

TOGETHERTHERE

ToGetHerThere: Girls' Insights on Leadership

Roper Research Findings

January 2012

Research Background and Goals

The goal with the *ToGetHerThere: Girls' Insights on Leadership* study* is to learn more about how girls today view the concept of leadership. The study, commissioned by Girl Scouts of the USA and conducted by Roper Research, solicited the opinions of girls ages 8–17. It was designed to understand the ways in which girls are engaging in leadership roles, learn the challenges girls face today in realizing their leadership aspirations, and motivate the adults in their lives—family members, teachers, coaches, mentors, community leaders—to take steps to help girls embrace their potential as future leaders and strong women. This research builds on the findings of the Girl Scout Research Institute's groundbreaking study on girls and leadership, *Change It Up! What Girls Say About Redefining Leadership* (2008).

Key Findings

Girls see glass ceilings in today's society, and they want more supportive environments.

- Almost 9 in 10 teen girls (89%) say men outnumber women in leadership positions today, whether in places like Congress or as heads of major corporations.
- Close to 3 in 5 teen girls think that while women can rise in a company, they will only rarely be put at the very top.
- A clear majority, 8 in 10 (81%), say the workplace could do a better job of meeting the needs of female workers.
- The majority (67%) of teen girls believe to some degree that family responsibilities weigh women down more than men as they try to move up in their careers.

Girls want to lead, but they face challenges along the way.

- More than 9 in 10 teen girls agree that it's best to try to be a leader at their current age to see whether or not they like it.
- But 59 percent agree that it's easier to be a follower than a leader.
- More than one-third (35%) say they wouldn't feel comfortable trying to be a leader.
- And many teen girls (38%) aren't sure whether they're cut out to be a leader at all.

Together, we can get her there.

- In a finding that presents a clear opportunity for adults to impact the life of a girl, a majority of girls (60%) say they haven't been offered the chance to visit the workplaces of successful women in their community during the last school year.
- Even more telling, 4 in 10 girls say they've had no opportunities to interact with successful women during the last school year.
- More than 8 in 10 girls are interested in interacting with successful women, including hearing them speak about confidence building.

* Telephone interviews were completed with 1,001 girls, ages 8–17. Adult parents or caregivers were first reached to obtain permission to interview their daughters, and adults completed the household demographic portion of the questionnaire. The interview was approximately 20 minutes in length, with a few questions asked only of teen girls. Interviews were conducted between December 6 and December 22, 2011.

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- Despite these challenges, the majority of girls remain optimistic about their futures, with 65 percent feeling that women have a chance equal to that of men to attain leadership positions like president of the United States or head of a major corporation.

Summary

This study clearly shows that society needs to step up and do better for our girls, and that girls clearly want adult guidance and leadership role models. Let's not fail them. All adults have a role to play in getting them there. And with Girl Scouts leading the charge, we WILL get them there. Join us at ToGetHerThere.org.

To read more about GSRI's *Change It Up!* visit <http://www.girlscouts.org/research>.