



THE
DREAM GAP
PROJECT



UNCOVERING YOUR
LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL



PART ONE

GETTING GROUNDED

Have you ever noticed that sometimes in entertainment, like in books or movies, there aren't as many girl characters as there are boys or men? In fact, according to a February 2024 study from the [University of Southern California](#), only 30 of the 100 top films of 2023 featured a female-identified actor as a lead or co-lead at the center of the story. When you look around and see boys and men playing superheroes and star athletes but don't see girls and women in those roles, that is called "underrepresentation."



Every person, regardless of their gender, deserves to see themselves represented and celebrated. Equal representation is important in our communities because it makes things fair, ensures different ideas are considered, and ultimately empowers everyone to live their best lives and contribute to a shared community. When groups of people need to make decisions that will impact them, equal representation ensures that everyone's ideas and backgrounds are considered.

Girls are capable of doing amazing things, just like anyone else, but when people assume that all girls are the same, that is called a "stereotype." Stereotypes make it harder for women and girls to overcome years of being underrepresented. After all, if we don't promote women as equal members of our society, we can't challenge stereotypes and make room for our potential to lead!

Here are some of the different ways women and girls are underrepresented across the world:

EDUCATION

- * Women and girls are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, which are very important types of jobs that are

expected to grow and provide more jobs for people across the world.

- * Women make up almost half (49.3%) of total employment across non-STEM jobs, but just 29.2% of all STEM workers. (WEF, 2023)

SPORTS

- * A global history of placing a greater focus on men's sports has contributed to the underrepresentation of women in sports at various levels, including media coverage, funding, and participation opportunities.
- * Sports media often prioritize coverage of men's sports over women's sports, leading to less visibility and recognition for female athletes.
- * The average male US National Basketball Association player earns \$5.3 million a year, whereas women players earn an average of \$130,000.



GOVERNMENT

- * Data from 141 countries show that while women make up more than 3 million of elected members in local governments, only in three countries do women hold an equal share of offices as men.
- * Women currently serve as the Head of Government in just 13 of the 193 member states of the United Nations.
- * At the current rate, gender equality in the highest positions of power will not be reached for another 130 years.

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CAN YOU THINK OF A TIME WHEN YOUR NEEDS WEREN'T CONSIDERED WHEN A GROUP OF PEOPLE WAS MAKING A DECISION? HOW DID THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?



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HOW MIGHT HAVING EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF GIRLS AND BOYS SOLVE A CHALLENGE IN YOUR SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY?



DEFINING YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE

There are many different ways to lead, and not all leaders look the same or hold the same qualities. Every leadership style has its own unique characteristics, which means that everyone has something to offer as a leader. Especially you!

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

In a collaborative style, leaders work closely with their peers to achieve common goals. This approach fosters teamwork, communication, and mutual respect.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Leaders can inspire others through their actions, positive behaviors, and integrity. This style typically is demonstrated through kindness, empathy, and determination.

SUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP

With this style of leadership, leaders emphasize the importance of serving others and putting their needs before their own. This style focuses on empathy and compassion.

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

People who can navigate change, uncertainty, and diverse perspectives effectively make strong leaders. This style involves being flexible, open-minded, and responsive to the needs of the group.

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DO ANY OF THESE LEADERSHIP STYLES RESONATE WITH YOU? IF NOT, WHAT'S MISSING? HOW MIGHT YOU DEFINE YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE?

EXERCISE: VALUES CLARIFICATION

Your values are the beliefs that define what is most important to you. They guide each of your choices in life and help inform the actions you take. This worksheet will show you how to take the skills you already have and utilize them for your community!

You might relate to several of these items, but narrowing down what is most important to you will help you figure out where to start and think through your point of view as a leader.

Select the 10 most important values from the following list.

ACHIEVEMENT	CREATIVITY	INDEPENDENCE	RECOGNITION
ADVENTURE	DEMOCRACY	INVOLVEMENT	RELATIONSHIPS
ARTS	DIVERSITY	KNOWLEDGE	RELIGION
BELONGING	EDUCATION	LEADERSHIP	RESPECT
CHALLENGE	EXCELLENCE	LEARNING	RESPONSIBILITY
CHANGE	FAIRNESS	LOYALTY	SELF-AWARENESS
COMMUNICATIONS	FAMILY	NATURE	SELF-RESPECT
COMMUNITY	FRIENDSHIP	OPENNESS	SPIRITUALITY
COOPERATION	FUN	ORDER	TEAMWORK
COLLABORATION	HEALTH	POWER	TRUTH
CONFIDENCE	HELPING OTHERS	PRIVACY	VARIETY
COUNTRY	HONESTY	PRODUCTIVITY	WEALTH

WRITE YOUR TOP 10:

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

NARROW YOUR LIST TO THE TOP 5:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

NOW, NARROW TO YOUR TOP 3:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



?

WHAT EXPERIENCES INFLUENCED YOUR VALUE CHOICES?



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WHAT WOULD YOU WANT YOUR COMMUNITY TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR VALUES?



