

## Girl Scouts—Diversity and Inclusion

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Girl Scout founder Juliette Gordon Low felt passionately that opportunities to develop skills and have fun should be available to all girls, **regardless of race**, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. The first 18 Girl Scouts included girls from influential Savannah families and girls from the Female Orphan Asylum and Congregation Mickve Israel. As early as 1917, the first African American troops were established, as well as troops for disabled girls. One of the earliest Latina troops was formed in 1922 and Girl Scout troops supported Japanese American girls in internment camps in the 1940s. By the 1950s, Girl Scouts was leading the charge to fully integrate all of its troops. In 1956, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called Girl Scouts "a force for desegregation."

—Girl Scouts Heart of Central California, October 23, 2012 News Release

### Findings Spotlight\*

Nearly half of girls (49%) try to make friends with kids from different backgrounds.

- For nearly 40% of girls, family conversation about diversity is situational: when it is a school or class project (10%) or when something happens related to race, religion or disability (29%).
- Only one in 10 girls say they don't do anything in particular to promote or embrace diversity or include others who are different than they are.



Most girls have a decent understanding of what diversity means and are willing to promote and embrace it in their daily lives at school and at home, from listening to and making friends with others different from themselves, to standing up for other girls who are being picked on because they may be different than others. Yet, although girls are more inclined to get angry and stand up for others victimized because of perceived disabilities, they are less inclined to do so for others victimized because of religion.\*

#### Major Findings:

- When asked "What is your understanding of diversity?" girls' responses showed a prevailing connection to a difference of beliefs, backgrounds, religions, people, race or abilities.
- Over half (56%) of girls talk about diversity with their families often or all the time.
- Over half (58%) of girls usually promote or embrace diversity by trying to listen to or value other people's ideas and opinions.
- For nearly six out of 10 girls, seeing someone being picked on because of their race or ethnicity generally makes them feel angry and they want to defend the victim.

\**Girl Scout Research Institute, Girl Survey Panel, April 2008. [www.girlscouts.org/research/what\\_girls\\_say/](http://www.girlscouts.org/research/what_girls_say/)*

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*When girls succeed, so does society.*

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## Girl Scouts and Gender, Race and Equality\*

- Only one in five girls believes she has the key qualities required to be a good leader.<sup>1</sup>
- Six in 10 girls say that women can rise up in a company or organization, but they will only rarely be put at the very top.<sup>2</sup>
- One third of girls are afraid if they tried to step up and be a leader, they would be laughed at or picked on.<sup>3</sup>
- Seventy percent of the 1.5 billion people living on \$1 a day or less are female.<sup>4</sup>
- One hundred million girls go missing around the world each year.<sup>4</sup>
- There are no countries in the world where women's wages equal those of men.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Get the Facts*, [www.togetherthere.org](http://www.togetherthere.org), 2012.

<sup>2</sup> GFK Roper, *ToGetHer There*, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> GSUSA, *Change It Up!*, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> *Because I Am a Girl: The State of the World's Girls 2007* (Plan International).

<sup>5</sup> Women's Learning Partnership/[womankind.org.uk](http://womankind.org.uk).



### Findings Spotlight\*

*"While it is refreshing to see evidence that nearly 60% of youth, particularly girls and racial/ethnic minorities, say that diversity is important to them, findings from this study suggest that there may be more we can do to assist American boys and girls in valuing the rich cultural diversity our nation has to offer."*

—Janie Victoria Ward, Professor of Education, Simmons College

*\*Good Intentions: The Beliefs and Values of Teens and Tweens Today. A report from the Research Institute, Girl Scouts of the USA, 2009.*

Girls understand that equality is still an issue in the United States. They see differences in influence among different groups, in opportunity to gain leadership positions across gender, and even the difference a woman President would make in the lives of other girls and women.\*

- Three-fourths of girls feel that it is still necessary to focus on gender or racial equality.
- Nearly 70% of girls believe that having a woman President would change things for themselves and other girls and women.
- Nearly two-thirds of girls believe they have to work harder than boys in order to gain positions of leadership. Of those girls, 49% says that it bothers them and they care enough to do something to change it.
- Regarding levels of influence in the U.S., nearly 70% of girls think wealthy business leaders have too **much**, followed by men (53%). Nearly two-thirds of girls think that young people have too **little**, followed by women (54%) and senior citizens (51%).

\**Girl Scout Research Institute, Girl Survey Panel, February 2008.* [www.girlscouts.org/research/what\\_girls\\_say/](http://www.girlscouts.org/research/what_girls_say/)