Chapter 6
Girls Leading Outward (GLO): A School-Based Leadership Intervention to Promote Resilience for At-Risk Middle School Girls

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Fostering Resilience in At-Risk Minority Youth

Early adolescence often involves significant increases in adjustment problems, including internalizing problems such as depression and anxiety (Karevold, Roysamb, Ystrom, & Mathiesen, 2009), delinquency, and substance use (Farrington, 2004). Further, youth during this time experience decreases in academic achievement (Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2009; Fredricks & Eccles, 2002; Ryan & Patrick, 2001), which can negatively impact the trajectory of their life. Indeed, it has been estimated that by high school as many as 40–60 % of students become chronically disengaged from school (Klem & Connell, 2004). The transition from childhood to adolescence can be especially challenging for at-risk youth, and youth who do not successfully negotiate this critical transition are at increased risk for academic failure and school dropout, as well as serious forms of psychopathology (Ellis, Marsh, & Craven, 2009). Early adolescent girls, in particular, are at risk as there is evidence that girls tend to experience more adjustment difficulties than boys during this adolescent transition (Derose & Brooks-Gunn, 2006). For example, by age 15 the gender difference in depressive disorder is at the adult rate of 2:1 for girls to boys (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2002).

Furthermore, the risk for adjustment difficulties resulting from the adolescent transition may be even greater for African-American and Latina girls, who often live in communities beset by poverty, crime, and failing schools. Many African-American and Latino children are exposed to a disproportionate amount of risk. Research reveals that 35 % of African-American and 31 % Latino children live in poverty compared to 11 % of White children in the United States (Wight, Chau, & Aratani, 2011). Poverty has been linked to lower levels of cognitive functioning,

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social development, psychological adjustment, and self-esteem, and poor academic achievement (Cauce, Cruz, Corona, & Conger, 2011). Much of the existing research indicates that African-American and Latino youth face significant challenges and engage in many risky behaviors that can hinder positive development and well-being (Cauce et al., 2011). Data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Youth Behavior Surveillance System indicate that African-American and Latino youth were more likely than White youth to have been in and injured in a physical fight, threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, attempted suicide, and engaged in sexual intercourse (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). Latinas have the highest teen pregnancy rate among major ethnic groups in the United States, and are at the highest risk for depression and suicide attempts (Umaña-Taylor, 2009; Zayas & Pilat, 2008). Latino youth also have the highest school dropout rate. In 2011, approximately 14 % of Latino youth dropped out of high school, which is about three times the rate among White youth (5 %) and double the rate among African-American youth (7 %) (U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Furthermore, ethnic or racial discrimination is also ubiquitous in the lives of many African-American and Latino children (Kuperminc, Jurkovic, & Casey, 2009; Utsey, Bolden, Lanier, & Williams, 2007). Discrimination experiences can be demeaning and degrading and are linked to poor mental health and educational outcomes (Luthar, 2006). Despite this great amount of risk, there are few prevention programs that specifically target Latina and African-American youth who are at risk for developing academic, behavioral, or social problems (Belgrave, 2002; Belgrave, Chase-Vaughn, Gray, Addison, & Cherry, 2000; Botvin, Griffin, & Ifill-Williams, 2001). Latina and African-American middle school girls are thus an important target for preventive interventions to help sustain them in school.

Given that ethnic and cultural minority groups can experience a disproportionate level of stressors, it is critical to evaluate the capacity for school-based programs to promote resilience (Cauce et al., 2011). The promotion of resilience, typically defined as "a pattern of positive adaptation in the context of past or present adversity" (Wright & Masten, 2005, p. 18), should be a core component of school-based prevention programming. Further, despite increasing diversity in the United States, culture is typically afforded a distal or indirect role in models of resilience. However, culture plays an important role in children's lives and diversity factors can relate to and influence resilience and the impact of interventions, particularly among ethnic minority youth (Clauss-Ehlers, 2004).

While the statistics are alarming and point to grave concerns for the development of African-American and Latino children and adolescents, the fact remains that many of these youth are developing quite well despite exposure to significant adversity in their social environments (Belgrave et al., 2000; Kuperminc et al., 2009). For instance, the majority of Latino youth, 78.6 %, do successfully complete high school (Reyes & Elias, 2011). A critical question that lies before researchers, educators, and policy makers is how to improve the health, well-being, and achievement of more African-American and Latino youth. A significant amount of research provides a rationale for the increase in use of after-school programs

(Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Mahoney, Lord, & Carryl, 2005). Participation in a high-quality after-school program can help students improve academically and decrease delinquent behaviors (Fredricks & Eccles, 2002; Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1995; Walking Eagle, Miller, Cooc, LaFleur, & Reisner, 2009). After-school programs are of particular importance within high-risk communities as the arrests for juvenile crime peak between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. on school days. Particularly, the effects on reducing juvenile delinquency were found to be strongest in programs that placed a high emphasis on social skills and character development (Gottfredson, Gerstenblith, Soulé, Womer, & Lu, 2004; Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, & Gottfredson, 2005). Interventions consistent with resilience theoretical models and research on the importance of social, emotional, and character education program provide a promising means to guide school-based preventive interventions directed at least in part towards African-American and Latino adolescents (Reyes & Elias, 2011).

Schools are in a unique position to impact the positive development and resilience of young people because they are a public institution that reach nearly all youth and have the potential to provide ongoing support and access to resources and services (Billy et al., 2000). In particular, schools play an important role in supporting children by fostering both their social–emotional and their academic development (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). For students at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders, increasing the opportunities to succeed in school and life requires effective, preventive interventions designed to improve behavior and academic performance. Unfortunately, schools have been inundated with well-intentioned prevention and promotion programs that address diverse issues but are typically conducted as a series of short-term, fragmented initiatives without long-term follow-up. In their 2011 meta-analysis, Durlak et al. found that only 16 % of the studies collected information on academic achievement after the intervention, and that although all reviewed studies targeted the development of social and emotional skills, only 32 % assessed skills as an outcome (Durlak et al., 2011). Follow-up investigations are needed to confirm the durability of program impact. Additionally, much of the research concerning African-American and Latino students relies on deficit paradigms that emphasize stressors, school disengagement, academic underachievement, and behavior problems (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Smith, 2006; Villalba, 2007). While these issues may represent the reality for many African-American and Latino students, little research emphasizes these students' resiliency or strengths.

