In partnership with Let Girls Lead, we are empowering girls to raise their voices and advocate for their rights. The girls are educating village leaders and achieving bylaws that bring an end to child marriage and other harmful traditional practices.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAM BUILDING
In collaboration with the Youth Leadership in Sexual and Reproductive Health Program (GOJoven), LGL designed the team building exercises described in this chapter to increase trust and collaboration within the group as a whole. Although facilitators could easily conduct advocacy workshops without including any team building activities, Let Girls Lead’s experience demonstrates that these experiential team building activities help to enrich workshop discussions, allow for movement and a change of environment, and enable the group to interact in a more personal way. These activities are also a lot of fun, and often the most memorable moments of a workshop take place during these sessions.

One of the most important parts of a team building activity is the reflection process that takes place afterwards. Facilitators should make to allow enough time for true reflection and dialog, ideally so that each participant has the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings after each activity.

Before deciding on which team building activities to implement during a workshop, the facilitators should think carefully about the characteristics of the group, taking into consideration the following:

1. How well participants know one another
2. Group diversity, including ages and languages
3. Physical limitations or special needs

Select team building activities that take into account the group’s needs, and still challenge the group as whole. It is important to select activities in which all participants can take part, and setting the foundation of mutual trust and support is critical to encouraging everyone to participate actively.
Leadership Outing Background

Let Girls Lead typically sets aside an entire day for leadership outings, because these outings often occur at a specific site that may require 30-60 minutes of travel in each direction.

The actual time allotted for the outing varies depending on the size of the group and the specific activity. As a general rule, an outing may take between 3-6 hours from start to finish.

The ideal leadership outing achieves the following:

- Provides significant physical and mental challenges for the greatest number of the participants
- Allows for leadership opportunities for those who have experience in the activity
- Presents goals that all participants can attain

Leadership outings that have worked well include the following:

- Long hike with challenging terrain (steep mountainside)
- Snorkeling
- Kayaking or canoeing
- Ropes course
- Rappelling or caving
- Zip lining
- Climbing a structure such as pyramid ruins or anything with a staircase

Facilitators should consider potential hazards and/or barriers to individual participants and think creatively about how to motivate, educate, and coach to extend the participants’ perceived or real limitations. Taking time beforehand to speak with individuals who may hesitate to participate can help to encourage and motivate their active participation.
Facilitators should avoid leadership outings that require skills and or physical demands that are clearly beyond the abilities of more than one or two of group participants, as well as activities that are too easy to perform and do not demand a certain amount of extension of personal limits.

The facilitators must lead by example and be prepared to provide encouragement, instruction, support, and caring accompaniment. Because some activities require physical effort that may be beyond the capacity of some participants, the facilitators must know the activity and the participants and plan accordingly to offer encouragement and/or alternative forms of participation when necessary.

Because leadership outings encourage participants to move beyond their comfort zone, often causing feelings of insecurity, fear, uncertainty, and embarrassment to arise, it is important to only include participants who have been a part of the larger group training process.

The facilitators may include participants who are not actual members of the training group if they are needed to ensure the group’s safety, well-being, and successful completion of the activity’s goals.

Someone in the staff team should have some basic knowledge of first aid, and the group should bring an approved first aid kit.

The facilitators should take care to provide the following to participants during an outdoor leadership activity:

- Enough water to prevent dehydration
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Snack or meal, depending on the length of the activity, to prevent low blood sugar

Pre-Outing Guide

1. Let the participants know that they will be engaged in activities that they may not have done before. The planned activity is designed to challenge them, push their limits, get to know their fellow participants, and grow as a team. Let the group know what kind of clothes and shoes are most appropriate for the activity selected—for example, sneakers or other comfortable rubber-soled shoes, comfortable clothing that participants do not mind getting dirty, swimsuits, etc.

2. Divide the group into pairs, taking into consideration any observations about participants’ personalities. For example, it would be good to pair a very outgoing person with a quieter one, and one who is very physically fit with someone who is not.

3. Let the participants know that they should take this opportunity to get to know more about their partners and that their responsibility is to support their partners throughout the activity. Also let them know that the activity may include instances where they will participate as a whole team in a large group.
The goal is to fully participate in the activities of the day and for all participants to challenge themselves to accomplish the activity according to their specific abilities. Facilitate a 20-30 minute discussion using the following questions as a basics. Make sure that everyone speaks using “I” statements. For example, if participants begin sentences with, “We were all challenged,” gently remind them to say, “I was challenged.”

