

Girl

LEADING



Mulberry
Schools Trust

In support of
LET *
GIRLS
LEARN

Head Teacher's Welcome

Welcome to the Girl Leading 2017 Impact Report. Girl Leading was Mulberry's first residential girls' leadership development programme. We ran this event in support of Michelle Obama's Let Girls Learn campaign, which was launched in the UK at Mulberry in June 2015.



The inspiration for Girl Leading came from the girls and young women we work with at Mulberry. As a school, we know that girls are capable of becoming the most inspiring leaders: we see young women leading with passion and vision every day, in the classroom,

amongst their friends, in their families and in their communities. Yet regularly, we see girls' leadership potential ignored in the world outside school: the voices of adolescent girls are rarely given a serious platform, and their interests, passions and concerns are frequently trivialised or overlooked. As girls grow into women, evidence shows that their leadership potential is still too often undermined. Envisioning a future as a female leader is difficult when you see so few examples of women at the top of their fields or being celebrated openly for their achievements. Pay – one way of demonstrating value for leadership and expertise – is also unequal.

As a school, we know that young women have the power to change the world. We saw this in the wake of Michelle Obama's visit to our school. Speaking to an audience of our students, staff and partner schools, Mrs Obama told us that at least 62 million girls around the world were out of school: denied the basic right to a high quality education in a safe school environment. Hearing this, our students were inspired to take action on behalf of other girls around the world – girls whose potential they recognised to be as great as their own, but whose opportunities were limited by lack of access to education.

Girl Leading aimed to develop leadership skills and confidence in girls at school in the UK; and to challenge them to use their leadership to take meaningful action in support of the Let Girls Learn campaign. Girl Leading created a unique and special space, in which girls felt empowered and equipped to go out into their communities and use their leadership to open up opportunities for other girls. We could not have anticipated how deeply committed all participants would be – both Mulberry students and students from our partner schools – to creating a world where every girl can thrive, and how courageous they would be in taking direct action to make that world a reality. It is this story that we share with you in our report.

Girl Leading will continue at Mulberry, we hope, with a second residential in 2019. We want to expand the reach of the programme in future, involving more students from other regions of the UK – and even across the world. I would like to thank all who made the inaugural programme such a resounding success: particularly those at Mulberry School who led the Girl Leading residential; and, Carly Kew and the team at Kilve Court in Somerset; BBC Children In Need, who generously part-funded this event; Women of the Future, especially Pinky and Imraan Lilani; and the speakers and facilitators who gave up their time to share their expertise with us.

We welcome enquiries from all those who would like to be involved in our work in the future: you can find more details about how to reach us at the back of this report.

Dr Vanessa Ogden

Head Teacher, Mulberry School For Girls;
CEO, Mulberry Schools Trust

Mulberry School For Girls: Our Context

Mulberry School For Girls is a successful all-girls comprehensive school in Shadwell, East London, and the founding school of the Mulberry Schools Trust. Our school promotes high quality education for young women and has its own distinctive ethos which reflects the particular community and area which we serve. At the heart of our ethos is our belief in the importance of leadership by young women across all spheres: in employment, in public life and community life, and in family roles. At Mulberry, we develop aspiration, confidence and high level communication skills amongst our pupils to ensure that they succeed in future life.

Girl Leading: How it began

Girl Leading is Mulberry's first ever leadership camp for girls. The idea for Girl Leading began to take shape when Michelle Obama visited us in June 2015 for the UK launch of her girls' education campaign, Let Girls Learn.

Speaking to an audience of our students and staff, and students and colleagues from our partner schools, Mrs Obama told us that, in 2015, 62 million girls around the world were out of school: out of school not because they didn't want to go, but because the barriers that stood in the way of their education were simply too great for them to overcome alone. Girls were kept from the classroom by a variety of factors, ranging from vast and complex issues – such as conflict and unrest in their home

countries – to smaller and more localised issues, such as a lack of clean and functional toilet facilities in their school buildings.