Recognizing the above-stated issues, Girls Leading Outward (GLO) is an after-school program that intends to produce sustainable positive change in the life trajectory of at-risk middle school girls, particularly ethnic minority girls. In particular, this program draws on ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Dalton, Elias, & Wandersman, 2007), a model in which an individual is embedded within multiple systems (e.g., school, family, neighborhood contexts) that each impacts the individual's mental health and behaviors. We are interested in determining what feasible changes can be affected at the school and individual level to systematically modify a key microsystem of girls, their attitudes, and social–emotional competencies, in a way that offsets other ecological forces that do not promote positive growth.

Specifically, this program aims to be an ecologically sensitive intervention targeting at-risk Latina and African-American girls with a focus on having sustained impact on their social–emotional and character development (SECD) by changing how they view themselves and their role as leaders in their school community. We believe that building students' skills in a context that provides them with a new perspective on themselves and their future, while fostering a sense of community, may be sufficiently powerful to create a positive trajectory for middle school girls as well as ultimately change the overall school environment. Through this in-school visibility, we believe that we can change the role that these students play in the school setting from "at-risk girls" to "student leaders," which can then become internalized and integrated into their own identity. This chapter will provide theories behind the program development, followed by a detailed description of the intervention.

The Importance of an Ecological Perspective of Resilience

Resilience extends beyond the concept of a fixed individual trait or quality (Luthar, 2006) and is best viewed as a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses individual, relational, and contextual factors (Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2009). One major framework guiding resilience research is the ecological systems theory first posited by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), which proposes that multiple levels of children's ecologies influence each other, and in turn influence children's development. From such a perspective, appropriate, comprehensive, and developmentally sequenced preventive interventions can best be designed and implemented. This theory conceptualizes ecological contexts as consisting of a number of nested levels with varying degrees of proximity to the child, including the microsystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The microsystem refers to the family environment that children and adults create and experience. The exosystem includes the neighborhood and community settings in which families and children live. The macrosystem refers to the underlying mainstream societal beliefs and values. This model was further elaborated on by Cicchetti and Toth (1997) who described an additional system of ontogenic development which includes the individual and his or her own developmental adaptation. Cicchetti and Toth (1997) hypothesized that these levels of the environment interact and transact with each other over time in shaping child development and adaptation. Because resilience is both an individual characteristic and a quality of an individual's environment that provides the resources necessary for positive adaption despite exposure adversity (Ungar et al., 2007), it becomes clear that school-based preventive interventions must be of wide scope if they are to be maximally and widely effective.

Keeping the ecological model in mind, in order for interventions for individuals to be sustainable, they must transform the social settings in which they are implemented in order to bring about effective change (Seidman, 2011; Tseng & Seidman, 2007). Such transformations involve changing a setting's organization, social

norms, and resources to improve the overall effectiveness of those settings. At their best, school settings provide youth with meaningful relationships with adults and peers, structured activities, access to resources, and opportunities for academic, social, and emotional learning, and identity development (Tseng & Seidman, 2007). Creating a positive school climate through school setting improvement gives students benefits systematically, thereby affecting numerous developmental outcomes (Brand, Felner, Shim, Seitsinger, & Dumas, 2003; Kreft, 1993).

Recent large-scale studies of after-school programs have yielded disappointing results, potentially because of a lack of attention to implementation details related to the connection of programs to their host settings (Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011). Using an ecological perspective, Hirsch et al. (2011) point out that contextual factors often contain the determining factors leading to the direction and strength of youth outcomes. Particularly in school-linked after-school centers (versus freestanding community-based centers that draw from many schools), student outcomes are linked to the relationship of the program to the peer context and school culture with which the after-school program has inevitable continuity. These authors (Hirsch et al., 2011) refer to the acronym, PARC, as containing key elements that contribute to outcomes: Program, Activity, Relationship, and Culture.

The acronym SAFE characterizes features of other after-school programs that are likely to have a range of positive effects: Sequenced, Active, Focused, and Explicit (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). However, there are two important caveats to SAFE. While we know the potential of after-school programs is considerable, data show a structured curriculum is less likely to be feasible and appealing to youth than approaches that are problem-based. Problem-based approaches work despite fluctuating attendance, and feature strong youth empowerment and input (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010). Second, there is a critical need to think in terms of sustainability and scalability. For either to occur, consideration must be given to the reality of staff capacity. Specifically, more support is needed for structured interventions if they are to have lasting, tangible effects. Unfortunately, the research in this area still does not provide detailed guidance for program success.

PARC and SAFE have complementary programmatic concepts, which emphasize the importance of having a coherent program that recognizes the flexibility required in the after-school context. Programs must be engaging, empowering, active, and not didactic, and they must have a clear focus and explicit structure. In addition, youth must have an opportunity to have second-order change in the pattern of their relationships, ideally with peers but certainly with adults. Last, and perhaps most important, is need for the programs be embedded in cultural and school organizational contexts which lessens the possibility that they will be ignored. When at-risk youth are the program recipients, attention to this ecological reality becomes paramount: for second-order change, students' relationships to their contexts must be affected. As students enter adolescence, the importance of the school social atmosphere is particularly important as adolescents' expanding capacity for perspective-taking results in their increased awareness and concern with the opinions of others (Good & Adams, 2008). For their behavioral changes to be sustainable, their relationships with peers and adults must shift in positive directions.

We believe that this is the reason why many programs for at-risk youth that are well structured on the surface do not ultimately succeed in changing their status. True adherence to an ecological model requires changing the social ecology of the students and their perception by those with whom they interact often in school. However, most after-school programs consist of academic tutoring, academic enrichment, and art or athletics activities in individual class settings with minimal opportunity to build cohesion among students and skills over time. Further, most programs are rarely coordinated with daily school activities which impacts the potential generalization of skills learned after school to skills employed during the school day. Most after-school programs that address SECD and/or service-learning take a predominantly person-centered approach by aiming to build a student's individual skills without considering the ecological factors that may be helping or hindering success. It is important to consider the various systems that may help a child obtain SECD and empowerment, as well as what may inhibit a child from gaining these even with quality programming. Such an analysis can guide approaches to intervention at various ecological levels to support the child.