- How did you feel about what you did today?
- What was most challenging for you, and why?
- What did you observe that most impacted you about the team?
- What would you do differently next time?
- What did you learn that is new for you?
- How does what you accomplished today relate to leadership?
- Does it change how you will advocate with and for girls?

Human Knot Activity

1. Form groups of 10-12 people. It is important to have enough people to make the knot challenging, but not so many as to make it overly complicated.

2. Arrange group members in a circle, standing shoulder-to-shoulder.

3. Tell everyone to close their eyes, put their right hands up in the air, and then reach into the circle to grab the hand of someone across the circle from them. Watch to ensure that they do not take the hand of someone directly next to them.

4. Tell everyone to keep their eyes closed, put their left hands up in the air, and then reach into the circle to grab the hand of a different person across the circle from them.
5 Watch to ensure that they do not take the hand of someone directly next to them, or of the person whose right hand they are holding.

6 Check to make sure that everyone is holding the hands of two different people across the circle from them.

7 Tell participants to open their eyes, and then to untangle themselves to without breaking the chain of hands.

8 If group members break the chain, they need to start over.

To make the activity more challenging, the facilitator can do any of the following:

- Set a timer on this activity
- Blindfold the participants
- Ask participants to do the activity in silence

### Discussion

After the group has undone the human knot and is standing in a circle, facilitate a 10-15-minute discussion using the following questions as a basis, again ensuring that everyone speaks using “I” statements. For example, if participants begin sentences with, “We were all challenged,” gently remind them to say, “I was challenged.”

- What happened?
- What strategy did your team end up using to complete the task?
- What did you notice about how the knot was unfolded. Who made decisions about how to move? Who followed?
- Did the team agree on how to unravel themselves? What process did the team go through to agree on a strategy?
- How did you communicate during this activity. What did you observe about how other people communicated?
- How do team activities like this one connect with leadership and activity?
- (Time permitting) Would you like to do the activity again?
Name Card Activity

To create personal bonds with other participants and provide ways for participants to interact and move around the training space.

The group can play this game individually or in teams.

1. This activity involves identifying the name written on an index card by asking “yes or no” questions. The first step is determining how to write the names on the cards. Several options are possible:
   - The facilitators determine the theme for the cards and writes the names in advance
   - The facilitators determine the theme, and then participants write names on the cards based on the theme
   - The participants both determine the theme and write the names on the cards

2. Facilitators gather all the cards and tape one card on each participant’s forehead, with the name showing outward. The participants should not see the name on the card taped to their forehead.

3. Each participant asks the rest of the group “yes or no” (closed) questions to identify the name written on that participant’s card.

Themes can be anything from famous people to work colleagues to the activity participants themselves. Using names of work colleagues and group members adds a fascinating dimension — relationships, reputations, perceptions, emotions — so this requires sensitive facilitation and review.

Objectives

- To create personal bonds with other participants
- To provide ways for participants to interact and move around the training space

Material

- Index cards
- Tape

3.2 EXPERIENTIAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES
Trust Walk Activity

1. Locate or create a space with some obstacles, ideally in an outdoor and natural environment. Good spaces for this activity may include an outdoor hiking area or an outdoor courtyard with obstacles placed strategically around it such as chairs, stairs or fences to climb over or under.

2. Divide the group into pairs, and ask one partner to be the guide; the other partner will be blindfolded. Take care to pair people up based on their personalities—for example, pair a very outgoing person with a very quiet person. The facilitators should decide which person in the pair will be blindfolded. Again, make this selection based on observations about each participant’s personalities and how to best challenge them. For example, it is most challenging for a person who tends to be very outgoing to be the blindfolded person in the pair. A quiet person may not be used to being “in charge”, and so it might be most challenging for them to take on the role of guide.

3. When the blindfolded partner is ready, slowly spin the person around a few times so that they do not know which direction they are headed.

4. At this point, the guide is solely responsible for their partner’s safety. The guide must lead the blindfolded person to avoid obstacles. In this way, participants learn valuable lessons related to teamwork: the guide learns about the challenge and responsibility of caring for another individual’s well being, while the blindfolded partner learns to trust and rely on another person.

The facilitators can set up different rules for the activity, including:

- Ask everyone to be silent and guide their partners only using touch and physically guiding their partners by the hand.
- Alternatively, ask the guides not to touch the partners at all, and rely completely on verbal instructions to guide them—for example, “About five steps ahead, there is a branch. Step over it slowly.”
- Ask that guides only touch their partners on one shoulder and lead them from behind, using both verbal instructions and pressure on their shoulder to guide them.

