for the children of working parents.²² Therefore, the survey instrument included questions to measure program engagement among young women.

Key Finding #2

Survey findings show that participation in “programs and activities” bring benefits of employment and empowerment, particularly when these activities build and support self-esteem.

A large percentage (41%) of young women surveyed indicate that they are not participating in programs or activities. Of those not participating in programs, 22% are also not employed.

Participation in programs, especially those which help build and support their self-esteem, contributes to the empowerment elements of **Social Capital, Knowledge and Skills,** and **Health.**

involvement is significantly and positively associated with key **Empowerment, Social Capital,** and **Mental Health** elements. Specifically, young women who participate in programs are more likely to often feel:

In addition to being a potential gateway to employment, a chi-square analysis demonstrated that program



Figure 14: Program Involvement Associated with Key Empowerment Elements

Empowerment Elements	In control of their life and future* Good about their future*
Social Capital Elements	Valued and appreciated by others*
Mental Health Elements	Less pressured to have certain clothes or accessories* Less likely to be overwhelmed by negativity*

*p<.05

The findings indicate that when young women often participate in programs where they feel good about themselves, they are significantly more likely to have considerable assets and resources in the areas of **Empowerment**,

Social Capital, Knowledge and Skills, and Health.

Specifically, when young women are often engaged in activities where they feel good about themselves, they are more likely to:



Figure 15: Program Involvement Where Young Women Feel Good About Themselves Associated with Key Empowerment Elements

<p>Empowerment Elements</p>	<p>Have the ability to ask for help when they need it**</p> <p>Be able to speak up for themselves**</p> <p>Feel good about their future*</p> <p>Feel in control of their life and future**</p> <p>Plan ahead and make good choices**</p> <p>Get to make important decisions about their life*</p>
<p>Social Capital Elements</p>	<p>Have friends who set a good example for them**</p> <p>Have a person in their life who provides them with emotional support**</p> <p>Feel valued and appreciated by others**</p> <p>Build friendships with other people**</p>
<p>Knowledge and Skills Elements</p>	<p>Develop life skills for adulthood**</p> <p>Enjoy learning**</p> <p>Have teachers who urge them to develop and achieve*</p>
<p>Mental Health and Health Elements</p>	<p>Feel less pressured to have certain clothes or accessories*</p> <p>Have access to healthcare*</p>

*p<.05, **p<.01

This finding is important because it demonstrates the need to focus on the impact programs and activities have on the empowerment elements, in this case, activities resulting in self-esteem. If only previously tested measures had been

used, programs that foster self-esteem would not have been measured. This survey question was developed by the youth researchers and demonstrates the benefit of including the voice of youth in the study design.

A. Participation

Given the benefits of participation in programs, the impact of 41% of young women surveyed not participating in programs or activities is significant. Of these, one in five (22%) are also not employed. About half (55%) of those who are not working or participating in programs are under the age of 16.

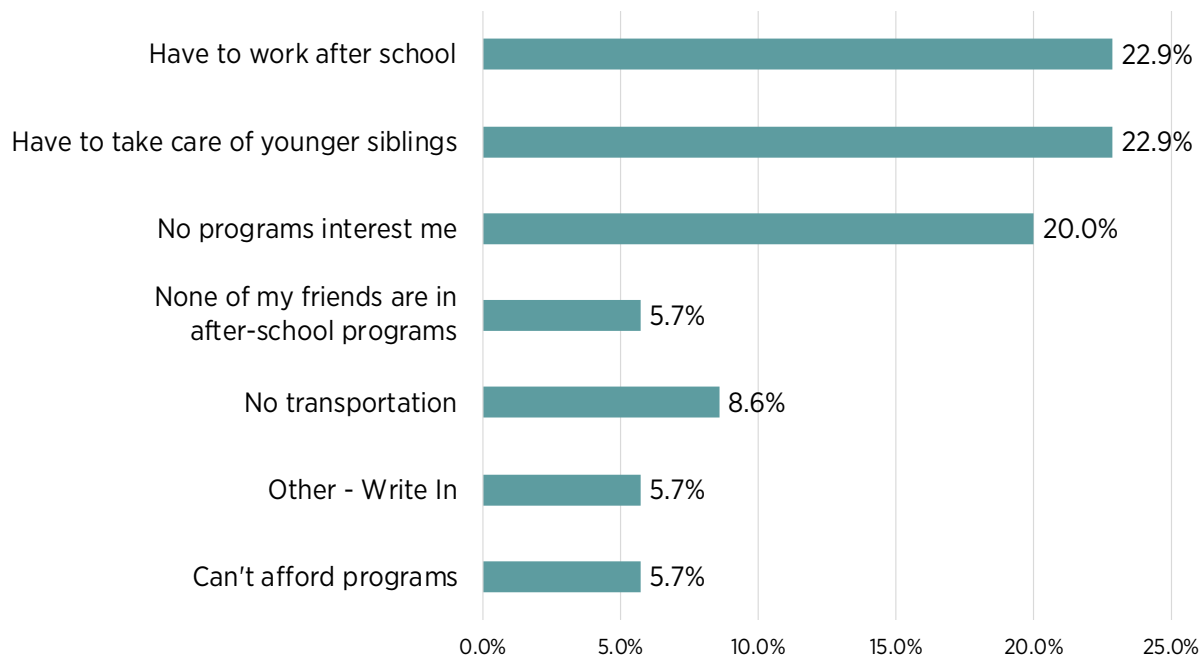
In addition to program participation, young women were surveyed about their involvement in sports, clubs, or other groups, including religious groups. More than half (53%) said they were not often involved in a sport, club, or other group and 62% were not often involved in religious groups or activities.

Of those not participating in programs, 23% have to work or care for siblings, one in five (20%) do not have programs that interest them, and 9% lack transportation. A subgroup of young women are not participating in programs because their friends are not participating or they cannot afford programs (6%). Figure 16 provides a summary of why young women are not participating in programs. Focus group findings reinforce the survey findings on barriers to participation as young women note that they also want programs to be local, easy to travel to, and to include transportation.



Figure 16: Survey Question:

Why are you not participating in programs or activities?



N=35; Missing data=8

The lack of program participation is particularly concerning given that young women engaged in programs and activities are more likely to be employed (62%) than those who are not involved in programs or activities (38%) ($p < .05$). One contributing factor may be that some programs assist participants in job searches or pay them a stipend for program participation.

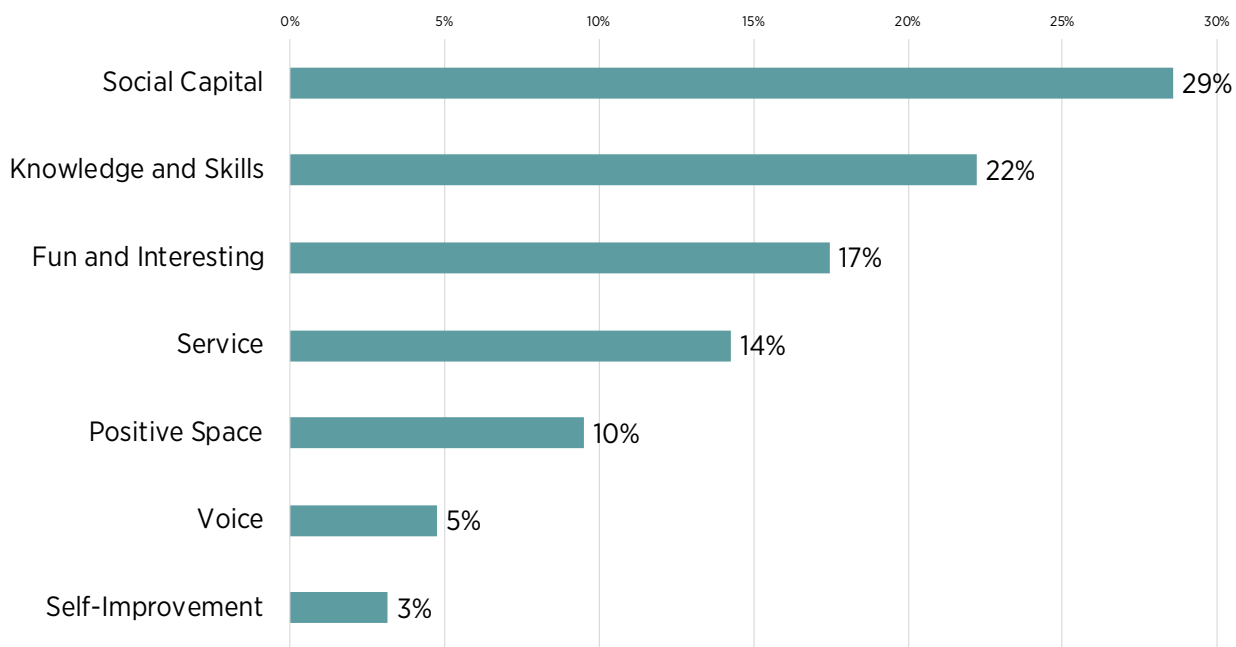
An open-ended question on why young women were participating in programs or activities provides further

context for these findings. **Social Capital** reasons were the most frequently cited (29%) and include relationships, support, and mentoring followed by **Knowledge and Skills** (22%). Other reasons for participation include: fun and interesting; a chance to engage in service; a positive space; free expression of voice; and an opportunity to work on self-improvement. Figure 17 provides an overview of the specific reasons for program participation.



Figure 17: Survey Question:

What do you like about the programs and activities you participate in?



N=47; Missing data=15

Categories coded from open-ended survey answers

B. Program Improvement

Survey participants were asked to identify the improvements they would recommend to their current programs. While 13 respondents indicated that they would not change anything, others had the following suggestions ranked by frequency:

- More resources and opportunities
- Less conflict
- More support
- More consistency and structure
- More outside activities
- More free time/flexibility

- Better timing
- More choices
- Better staff, coaches

These findings are further evidence of young women’s interest in programs where they can acquire key elements outlined in the *P4G Empowerment Model* including **Knowledge and Skills** (e.g., more resources and opportunities), **Social Capital** (e.g., more support), and **Safety and Security** (e.g., less conflict).