Social–Emotional and Character Development and Service-Learning

Research has shown that investment in academic instruction without complementary attention to social and emotional needs and character development may lead to failure in both areas (Adelman & Taylor, 2000). Lack of social–emotional competencies can cause students to become less connected to school as they progress, and this lack of connection can negatively affect their academic performance, behavior, and health (Blum & Libbey, 2004; Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). Problems of social–emotional functioning often occur in conjunction with academic problems (Barbarin, 2002). This relationship implies that social–emotional development is not separate from academic achievement; instead these areas are dynamic and interrelated and thus, in a school context, are necessary for children to develop and be successful (Klein, 2002). Children who do not obtain the skills needed to develop social–emotional competence are at greater risk of falling behind in school, and have greater chances of behavioral, emotional, academic, and social developmental problems (Aviles, Anderson, & Davila, 2006).

Concerted efforts to inculcate universal values such as compassion, mutual support, and community service are being reconceptualized as vital aspects of high-quality education in a context of globalization (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004). The adoption of programs that foster these values may be an effective method to help redress the unhealthy imbalance in the current public education system (Elias, 2009); a focus on personal values and their expression should provide a welcome change in the school environment. Importantly, these factors have international significance and implications; data show that those educational systems with the greatest consistent records of academic success are also those that focus on the character of their students (Elias, Tobias, & Friedlander, 2011).

One device that is becoming more common in SECD programs is including an element of service-learning or some form of community service. Students who participate in service-learning programs often have stronger ties to their schools, their peers, and their communities, better academic performance, and higher graduation rates than nonparticipants (Wilczenski & Coomey, 2007). Service-learning models have been shown to create a positive change in students by increasing their sense of empowerment, while allowing them to help their greater communities through the successful completion of community service projects (Kielsmeier, Root, Pernu, & Lyngstad, 2010). A number of studies show that students who participate in service-learning have a greater awareness of community needs, a stronger sense of civic responsibility, and more concern for social change than nonparticipants (Billig, 2000; Morgan & Streb, 2001).

While service-learning increases student engagement in the learning task, this effect in itself is apparently not sufficient to produce robust student outcomes. Rather, a whole variety of program design characteristics appear to be necessary to shape the impact. These characteristics include a high degree of student responsibility for the service, a high degree of student autonomy (students empowered to make decisions, solve problems, and so forth), a high degree of student choice (both in the selection of service to be performed and in the planning and the evaluation of the activity), a high degree of direct contact with the service recipient (who receives service of some duration, not short-term, one-shot service), and high-quality reflection activities (reflection that connects the experience with content, skills, and values). Additionally, research suggests that service-learning embedded in a pedagogical structure within the school curriculum yields the greatest positive effects (Wilczenski & Coomey, 2007). Well-prepared teachers who serve as active partners and knowledge mediators (but not as sole decision makers) are critical factors in determining student outcomes (Billig, 2000; Wilczenski & Coomey, 2007). When service-learning meets an authentic community need and includes meaningful planning, service, reflection, and celebration, it typically succeeds in engaging students in the learning task. Most studies attribute this outcome to having activated students' sense of purpose, motivation to learn, and changing students' relationships to peers and adults in their schools (Billig, 2000; Wilczenski & Coomey, 2007).

Service-learning and the way it changes participants' relationships with those in community settings can be a source of transformational second-order change for both the students and their participating schools. This is perhaps because of the potential service-learning has to improve participants' relationships with those in their educational community settings. When teachers evaluate a student's academic skills, they look for interpersonal skills, study skills, motivation, and engagement, all which are thought to be key components of academic competence (DiPerna, Volpe, & Elliott, 2002). Teacher preference (i.e., the degree to which a teacher positively or negatively perceives a specific student) has been found to predict adjustment of children in school. Longitudinal studies have found a relationship between low teacher preference and negative academic and social outcomes (Mercer & DeRosier, 2008). Because teachers influence the classroom climate, teacher preference can affect a student's general social acceptance as well as peer acceptance of specific social behaviors (e.g., aggressive and prosocial) (Chang et al., 2007; Mercer & DeRosier, 2008).

Teacher preference is based on a number of student behaviors related to academic competence, specifically those areas that the GLO program seeks to target. Teachers tend to dislike aggressive and disruptive students and prefer students who are high-achieving, hard-working, and display prosocial behavior (Babad, 1993; Birch & Ladd, 1998; Wentzel & Asher, 1995). Participation in school-based service-learning has the potential to increase teacher's positive perceptions of the student as well as student engagement. Additionally, promoting school and community engagement through service-learning may be particularly important in at-risk populations such as minorities and/or with academic and behaviorally at-risk youth (Lakin & Mahoney, 2006). Given the influence teachers have on the education climate and potential of the student (Chang et al., 2007; Mercer & DeRosier, 2008) and that this preference is often based on students' social–emotional skills (Babad, 1993; Birch & Ladd, 1998; Wentzel & Asher, 1995), the GLO program has the potential to activate positive regard towards our targeted at-risk girls. By affecting a positive change in the perceptions of teachers and peers towards adolescence at-risk, GLO aims to have a long-term, sustainable impact on these youth's academic and behavioral trajectories as it is impacting them not only at the individual level but also at the microsystemic level.

