
Change It Up! ***What Girls Say About Redefining Leadership***

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Abstract: A national study conducted by Girl Scouts of the USA and Fluent, a New York-based research firm explores the leadership aspirations of girls and boys. Over 4,000 youth were included in the study which examines perceptions, behaviors, experiences and attitudes regarding leadership. The executive summary includes numerous tables and charts highlighting the research findings and comparative responses of boys and girls. Readers will find the results from this study to be of great value when designing youth leadership programs.

Review

Change It Up! What Girls Say About Redefining Leadership (2008) presents findings from a national study conducted by Girl Scouts of the USA and Fluent, a New York-based research firm. Over 4,000 girls and boys were included in the study which examined youth perceptions, behaviors, experiences and attitudes regarding leadership.

The fifty page executive summary is filled with helpful tables and charts highlighting the research findings and comparative responses of boys and girls. Specifically, the researchers addressed:

- Barriers to Leadership Aspiration
- Enjoyment of Leadership Experiences
- People who Influence You to be a Leader and
- Peer Relationships Influence on Leadership.

Responses are further explored based on gender, age, race and income in relationship to the leadership aspirations of girls and boys. Of interest were insights into how girls view leadership and what girls need to be successful leaders. The study noted that "*Many girls emphasize what*

leadership should be used for, rather than focusing on specific roles or positions. For example, 72% of girls say a leader is someone who 'brings people together to get things done,' and 65% say a leader is someone who 'stands up for his or her beliefs and values.'”(p. 8).

In addition, the study summarizes the following four key insights:

Insight #1 – Girls Redefine Leadership in Meaningful Terms

Insight #2 – Self-Confidence + Skills = New Girl Leaders

Insight #3 – Opportunities + Experiences + Support = New Girl Leaders

Insight #4 – Girls Have a Range of “Leadership Identities”

Youth workers will find the results of this study of great value as leadership programs are designed and youth are recruited for leadership roles. This executive summary, as well as supplemental materials and additional youth-related research may be downloaded from the Girl Scouts of the USA website at www.girlscouts.org at no charge.

References

Schoenberg, J., Salmond, K., & Fleshman, P. (2008). *Change It Up! What Girls Say About Redefining Leadership*. New York, NY. (Girl Scouts of the USA Executive Summary). Retrieved November 1, 2008, from <http://www.girlscouts.org/research>.

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