C. Program Participation by Age

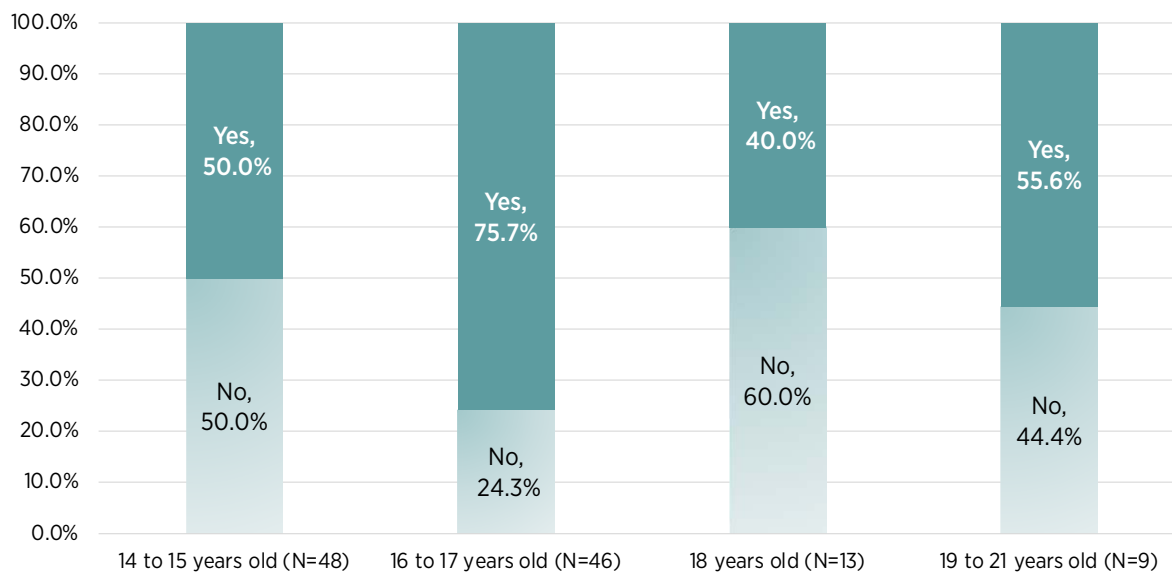
Sixteen to seventeen year olds were more likely to be engaged in programs than any other age group. The youth researchers noted that this is likely due to the fact that for those planning for college, program participation is viewed as a necessary component of college acceptance.

This finding demonstrates that young women are often motivated to participate in programs to acquire **Knowledge and Skills**. Figure 18 provides a breakdown of program participation by age.



Figure 18: Survey Question:

Do you participate in a program or activity? Answers by age.



Does not include the 33 girls who completed the survey during focus groups at the local programs where they were enrolled. N=104; missing data=1.

D. Preferred Programming

Key Finding #3

Survey and focus group findings show that young women have an expressed need for tools that will assist them with their transition to adulthood including: life skills, college and career planning, job training, financial aid, and paid internships. Overall, more than half of the young women surveyed want to participate in basketball programs.

Other popular programs include artistic activities such as dance and photography. Qualitative findings indicate that art is a venue where young women can channel and process their emotions and thoughts.

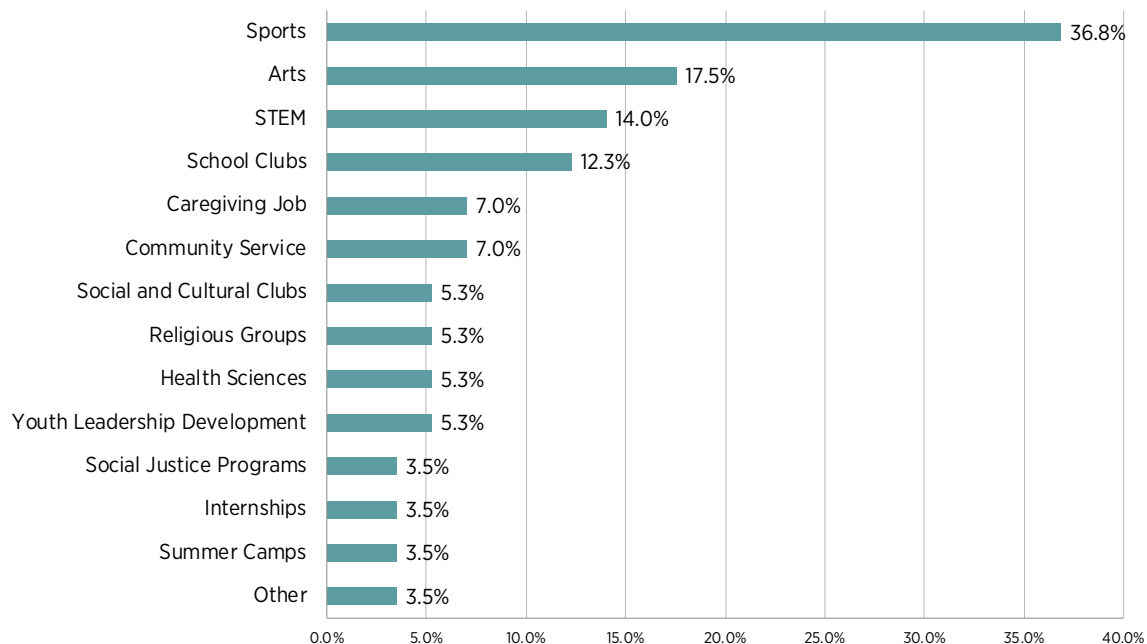
Young women are clear about their need for increased access to basketball programs where they can develop their competencies. Additionally, they state a need for both life skills and access to the tools to assist them in planning for their post-high school life. Finally, access to arts-based programming is also identified as a priority. Together, these programs address their **Social Capital, Knowledge and Skills, Safety and Security**, and **Health** needs.

Survey respondents who are participating in programs and activities were asked to describe the types of programs they are currently participating in. More than one third (37%) are participating in sports and physical activities, 18% are participating in the arts, while 14% said they are participating in STEM (Figure 19).



Figure 19: Survey Question:

What types of programs are currently participating in?

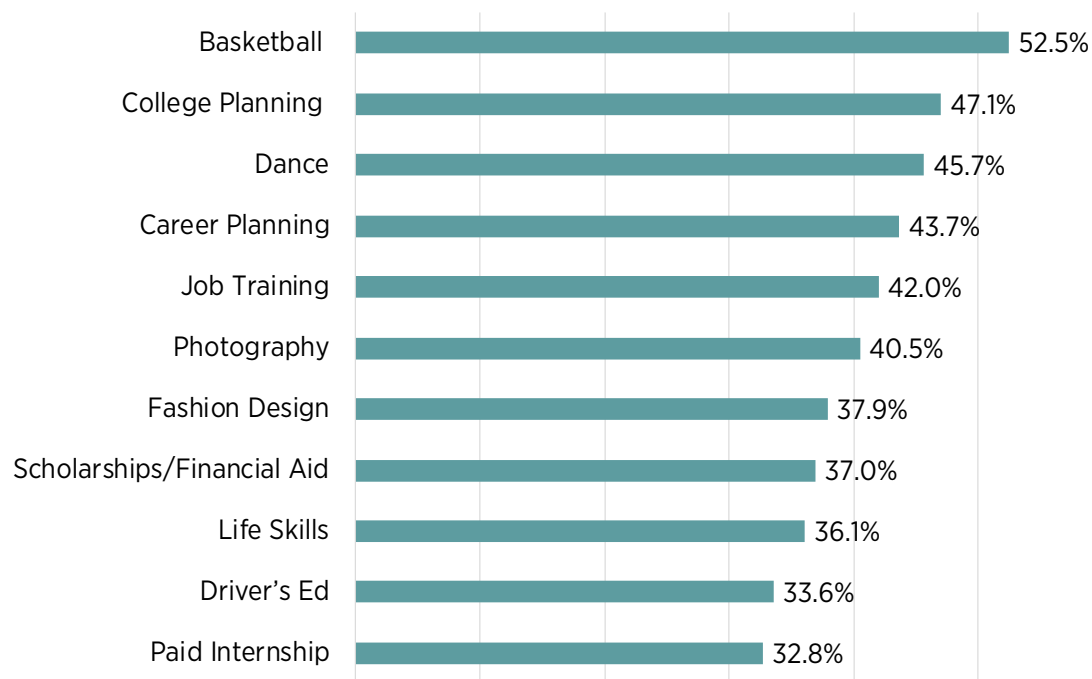


In order to determine their preferences for specific types of programs and activities young women want to participate in regardless of whether or not they were currently engaged in programming, young women were asked the following survey question:



Figure 20: Survey Question:

We are interested in knowing about the educational, arts and creative, and sports and physical programs and activities that you would be interested in taking part in. Please mark all activities that you would like to do or resources that you currently need.



A full list of rankings for all three types of programs (educational, arts and creativity, and sports and physical) and activities are included in Appendix B, Tables 1A to 1C.

Young women in the focus groups were asked to weigh in on these survey findings on program preferences (Figure 20) with the following prompt and question:



Figure 21: Focus Group Question:

Here is the list of the top ten most popular programs and activities mentioned by girls and young women in our study. Does this list surprise you? How is this list the same or different from your program needs and wants?

The following summary provides an overview of the survey and focus group findings on program preferences. Focus group participants strongly reinforce the survey findings.

Program	Survey Findings	Focus Group Findings
Educational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many of the top-rated programs from the survey findings are educational in nature with an emphasis on activities and programs that prepare young women for their future, including college and career planning, job training, access to scholarships/financial aid, life skills, and paid internships further demonstrating that young women are motivated to participate in programs where they can build Knowledge and Skills that prepare for the transition to adulthood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm the importance of including the key elements of Social Capital and Knowledge and Skills in programming for young women. Want programs that include Knowledge and Skills with college and career planning, financial aid, and job placement options and life skills such as babysitting certification, cooking, financial knowledge/planning, and wealth creation. Need focused assistance and support around job placement; find the process difficult and complex and recommend one centralized location be made available to support youth with job search and career needs. Want programs that include Social Capital in the form of female role models and mentors.
Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basketball ranked as the most popular program with more than half (53%) of survey respondents indicating that they want to participate in basketball. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports, particularly basketball, volleyball, and soccer are popular. However, some feel excluded from boys' sports and see the need to make organized sports more equitable as they believe girls' sports programs do not receive the same level of respect, funding, or overall resources as boys' sports programs. Feel excluded from informal games of basketball by young men who are unwilling to share public basketball courts with young women.
Arts and Creative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts are well-represented in rankings through dance, the second most popular choice in the survey sample, followed by photography, and fashion design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts and creative activities provide a safe space to share their intense emotions as well as to process trauma, supporting asset and resource building within the empowerment elements of Safety and Security and Health. Young women often share and process emotions and thoughts through the arts including poetry, music, writing, journalism, coloring, fashion design, and writing (journals). Photography and fashion design are key given the importance these skills have in social media.

E. Empowerment Programming

Key Finding #4

Key elements from the P4G Empowerment Model, including Social Capital, Safety and Security, Knowledge and Skills, Family, and Health, were confirmed as essential aspects of empowerment by both survey respondents and focus group participants.

In order to better understand what young women need and want in an empowerment program, survey respondents were asked, “What do you need to be empowered?” while focus group participants were asked, “What do you want in an empowerment program that will help you to be successful?” Under the guidance of TACC’s Director of Research, the youth researchers analyzed and coded the results. The responses confirmed that the five key elements of the *P4G Empowerment Model*—**Social Capital, Safety**

and Security, Knowledge and Skills, Family, and Health—should be core components of empowerment programs. In addition, respondents indicated that other elements of the *P4G Empowerment Model*, including **resources, power and control, voice, motivation and critical consciousness/self-acceptance** are important as well.