GLO: Girls Leading Outward

GLO is a school-based, SECD after-school program for at-risk adolescent girls. GLO focuses predominately on urban, African-American, and Latina students from low-income communities who are identified as at risk for psychosocial adjustment by their teachers. At risk is defined as girls who are feeling disconnected from their school environment, who are struggling academically, and/or who are exhibiting problem behaviors. Because the GLO program is a preventive/Tier 2 intervention, the students sought are not those already experiencing severe academic and/or behavioral issues. The goal of this 2-year intervention is to reach at-risk girls in the years immediately prior to their transition to high school, in the seventh and eighth grade. GLO is designed to create an alternative setting in the school in which at-risk girls change their negative behaviors, raise their status in the school, and foster an overall positive change in school climate through their service-leadership activities. The GLO intervention addresses relational aggression, problem behaviors, social skills, and leadership through an empowerment approach and attempts to anchor girls' growing resilience in a school environment progressively more supportive of the changes they are showing.

GLO integrates what has been learned about the ecological model, the early adolescent transition, the unique difficulties of middle school girls, the unique difficulties of Latinos and African-Americans, as well as SECD and service-learning. GLO differs from typical after-school programs in that it involves a weekly in-school component and support from local undergraduate students. Further, GLO asks participants to visibly engage in their academic environment via a school-based community service project. GLO is designed to strengthen SECD while calling key life

skills into action through community service. Key skills that are addressed in the program include problem solving, decision making, goal setting, emotion recognition and regulation, and assertiveness. These skills support middle school girls towards making better decisions, building positive and stable relationships with others, and gaining a more positive view of themselves. Once mastered, these competencies positively affect the critical transition into high school. Further, through the community service and mentoring components, the GLO program provides an opportunity to strengthen skills while attaining positive acknowledgement for completion of their goals and engagement in leadership activities. Since the community service and mentoring components are school-based, the school setting as a whole benefits from the activities of the girls and the girls also have the potential to now be viewed as leaders by other members of the school community. This service-learning and strength-based model emphasizes leadership, teamwork, and community, while providing both a sense of self-worth and empowerment. Not only is GLO designed to target the students in the program at an individual level by teaching them leadership skills, but GLO also aims to change their perception in their larger ecological context, with their peers and teachers at the school-level, by providing them the space to become leaders of their community.

GLO seeks to target youth who are at risk and have the potential to be positive opinion leaders based upon the theory that affecting the trajectory of these at-risk opinion leaders can have a transformative affect on their peers as well. Prior research on the diffusion of innovations and health behavior has shown a link between the behavior of opinion leaders and the behavior of the community they represent (Valente & Pumpuang, 2007). Thus, this project aims to create an in-school and after-school setting whereby at-risk girls can become better connected to their school environment, and in turn improves their overall perception of school climate, microsystemic relationships, and individual level academic outcomes. Since students' perceptions of the school environment are likely to impact their behavior at school (Bandura, 2001), it is critical to provide a support system for at-risk students. In our view, this kind of sophisticated, multilevel intervention is necessary to both instill and sustain a sense of resilience in girls whose skills, aspirations, and support systems are not preparing them for success in high school and beyond.

In its current form, the program is designed to be co-facilitated by an existing school staff member, either a teacher or guidance counselor, along with undergraduate students from a local university. In order to enable program sustainability, a member of the school staff (e.g., a teacher or school counselor) will be the lead facilitator of the after-school component of the program. Undergraduate facilitators will support the school staff facilitator during the after-school component as well as provide the lunch programming. This facilitator design came about through concerns about the sustainability of school-based interventions in an era in which school staff members are overtaxed. Typical project resources can be devoted to staffing a demonstration project, but the capacity to replicate the program structure does not exist once external project resources end. To this end, GLO is designed explicitly as a school–university partnership where middle school staff and college student volunteers act as co-facilitators to deliver the intervention. Utilizing community

resources, particularly university students, may be beneficial, as resources for providing mental health services in schools can be limited. Providing the additional support of student facilitators may help to ensure the feasibility of a program being implemented in a busy school setting where teachers or other school staff may not have the time to implement all parts of the intervention without support.

In addition, and also of strong significance in affecting the girls' mind-sets and aspirations, university undergraduate students have the potential to be viewed as closer in age mentors by the middle school students who nurture their identities as future college students. Prior interventions in primary and secondary schools have successfully used university students, including undergraduates and nursing students, to deliver programs in smoking prevention, emotional regulation, and reading tutoring (Cavell & Hughes, 2000; Cowen, Zax, & Laird, 1966; Miller, Gillespie, Billian, & Davel, 2001; Ritter, Barnett, Denny, & Albin, 2009). The undergraduate facilitators are able to serve as mentors to the GLO participants, as well as positive role models of women's leadership. We believe that this university partnership is practical and generalizable to other geographic locations as our target population of at-risk students is often located in or near cities typically containing 2- and 4-year colleges or universities.

Components of the GLO Program

Participants receive GLO programming weekly for approximately 28 weeks throughout the school year while in seventh grade and eighth grade, with sessions after school and during a lunch period. GLO ideally has 6–10 members per GLO group. Tables 6.1 and 6.2 provide an outline of the GLO after-school program topics

Table 6.1 Outline of GLO sessions for the seventh-grade curriculum (year 1)

Year 1: seventh grade		
Lesson number	Lesson topic	Main components
1	Welcome Session	• Introduction to the group • Explain group format and devise group norms/rules together ("GLO Culture") • Rapport building activity
2	Assessment Session (optional)	• Conduct baseline assessment • Rapport building activity, such as human knot or blind trust game
3	Leadership	• Introduce "Speak Out," where group members are asked to share one positive and one negative experience since the last session (*Note*: this occurs at the beginning of each session) • Define leadership and identify female leaders • Identify and reflect on leadership qualities that members already possess and which they want to work towards

(continued)

Table 6.1 (continued)