5. Ask participants to reflect upon and share their experiences.
Discussion

Standing with all group members in a circle, facilitate a 20-30 minute discussion using the following questions as a basis. Make sure that everyone speaks using “I” statements.

For example, if participants begin sentences with, “We were all challenged,” gently remind them to say, “I was challenged.”

- What did you learn from this team building activity?
- What was the most challenging aspect of this activity?
- What was it like to be the guide? How did you feel?
- What was it like to be blindfolded. How did you feel. Did you have any difficulty trusting your partner while blindfolded? Why or why not?
- What did you notice about the ways that you had to communicate in this activity. Was it easy or difficult to communicate?
- How does this activity relate to advocacy?

Speed Dating Activity for Advocates

The group should be in a large open space where participants can pair off and have a conversation without too much interference from other pairs.

1. Ask the participants to divide into pairs. Each person should select someone in the group with whom they have not had much communication or contact up until now.

2. Let participants know that they will each be responding to a prompt and that they will have one minute to complete the sentence.

3. Each pair should decide which person will be the first listener and which person will answer the question first.
The listener will listen to their partner’s response to the prompt. The listener is not allowed to interrupt, ask questions, or begin to formulate a response while the other person is speaking. The listener can practice active listening skills, such as looking directly in the partner’s eyes, nodding to the listener, making acknowledgement sounds, or making other movements that let the speaker know that the listener is paying attention.

4 People answering the prompt must do so based on their experience and can talk about whatever comes to mind after they hear the prompt. Responders have one minute to talk without interruption. They may not ask questions or begin a dialog with their listener partners.

5 Facilitators should read the prompt aloud, repeat it once, and then call time to have all of the responders start talking at the same time.

6 After one minute, call time, the partners now switch roles. The listener becomes the speaker and the speaker becomes the listener. The new speaker responds to the same prompt as before.

7 After another minute, ask everyone to choose new partners and decide roles (speaker and listener), and begin the process again with a new prompt.

8 Continue with new pairings and prompts until everyone in the group has had the chance to partner with everyone else, or until the time allotted for the activity ends.

Sample Prompts

- What I most admire about my mother (or the person who raised me is)...
- When I was an adolescent...
- My greatest accomplishment is...
- The biggest challenge that I have faced is...
- My greatest love is...
- In five years I hope to...
- If I could talk to anyone in the world (past, present, or future) for an hour, it would be...
Discussion

To close the activity, facilitate a brief discussion using the following questions:

- How did it feel to be listened to?
- What was it like to have to listen without speaking?
- What did you learn about other people in the group?
- What did you learn about yourself in this exercise?

We Are Alike and We Are Different

The best moment for this activity is at the beginning of the workshop, when participants do not know each other yet.

1. Have participants stand up in an open space, indoors or outdoors.
2. Ask them to arrange themselves in line based on any of the following:
   - Birthday (month and day)— January at one end and December at the other
   - Age—Oldest at one end and youngest at the other
   - Shoe size—Largest at one end and smallest at the other
   - Number of siblings—Most siblings at one end and least siblings at the other
   - Number of children—Most children at one end and least children at the other

Discussion

Standing with all group members in a circle, facilitate a 5-10-minute discussion using the following questions as a basis. Make sure that everyone speaks using “I” statements.

- How did you feel during the activity? What did you notice?
- What do you think this activity has to do with our advocacy work?
Discuss how the world is organized according to divisions and distinctions. Some of these differences are simple and funny, such as foot size, which we compared in this exercise, while others tell us about access to education or health services and other important resources, which very much affect our experiences and perspectives, along with those of the adolescent girls in our communities.

### The Alarm Game

This activity allows participants to gain information and knowledge about the situation adolescents face around the world and provides opportunity for reflection. The participants will attempt to cross a grid with hidden “alarms,” each with facts about adolescent girls written on them. Every alarm will offer an opportunity for discussion and will highlight a way in which girls’ human rights are violated across the globe. The facilitators can change this activity to reflect different topics. For example, it could reflect alarms on the topics of gender, sexuality, or violence. The design shown here reflects alarms regarding the realities facing girls and young women around the world. This session fits well within the session on girls’ human rights.

The rules for the activity are as follows:

1. The goal is to attempt to cross the grid without setting an alarm off. Some of the squares are free, and others set off an alarm. Participants start by stepping on a square on the first row and continue moving forward by stepping on adjacent squares ahead.

