

GoGirls Program Proposal

Abstract: The GoGirls Entrepreneurship Program is a six-week summer course which teaches entrepreneurship, business, and personal finance to underserved young women in Boston. Twelve students will take part in the course, with instruction focused on developing skills in money management, leadership, and teamwork. The primary goal of the program is to increase each participant's sense of control over her own life, both financially and overall. The success of the pilot program will be measured pre and post program and will be evaluated at various points after the program ends. GoGirls has partnered with Education Collaborative Youth Alternative High School (EDCO), a Boston based educational nonprofit which serves at risk youth, to deliver this program.

Background: I created the GoGirls program to target structural violence by increasing access to entrepreneurship, leadership and money management education as a way to promote educational equality in inner city Boston. In Unicef's paper titled The Role of Education on Peacebuilding, the organization identifies structural violence as a hindrance to peace. Structural violence is defined by Unicef as "violence that is built into structures and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances." The presence of structural violence in Boston's most underserved communities is clear. In the neighborhoods of Roxbury, Mattapan and Dorchester, this inequality manifests as extreme high school dropout rates, rampant crime, and limited opportunities for educational advancement. Providing entrepreneurship and money management education to underserved women will help reduce structural violence in Boston's most challenged neighborhoods.

Purpose: The GoGirls Entrepreneurship Program will train at-risk high school women in entrepreneurship and leadership skills in a six week program during the Summer of 2016. Entrepreneurship programs have been shown to be successful intervention programs, and are proven to re-engage struggling students in class. In my research, I found youth entrepreneurship programs increase self-esteem and locus of control, need for achievement, educational attainment, and educational and career aspirations. Entrepreneurship programs enhance skills in English and math and increase levels of achievement and commitment to school (Jacinta Bronte-Tinkew, Ph.D., *Logic Models and Outcomes for Youth in the Transition to Adulthood*, 2005). In the under-resourced communities of Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan, an entrepreneurship program would be especially beneficial. Furthermore, the tenets of entrepreneurship--leadership, collaboration, creativity, discipline, and conflict negotiation--will be useful in the many challenges these students will face.

As a student who has completed a youth entrepreneurship program, I have experienced the benefits of this particular approach to education. The course renewed my interest in English and Math by applying these subjects to real life. I used my newfound leadership skills in my extracurricular activities and entrepreneurial skills when starting my own businesses.

Implementation: Twelve students from EDCO Alternative and the Boston Youth Services Network will take part in the course during Summer 2016. Students ages 16 to 24 are eligible to take part in the course. While the teens will develop specific skills, the primary goal of the program is to increase each participant's sense of control over her own life.

I will select students for the course through a referral and application process. EDCO Alternative will refer interested students to the GoGirls webpage with application instructions throughout the months of April and May. Students will be asked to submit their resume and answers to three questions: 1) Why do you want to participate in the GoGirls Program? 2) What skills and qualities will you bring to the program? and 3) Describe a time that you demonstrated leadership within your community. What did you learn? Students will also be asked to submit proof of enrollment in a Greater Boston area high school, typically by a signed letter from a teacher or school official. Favorable candidates for the program will take part in a 15 minute Skype or phone interview. Students will be notified of their acceptance to the GoGirls Program during the first week of June.

The course will be taught by myself and a co-teacher who is a graduate of EDCO Alternative High School. Prospective co-teachers will go through a process that is similar to the student application. Preference will be given to teachers available to co-teach the GoGirls Program the following Summer.

This course will teach the key principles of entrepreneurship, which students will apply in real-life scenarios. During the first two weeks of the course, we will instruct students the basics of entrepreneurship and provide an opportunity for students to discuss entrepreneurship with local female business leaders. During the next two weeks, we will assist students in creating their own business plans. During the last two weeks, we will work with students to help them create apps to inspire and encourage entrepreneurship education and practice among others. Students will be expected to contribute to discussions and take part in activities. We will encourage student contribution by creating a supportive environment where each student feels valued, and by offering the program only to motivated students capable of this commitment.