Year 1: seventh grade		
Lesson number	Lesson topic	Main components
4	Voice: BEST	• Introduce "BEST" as an acronym for good communication skills: Body Language, Eye Contact, Speech, and Tone of Voice • Role play BEST with partners in the group
5	Voice: FANSO	• Introduce "FANSO" as a strategy for stating one's opinion, while being respectful: First Acknowledge, Next Speak Out • Practice FANSO as a group
6	Voice: Assertiveness	• Define being assertive, in contrast to being passive or aggressive • Role play assertiveness skills as a group, with group leaders first providing a demonstration
7	Voice: Mini Project (*Note*: two sessions max)	• Members are asked to write a reflective essay on their Law of Life, or a value that is important to them • The first session should focus on explaining the task, to begin brainstorming, and start writing, with the members continuing to work on the essay for homework; the second session can allow more time for the members to work on their essays and/or begin sharing their essays with the group
8	Voice: Reflect on Mini Project	• Share essays with the group and reflect on the process • Members decide on group name
9	Heart: Identify Emotions	• Recognizing emotions—discussing when and why individuals have felt certain emotions • Emotion charades activity
10	Heart: Keep Calm	• Discussion on how to manage negative emotions • Introduce the Keep Calm technique: (1) Tell yourself to STOP; (2) Tell yourself to KEEP CALM; (3) Slow down your breathing with two long, deep breaths; (4) Praise yourself for a job well done
11	Heart: Connect Emotions with Thoughts and Behaviors	• Discussion on the relationship between emotions, thoughts, and behaviors
12	Mind: Identifying Aggression	• Discussion on interpreting peoples' intentions and how to gage what someone is feeling • Discussion of experiences of being victims or bystanders of aggression
13	Mind: FIGTESPN	• Linking leadership and problem solving • Introduce FIGTESPN: (1) Find the feelings, (2) Identify the problem, (3) Guide yourself with a goal, (4) Think of many possible solutions, (5) Envision consequences, (6) Select the best solution, (7) Plan and be prepared for pitfalls, (8) Notice what happened–anticipate future • Activities: problem solving scenarios
14	Team: Civic Engagement	• Recap FIGTESPN • Leadership and civic engagement discussion
15	Team: Leadership Project	*Note*: Project must be completed in time for there to still be three sessions before the end of the program
16	Reflection Session	• Thank girls for their work and hand out certificates • Reflect on pros and cons of the project
17	Assessment Session (optional)	• Conduct post-assessment
18	Celebration Session	• Reflect on what the girls got out of the program • Keepsake activity

Table 6.2 Outline of GLO sessions for the eighth-grade curriculum (year 2)

Year 2: eighth grade		
Lesson number	Lesson topic	Main components
1	Welcome Session	• Review GLO and discuss differences between year 1 and year 2 • Devise group norms/rules together ("GLO Culture") • Trust exercises
2	Assessment (optional) and Leadership Session	• Complete baseline assessment • Discuss important leadership qualities and their relevance in GLO and high school
3	Review from Year 1: BEST, FANSO, and Assertiveness	• Review BEST, FANSO, and Assertiveness • Practice with role plays
4	Voice: Assertive Language	• Review assertiveness and practice • Introduce IFA: (1) Identify the problem, (2) Say how you feel, (3) Ask for a change
5	Voice: Mini Project	• Laws of Life Activity (*Note*: up to two sessions)
6	Heart: Relaxation and Increasing our Positive Emotions	• Discussion on positive outlooks and managing their negative feelings • Practice relaxation and mindfulness activities
7	Heart: Communicating How You Feel to Others	• Review different techniques that one can use to avoid getting upset in an argument • I-statements activity
8	Team/Mind: Thinking about Relational Aggression	• Review BEST, FANSO, Keep Calm, and I statements • Ask the girls to discuss examples of the above by going over example scenarios
9	Team: Relationship Rules 1	• Discussion on steps to avoid engaging in relational aggression, such as not attacking someone's character
10	Team: Relationship Rules 2	• Discussion with girls about being in uncomfortable situations
11	Team: Civic Engagement	• Recap FIGTESPN and its relationship to keep calm and FANSO • Guest speaker discussion of civic engagement
12	Team: Leadership Project	• *Note*: Project must be completed in time for there to still be three sessions before the end of the program
13	Reflection Session	• Thank girls for their time in GLO • Reflect on GLO experience
14	Assessment Session (optional)	• Conduct post-assessment
15	Celebration Session	• Hand out certificates and keepsake activity

for the seventh- and eighth-grade curriculums, respectively. The GLO curriculum is designed to focus on four main components of leadership: Voice, Heart, Mind, and Team. The Voice sessions consist of communication skill building. The Heart sessions focus on emotion recognition and regulation. The Mind sessions focus primarily on problem solving skills. The Team sessions consist of the civic engagement and leadership project portion of the program. Assessments are integrated into program delivery in order to measure change systematically in the participants.

It is recommended that this assessment occur during the second session and again following completion of the service-learning project (see Tables 6.1 and 6.2). Typical assessments have included measures of students' sense of mastery and perseverance. It may also be useful to have teachers rate students on their social–emotional competencies in order to assess for changes observed in the school environment.

Each after-school session is designed to be approximately 60 min long and includes skills training and a skills reinforcing activity, with a goal of ultimately utilizing the skills they learn for an end-of-year community service project. The duration of the lunch session varies depending on the school bell schedule but tends to run approximately 20–30 min. The curriculum for the first year focuses on building leadership skills, such as effectively communicating ideas and opinions to others, and becoming involved with community service within the school. The curriculum for the second year focuses on maintaining and utilizing the skills learned during the seventh-grade year, as well as mentoring the new seventh-grade GLO girls. Both seventh and eighth graders will engage in various community service-leadership projects within the school setting. Overall, GLO involves five structural elements: after-school programming, service-learning, lunch meetings, in-school support, and undergraduate mentors.

After-school programming. GLO is structured primarily as an after-school program. After-school programs provide schools the opportunity to support students in ways not possible during the school day. In high-risk communities, often times the typical dose of school support is simply not enough. After-school programs act as an important supplement and an alternative setting for establishing positive relationships and attitudes. The after-school sessions of GLO are run by the school staff member along with undergraduate co-facilitators. Each after-school session is approximately 60 min long and includes the following three elements: (1) skills training, (2) a skills reinforcing activity, and (3) a service-learning project. Each after-school session of GLO commences with "Speak Out" where the group members and facilitators are asked to briefly check in about one good thing and one bad thing they have experienced over the week since that last group session. Speak Out serves as an opportunity for all group members to get to know each other better, as well as a way for facilitators to gage the overall mood of the group members before beginning the days' activities. Further, facilitators are able to build relationships with the participants by sharing relatable experiences from their own lives while modeling what are appropriate events to share with the group.