1. Qualitative Findings

Qualitative responses from survey respondents and focus group participants reinforce the finding that **Social Capital, Safety and Security, Knowledge and Skills, Mental Health, and Family** should be core components of empowerment programs for young women in Roxbury. Other themes also emerged which are identified in Section f. below.

a. Social Capital

Social Capital Theme

Social Capital emerged as a core component of empowerment programs. The support systems young women describe are built on connections and relationships currently lacking in their own lives.

Social Capital Subthemes	Examples/Quotations from Participants
Strong Leaders and Role Models	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Seeing more people who look like me and being acknowledged.”• “Leaders I can look up to.”• “An influential person.”• “I need people to help me and guide me and also to encourage me to do better and succeed. I want them to put me on the right path and help me with things I need help with.”
Strong Adult Support Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Connections,” mentoring, relationships, and community service led by supportive adults; help achieving goals via role models to “inspire them” and represent them in positions of power (i.e., “to see people like myself in higher positions”).• “Role models” (i.e., influential women and strong leaders).

Emotional Support and Sense of Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional support; community support; mentoring; encouragement; friends; family; respect; and acceptance. <i>“An adult that provides comfort.”</i>
Sense of Community and Shared Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs that allow for a <i>“speaking outlet”</i> and <i>“a place to vent;”</i> performing <i>“volunteer work”</i> and engaging in service learning to connect with and build relationships with others.

b. Safety and Security

Safety and Security Theme

Creating an environment of Safety and Security are fundamental to successful empowerment programming. Young women say they need to feel safer and more secure across all sectors of their lives, including neighborhood, school, programs and activities, homes, and social media.

Safety and Security Subthemes	Examples/Quotations from Participants
Safe and Comfortable After-School and Summer Program Environments (and “vibes”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“A safe and welcoming environment.”</i> Safe place where <i>“girls can have a voice,” “speak their mind,”</i> and <i>“uplift themselves.”</i> Feeling safe and <i>“comfortable”</i> in one’s surroundings in order to fully participate as their authentic selves.
Program Staff Who Promote Culture of Safety and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff who will challenge them and <i>“push them to try new things”</i> but where they will not be judged for trying, failing, and learning from their mistakes.
Gender-Specific Programs that Foster a Safe and Secure Space with Minimal Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programming and spaces where young women can spend time with other young women without <i>“fighting”</i> or <i>“conflict.”</i> <i>“Girls-only”</i> spaces, schedules, and programs; spaces that are safe from physical and verbal altercations and <i>“toxic relationships”</i> and <i>“drama”</i> with young women their age.
Program Choices that Directly Empower Young Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs that promote safety such as <i>“self-defense classes”</i> to empower young women in feeling safer in their environment. Structured, but not too <i>“strict,”</i> programming with built-in <i>“flexibility”</i> where girls can <i>“be themselves”</i> and work on <i>“self-development.”</i>
Feeling Unsafe at School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some schools provide opportunities for young women to acquire the knowledge and skills (i.e., job training) they want and need but may have a <i>“bad reputation”</i> for being <i>“unsafe”</i> and <i>“chaotic,”</i> creating a barrier to these crucial empowering resources.
Need for Safer Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Many things are unsafe;”</i> not being able to walk around freely without being harassed or bothered by adult men or with <i>“grown men are always trying to talk to us.”</i> Feeling very uncomfortable and unsafe, particularly around Nubian Station.
Feeling Unsafe in Neighborhoods Leads to Desensitization or Triggers Past Trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being <i>“numb”</i> and unable to identify danger; being <i>“triggered”</i> by violence resulting in ongoing mental distress.
Opportunity for Mixed-Gender Activities Where Young Women Are Respected and Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boys and young men are a crucial part of their lives and a source of levity, comfort, and support in times of need; <i>“We still need to have boys there, because they are fun and make the environment fun.”</i>
Safe Virtual Spaces that Transcend a Physical Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media spaces pose a threat to safety and security and create <i>“drama”</i> and unsafe virtual spaces online.

c. Knowledge and Skills

Knowledge and Skills Theme

Young women indicate they do not have access to all of the Knowledge and Skills they need to be empowered and successfully transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Knowledge and Skills Theme	Examples/Quotations from Participants
Education and School Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Being educated makes me feel empowered.”</i> • Services and resources which are needed to be empowered and successful are lacking at some school including, tutoring, guidance counselors, life coaching and college planning and funding (i.e., <i>“financial aid and scholarships”</i>).
Arts and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I feel like I need MUSIC. Music has always been a big part of my life and I want to have other girls feel the same as I do when I’m empowered.”</i>
Life Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to learn how to open a bank account and budgeting, cooking nutritional foods, CPR and first aid skills, and financial literacy. These are barriers to feeling empowered and prepared for future success.
Employment and Job Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigating the hiring and employment process is <i>“confusing and difficult,”</i> the need for career coaching and planning. • Need for career training and career exploration. • Assistance in pursuing careers where a college degree is not needed but are unsure how to proceed given the lack of guidance and job training at their schools.
Education and School Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of schools is inconsistent across schools with some schools enjoying a robust and comprehensive guidance programs where young women feel confident about their futures. • Concern that their schools are not preparing them for success in the transition to adulthood. • Dearth of tutoring support at schools in subjects where they are struggling academically. • Lack of school engagement because school is too <i>“boring.”</i> • Need for more support and creativity from teachers to address their lack of school engagement including <i>“motivational and inspirational class speakers.”</i> • <i>“More field trips.”</i> • <i>“More fun”</i> built into the curriculum with <i>“games and activities”</i> and, school administrators allowing teachers to be <i>“flexible”</i> with the learning process.

d. Mental Health

Mental Health Theme

Young women express a need for prevention, screening, and treatment for Mental Health challenges.

Mental Health Subthemes	Examples/Quotations from Participants
Suicidality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughts of suicide are a <i>“reality”</i> in the lives of teenager peers caused, in part, by bullying, social media, trauma, family problems, and mental health issues.
Conflict Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inability to negotiate conflicts and the need for <i>“conflict resolution training”</i> to address the conflicts and fighting in their families, communities, and schools. • Conflict is key source of the depression and suicidal feelings.
Trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young women note that a decrease in <i>“violence”</i> and <i>“sexual harassment”</i> would also help alleviate the emotional problems they are grappling with in their everyday lives.

e. Family

Family Theme

Family support is a key to empowerment and dealing with life stressors. Several young women surveyed indicate that their families are important to their empowerment and mentioned that they need “family and friends” to be empowered.

Family Subtheme	Examples/Quotations from Participants
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young women note that youth need to be coached and taught about resilience in the face of challenges. Many say that their families have been helpful but that many of their peers lack this type of support and education or coaching from family members.

Other themes that emerged as important components of empowerment programming and include:

f. Other

Other Themes

Other Subthemes	Examples/Quotations from Participants
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources are key to empowerment and include money and jobs for women; internal resources include values and a good personality.
Power and Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young women describe power and control as opportunity, independence, “having control,” power, and self-control. “You need to be independent and strong.”
Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young women mention terms such as “strong voice,” “power and voice,” and “speak out and be brave.” One young woman expresses the immediacy of this need saying: “We need more women to speak out, now.” Another connects voice to improving her community: “To use your voice for making a change in the neighborhood we live in.”
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need “motivation” to be empowered. “I need a crowd of people who have the same motivational energy and determination to do something with their lives.”
Self-Acceptance (Critical-Consciousness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theme of self-acceptance in achieving empowerment with a focus on “me, myself, and I,” and “be more myself and speak up for myself” emerged. Other themes include the development of internal strengths such as self-esteem, self-awareness, self-respect, self-confidence, pride, “being grounded while embodying my beliefs,” and “believe in myself.” One young woman describes how tragedy has shaped her and how she needs help developing self-confidence in order to be empowered: “I need to be able to develop a full formation of self-confidence and clarity and resolution with the issues I have faced, namely my father’s death and getting bullied.”
Childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not only young mothers but also those caring for younger siblings need childcare to promote program participation. Survey data indicates that 23% of those not participating in programs say that caring for younger siblings is a barrier to program participation.

2. Quantitative Findings

Key Finding #5

Empowerment takes many forms. Focus group findings indicate that young women want and need programming that includes health education, particularly in the area of reproductive health. Additionally, participants indicate the need for programming to address issues of racism, sexism, and self-esteem in addition to the five key empowerment elements prioritized in the P4G Empowerment Model.

Beyond the need for mental health services, young women also discuss the need for reproductive healthcare and education in their lives. Focus group participants note that their schools lack robust health classes and that they are struggling with misinformation or lack of information about their basic health needs. This is one reason why they want empowerment programs that have gender-specific programs and safe spaces to discuss these types of sensitive issues.

To quantify the qualitative survey and focus group findings on empowerment, focus group participants were given the option of completing an additional survey question not included on the original instrument. Thirty young women who participated in the focus groups agreed to complete the survey and answered the following question:



Figure 22: Focus Group Question:

If you could design an empowerment program for girls ages 14 to 21 to help them reach their full potential and set them up for success, what would the program look like? What are the most important types of programs to include? Please rank your top three choices.



The following is a ranking of the issues prioritized by young women from the focus groups by frequency:

1. Racism and Sexism
2. Self-Esteem
3. Health and Mental Health Issues
4. Family
5. Safety and Security
6. Job and Career Planning and Training
7. Education, Knowledge, and Skills
8. Financial Planning
9. Activism
10. Leadership

Young women rank programs addressing racism, sexism, and self-esteem as the most important in empowering young women. Elements of the *P4G Empowerment Model* were ranked highly as well including **Safety and Security**, **Knowledge and Skills**, **Family**, and **Health** including mental health issues. Social Capital was not included as an option as there are too many facets of Social Capital to include and the study wanted to give young women an opportunity to rank other aspects of empowerment that are not as well documented.

VIII. Findings: Empowerment Elements

Findings in this chapter provide an assessment of the specific empowerment elements of young women in the study overall, regardless of employment or program participation. This chapter also sheds light on the challenges and life stressors young women face that can further hinder empowerment.

As discussed in Chapter III, the youth researchers used key measures from the *DAP* and additional measures they developed as a group to operationalize the empowerment elements from the *P4G Empowerment Model*. These measures were included as questions on the survey instrument to benchmark and assess the assets, supports,

resources, and social and emotional factors that are essential for young people’s success in school and life, and to develop an empowerment needs baseline. The survey results of these questions demonstrate where young women have sufficient assets, resources, and supports and highlight those elements that need strengthening with additional supports and resources. The survey questions were developed to measure the five key elements of **Social Capital, Safety and Security, Knowledge and Skills, Family, and Health** support but also include several other empowerment elements from the *P4G Empowerment Model*. See Appendix A for a list of these measures.