I developed the syllabus for the course, and tailored it to the needs of Boston's underserved communities. I have purchased textbooks using a grant awarded during the planning of the GoGirls Program. Students will be working from the text Young Wold Rising, How Youth Technology and Entrepreneurship are Changing the World from the Bottom Up. The book contains the profiles of numerous businesses headed by young entrepreneurs with limited means around the world as

well as 12 case studies focused on these businesses. I presented the syllabus before a board of EDCO Staff, many with experience in teaching in underserved communities prior to coming to Edco, and an advisory board of current EDCO Students. I modified the syllabus according to their recommendations. The course will be taught Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. I have organized class time to be spent as follows:

9:00 - 9:20 Icebreaker
9:20 - 10:30 Lecture
10:30 - 11:30 Round Table Discussion
11:30 - 11:40 Break
11:40 - 12:10 Activity
12:10 - 1:00 Introduction to Next
Days' Topic

Example topics covered during lecture include:

- Defining Entrepreneurship
- Finding a Market Need
- Creating a Solution
- Finding Your Target Market

Example topics covered during Table Discussion include:

- Creating Community Solutions: The Neighborhood Entrepreneur
- Individual and Group Dynamics: the Collaborative Entrepreneur
- Managing Self Doubt: the Hesitant Entrepreneur

Example activities include:

- Pitching
- Idea chart making
- Business charades

I will determine the success of the program by assessing academic performance, locus of control and understanding of course material. I will measure **academic performance** by collecting grades and records of disciplinary action from the GoGirls cohort as well as a similar group of peers during the years before and after the program. I will measure locus of control using the Petijohn Test, a reformulation of the Rotter's test which has been successfully used in academic settings. I will

measure grasp of entrepreneurial concepts using a pre and post program questionnaire which I will develop. These questions will be presented in multiple choice format [e.g. 1) A target market can be chosen based on the following: a) gender b) hobbies c) current address or d) all of the above. 2) Ideally, competitors are defined before: a) creating a business solution b) deciding what to sell c) determining your target market d) defining your advantage. 3) Calculation of fixed costs does not depend on: a) rent b) electricity c) raw materials d) insurance?]

Local Partnership: I have partnered with EDCO Alternative to deliver this program. EDCO has 46 years experience serving Greater Boston's most at-risk students. Through collaboration with twenty public school districts, EDCO has served thousands of Boston Public Schools students. To be eligible for the EDCO program, students must be from a low to middle income family and fit at least one of the following criteria: 1) demonstrate deficiency in basic academic skills, 2) have dropped out of school, 3) be a homeless, runaway, or foster child, 4) be pregnant or parenting 5) be an offender, or 6) require additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment. EDCO Alternative has secured a classroom space for the GoGirls program at GED Plus, a Boston based educational nonprofit. In addition to a classroom space, GED Plus is equipped with on-call counselors and security for the GoGirls program. The speakers for the program will be provided by Tiziana Dearing, current professor at Boston College's Graduate School of Social Work and previous president and treasurer of Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Boston.

Sustainability: The GoGirls Program promotes both positive and negative notions of peace. The program supports *positive peace* through grants awarded to students to carry out business plans or social initiatives that support social justice through structural means: encouraging economic self sufficiency, increasing the availability of entrepreneurship education in underserved communities, and increasing financial literacy in the female population. The GoGirls Program supports *negative peace* by increasing internal locus of control, a sense of self agency that has significant implications for peace. A study titled Locus of Control Redux: Adolescents' Choice to Refrain from Violence, originally published in the Journal for Interpersonal Violence, found that "an internal locus of control is a significant predictor of abstention from violence, even when controlling for individual characteristics and family and neighborhood contextual factors known to influence violence." The students of the GoGirls course will be the mothers and sisters, aunts and cousins, friends and acquaintances of the next generation. By demonstrating a high internal locus of control that leads to abstention from violence, they will influence those around them.

For the continuation of the program, I will provide the resources necessary for the continuation of the program to EDCO Alternative at the end of the summer. I will compile the instructional components of the GoGirls program into a workbook and online program. These materials will include the syllabus, curriculum, lesson plan, list of speakers, student interviews, data on student impact, and instructor trainings. Next year, I will assist the director of EDCO Alternative in hiring a suitable teacher for the summer, and in recruiting participants for the program. I will be available to mentor future teachers and coordinate with GED Plus and EDCO to provide ongoing support as needed for the continuation of the GoGirls program for the next 5 years.