Following Speak Out, the session focuses on teaching and practicing one SECD skill, such as problem solving, followed by a reinforcing group activity. Each lesson builds off of the prior session, with a quick review of the prior week before introducing the new skill. The lessons are meant to be interactive and often involve role plays to get the girls on their feet and putting the skills into practice. The group activity at the end of the session is meant to reflect the SECD skill while fostering team building and bonding among the participants and the facilitators. Over the course of about 12 weeks, the group will have worked on defining what leadership means to them and learning some of the key leadership skills, including communication, assertiveness, and problem solving.

Service-learning. A key component of the GLO program is a service-learning project that is introduced early on in the program and brought to fruition during the later half of the school year once basic SECD skills have been covered. The purpose of the service-learning is to increase the group's feeling of empowerment, and to encourage the girls to fully utilize their leadership abilities. The goal is to foster a social process by which these at-risk girls can interact with each other and the larger school setting in positive ways. Successful completion of the service-learning project has the potential to affect both the girls' perceptions of the school climate and the school setting's perception of them. The SECD skills learned throughout are meant to lay the foundation for them designing and implementing a service project of their choosing. They are asked to brainstorm different possible projects and come up with a feasible plan for implementing it. During the course of planning, they present their project idea to the school principal or any other staff that they would need approval from. This step allows them to practice their communication and problem solving skills they learned earlier in the program. It also reinforces to the school administration that these girls are becoming leaders in the larger school community.

In our experience, the service-learning projects that are the most successful are those that involve other members of the school community, and the more other students that are involved the better. Examples of past service-learning projects have included (a) a mural completed by the whole seventh-grade class over a series of lunch periods focused on being yourself that was hung up in the school cafeteria, (b) a campaign raising awareness of individuality with all seventh-grade students writing brief stories about themselves in exchange for dog tags that read, "Everyone Has a Story," and these stories were then shared with the school staff, and (c) a week of service where the GLO girls visited a nursing home, raised money for an animal shelter by having a lemonade sale, culminating in the GLO girls teaching the other seventh-grade girls some of the key GLO skills and then holding a big sister/little sister event where all of the seventh-grade girls taught these skills to the second-grade girls. These projects served as a way for the GLO girls to demonstrate the skills they had learned not only to themselves but also to the larger school community and greatly enhanced the GLO girls' leadership roles and visibility.

Lunch sessions. Another component of the weekly program is the school lunch sessions. The school lunch sessions are supervised by the university undergraduate facilitators and typically occur on the same day as the after-school session, which also helps to serve as a reminder that the after-school session will be occurring. Each session occurs during the regularly scheduled lunch period and includes the following two elements: (1) review of the prior after-school session and (2) a skills reinforcing activity that will in turn promote GLO culture within the larger school community. The lunch component reflects literature and our experience regarding the need to ensure continuity between after-school programming and the school culture and context to create a coherent ecological connection for students (Hirsch et al., 2011). It is important to create a method for students to translate what they learn after-school into in-school success. The lunch sessions also serve to provide visibility of the GLO girls in the larger community. Many of the activities

involve creating posters that will be hung up around the school to promote the particular SECD skill that was learned the prior week. Depending on the set up of the lunch meeting with the logistics of a particular school, the session may be occurring in the cafeteria at a designated GLO table with the other students then being able to identify who is involved in the program. In the past, groups have decorated a GLO tablecloth with their names and what is important to them that is used at every lunch session to designate the GLO table.

In-school support. Through our experience running the program over the past 10 years, we have learned that it is important to have a member of the school staff take a lead in facilitating the program. This helps the school to take ownership of the program, which we see as essential for sustainability once program developers are no longer in the picture. Having a school staff member be the lead facilitator also allows for more flexibility in the program, such as last minute scheduling changes or timely modifications to the curriculum, as the school staff member often has a better sense of what is going on in the school than facilitators from the outside. In addition, in-school support, along with the lunch meetings, provides visibility, which leads to norm changes and goal/aspiration changes on the part of the group members, as well as changes in respect for these girls and changes in their self-respect. This is all essential for climate change, which is strongly linked to levels of respect in the school.

Undergraduate mentors. We believe that the undergraduate co-facilitators serve not only as a support for the school staff member who is facilitating the program but also as an important mentoring role for the GLO participants. In the current implementation of the program, undergraduates are selected through an interview process based on their past experience in working with youth and prior leadership experiences. They receive training on delivering the program curriculum, with particular emphasis on how to effectively facilitate groups and work with middle school-aged students. They also receive ongoing supervision to address issues as they arise and to provide ongoing feedback. The undergraduates are primarily responsible for leading the lunch session, ideally in pairs, and they also participate in the after-school program. How much they facilitate the after-school program material can vary from school to school, but in our experience having the undergraduates assist in delivering sections of the curriculum is useful as the GLO participants begin to look up to them as examples of what it means to be leader. The undergraduates model appropriate behavior and responses, and over time we begin to see the GLO participants emulate this. The undergraduates also serve as a gateway to discussions about the future for the girls and help them to begin to envision college as part of that future. The participants ask a lot of questions to the undergraduates about what college is like and seemed fascinated by this prospect. We believe that involving these older peer role models is a key component of the GLO intervention, and that it is also feasible as any local 2- or 4-year college can serve as a source of students. In areas where college students are less accessible, we could envision high school seniors fulfilling a similar role with training and supervision, as they would also be able to provide a model of future leadership for the girls.

Sample GLO Lessons

Voice

Two skill-building lessons that form the foundation for much of the GLO program focus on communication skills. During the fourth session, students are introduced to the concept of "BEST" which teaches the basics of how to present oneself when communicating with other people. It is emphasized that it is important to have good body posture, make good eye contact, use good speech, and use a good tone of voice when speaking, and BEST serves as an acronym and reminder for these four elements of communication (Elias & Bruene, 2005). During this session, facilitators role play poor and good use of BEST, and the girls are asked to practice using these skills with a partner as well as with the larger group. They are also encouraged to practice this technique during the week and to report back during the following session.