A. Assessment of Key Empowerment

Figure 23 provides an assessment of the top empowerment elements from the *P4G Empowerment Model* for young women surveyed where at least 75% indicated they “often or almost always” have key empowerment elements.

Figure 23: Survey Results: Top Empowerment Elements

Top Elements	Young women said they often or almost always:
Empowerment Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accept people who are different than them (84%)• Feel accepted by others who are different from them (78%)
Social Capital Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have adults in their life who are good role models for them (75%)
Safety and Security Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feel safe and secure at their workplace (83%)• Feel safe at home (80%)
Family Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have parents/caregivers who urge them to do well in school (80%)
Institutional Structure Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have access to healthcare (75%)

However, at least one-third of young women surveyed indicate that they do not often have certain empowerment elements. Figure 24 provides an overview of these empowerment element limitations.

Figure 24: Survey Results: Empowerment Element Limitations

Empowerment Element Limitations	Young women said they do not often:
Empowerment Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get to make important decisions and choices about their lives (44%) ● Feel in control of their lives and futures (39%) ● Avoid dangerous or unhealthy things (38%) ● Feel good about their future (33%)
Social Capital Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feel respected by their peers (44%) ● Have trusting and supportive relationships with other young women their age (42%) ● Feel valued and supported by others (41%) ● Have a person in their life who provides them with emotional support (40%) ● Build friendships with other people (39%) ● Have friends who set a good example for them (38%)
Safety and Security Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Live in a safe neighborhood (49%) ● Feel safe at school (34%)
Knowledge and Skills Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attend a school that enforces rules fairly (43%) ● Enjoy learning (38%) ● Develop life skills for adulthood (34%) ● Engage in activities that make them feel good about themselves (32%) ● Have a teacher who urges them to develop and achieve (30%)
Family Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have a family that gives them love and support (33%)

In designing the survey, youth researchers note that young women can face significant challenges in their lives that can negatively influence their ability to be empowered and successful. Therefore, youth researchers created several questions related to challenges and stressors within the empowerment elements of **Family** and **Health** that were included. Figure 25 provides an overview of the results for these documented challenges.

Figure 25: Survey Results: Empowerment Element Limitations

Challenges	Young women often or almost always:
Family Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have stress caused by family problems (33%)
Mental Health Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feel like too much is expected of them (39%) ● Experience mental or emotional health challenges (36%) ● Black/African American females and LGBTQ females were more likely to have mental health challenges than non-Black and heterosexual females respectively ($p < .05$) ● Fewer than half of young women said they often have access to a therapist or professional they can talk to when they need help or support

For a full description of findings for all empowerment elements, see Appendix B, Table 2.

At least 75% of young women in the study say they are often accepted by others and accept others who are different than themselves, at least one in three struggle with a lack of choice and control including having trouble avoiding dangerous and unhealthy things and not feeling good about their futures.

Young women lack empowerment elements in which they do not often get to make important decisions and choices about their lives (44%) and do not often feel in control over their lives and futures (39%). They also have trouble avoiding dangerous and unhealthy things (38%) and do not often feel good about their futures (33%).

Key Finding #6

Many young women often have positive adult role models in their lives (75%) providing them with Social Capital.

Survey findings show that many are lacking other elements of Social Capital including having difficulty connecting with their peers, including other young women, not feeling valued, and lacking emotional support.

While 75% of young women surveyed often have adults in their life who are good role models for them, about 40% struggle with **Social Capital** elements including a lack of respect from peers and trouble building friendships,

particularly with other young women and with friends who set a good example for them. They also do not often feel valued and supported and lack emotional support.

Key Finding #7

Young women (~80%) report often feeling safe and secure at home and at work.

Many lack the empowerment element of Safety and Security in their neighborhoods (49%) and at school (34%) according to survey findings.

Approximately 80% of young women report feeling safe at home and at work. However, this sense of **Safety and Security** does not extend to their neighborhoods and schools.

Specifically, nearly half (49%) of young women do not often feel safe in their neighborhoods while about one in three (34%) do not often feel safe in school.

Key Finding #8

Two-thirds of survey participants had the key empowerment element of Knowledge and Skills.

At least one-third of young women surveyed are having negative experiences at school, not developing life skills for adulthood, and not participating in programs where they can build self-esteem.

Issues with school extend beyond school safety to problems with obtaining the empowerment element of **Knowledge and Skills**. Young women do not feel their school enforces rules fairly and they do not have teachers who urge them to develop and achieve. Therefore, it is not surprising that more than one-third say they often do not enjoy learning. Young women also indicate that they are not often developing life skills that they need for the

transition to adulthood nor are they engaging in activities where they feel good about themselves. These findings, confirmed through the focus groups, indicate that existing school and **community programs** are not providing the **Knowledge and Skills** young women want and need for a successful transition to adulthood such as life skills, employment, and college and career planning.

Key Finding #9

A large majority of young women surveyed (80%) have Family support in the form of academic achievement.

One in three feel they often lack family love and support and experience stress caused by family problems.

Eighty-percent of young women in the study say they often have **Family** support where they are often urged by family to do well in school. However, one in three feel that they do not often get love and support from their family and often are stressed by family problems. A lack of family support connects to the lack of support young women experience within the element of social capital. Focus group participants and youth researchers described the nuances around

the importance of “family” in their lives and how it relates to empowerment. Conversations centered around not being defined by one’s family, rising above family issues, or succeeding despite negative influences in discussions about “toxic” or negative family members. Conversely, positive family members are seen as a great source of support of empowerment by the young women in these discussions.

Key Finding #10

More than one-third of the young women surveyed report Mental Health and Emotional Health challenges and nearly two-thirds are currently experiencing at least one critically stressful life event including trouble with staying in school, feeling safe, suicidal thoughts, and avoiding fighting.

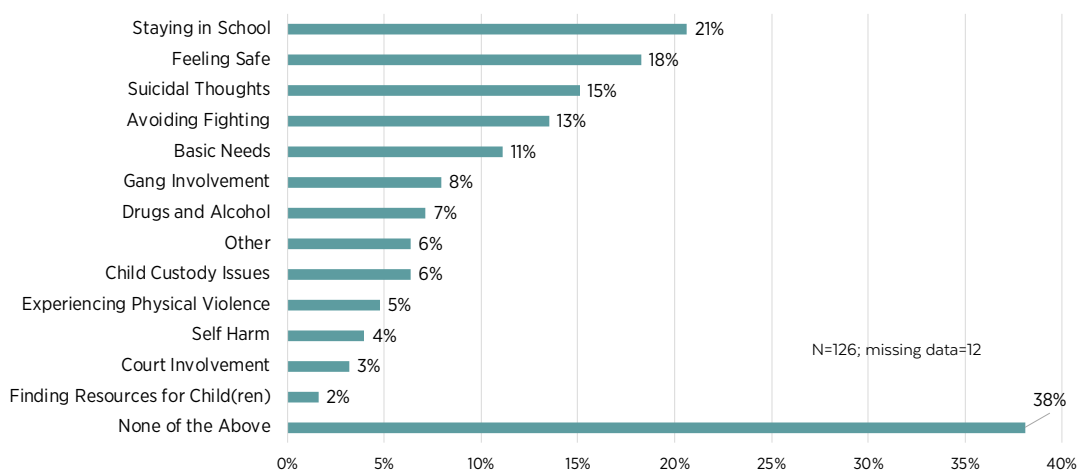
Fewer than half have access to mental health resources posing a challenge to processing and dealing with these stressful life events.

Young women experience challenges in the empowerment element of **Health**. Many (39%) experience pressure from feeling that too much is expected of them, and 36% indicated that they often have emotional or mental health challenges. Black/African American and LGBTQ are more likely to have mental health challenges than non-Black and heterosexual females respectively. Unfortunately, although 75% of young women say they often have access to healthcare, less than half of young women say they often have access to a therapist or professional they can talk to when they need help or support.

Youth researchers also included the following question to determine if any of the young women were experiencing particularly stressful life events that could negatively impact empowerment. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of young women in our sample indicate they were struggling with at least one of the following issues as outlined in the Figure 26 (young women could check all that apply to report more than one issue). Trouble staying in school, trouble with feeling safe, trouble with suicidal thoughts, and trouble avoiding fighting top the list of life stressors further confirming the findings on a lack of empowerment elements within the categories of **Safety and Security**, **Knowledge and Skills**, and **Health**.

Figure 26: Survey Response: Challenges

62% had trouble with at least one issue. I'm having trouble with:



Of those who indicate they are having trouble with specific issues, one in five are having trouble staying in school while other top challenges include trouble feeling safe (18%), trouble with suicidal thoughts (15%), and trouble avoiding fighting (13%).

Young women who lack specific key elements of empowerment are significantly more likely to experience mental and emotional health challenges and life stressors than those who do not lack these empowerment elements.

B. Association between Empowerment Elements and Challenges

Chi-square analysis and Fisher’s exact test of independence demonstrates a significant and positive association between lacking key empowerment elements and experiencing key challenges and stressful life events.

When young women have limited empowerment elements, such as the inability to make important decisions, feel in control of and good about their future, or avoid things that are dangerous and unhealthy, they are significantly more likely to have trouble with key challenges and stressful life events including trouble feeling safety, mental and emotional health issues, experiencing violence, and trouble with drugs and alcohol.

- Suicidality: Twenty-three percent of young women who say they do not often **get to make important decisions** and 27.1% who do not often **feel in control of their future**

are significantly more likely to have **suicidal thoughts** than young women who often get to make important decisions (8.6%) or often feel in control of their lives (7.8%) ($p < .05$).

- Safety: Those who do not often **feel good about their future** are significantly more likely to have trouble **feeling safe** (28.6%) than young women who often feel good about their future (13.4%) ($p < .05$).
- Violence, Drugs and Alcohol, and Gang Involvement: Young women who do not often **avoid things that are dangerous or unhealthy** are significantly more likely than young women who often avoid dangerous or unhealthy things to have trouble with **drugs and alcohol** (14.3% vs. 2.6%), **experiencing physical violence** (10.2% vs. 1.3%), and **gang involvement** (14.3% vs. 3.9%) ($p < .05$).

a. Social Capital Elements

Social Capital Elements

When young women in the sample have limited elements of Social Capital, including a lack of emotional support, respect, friendships, and feeling valued, they are significantly more likely to self-report trouble with staying in school, meeting basic needs, experiencing physical violence, and drugs and alcohol.

Associated Challenges	
Staying in School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twice as many of the young women in our sample who say they do not often have a person in their life who provides them with emotional support report having trouble with staying in school (30.0%) compared to 14.7% of young women who often have emotional support from a person in their life ($p < .05$). • Twice as many young women who are not often respected by their peers struggle with staying in school (29.6%) compared to those often respected by peers (13.2%) ($p < .05$).
Physical Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight times as many young women who lack emotional support from a person in their life reported trouble with physical violence (10.0%) compared to young women who say they often have this support (1.3%) ($p < .05$).
Basic Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly three times as many young women who do not often build friendships are having trouble meeting their basic needs (19.1%) compared to young women who report that they often build friendships (6.7%) ($p < .05$).
Drugs and Alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five times as many young women who do not often feel valued or appreciated by others are having trouble with drugs and alcohol (13.7%) compared to 2.8% who said they often feel valued or appreciated ($p < .05$).

