



LET GIRLS LEAD

Rise Up's Let Girls Lead (LGL) Initiative is building a global movement of champions to ensure that girls can attend school, stay healthy, escape poverty, and overcome violence.

Since 2009, Rise Up's Let Girls Lead model – endorsed, validated and supported by leading foundations – has contributed to better health, education, livelihoods, and rights for more than 3 million girls globally.

Let Girls Lead catalyzes scalable change for girls by investing in visionary leaders and local organizations through leadership development, organizational strengthening, grant-making, and advocacy.

Let Girls Lead's innovative model achieves sustainable impacts and systemic change by improving laws, policies, funding, and programs for girls in Africa and Latin America.

OVERVIEW

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

BY THE NUMBERS

Rise Up's Let Girls Lead Initiative Has:

- Contributed to laws & policies benefiting > 3 million girls
- Created a global network of > 200 advocates
- Reached > 40,000 girls with direct services, advocacy training, & empowerment programs
- Built capacity of > 600 grassroots organizations
- Awarded advocacy funding to > 50 organizations
- Launched national girl-centered advocacy networks
- Empowered girls to achieve national & local policy wins



IMPACTS

Rise Up's Let Girls Lead Initiative funded over 50 advocacy projects in Guatemala, Honduras, Liberia, and Malawi. Of these, the evaluation team selected six illustrative cases, using Contribution Analysis to examine LGL's contribution to each policy change. Using the Most Significant Change methodology, the evaluation team gathered early evidence of resulting changes in adolescent girls' lives. The six cases are described below.

Liberia

In Liberia, external stakeholders confirmed reports by LGL grantees Touching Humanity in Need of Kindness' (THINK) and Helping Our People Excel's (HOPE) that their LGL-supported advocacy strategy influenced passage of the national Children's Law. HOPE and THINK noted LGL's capacity building, technical assistance, and well-timed funds as critical to their success. LGL's funds helped HOPE and THINK engage the Children's Parliament and empower girl leaders to participate in the advocacy process, resulting in passage of a landmark law guaranteeing comprehensive protections for children's health, education, and rights, with a special focus on the needs of adolescent girls.

Malawi

In Malawi, local authorities and other key informants confirmed that LGL grantee the Girls Empowerment Network (GENET) contributed significantly to the drafting and enactment of local bylaws to eradicate child marriage in southern Malawi. LGL's training, technical assistance, and grants supported GENET's successful advocacy with village chiefs and traditional leaders. Adolescent girls interviewed also reported cases of girls leaving marriages and returning to school as a result of the new bylaws. They stated that the bylaws' penalties and associated community disapproval were effective deterrents to older men considering marrying young girls.

The Adolescent Girls Advocacy Network (AGANET) in Malawi, created and led by LGL Fellows, influenced policy makers to support the Age of Marriage Bill's reintroduction in the National Parliament. Through LGL's support, Fellows built their advocacy capacity, created a formal registered network, and launched a national advocacy campaign to increase the age of marriage from 15 to 18 years. With support from LGL, AGANET and GENET successfully advocated for passage of landmark legislation outlawing child marriage.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Rise Up's Let Girls Lead program graduates (known as Fellows), partner organizations, policymakers, and other key informants report that LGL has helped country-based leaders, organizations, and networks build their advocacy capacities and influence policy change. They noted LGL's holistic focus on adolescent girls as unique and important across the diverse cultural and political contexts. Key informants valued LGL's focus on national and sub-national advocacy, since programs at these levels directly affect adolescent girls' lives. They welcomed LGL's efforts to build on local expertise to support country-based advocacy and ensure that advocacy goals, skills, and strategies are contextually appropriate.

Fellows appreciate LGL's comprehensive approach to advocacy capacity building. Intensive advocacy capacity building workshops, institutional strengthening workshops, ongoing technical assistance, and ongoing communication together increase the effectiveness of girl-centered advocacy efforts. Seed grants and support to find other funding sources enable Fellows to implement their advocacy plans. The LGL staff's expertise and the LGL cohorts' diversity allow for comprehensive approaches to addressing adolescent girls' needs.

Guatemala

In Guatemala, external stakeholders confirmed the contribution of LGL grantee CONAMI (the National Association against Child Abuse) to national protocols for prevention and treatment of sexual violence against girls. Through LGL's technical assistance, funding, and network development, CONACMI established strategic partnerships to successfully advocate for the passage and implementation of national sexual violence policies that respond to girls' unique needs.

Also in Guatemala, policymakers confirmed that LGL grantee the Research, Development and Comprehensive Education Association (Asociación IDEI) influenced the creation of a Municipal Commission and Office to protect and advance the rights of indigenous children and adolescents. The adolescent girls who led this advocacy initiative reported that, as a result of their success, their communities show greater respect for children's and notably girls' rights. Girls interviewed by the evaluation team stated that parents, school directors, and teachers are prioritizing children's and especially girls' well-being. Key stakeholders reported that LGL played a key role in this success, by providing IDEI with advocacy training, financial support, and connections.

Honduras

In Honduras, policy makers attested to the impacts of a national advocacy campaign led by the Honduras Advocacy Coalition for Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Rights to improve youth access to comprehensive sexuality education and services. The Coalition has advocated for implementation of the National Strategy for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy and the Regional Ministerial Declaration "Prevention through Education." LGL helped establish the Coalition, built members' advocacy skills, and funded its girl-centered advocacy campaigns. Youth interviewed by the evaluation team stated that as a result of this advocacy campaign, schools now have sexual and reproductive health (SRH) classes, and officials are creating centers offering SRH education and services.



RECOMMENDATIONS

This evaluation demonstrates that Rise Up's Let Girls Lead model achieves scalable impacts and sustainable outcomes for girls through leadership development, organizational strengthening, grant-making, and advocacy. The evaluation team developed the following recommendations to help Let Girls Lead further increase the global reach, sustainability, and influence of the LGL model:

- Ensure that all influential actors are represented among LGL Fellows and their allies.
- Expand efforts to directly engage adolescent girls and boys as advocates.
- Increase the focus on promoting country-based collaboration and network formation.
- Collaborate with donors to lengthen the grant funding periods for seed grants.
- Further strengthen in-country capacities to implement the LGL model locally.
- Help others replicate LGL's successes by sharing lessons learned from the model.
- Use the evaluation findings to encourage funders to invest in the model's expansion.



LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR WORK

riseuptogether.org
blog.riseuptogether.org

STAY CONNECTED

Twitter: [@RiseUp_Together](https://twitter.com/RiseUp_Together)
Facebook: [@WeRiseUpTogether](https://facebook.com/WeRiseUpTogether)

ABOUT RISE UP

Rise Up advances health, education and equity for girls, youth, and women everywhere. Since 2009, Rise Up's global network has successfully advocated for over 100 laws and policies impacting 115 million girls, youth, and women. We invest in visionary leaders, local organizations, and innovative solutions to achieve large scale change through leadership development, advocacy, funding, and storytelling. Rise Up unifies the power of [Let Girls Lead](#), [Champions for Change](#) and the [Youth Champions Initiative](#) to create a better future for girls, youth, and women in Africa, Central America, South Asia and the United States.