In the subsequent session, following a review of "BEST," communication skills are expanded upon with a discussion of the importance of making sure the person you are talking to know you are listening to them. To introduce this concept, the acronym "FANSO" is used, which stands for "First Acknowledge Next Speak Out." This emphasizes that instead of blurting out your opinion when speaking with someone, especially when you disagree, it is first important to recognize what he or she said and then state your own opinion. One example that is given to participants is the following: if they are discussing service project ideas with another group member and they don't like her idea, instead of saying "That's a dumb idea!" they could say, "I think it is good that you have ideas about this, but I don't agree." Group facilitators model use of the FANSO skill through role plays and participants are asked to point out what works well and does not work well in these role plays. The end of group activity asks the girls to give their opinion on a variety of topics, such as "What is your opinion about school uniforms?" or "What is your opinion on *X celebrity*?," and to have a dialogue among the group members.

BEST and FANSO carry through into future sessions as they are not only reviewed in future lessons, but the girls are also asked to make posters of these skill acronyms to hang up during the group sessions as a reminder as well as throughout the school for other students to see. When group facilitators notice the students using these skills, they should reinforce them, and when they notice that they are not using them but could benefit from them, they should encourage the students to use BEST and FANSO. These become particularly relevant as the group is planning for their service-learning project.

Heart

Following the foundation of communication skills, the program shifts to focus on emotion regulation strategies. First, the group members are asked to think of experiences where they have experienced a given emotion (assigned by drawing emotion cards randomly), explain to the group how they physically experienced that emotion

(e.g., body tightness, heart beating), and what they did to cope with the feeling if it was a negative feeling. Participants then practice recognizing emotions in other people through an emotion charades game, in which they take turns acting out and guessing emotion words. This game emphasizes how we can use body language and facial expressions to get clues to how others are feeling, but also points out that it can sometimes be difficult to know for sure unless you ask them directly.

In the subsequent lesson, the facilitators lead a discussion on the importance of managing your emotions and ways to cope with negative feelings. The concept of "KEEP CALM," taken from the evidence-based *Social Decision Making* program (Elias & Bruene, 2005), is introduced with participants encouraged to use the following steps when they encounter a situation and feel their emotions begin to escalate: (1) Tell yourself to STOP, (2) Tell yourself to KEEP CALM, (3) Slow down your breathing with two long, deep breaths, and (4) Praise yourself for a job well done. The girls are encouraged to practice this skill in the session and over the next week; facilitators check in during the following lunch and after-school session.

Mind

The primary lesson in the Mind portion of the curriculum focuses on problem solving skills. Facilitators emphasize that problem solving and being able to make smart and thought-out decision is an essential aspect of leadership. The acronym "FIGTESPN," also from *Social Decision Making* (Elias & Bruene, 2005), is introduced as an eight-step plan for problem solving: (1) Find the feeling, (2) Identify the problem, (3) Guide yourself with a goal, (4) Think of many possible solutions, (5) Envision consequences, (6) Select the best solution, (7) Plan and be prepared for pitfalls, and (8) Notice what happened and anticipate the future. The group then practices problem solving by going through one to two situations that they have generated, such as not being invited to a friend's party or having a teacher that you don't get along with in school and that gave you a bad grade. Throughout this lesson, facilitators remind group members to use prior communication and emotion regulation skills, such as BEST, FANSO, and KEEP CALM, when working through their possible solution. This problem solving method becomes important in the planning process of the service-learning project, and it helps the group members strategize how to implement their project.

Lessons Learned: Success Stories and Problems Encountered in Implementation

Over the past several years, we have had two primary sites implementing the GLO program. From 2009 to 2013, GLO was implemented in a middle school that contained grades 4–8. Graduate students from our team along with undergraduate co-facilitators facilitated this program. School staff was minimally involved. When the program began, there was only an after-school component. While the program was

qualitatively successful, we noticed that not having a school staff member involved and only being there during after-school time left the program being less connected with the rest of the school and did not provide as great an opportunity for the participants to demonstrate their leadership to the wider school community. At this point, lunch sessions were added into the weekly programming and we began to notice that the program became more visible to other members of the school environment. The girls designed posters and worked on other projects during the lunch period, which drew attention from other students in their grade who were curious about what they were working on. It also improved visibility to school staff as the group facilitators were around the school building more frequently.

While we believed this was a good start to helping GLO participants become viewed as leaders by themselves and others, having our team be the primary administrators of the program was not sufficient to cause system-wide change. Therefore, beginning in 2012, a different version of GLO was also being implemented in another middle school where the school guidance counselor was trained by our team to be the lead facilitator, along with two undergraduate co-facilitators. Overall, we found that by having a facilitator serve as in-school support and who was more aware of the interworking of the school, the program ran more smoothly as she was able to incorporate her knowledge of what was going on with the school into the implementation of the GLO program. For example, the guidance counselors were able to more easily check in with girls who had not been coming to the program to find out why and in after a couple of cases were able to switch the day of the program so that it did not conflict with other activities the girls were participating in. They also were more cognizant of what aspects of the program would and would not be acceptable to school administration and were able to have discussions with administrations more easily than purely outside facilitators.

The GLO program at this school will continue into the current academic year, 2013–2014 and, thus, we will be able to observe if there are any qualitative differences in how the eighth-grade program is implemented by a school staff member. One primary problem we have observed at past sites over the course of the program is attrition from the seventh- to eighth-grade year. While attrition is to be expected, we are hoping that having this school staff member in place will help to buffer against this.