Figure 27: Comparison of Assets and Resources by Types of Challenges

P4G Empowerment Model Elements	Elements that are Lacking	Challenges	p-value
	If you don't often....	You are more likely to have trouble with...	
Empowerment	Get to make important decisions	Suicidal thoughts	*
	Feel in control of your future	Suicidal thoughts	**
	Feel good about your future	Feeling safe	*
	Avoid things that are dangerous or unhealthy	Drugs and alcohol	*
	Avoid things that are dangerous or unhealthy	Experience physical violence	*
	Avoid things that are dangerous or unhealthy	Gang involvement	*
Social Capital	Have a person in my life who provides me with emotional support	Experiencing physical violence	*
	Have a person in my life who provides me with emotional support	Staying in school	*
	Feel respected by my peers	Staying in school	*
	Feel valued and appreciated by others	Drugs and alcohol	*
	Build friendships	Basic needs	*

*p<.05; **p<.01

b. Safety and Security Elements

Safety and Security Elements

When young women in the sample lack elements of Safety and Security, they are significantly more likely to have trouble staying in school and with child custody issues than those who do not lack elements of Safety and Security.

Associated Challenges	
Staying in School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those who say they do not often live in a safe neighborhood are significantly more likely to have trouble staying in school (31.1%) compared to those who often live in a safe neighborhood (11.1%) (p<.01).
Child Custody	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those who often live in a safe neighborhood are less likely to have trouble with child custody issues (1.6%) compared to those who do not often live in a safe neighborhood (11.5%) (p<.05).

c. Knowledge and Skills Elements

Safety and Security Elements

Young women with Knowledge and Skills elements in the area of teacher support are less likely to have trouble staying in school and feeling safe than those with more limited teacher support.

Associated Challenges

Staying in School or Feeling Safe

- Young women who report having teachers **who often urge them to develop and achieve** in school have trouble **staying in school** (14.6%) and **feeling safe** (13.4%).
- In comparison, twice as many, or about one in three, of those who do not often have teachers who urge them to develop and achieve have trouble staying in school (34.3%) and feeling safe (31.4%) ($p < .05$).

d. Family Elements

Family Elements

Family support is a key empowerment element. When it is limited, it can be associated with challenges and stressful life events for young women in this sample.

Associated Challenges

Trouble with Basic Needs, Self-Harm, and Drugs and Alcohol

- Young women who feel that they do not **often have love and support from their families** have significantly more trouble in three areas, **meeting basic needs** (25.0%), **self-harm** (13.9%), and **drugs and alcohol** (16.7%) compared to those who feel they often or almost always have family love and support ($p < .05$).
- Specifically, for young women who feel they often or almost always have love and support from their families, 5.7% have trouble meeting basic needs, 0.0% have trouble with self-harm, and 3.4% have trouble with drugs and alcohol ($p < .05$).

e. Mental Health Elements

Mental Health Elements

Among this sample of young women, lacking elements of Mental Health is significantly and positively associated with several challenges and life stressors.

Associated Challenges

Child Custody Issues, Suicidality, and Stress Caused by Family Problems

- Young women who often have **mental or emotional health challenges** are also more likely to often have **stress caused by family problems** (54.5%) compared to young women who do not often struggle with mental health challenges (20.0%) ($p < .001$).
- Among those who often having **mental or emotional health problems** rates of **suicidal thoughts** (26.7%) and **child custody issues** (15.6%) are also higher compared to those who do not often have these mental health issues (8.9% and 1.3% respectively) ($p < .01$).

Youth researchers included a mental health element measure for **peer pressure** to reflect the pressure young women face to have certain clothes or accessories to be accepted by others adolescents. This measure was significantly associated with suicidal thoughts. Specifically, 28% of young women who often feel this **pressure** report trouble with **suicide** compared to 9.5% of young women

who do not often feel this pressure ($p < .05$). This finding is further evidence of the importance of including young women's voices in the design of this study. Figure 28 provides an overall summary of the association between a lack of empowerment elements and specific challenges and stressors.

Figure 28: Summary of P4G Empowerment Element Findings

P4G Empowerment Model Elements	Elements that are Lacking	Challenges	p-value
	If you don't often....	You are more likely to have trouble with...	
Safety & Security	Have a safe neighborhood	Staying in school	**
	Have a safe neighborhood	Child custody issues	*
Knowledge & Skills	Have teachers who urge you to develop and achieve	Staying in school	*
	Have teachers who urge you to develop and achieve	Feeling safe	*
Family	Have a family that gives me love and support	Meeting your basic needs	**
	Have a family that gives me love and support	Self-harm	**
	Have a family that gives me love and support	Drugs and alcohol	*
Mental Health	Have mental or emotional health problems	Child custody issues	**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

C. Sense of Community

Key Finding #11

Survey findings indicate that young women get a sense of community at home and at school providing an opportunity to integrate these communal aspects of home- and school-based experiences in empowerment program design.

Themes that emerged from an open-ended survey question on community demonstrate that young women get their sense of community mainly from home and at school, not from community-based programs and activities, potentially confirming a perceived lack of opportunity by young women to acquire empowerment elements within existing programming.



Figure 29: Survey Question:

Where do you go to feel a sense of community?

The majority of young women turned to what the *KIT/Gates Empowerment Model* describes as “institutional structures” for their sense of community. The following list provides a ranking of the community themes ranked by frequency:

- Home (N=26)
- School (N=19)
- Neighborhoods (N=7)
- Friends and family (N=9)
- Work (N=8)
- Community-based organization programs including community centers (N=5)
- Church (N=4)
- Libraries (N=4)
- Cultural events and spaces (such as museums and art fairs) (N=4)
- Sporting events (N=3)
- Outdoor spaces such as parks (N=3)

The fact that many young women consider their home as an important source of community is an extremely positive indicator of how home and family provide young women with elements of empowerment. It should be noted however, that this finding may indicate that young women are lacking a sense of community in other areas of their lives possibly related to the lack of safety young women feel in their neighborhoods. The following chapter delves deeper into issues of Safety and Security related to the community and neighborhood with a focus on the Nubian Square area.



IX. Findings: Nubian Square

Key Finding #12

Focus group findings on the Nubian Square environment mirror negative experiences such as harassment, fighting, heavy policing, and homelessness shared by youth researchers when fielding the survey.

Conversely, the positive aspects—an abundance of diversity, culture, art, music, and positive social interactions—provide opportunities for making the area more youth-supportive and -empowering.

Youth researchers analyzed field notes from their experiences surveying young women in and around Nubian Station. Young women had both positive and negative experiences during their month of observations in Spring 2019.

Youth researchers describe several positive experiences while in Nubian Square which include observing positive social interactions between commuters and community residents as well as an abundance of ethnic and cultural diversity and displays of culture, art, and music.

Negative experiences were numerous and were categorized as danger and violence, distractions, lack of personal space, and substance use. Youth researchers observed youth fighting, and, despite a strong police presence, a lack of a sense of safety and security. Other experiences include being sexually harassed by adult men and observing drug use and drug dealing.

Focus group respondents were asked to reflect on their experiences in the Nubian Square area as well with the following question:



Figure 30: Focus Group Question:

We conducted this study in Nubian Square in Roxbury, mainly in Nubian Station.

Are you familiar with this area?

What are your thoughts about the area?

Focus group participants' perceptions of Nubian Square are similar to those experienced by the youth researchers. They perceive Nubian Square as a place that is "dirty" and "dangerous" and as a place with a "bad reputation" where young women should not travel alone. Young women describe being sexually harassed and propositioned by adult men while in the area. Many provide detailed descriptions of violence, drug dealing, sex-trafficking, hate crimes, homelessness, and drug use in the area. Young women also voiced their frustration with the police who they believe are ignoring these problems and fail to have positive interactions with local youth.

X. Findings: Mapping of Programs and Activities

Using the survey findings outlined in Figure 20 on program preferences, TACC mapped the programs and activities in or near Roxbury that offer the preferred programming. Youth researchers conducted online research and entered their findings into Google maps online software. The youth researchers then reflected on the research process and developed the following observations and recommendations:

- Barriers to participation include the fact that it is difficult and time-consuming to research and locate programs online. Other barriers include: long distances, high prices, and a lack of transportation; and
- Community centers can be gateways to program participation by providing a variety of programs in one convenient location.

However, it can be difficult to determine the various types of programs available at each community center as they vary across centers. Locating gender-specific programming in a community center may also be a barrier to participation as it discourages young women from participating if they feel intimidated when entering a center where many boys and young adult men gather. For example, some young women in the study indicated that they want to play basketball at their local community center but do not feel welcome by the boys and young adult men who are on the court or waiting to play.

Figure 31: Resource Map



XI. Recommendations and Conclusion

We will not use the complexity of resolving gender inequality as an excuse for failing to think and act more intentionally about putting women and girls at the center of what we do.

— Melinda Gates, “Putting Women and Girls at the Center of Development,” *Science* (12), 2014

The quantitative and qualitative findings provide numerous insights and implications for policymakers, funders, educators, and programs on meeting the empowerment needs of young women in Roxbury. Many of the recommendations are implementable in the short-term but others will need intentional and implementable strategies to have a sustained impact on the adult lives of young women.

Young women from the Roxbury community provided a roadmap, identifying key elements they need now and in

the future to be empowered and successful. The Roxbury community is a strategic location to pilot this work. The Nubian Square community is a microcosm of the City of Boston as it is a hub for the diversity of young women who live, travel through, and attend school. Focusing on young women’s empowerment in Roxbury will leverage the community’s strengths while working to address its challenges in ways that will benefit neighborhoods across the City of Boston.

A. Key Findings

- Key Finding #1** Survey findings show that young women who are employed experience benefits related to **Social Capital** and **Knowledge and Skills**. Nearly half of the young women surveyed are unemployed. Survey findings indicate that 82% of those that are unemployed want to work but are having difficulty finding a job; young women express a desire for more job-readiness related programming.
- Key Finding #2** Survey findings show that participation in programs and activities bring benefits of employment and empowerment, particularly when these activities build and support self-esteem. A large percentage (41%) of young women surveyed indicate that they are not participating in programs or activities. Of those not participating in programs, 22% are also not employed.
- Key Finding #3** Survey and focus group findings show that young women have an expressed need for tools that will assist them with their transition to adulthood including: life skills, college and career planning, job training, financial aid, and paid internships. Overall, more than half of the young women surveyed want to participate in basketball programs. Other popular programs include artistic activities such as dance and photography. Qualitative findings indicate that art is a venue where young women can channel and process their emotions and thoughts.
- Key Finding #4** Key elements from the *P4G Empowerment Model*, including **Social Capital, Safety and Security, Knowledge and Skills, Family, and Health**, were confirmed as essential aspects of empowerment by both survey respondents and focus group participants.