2. If someone steps on an alarmed square, an alarm sounds. The facilitator give that participant the corresponding alarmed card, and the participant must read it aloud. The alarm is then returned to its original square.

3. The participant cedes their turn to another person, and the new participant returns to the beginning of the grid and tries to cross it again, remembering not to step where an alarm was found.

4. Participants take turns trying to cross the grid until someone reaches the other side without sounding any alarms.

5. If participants cross the grid more or less quickly, congratulate them and hand them the remaining alarm cards for them to read aloud.
Discussion

The group remains standing in a circle around the grid, and each person reads again their card statistics before discussing the following questions. Make sure that everyone speaks using “I” statements.

- Were you surprised by any of the alarms?
- Were there any that you thought were particularly “alarming”?
- Why do these alarms exist, not only in our country, but in the whole world?
- What did you learn from this exercise?
The facilitator can use these for the “alarm” cards.

- One in three girls in developing countries is married by age 18.
- Poor girls are two times more likely to marry before age 18 than girls from wealthier backgrounds.
- In poor countries, about half of all first births are to adolescent girls.
- Girls between the ages of 10 and 14 have five times the risk of dying during pregnancy or childbirth than women between the ages of 20 and 24.
- The main cause of death for girls aged 15-19 is due to complications from pregnancy and childbirth.
- Every year of primary school completed increases a girl’s eventual wages by 10 to 20 percent. Every year of secondary school completed increases her eventual wages by 15 to 25 percent.
- Fewer than five percent of girls in most sub-Saharan African countries complete secondary education.
- Staying in school protects adolescent girls from early sexual debut and forced sex. Sexually active girls who are enrolled in school are also more likely to use contraception than those who are out of school.
- A girl who completes seven years of education will marry four years later and have 2.2 fewer children than girls who do not complete basic primary school.
- It is estimated that about three million girls, the majority under 15 years of age, undergo female genital mutilation/cutting every year.
- Almost half of all sexual assaults worldwide are against girls under age 15.
Eat the Bread

This activity is best if done within a teamwork session, or in introduction to advocacy sessions.

1. Have participants stand in line in such way that their fingers barely touch when their arms are horizontally outstretched.

2. Blindfold everyone.

3. Tell the participants that they must not speak at all, not even to ask about the instructions.

4. Tell each participant to hold out one hand, palm up, in front of them, arm completely stretched.

5. Put one piece of bread in each participant’s right hand.

6. Tell the participants: “The goal is for you to eat the bread.” Make sure not to say “Eat your bread.”

7. Participants will immediately start to ask questions, so strongly remind them not to speak at all.

8. Repeat the instructions in steps 3-6 again: no speaking, arm outstretched in front, no peeking under the blindfold, eat the bread.

9. Watch what different participants do. If possible, take pictures.

10. Once some participants succeed at eating the bread—they will probably feed the person beside them—tell them to uncover their eyes and observe who still has bread and who is eating it.

Discussion

The group remains standing to discuss the following questions. Make sure that everyone speaks using “I” statements.

- What happened during this exercise?
- How did you feel when you heard the instructions, and when you tried to do it?
- What did you do? (Make sure to listen to participants who tried different methods)
3.2 EXPERIENTIAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

- To reflect on the importance of collaboration for advocacy efforts
- To recognize different kinds of leadership
- To practice effective communications methods

OBJECTIVES

ACTIVITY NINE

40 min

- Long rope at least one meter (3 feet) per participant
- Blindfolds enough for the entire group minus 3-5 people

MATERIAL

NOTES

- This activity requires a wide, safe, and flat space where people can move around blindfolded without tripping on anything

What did you not do? Why not?
What does all this have to do with advocacy?
What did you learn about yourself? Do you wish to share anything else?

Build the House

This activity works best within a teamwork session, or in the Introduction to Advocacy session.

1. Choose three to five participants from the group to act as observers. Make sure that the group of observers includes different ages, genders, and positions within the group, including some of the most extroverted people. Explain to the observers that their responsibility is to observe the rest of the group, taking note of their actions and events, what they say and do, who speaks and who does not, and gender and group dynamics that stood out. Observers also must look after the group so no one gets hurt during the activity.

2. The rest of the participants must blindfold their eyes and remain blindfolded throughout the activity. Members of the observers group and facilitators will make sure they come to no harm.

3. Tell the participants that their goal is to collaborate with their team and use the rope to draw the shape of a house. To avoid confusion, draw the shape on paper and show it to everybody prior to starting the exercise.