Hearing this, our students were galvanised into action. They recognised that, despite the significant challenges many young women in Tower Hamlets face, having access to a high quality education opens the doors to opportunities that girls who are denied the chance to go to school simply do not have. Our students told us that they wanted to find meaningful ways to help girls around the world to get the education they deserve. We sat down with them to listen to their ideas, and it was through this consultation process that Girl Leading began to emerge.



Extended Learning at Mulberry

The Mulberry Schools Trust is committed to providing a holistic educational experience which helps young people to develop as well-rounded individuals with rich inner lives. Part of how we do this is through our broad Extended Learning offer. We provide a varied range of extra-curricular opportunities, organised into four main programmes:

Out of Hours Learning is our weekly offer of lunchtime and after-school clubs. Over 50 clubs are available, covering topics ranging from chess to football, physics to feminism.

Global Education offers students opportunities to learn about world affairs and develop a sense of global citizenship. Our flagship Global Education initiative is our Model United Nations programme: we are the lead UK school for the United Nations Global Classrooms project, offering two MUN conferences a year for UK and international schools.

Pupil Voice provides students with opportunities to develop strong public speaking and presentation skills, and to play an active role in school decision-making.

Our leading Pupil Voice programme is our Youth Conference, a social action conference organised annually by Year 12 students.

Women's Education is a programme of extra-curricular opportunities which give students the space to explore their identities as young women. The programme seeks to develop an awareness of, and empowered response to, gender inequality; build students' confidence; give students platforms from which to express their views; and connect students with positive female role models from a diverse range of backgrounds and contexts.

Our flagship Women's Education programme is our annual Women's Conference: a one day conference programme at which girls at secondary school and their teachers come together with female speakers who are experts in their fields to discuss the key issues that matter to young women today.

Girl Leading is an original Mulberry Women's Education programme.

Programme Development

Event Format

Working alongside our students, we settled on a final format for the event:

- From December 2016 – April 2017, a Student Leadership Committee (SLC) made of up of 15 Mulberry students – 5 each from Years 9, 10 and 12 – would take the lead on planning and designing all aspects of the Girl Leading programme.
- There would be a residential weekend at Kilve Court residential education centre in Somerset, taking place from 21-23 April 2017. This event would be attended by our SLC and by 50 students from 10 partner schools based in London and Somerset, along with teachers from all participating schools.
- At the residential, expert speakers and facilitators would join us to lead panel discussions and skills-based workshops, all with a focus on leadership. There would be a particular focus on leadership that drives forward positive social change.
- The Mulberry Extended Learning team would deliver workshops on girls' education, so that students could grow to understand the barriers standing in the way of girls' access to education, and the importance of working to bring those barriers down.
- The SLC would play a key role in hosting, leading and managing the event.
- Students would end the residential by planning their own independent leadership projects, which we called Personal Leadership Challenges, or PLCs. PLCs would support the work of the Let Girls Learn campaign in increasing girls' access to education around the world.

- Using a bespoke planning framework developed at Mulberry, students would put together a detailed plan at the residential, carry out their plan at their own schools, and then evaluate their work.
- Students would return to Mulberry three months after the residential to share impacts and outcomes of their PLCs – both the impacts they had made in increasing girls' access to education, and the impacts on their own development as confident leaders. Our SLC would host this event.

Through the Girl Leading programme, we aimed to enable a self-sustaining cycle of girls' leadership: girls at school in the UK, inspired and equipped to be confident and effective leaders, would use their leadership to create educational opportunities for other girls around the world. This in turn would furnish the chance for girls everywhere to develop as confident leaders in their own right, and to work towards opening up opportunities for the next generation.



Who took part?

When thinking and talking about leadership, especially leadership that drives forward positive social change, we agreed that girls and women face significant barriers to leadership in a way that most boys and men do not: it is for this reason that developing leadership ability and confidence is a core part of our ethos, and a big part of our Extended Learning and Women's Education work. However, it soon became apparent in our earliest discussions that some girls and women face greater challenges than others when accessing, maintaining and developing leadership roles.