- Key Finding #5** Empowerment takes many forms. Focus group findings indicate that young women want and need programming that includes **health education**, particularly in the area of **reproductive health**. Additionally, participants indicate the need for programming to address issues of **racism, sexism, and self-esteem** in addition to the five key empowerment elements prioritized in the *P4G Empowerment Model*. Beyond the need for mental health services, young women also discuss the need for reproductive health care and education in their lives. Focus group participants note that their schools lack robust health classes and that they are struggling with misinformation or lack of information about their basic health needs. This is one reason why they want empowerment programs that have gender-specific programs and safe spaces to discuss these types of sensitive issues.
- Key Finding #6** Many young women often have positive adult role models in their lives (75%) providing them with **Social Capital**. Survey findings show that many are lacking other elements of Social Capital including having difficulty connecting with their peers, including other young women, not feeling valued, and lacking emotional support.
- Key Finding #7** Young women (~80%) report often feeling safe and secure at home and at work. Many lack the empowerment element of **Safety and Security** in their neighborhoods (49%) and at school (34%) according to survey findings.
- Key Finding #8** At least one-third of young women surveyed are having negative experiences at school, not developing life skills for adulthood, and not participating in programs where they can build self-esteem demonstrating a lack of important educational assets and resources (**Knowledge and Skills**) that foster empowerment.
- Key Finding #9** A large majority of young women surveyed (80%) have **Family** support in the form of academic achievement. One in three feel they often lack family love and support and experience stress caused by family problems.
- Key Finding #10** More than one-third of young women surveyed report **Mental Health and Emotional Health** challenges and nearly two-thirds are currently experiencing at least one critically stressful life event including trouble with: staying in school, feeling safe, suicidal thoughts, and avoiding fighting. Fewer than half have access to mental health resources posing a challenge to processing and dealing with these stressful life events.
- Key Finding #11** Survey findings indicate that young women get a sense of **community** at home and at school providing an opportunity to integrate these communal aspects of home and school-based experiences in empowerment program design.
- Key Finding #12** Focus group findings on the Nubian Square environment mirror negative experiences such as harassment, fighting, heavy policing, and homelessness shared by youth researchers when fielding the survey. Conversely, the positive aspects—an abundance of diversity, culture, art, music, AND positive social interactions—provide opportunities for making the area more youth-supportive and empowering.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed from the study's key findings:

1. Nubian Station and Nubian Square

Nubian Station and Nubian Square have the potential to improve young women's sense of well-being and empowerment as they negotiate their way to and from school.

Developed from Key Finding 12 (1.1, 1.2, 1.3)

1.1 Develop a comprehensive safety strategy with a focus on strengthening community policing to make young women in Nubian Station and Nubian Square safer and more secure.

- Young women in the Roxbury community are struggling with issues of safety and security as they describe daily exposure to crime, harassment, and other issues while traveling through Nubian Square and at Nubian Station. Jurisdiction for Nubian Square is with the Boston Police Department while jurisdiction for Nubian Station is with the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA). Since **Safety and Security** is a key impediment to empowerment, it must be addressed with a comprehensive strategy across both departments.
- Stated need was for community policing rather than an increase in an already heavy police presence in the square and the station. Therefore, there must be an intentional effort to increase security and build relationships between officers and the community at large to set a new culture of safety and inclusion.
- Existing technology that allows for real-time reporting of crimes anonymously should be leveraged and promoted.
- This recommendation goes beyond making the area safe for youth and has implications for other vulnerable populations such as people of advanced age and persons with disabilities.

1.2 Upgrade Nubian Station and improve the maintenance.

1.3 Support and conduct research on how to make Nubian Station explicitly youth-supportive and empowering.

- Findings indicate the importance of making a connection between "empowerment" and environments like Nubian Station and Nubian Square where there is a heavy youth presence, and, therefore, an opportunity to engage with large numbers of youth on a regular basis.
- Stakeholders should conduct research on how to make Nubian Station explicitly "youth empowering" as a pilot for other "active" transit hubs. A key research question for the study is, "What does it take to make Nubian Station supportive or empowering to youth who frequent the station?"

2. Short-Term: Empowerment

Developed from Key Finding 4 (2.1) and Key Finding 11 (2.2)

2.1 Invest in amplifying and enhancing gender-specific programming for young women in Roxbury that includes all aspects of the *P4G Empowerment Model* with an emphasis on five key empowerment elements:

1. **Social Capital** to ensure individualized support by staff, key mentors, and social networks;
2. **Safety and Security** is key in all areas of program design;
3. **Knowledge and Skills** that young women want and that will help shape their futures including a mix of life skills, college and career planning, job-readiness, education, arts, and sports;
4. **Family** involvement and support for young women's empowerment; and
5. **Health** prevention, screening, and treatment for mental, behavioral, and physical health disorders.

2.2 Find ways to build a sense of community in the neighborhood.

- By building on the sense of community young women experience at school and at home, it is important to further understand what community means to young women and how communal benefits can be integrated and leveraged in various programs and settings. Potential research questions include: What aspects of school are community-building? What does the sense of community look like at home with family? How is a sense of community fostered at home replicated in empowerment programming?

3. Short-Term: Employment

Developed from Key Finding 1 (3.1)

3.1 Provide young women with gender-specific empowerment programming focused on job readiness, career planning, and paid internships.

- The high rate of unemployment among the study sample is concerning.
- Young women expressed their frustration with the process of finding a job and planning for a career. Economic self-sufficiency is a cornerstone of empowerment. Therefore, comprehensive job training coupled with long-term career planning where young women can learn the skills they need to improve their employability, earning potential, and create wealth is vital.
- Building Social Capital coupled with career planning and skills training is crucial. Active mentoring should be a cornerstone at year-round jobs and paid internships in career pathways with promising career growth and the opportunity for advancement. Programs should also include a robust discussion of sexism and racism.

4. Short-Term: Programs

Developed from Key Finding 2 (4.1, 4.3), Key Findings 5-10 (4.2), and Key Finding 9 (4.4)

4.1 Respond to the lack of program engagement among young women in Roxbury by piloting programs designed to address their gender-specific empowerment needs and interests while eliminating barriers to program engagement.

- It is essential that young women engage in gender-specific programming that empowers them and prepares them for future success. A large portion of young women in the sample are not engaged in gender-specific programs despite an interest in this type of programming.
- Recruiting young women in groups, as opposed to targeting individuals, will be crucial given that young women in the sample indicate they do not like to engage in after-school programs if their friends are not participating. Recruiting cohorts of young women also allows them to provide support to one another and build Social Capital as they work to achieve their individualized goals.

4.2 Train program staff in evidence-based strategies with training modules on gender-specific approaches to empowerment that include cultural competency and cultural humility,²³ mental health services, and a focus on trauma-informed care.

- Staff training should include gender-specific empowerment training modules on the key elements of empowerment with a focus on the inclusion of Social Capital, Safety and Security, Knowledge and Skills, Family, and Mental Health elements as outlined in this report.
- Given the cultural diversity of this population, cultural competency and cultural humility training is also key and should prepare staff to address issues of racism, sexism, and power.
- Finally, the study findings indicate that young women are struggling with cumulative trauma including mental health, feeling unsafe, and navigating unsafe environments in their neighborhoods and schools. Therefore, staff should also be trained in mental health treatment with a focus on trauma-informed care.

4.3 Foster program engagement by designing user-friendly, cutting-edge, free technology to educate young women about program opportunities that match their interests.

- Young women describe the complexity and difficulty of finding programs that fit their needs. Therefore, a free search tool that provides quick and easy access to key information updated frequently on program information in Roxbury and the surrounding area is essential to educate young women about their options.
- The tool could be designed to collect data on the interests and needs of young women in order to identify gaps and increase offerings in specific programs and internship opportunities. Data collected could provide a much-needed feedback loop for stakeholders to have real-time data to deploy necessary resources.
- The tool should build on the current social media usage of youth and be moderated by youth themselves in order to optimize usage.

4.4 Provide families with support to address family stressors as a key component of empowerment programming for young women.

- Adolescence and the transition to adulthood can be challenging for both young women and their families.
- Empowerment programming can provide much-needed emotional and practical support to buffer these challenges. Eighty percent of

young women say their parents and caregivers often urge them to do well in school. Therefore, using academic achievement as a gateway for engaging families may be a good starting point for beginning the process of integrating family support into empowerment programming.

5. Long-Term

Developed from Key Finding 4 (5.1) and Key Finding 3 (5.2)

5.1 Develop program evaluations and funding based on addressing the five key elements of empowerment outlined in the *P4G Empowerment Model*.

- Funding and program evaluation must be designed to serve the needs of young women by addressing the key elements of empowerment outlined in the *P4G Empowerment Model*. The study findings illustrate the need to provide comprehensive programs that include all aspects of empowerment in the development and evaluation of programs designed to meet

the unique needs of young women. And, as this study demonstrates, there are powerful benefits to empowerment-based programming.

- To incentivize the inclusion of empowerment elements, funders should make the inclusion of empowerment elements in program and evaluation design a requirement for funding.

5.2 Provide young women with a fair share of resources, including funding and respect for gender-specific, inclusive programs designed for them by them.

- Only 1.6% (2016) of total charitable giving in the United States is dedicated to nonprofit organizations focused on serving women and girls.²⁴ In order to implement the bold strategy needed to empower young women in Roxbury and put

them and their communities on a path to success, funding is needed. Not only is it a smart investment in individuals, as outlined throughout this report, it is a smart investment for the Roxbury community and the City of Boston.

Young women from the Roxbury community provided a clear roadmap, identifying the key elements they need now to build a future for themselves where they are empowered, successful, and active members of the community.

Focusing on young women’s empowerment in Roxbury by strategically piloting community-based programs with the empowerment elements interwoven into the curriculum will further leverage the community’s strengths and provide more immediate benefits to the neighborhood. After-school, summer, and year-round programs have an integral role to play, especially if programs are modified to include the *P4G Empowerment Model*.

Given that only 1.6% of total charitable giving in the United States is invested in programs for girls and young women, implementation cannot be left to chance and requires intentional action by policymakers, funders, educators, and programs.



Appendix A: P4G Study Survey Instrument

Introduction: This survey should take about five to ten minutes to complete. Your responses are voluntary and confidential. If you do not want to answer an item, leave it blank. There are no penalties for not participating. But please try to answer all items as best you can. We do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life.

Please click on the "Next" button or arrow to consent to and begin taking the survey.