4. Tell the participants to stand in line about one meter (3 feet) apart, so that their hands do not touch with their arms stretched.

5. Tell the participants to put on their blindfolds. Observers can help if needed. Once participants cannot see, give each one a section of the rope to hold onto.

6. Tell the blindfolded participants to use the rope to create the shape of a house.

7. Give participants about 10 minutes to attempt the exercise, and then remind them the instructions, and allow them to continue for another five minutes.

8. Once participants have been doing the activity for about 15 or 20 minutes, ask them to stop, to put the rope on the floor where they are standing, and to remove the blindfolds so they can see how the house they have created looks so far.
3.2 EXPERIENTIAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

**Discussion**

The group remains standing to discuss the following questions. Request that everyone speaks using “I” statements.

Begin by asking the observers to share their observations, and then ask the participants to share their experiences.

**Observers**
- What happened?
- Who led the process, and who followed instructions?
- How were instructions and suggestions given? Which words were used, and how were instructions interpreted?

**Participants**
- What happened during the activity?
- How did you feel?
- What worked, and what did not work? Why?

**Everyone**
- What most impacted you in this activity?
- What does this activity have to do with leadership, advocacy, communications, and networks?

Participants may become quite frustrated with the process, so if time allows give them a chance to try again. One option for a second try is to remove the blindfolds, but have the participants not talk to each other while trying to create the house shape. If there is no time for a second try, be sure to process with the whole group that teamwork and collaboration challenges are meaningful and that we should all strengthen our ability to work together.
The Girl I Am

LGL designed “The Girl I Am” to be implemented with a group of adults. If participants are young women, they can represent themselves, or they can represent the point of view and experiences of a friend or another girl in their community. Preferably the activity should be done on the first day of the workshop as an introduction, or in the Getting Girls Involved with Political Advocacy session.

1. Tell the participants to make a circle.

2. Ask each person to light a match and introduce themselves as the young woman they interviewed. Preferably, they can talk about a positive and a negative facet of the girl’s life. They can only talk while the match is burning. If using a stopwatch, allow 30 seconds per person.

Discussion

Facilitate a discussion that includes the following points:

• What did you learn from this exercise?
• How different are the realities of the girls in our communities?
• What can you do to create a change for the girl that you interviewed?
Revisiting the Girl I Am

This activity revisits the “The Girl I Am” exercise. It should preferably be done on the last day or at the end of the workshop as part of its conclusion. The objective is for this activity to revisit the discussion about the goals and reasons that participants have to work for girls.

The specific instructions are as follows:

1. Tell the participants make a circle.
2. Ask each person to light a match and answer the following question. Participants can talk only while the match is burning. If using a stopwatch, allow 30 seconds per person.

• At the end of this workshop together, what would you say to the girl you interviewed about your plans to advocate for and with girls?

Kind Words

This exercise works best for groups who have had the opportunity to get to know each other rather well. It is a great closing exercise for a multi-day workshop.

1. Tell the participants to form a circle, seated either in chairs or on the floor.
2. Ask participants to take a blank sheet of paper and write their name clearly in large letters in the middle of the sheet.
3. Tell participants that the goal of the exercise is to help them know the positive qualities the rest of the group sees in them. They will all have one minute to write the positive qualities, skills, and strengths they see around the name of each participant’s sheet. The more detailed they are, the more meaningful the comment.
4. Remind them they must not write negative comments about anyone and they must write something on everyone’s sheet of paper.
Tell participants to pass the sheet of paper to the person sitting at their left. Give each person one minute per sheet.

Tell the participants to pass the names to one another until they have written on everyone’s sheet of paper.

**Activity Closure**

At the end of the activity, invite participants to look over their individual sheets.

Ask the participants the following questions:

- How do you feel reading what your colleagues have written?
- What have you learned here during the workshop?
We have incorporated more team building exercises into certain sessions throughout the curriculum because the exercises complement the accompanying topics particularly well. However, the facilitators are always free to implement these exercises with other topics or by themselves depending on the participants’ needs.

1. **Crossing the Line**
   Located in Section 5.2, Human Rights and Advocacy for Girls, on page XXX of the curriculum. This exercise informs participants about social, economic, and cultural differences and how these differences impact how different communities are able to access their basic human rights.

2. **Proverbs Say it All**
   Located in Section 10.1, Why Do We Need to Work Together?, on page XXX of the curriculum. This exercise uses participants’ knowledge of cultural sayings to emphasize the need for planning and collaboration in advocacy.
REFERENCES