At Mulberry, we believe that the only way to create the fairest, most just and most compassionate society is to ensure equality of opportunity for every girl. Furthermore, we recognise that the most marginalised people can also have the potential to be the most visionary leaders, using their leadership to include others and to break down barriers.

From the outset, we decided that Girl Leading would focus primarily on girls who do not usually have access to opportunities to see themselves as leaders. We did this by focusing in our recruitment on disadvantaged students. We defined disadvantage as:

- Entitlement to Free School Meals/Pupil Premium
- English as a second or additional language
- Low self-esteem
- Difficult home situation, such as parents separating, family illness, being a young carer
- Difficult school situation, such as bullying, friendship issues, returning to school after illness, difficulty settling in a new school
- Anxiety/depression

We set ourselves a target that 60% of the students we worked with would meet at least one of our disadvantage criteria. For our own students, we monitored applications to join the programme carefully to ensure a majority of students met the criteria; and we shared our criteria with other schools as they prepared to select their own students.

Programme Aims

The three key differences we wanted to make for students were:

- 1** Girls develop increased self-esteem and strong self-belief, both in general life and specifically in contexts where they are practising leadership.
- 2** Girls are positively empowered through knowledge of an increased range of future options, reinforced by a range of positive role models and strong self-belief. Girls feel inspired and enabled to positively empower other disadvantaged girls around the world by supporting Let Girls Learn in increasing girls' access to education.
- 3** Girls develop essential skills for leadership and employability, including but not limited to public speaking, teamwork, goal-setting, and planning, implementing and evaluating a project. These skills should be retained and continuously developed, and the child should be able to apply them independently.

Impact measurement strategy

In order to ensure that we were making a difference to students, we carried out regular monitoring and impact measurement work to get a sense of what students were learning, and how they were progressing.

Before coming to the Girl Leading residential, all students attending were asked to fill in a questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into sections, each of which contained a number of statements focusing on one of our key differences. Students had to decide how far they agreed with each statement and circle their answers on a number scale, where 1 meant 'don't agree at all', 5 meant 'neither agree nor disagree' and 10 meant 'completely agree'. For each question on this survey, we took an average for each school group and an overall average.

After the residential and before students returned to their schools to carry out their Personal Leadership Challenges, we asked them to complete a second questionnaire. This was broadly similar to the pre-residential questionnaire, in that it asked students a range of questions focusing on our key differences, requiring students to rate their answers on number scales. However, this questionnaire focused on the impacts of the residential, reframing some of the

questions to ask students whether attending Girl Leading had made any direct difference to their thoughts, feelings and experiences across the key differences.

Teachers also carried out a survey at this point to tell us about the impacts of the residential for their students. Average scores were taken for number-rated questions.

Students were asked to fill in an evaluation form after carrying out their Personal Leadership Challenges to record the impacts of the project – both in terms of how successful the project had been in helping other girls, and in terms of the impact on students' own leadership development. Answers were typed up and collated so that comparisons could be drawn between groups.

Teachers carried out a second survey at this point to tell us about the impacts of the PLC segment of the programme for their students. Average scores were taken for number-rated questions.

5 schools were able to attend the feedback day in person, and we asked them to fill out an extra survey to collect some more detailed information about the impact of the PLC segment on students' personal development.

What difference did we make?

Analysis: Girl Leading residential

Difference 1

The residential had a positive impact on self-belief and self-esteem for most students, and confidence in leadership ability improved for most students over the course of the residential. We asked students to rate how far they agreed with a series of statements about the impacts of Girl Leading on their confidence and self-belief: the average answer for students from other schools and for Mulberry students is given for each statement below.

'1' means 'don't agree at all', 5 means 'neither agree nor disagree' and 10 means 'completely agree'.

Attending Girl Leading helped me to feel more confident in myself.

Mulberry students' average score: **8/10**
Other students' average score: **8/10**

Attending Girl Leading helped me to like who I am as a person and feel good about myself.