Drawing off of our experience of implementing GLO in these two different middle school settings, we have noticed a number of key themes emerge of what makes the group more or less successful. For example, creating a GLO culture where the girls define leadership for themselves and set up ground rules for the group is essential early on in the program. Having the group members participate in setting ground rules builds the foundation for future sessions. This supportive culture allows for the girls to let their guards down, not have to worry about judgment, and feel like they are welcomed to express their thoughts and feelings. In addition, the full participation of the group facilitators also helps to assist in setting up a place of discussion rather than something more typical of what they normally experience during the school day. This helps with group participation, as the girls seemed to appreciate the activities more seeing that everyone contributes to them. This not only builds rapport but also gives the girls the sense of equality and likeness. Having activities that involved the entire group or one to which everyone can relate strengthens the bond

within the group. It seems as though these activities give the girls a common interest or help them become better aware of themselves. Especially when it came time for the year-end service project, the girls' excitement shined as they diligently worked towards their service project.

As the girls became more comfortable with the GLO program, their interest and desire to participate often influenced less-interested peers. This is a worthwhile tool to have and usually will work well in groups which have established a great bond with one another. Furthermore, once the girls were more comfortable sharing and expressing their opinions, it was particularly effective to discuss topics of which they related to in life, such as teachers underestimating students or physical and emotional aggression. In several lunch and after-school sessions, GLO facilitators brought up certain topics and prompted the girls to list out the pros and cons and any potential consequences of their actions. These brainstorming sessions seemed to have assisted in presenting the girls with a different perspective of common problems and something real in their life into perspective.

In any intervention, there are possible barriers to change that it is important to be aware of. As with most after-school programs, the early sessions are often the most difficult because the participants, and often the facilitators, do not know what to expect. Getting the program started can be a challenge especially if there is not a school staff member on site to help facilitate getting permission slips back and figuring out logistics of running the program. Without much assistance from school personnel, this process can be very difficult, and thus, having a school staff member who is invested is essential. There were also many times when other extracurricular activities interfered with GLO and girls were forced to choose one or the other. Thus, this led to low attendance and inconsistency within the group. As GLO is only once per week, it can be useful to have a structured agreement put into place that allows girls to participate in GLO on one day and another extracurricular on the other days of the week. As constant absences diminish the effectiveness of GLO and seem to disrupt the group when certain students do return, figuring out a way to reduce this disruption with school administration is important to consider early in program implementation.

In addition, we have found that it is important to screen students with a brief interview discussion in order to gage interest and to become aware of any preexisting conflicts among potential group members. We have come to recognize the importance of having GLO consistently throughout the year as well as continuity into the second year of the program by starting up as early as possible in the eighth-grade school year. While there may be forces that prevent this beyond the control of the group facilitators, it is important to strive for this as much as possible.

During the early sessions, facilitators are often dealing with issues of lack of active participation or lack of focus by many students who are either shy or insecure or just lack concentration skills and are not yet fully engaged. This can lead to multiple individuals trying to speak at once or side conversations, which then require more frequent redirection. There may also be participants in the group who previously did not get along with other group members, which may lead to early issues with group dynamics. Early rapport building and team building activities, such the human knot and working on the tablecloth at lunch, seem to work well in breaking

down initial barriers and helping the girls feel more comfortable with each other. Having frank discussions about group dynamics can also be beneficial. Conflicts of preconceived notions of leadership and how to solve problems may also arise, with some participants thinking physical aggression is an acceptable way to solve problems and stand up for oneself while others believe that this is unacceptable. There may be conflicts in what GLO encourages versus what is taught at home or the school culture at large. GLO is a place to express these differing opinions and to weigh the pros and cons of each approach.

Overall, we have observed that as the sessions progress, there is a better sense of group cohesion. The girls appreciate the structure that allows them to express their thoughts and feelings safely, which leads them to gradually display more respect and participation, taking turns speaking to the group and also giving valuable recaps to girls who were absent from previous sessions. Role playing and talking about how these lessons relate to their own lives help with better comprehension of GLO lessons and skills. By the end of the year, there is a stronger bond among the group and facilitators observe participants more readily using their skills from BEST and FANSO to communicate with one another and other school personnel. This is especially evident when the GLO groups have to deliver their year-end project proposal to their principal. The girls were more respectful and empathic towards each other and seemed to express their opinions and ideas effectively to their peers, even in times of difference and incongruity.

Initial Research Findings on the Benefits of GLO

Even though GLO has been implemented for over a decade, systematic research on its effectiveness is still in its early stages. However, we believe the results to be promising. Members of our research team are interested in understanding the impact of GLO on the participants' self-rated self-concept (Piers & Harris, 1984), sense of mastery (RSCA Manual, Prince-Embury, 2007), and perseverance (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009), as well as their social–emotional and academic competence (Gresham & Elliott, 1990; LeBuffe, Shapiro, & Naglieri, 2009) as rated by their teachers. Results from the 2009–2010 cohort suggest that GLO increased the girls' overall self-concept score and their sense of mastery, with the more introverted/shy girls in the groups showing greater positive changes (Narkus, Hamed, Reyes, Moceri, & Alphonse, 2011). In addition, GLO participants who showed improvements in teacher-rated social–emotional competence showed gains in self-rated optimism (Hamed, 2012). Initial examination of the 2010–2011 and 2011–2012 seventh-grade cohorts looking at the relationship between baseline characteristics and attrition found that low levels of anxiety and greater self-rated perseverance at the beginning of the program were predictive of participants not dropping out of the program by the end of the school year (Stepney, White, Yerramilli, Zigelboym, & Elias, 2013). Future studies will examine the impact of GLO relative to grade-matched control peers over the course of both the seventh- and eighth-grade years.

Future Directions and Practice Considerations

Reflecting on the lessons learned and initial findings from the GLO intervention, a number of implications for intervention programs in general can be deduced. The GLO framework of leadership, empowerment, and service for the purpose of promoting resilience can be a viable alternative to remediation-focused groups with at-risk youth. Targeting interventions at the needs of the specific population of interest is essential for effecting change, and the GLO framework allows for this as well. Further, thinking beyond simply intervening at the individual level, interventions that also aim to impact individuals from a more systematic approach have a greater chance of sustainability and longer-term impact once program developers are no longer the ones implementing the program. This process occurs through integration into an ongoing infrastructure in which youth have regular interactions, like in school and during after-school programs. The process of building resilience in youth must include ways of providing them with ongoing support as their new skills become part of a change in their identity towards being assets to their classmates and school.

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