1. How old are you? You must be at least 14 to complete the survey.

- Under 14
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21

2. Where do you live?

- Roxbury
- Dorchester
- Jamaica Plain
- Mattapan
- Hyde Park
- Roslindale
- Other - Write In

3. How do you describe yourself?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Do not identify as female, male, or transgender
- Prefer not to answer

4. Do you think of yourself as:

- Straight or Heterosexual
- Gay or lesbian
- Bisexual
- Not listed above - Please write in:
- Prefer not to answer

5. What is your race/ethnicity? (Please check all that apply.)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Prefer not to answer
- Other - Please write in:

6. Are you currently attending school or an educational program?

- Yes
- No

7. What grade are you in?

- 7th
- 8th
- 9th
- 10th
- 11th
- 12th (No diploma)
- General Equivalency Diploma (GED) /HiSET Program
- Attending college
- Attending Vocational-Technical School (Vo-Tech Program)
- Don't Know
- Other - Write In

8. What is the highest grade or level of school you have completed or the highest degree/certification you have received?

- 7th
- 8th
- 9th
- 10th
- 11th
- 12th (No diploma)
- General Equivalency Diploma (GED)/HiSET
- High School Diploma
- Vocational-Technical School (Vo-Tech)
- Associate's Degree
- Don't Know
- Other - Write In:

9. Are you currently employed?

- Yes
- No

10. Do you want to be employed?

- Yes
- No

11. Do you participate in any programs or activities?

- Yes
- No

12. Why are you not participating in any programs or activities?

No programs interest me

Have to work after school

Parents want me to go home right after school

None of my friends are in after-school programs

Have to take care of younger siblings

No transportation

Can't afford programs

Other - Write In

How true are the following statements?

13. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Express my feelings in positive ways.	()	()	()	()

14. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Feel good about my future.	()	()	()	()

15. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Get to make important decisions and choices about my life.	()	()	()	()

16. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Feel respected by my peers.	()	()	()	()

17. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Feel respected by my family.	()	()	()	()

18. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Feel that my opinion matters.	()	()	()	()

19. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Plan ahead and make good choices.	()	()	()	()

20. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Resist bad influences.	()	()	()	()

21. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Avoid things that are dangerous or unhealthy.	()	()	()	()

22. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Deal with frustration in positive ways.	()	()	()	()

23. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Feel safe and secure at home.	()	()	()	()

24. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Tell the truth even when it is not easy.	()	()	()	()

25. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Accept people who are different from me.	()	()	()	()

26. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Feel accepted by others who are different from me.	()	()	()	()

27. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Have a hard time trusting others.	()	()	()	()

28. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Feel safe at school.	()	()	()	()

29. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Teachers who urge me to develop and achieve.	()	()	()	()

30. I ...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Feel safe and respected at my workplace.	()	()	()	()

31. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Feel pressure to have certain clothes or accessories to fit in.	()	()	()	()

32. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Enjoy learning.	()	()	()	()

33. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Feel that my family is struggling financially.	()	()	()	()

34. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Engage in activities that make me feel good about myself.	()	()	()	()

35. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Feel in control of my life and future.	()	()	()	()

36. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Build friendships with other people.	()	()	()	()

37. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Feel valued and appreciated by others.	()	()	()	()

38. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Feel like too much is expected of me.	()	()	()	()

39. I...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Feel good about myself.	()	()	()	()

40. I am...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Able to speak up for myself.	()	()	()	()

41. I am...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Hurt by others spreading rumors about me.	()	()	()	()

42. I am...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Overwhelmed by negativity.	()	()	()	()

43. I am...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Encouraged to help others.	()	()	()	()

44. I am...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Trying to help solve social problems.	()	()	()	()

45. I am...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Struggling to get out of unhealthy friendships or relationships.	()	()	()	()

46. I am...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Involved in a religious group or activity.	()	()	()	()

47. I am...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Held back by racism, inequality, or discrimination.	()	()	()	()

48. I am...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Involved in a sport, club, or other group.	()	()	()	()

49. I am...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Held back by sexism.	()	()	()	()

50. I am...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
A victim of physical violence.	()	()	()	()

51. I am...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Emotionally hurt or attacked.	()	()	()	()

52. I am...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Developing life skills for adulthood.	()	()	()	()

53. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
A safe neighborhood.	()	()	()	()

54. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Access to healthcare when I need it.	()	()	()	()

55. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
The ability to ask for help when I need it.	()	()	()	()

56. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Mental or emotional health challenges (such as depression, anxiety, anger, etc.)	()	()	()	()

57. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
A person in my life who provides me with emotional support (such as talking over problems or helping me make a difficult decision).	()	()	()	()

58. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Access to a therapist or professional I can talk to when I need help or support.	()	()	()	()

59. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Friends who set a good example for me.	()	()	()	()

60. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Adults in my life who are good role models for me.	()	()	()	()

61. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Support from adults other than my parents.	()	()	()	()

62. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
A trusted adult I can ask for advice or help.	()	()	()	()

63. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
A school that enforces rules fairly.	()	()	()	()

64. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Parents/caregivers who urge me to do well in school.	()	()	()	()

65. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Family members who are a bad influence on me.	()	()	()	()

66. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Stress caused by family problems.	()	()	()	()

67. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
Trusting and supportive relationships with other young women my age.	()	()	()	()

68. I have...

	Not at All or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
A family that gives me love and support.	()	()	()	()

69. I am having trouble with... (Please check all that apply.)

- Meeting my basic needs (i.e., food, clothing, shelter)
- Drugs/Alcohol
- Staying in school
- Self Harm
- Suicidal Thoughts
- Experiencing Physical Violence
- Avoiding Fighting
- Court Involvement
- Child Custody Issues
- Finding resources for my child(ren)
- Feeling Safe
- Gang Involvement
- Other - Write In:

70. We are interested in knowing about the educational programs and activities that you would be interested in taking part in. Please mark all activities that you would like to do or resources that you currently need.

- Auto Repair
- Babysitting Certification
- Budgeting/Financial Planning
- Career Exploration Internship
- Career Planning
- Certifications
- College Planning
- Community Service Activity
- Computer Training
- Conflict Resolution Training
- Construction (such as carpentry, electrical, plumbing)
- CPR/First Aid Courses
- Driver's Ed
- Essay workshop for college prep
- Job Training
- Life Skills
- MCAS Prep
- Paid Internship
- Peer Leadership
- SAT/ACT Prep
- Scholarships/Financial Aid
- Social Justice
- Tax Preparation

- Tutoring
- Other - Write In:
- Not interested in any educational programs

71. We are interested in knowing about the arts and creative programs and activities that you would be interested in taking part in. Please mark all activities that you would like to do.

- Acting or Theater
- Band or Color Guard
- Chorus/Choir
- Culinary Arts/Cooking
- Dance
- Fashion Design
- Graphic Design
- Jewelry Design
- Journalism
- Mural Design
- Music Instrument Instruction
- Music Performance
- Music Recording
- Painting/Drawing
- Photography
- Poetry
- Pottery/Ceramics
- Spoken Word
- TV/Radio
- Video Production
- Video Game Design
- Voice/Singing Lessons
- Web Design
- Writing
- Other - Write In:
- Not interested in any arts/creative activities

72. We are interested in knowing about the sports and physical activities that you would be interested in taking part in. Please mark all activities that you would like to do.

- Basketball
- Bowling
- Cheerleading
- Double Dutch
- Golf

- Hockey
- Lacrosse
- Martial Arts/Self Defense
- Rowing
- Running Club
- Sailing
- Soccer
- Softball
- Step Squad
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Track and Field
- Volleyball
- Weight Training
- Workout Class
- Yoga/Pilates
- Other - Write In:
- Not interested in any sports/physical activities

73. What do you need to be empowered?

74. If you could design an empowerment program for girls ages 14-19 to help them reach their full potential and set them up for success, what would the program look like? What are the most important types of programs to include? Please rank your top three choices below. Programs that address issues of:

- _____ Self-esteem
- _____ Racism & Sexism
- _____ Safety & Security
- _____ Health & Mental Health Issues
- _____ Support, Relationships & Networking
- _____ Family
- _____ Education, Knowledge, & Skills
- _____ Values & Morals
- _____ Decision-making
- _____ Leadership
- _____ Activism

Thank You!

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Heartland Institutional Review Board. Questions concerning your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Executive Director at Heartland IRB. Office: (866) 618-4472; Fax: (866) 414-0517; or by emailing director@heartlandirb.org.

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- _____ Financial Planning
- _____ Job and Career Planning & Training

75. Do you like your job?

- Yes
- No

76. What do you like about your job?

77. What don't you like about your job?

78. Why are you not employed?

79. Please describe the programs and activities you participate in.

80. What do you enjoy about these programs or activities?

81. What could be improved about the program or activities you are involved in to better meet your needs?

82. What do you typically do after school?

83. What do you typically do during your free time?

84. What do you typically do after school when you are not working?

85. What do you typically do when you are not working?

86. Where do you go to feel a sense of community?

87. Where are you completing this survey?

- Dudley Station
- Freedom House
- Madison Park Development Corp. (DeWitt Center)
- ACEDONE
- Dorchester Bay Development Corp.
- Other - Write In:
- On phone (got survey link at Dudley)