Over time, certain experiences might influence a shift in your values. We are all learning, growing, and developing every day, and it can be helpful to reflect on what's most important to you throughout your life. Some people do this exercise every 6 months, every year, or even every month!

I PLAN TO RE-DO THIS EXERCISE ON _____ .

SETTING YOUR LEADERSHIP GOALS

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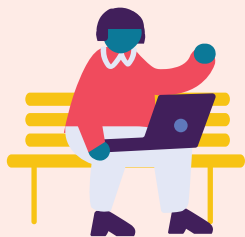
HOW WILL YOU BUILD YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS?
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO TRY?

These can be big or ambitious goals (stand for School Council, captain a sports team, become Prime Minister!) or smaller steps (lead a group discussion in class, put your hand up more in class, lead a change to improve something at home).



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WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP YOU CAN TAKE TO GET THERE?



PART TWO

UNCOVERING YOUR WORTH

Guess what? You have unique talents and perspectives to offer your friends and community! When girls are given the opportunity to lead, it helps create a more balanced and diverse society where everyone's voices are heard and valued.



Women and girls deserve to lead, but in some societies, there are strict rules and expectations that make it hard for girls to take charge. One big reason for this is something called “patriarchal attitudes.”

This is when people think that boys and men should always be in charge and have more power than girls and women. These attitudes can stop girls and women from having the same opportunities, and they may not be able to make decisions for themselves or speak up for what they believe in.

Across the world, women and girls are often treated unfairly. Learning about and naming those challenging experiences is an important step in uncovering your potential to lead.

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WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU OVERCOME IN YOUR LIFE? HOW DID YOU HANDLE THEM, AND WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THOSE EXPERIENCES?

?

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT YOU'RE REALLY GOOD AT? WHAT SKILLS OR TALENTS DO YOU FEEL CONFIDENT IN?



?

WHAT DO YOUR FRIENDS OR FAMILY SAY ARE YOUR BEST QUALITIES? WHAT DO THEY ADMIRE MOST ABOUT YOU?



EXERCISE: LET'S TALK BARRIERS

Circle the items that best describe your biggest challenges in life right now. It's OK if you don't relate to all, or any of these! Blank space has been provided to add other examples that make sense for you.

FRIENDSHIP ISSUES

ACADEMIC STRESS

FAMILY OR SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS

PEER PRESSURE

OTHER CHALLENGES:

?

WHAT SUPPORT DO YOU FEEL YOU NEED TO OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES?



?

IF YOU'RE FEELING THIS WAY, CHANCES ARE, OTHER GIRLS DO, TOO.
WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD NEED TO CHANGE TO HELP OTHER GIRLS NOT
EXPERIENCE THE SAME CHALLENGES YOU HAVE?



PART THREE

TAKING ACTION

There are many different styles of leadership, but all strong leaders are responsible for listening to the needs of their community and guiding a group of people towards a common goal. Almost any issue can be resolved with strong leadership.

The way you show up as a leader now, even in your school community, can have a significant impact on the issues that matter to you.

In this section, you will identify a topic that you care about, practice being a leader in your community, and get others to support your cause!

EXERCISE: PREPARING YOUR CAMPAIGN

A key aspect of being a leader is understanding your community. It's very important that you listen to the needs of your fellow students/community members and set yourself up to be a voice that helps everyone.

Note: When most people think of campaigns, they think of political campaigns. In this example, we want you to create a campaign that encourages other students to join your club. Your assignment is to think about a club or group that you would like to start, and to put together a campaign to encourage others to join.

STEP 1: BRAINSTORM CAMPAIGN IDEAS

Asking questions can help you gain valuable insights into the concerns and priorities of your classmates and allow you to develop a club that speaks to their needs. Once you have identified the key things you hope your club will do for its members, you can create key messages that you will repeat as you recruit participants. From posters to speeches, your points should never waver.

?

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ISSUES FACING OUR CLASS/SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RIGHT NOW THAT YOU CARE ABOUT? HOW WOULD THIS CLUB ADDRESS THESE ISSUES?



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HOW CAN THE NEW CLUB YOU WANT TO DEVELOP INVOLVE OTHER STUDENTS? HOW WILL YOU REACH THEM AND GET THEM INVOLVED?

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WHY IS THIS IDEA IMPORTANT TO YOU, AND WHY SHOULD OTHERS JOIN?



STEP 2: DRAFT A SHORT SPEECH

- * Personal introduction (3 sentences)
- * Why are you starting this club and what do you hope to accomplish? What are the benefits for others? (5-6 sentences)
- * How will you accomplish your goals and be a voice for others? (3-5 sentences)
- * How can others get involved? (2 sentences)

YOUR SPEECH

STEP 3: DESIGN A PROMOTIONAL POSTER

- * Aim to reach people with similar interests (photos and/or words)
- * Provide a simple explanation of what you want people to do (“join the X club”)
- * Include benefits of joining
- * Include contact info as you are comfortable

Note: There are many wonderful resources available online to support you on your leadership journey. [Canva](#), for example, is a free online tool for creating graphics and presentations.





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