Appendix B: Rankings of Programs

Table 1A

Ranking of Educational Programs

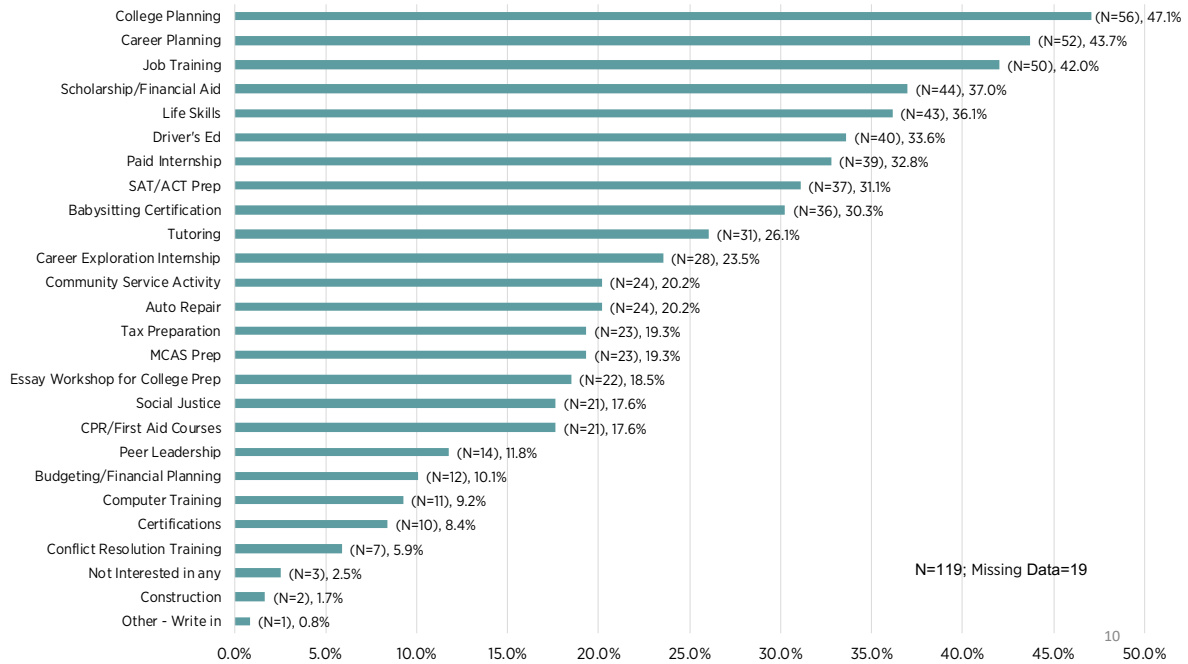


Table 1B

Ranking of Sports & Physical Activities

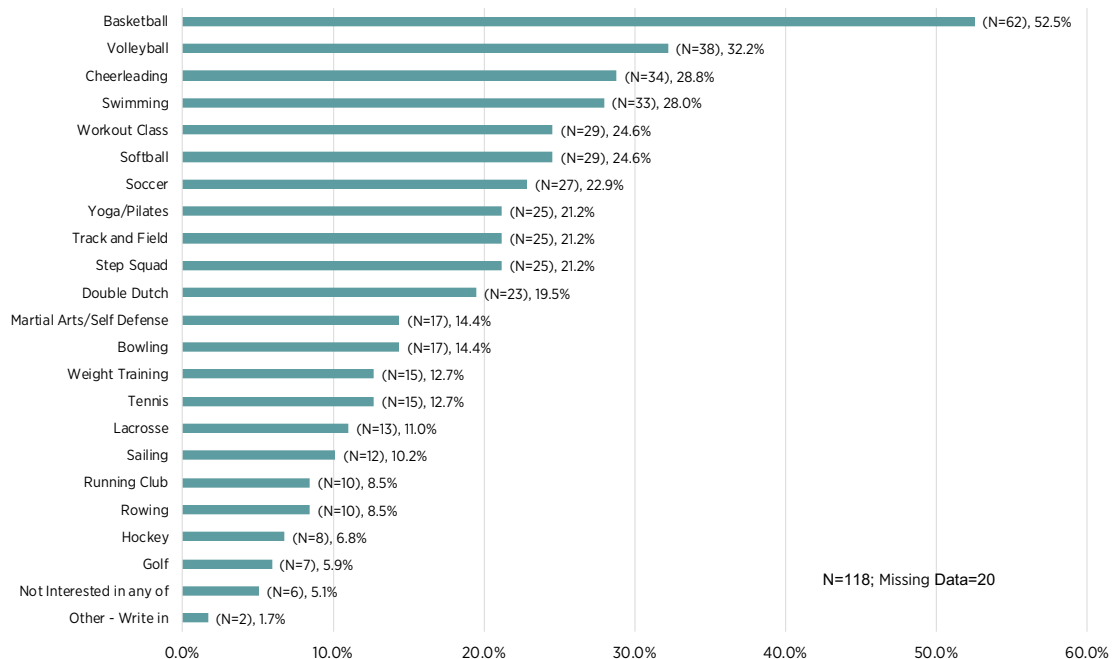
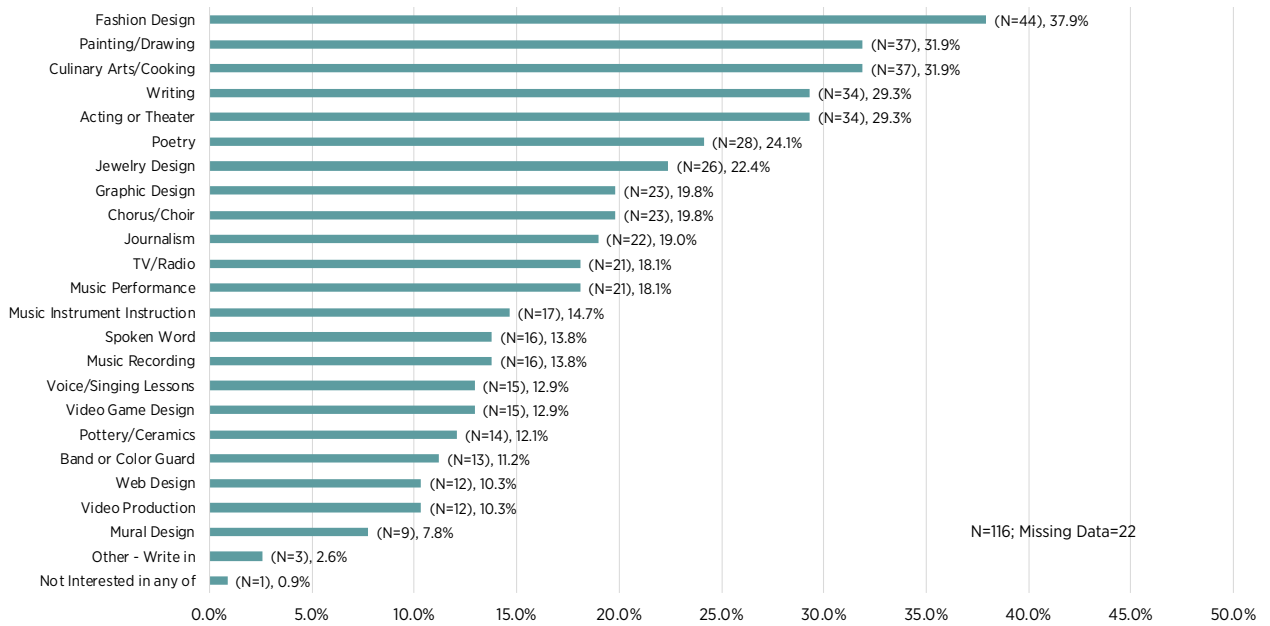


Table 1C

Ranking of Arts and Creative Activities



Appendix C: Rankings of Assets and Resources

Measures	Not at all or Rarely/ Somewhat or Sometimes		Very or Often/ Extremely or Almost Always	
	N	%	N	%
Accept people who are different from me	21	15.9%	111	84.1%
Feel safe and respected at my workplace	12	17.1%	58	82.9%
Parents/caregivers who urge me to do well in school	25	19.8%	101	80.2%
Feel safe and secure at home	27	20.3%	106	79.7%
Feel accepted by others who are different from me	30	22.4%	104	77.6%
Access to healthcare when I need it	32	25.0%	96	75.0%
Adults in my life who are good role models for me	32	25.2%	95	74.8%
Encouraged to help others	33	26.2%	93	73.8%
Feel respected by my family	36	26.9%	98	73.1%
A trusted adult I can ask for advice or help	35	27.8%	91	72.2%
Support from adults other than my parents	35	27.8%	91	72.2%
The ability to ask for help when I need it	37	28.7%	92	71.3%
Feel that my opinion matters	38	28.8%	94	71.2%
Feel good about myself	37	28.9%	91	71.1%
A family that gives me love and support	37	29.1%	90	70.9%
Teachers who urge me to develop and achieve	37	29.6%	88	70.4%
Plan ahead and make good choices	40	29.9%	94	70.1%
Able to speak up for myself	39	30.2%	90	69.8%
Engage in activities that make me feel good about myself	42	32.1%	89	67.9%
Feel good about my future	44	33.1%	89	66.9%
Developing life skills for adulthood	43	34.1%	83	65.9%
Feel safe at school	43	34.4%	82	65.6%
Enjoy learning	50	37.9%	82	62.1%
Avoid things that are dangerous or unhealthy	51	38.1%	83	61.9%
Friends who set a good example for me	49	38.3%	79	61.7%
Feel in control of my life and future	51	38.9%	80	61.1%
Build friendships with other people	50	39.1%	78	60.9%
Tell the truth even when it is not easy	53	39.8%	80	60.2%

Measures	Not at all or Rarely/ Somewhat or Sometimes		Very or Often/ Extremely or Almost Always	
	N	%	N	%
A person in my life who provides me with emotional support	52	40.3%	77	59.7%
Feel valued and appreciated by others	53	41.4%	75	58.6%
Trusting and supportive relationships with other young women my age	53	42.1%	73	57.9%
A school that enforces rules fairly	55	43.0%	73	57.0%
Feel respected by my peers	57	43.5%	74	56.5%
Get to make important decisions and choices about my life	59	43.7%	76	56.3%
Resist bad influences	60	44.8%	74	55.2%
Trying to help solve social problems	58	46.0%	68	54.0%
Have a hard time trusting others	63	47.4%	70	52.6%
A safe neighborhood	62	48.8%	65	51.2%
Deal with frustration in positive ways	66	50.8%	64	49.2%
Involved in a sport, club, or other group	67	53.2%	59	46.8%
Access to a therapist or professional I can talk to when I need help or support	68	53.5%	59	46.5%
Express my feelings in positive ways	77	57.9%	56	42.1%
Involved in a religious group or activity	76	59.8%	51	40.2%
Feel like too much is expected of me	78	60.9%	50	39.1%
Mental or emotional health challenges (such as depression, anxiety, anger, etc.)	81	63.8%	46	36.2%
Stress caused by family problems	84	67.2%	41	32.8%
Feel pressure to have certain clothes or accessories to fit in	88	67.7%	42	32.3%
Feel that my family is struggling financially	91	69.5%	40	30.5%
Overwhelmed by negativity	93	72.7%	35	27.3%
Family members who are a bad influence on me	94	73.4%	34	26.6%
Hurt by others spreading rumors about me	94	74.6%	32	25.4%
Emotionally hurt or attacked	99	77.3%	29	22.7%
Struggling to get out of unhealthy friendships or relationships	99	78.0%	28	22.0%
Held back by racism, inequality, or discrimination	104	81.9%	23	18.1%
Held back by sexism	105	82.0%	23	18.0%
A victim of physical violence	108	85.0%	19	15.0%

Endnotes

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- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Social Capital Research and Training (2018). Definitions of Social Capital. Retrieved on December 20, 2019 from <https://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/literature/definition/>.
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- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ University of California, Berkeley. (2015). YPAR Hub: Young People Empowered to Change the World. Retrieved on January 3, 2020 from <http://yparhub.berkeley.edu/>.
- ¹⁸ Gardner, R., Snyder, W., & Zuguy, A. (2019). Amplifying youth voice and cultivating leadership through participatory action research. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 27(54).
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Ibid.



- ²¹ Of those young women in our sample who said they were not currently attending school or an educational program (n=6), one had completed high-school, half (n=3) had dropped out of school in the 7th or 8th grade and had not attended high school while two had dropped out in high school.
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- ²³ Hook, JN, et al. (2013). Cultural humility: Measuring openness to culturally diverse clients. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 60(3):353-366.
- ²⁴ Women's Philanthropy Institute, Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy and DataLake Nonprofit Research. (2019). *Women & Girls Index*. Retrieved on December 24, 2019 from <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/21011/wgi-report.pdf>.





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