Mulberry students' average score: **8/10**
Other students' average score: **7/10**

Now that I have attended Girl Leading, I feel more confident putting myself forward as a leader.

Mulberry students' average score: **9/10**
Other students' average score: **7/10**

Difference 2

A majority of students said that they had met a career role model at Girl Leading, and that the role models they'd met had made them feel more confident about their own ability to be successful:

At Girl Leading, I met or heard from a speaker or a workshop leader who is a career role model for me: someone who has been successful in the kind of career I want to have.

Mulberry students:	Other students:
Yes – 61.5%	Yes – 59%
No – 8.5%	No – 14%
Not Sure – 30%	Not Sure – 27%

The career role model(s) I met at Girl Leading make me feel more confident that I can be as successful as they are.

Mulberry students' average score: **8/10**
Other students' average score: **7/10**

Now that I have attended Girl Leading, I feel more confident that I can achieve my ambitions for the future.

Mulberry students' average score: **9/10**
Other students' average score: **8/10**

Students across all groups felt strongly that it was important to use their leadership to make a positive difference in the world: **91.38%** agreed that Girl Leading had inspired them to take action to help other girls.

Difference 3

The vast majority of students (**98.3%**) said that they'd learned something new at Girl Leading, and most of the students who answered yes to this question cited **public speaking, confidence or communication** as the skill that they had learned.

88% of students said that they would recommend the skills-based workshops they'd attended at Girl Leading.

What did teachers think about the residential?

There has been a really tangible difference in some of the students. Just being in a safe environment in the company of other girls has really altered the approach that some girls have taken with their work. I brought some of the most challenging students... and I have not seen some of them so happy and excited before. Students have come out of their shells and... challenged their own behavioural habits and have walked away having made some really unlikely friends. Thank you for a truly wonderful experience!

Reflections helped, positive affirmations, but risk-taking and overcoming physical and mental limitations would have been beneficial.'

It has been a positive weekend for the girls. My only request would be more team building and ice breaking activities... Their confidence however in leadership and in taking on this project is evident in their energy and enthusiasm over the final project [PLC]... Thank you for a lovely weekend.'

Analysis: Personal Leadership Challenges

Participating in the PLC segment had a positive influence on students' self-belief, and gave them a sense of achievement and skill development that will underpin success in their future academic and/or career development.

How many schools carried out a Personal Leadership Challenge?

Eight out of ten schools successfully planned and undertook a Personal Leadership Challenge.

What were the PLC topics?

School 1: Raised awareness of forced marriage, invited a guest speaker into school to lead an assembly on the topic, handed out free books on the topic and planned a 'wear your trainers to school' day and a bake sale to raise money for charities supporting victims.

School 2: Ran a summer fair to raise money for The Lunchbowl Charity, which provides school lunches and educational materials for children in Africa. Raised over £800.

School 3: Planned a Let Girls Learn day to raise money and awareness, which included a cake sale, a non-uniform day and donation of spare resources by school departments.

School 4: Raised awareness of and resources for women's health and sanitation. Ran a series of assemblies and had a non-uniform day. Planned a bake sale and a series of concerts for Years 7 and 8.

School 5: Ran a sponsored walk for the whole of Year 9 to raise money for Afripads, a charity that provides sanitary towels and other resources to women and girls in Africa.

School 6: Supported a campaign called Bloody Good Period, which provides sanitary towels and other resources to vulnerable women and girls. Led assembly presentations and collected donations from tutor groups.

School 7: Raised funds to donate books and other resources to an underprivileged girls' school in India.

School 8: Planned a Year 7 class activity and a leaflet making competition for Year 8, to be carried out next academic year.

What did students learn about themselves?

We asked students what their group had learned about themselves, and what each of them had learned about themselves individually. We have highlighted some of the answers students gave below.

Group Learning

By coming together as a group we are powerful

We've all gained a lot of confidence and we have learned about our strengths and weaknesses

We can achieve more than we thought, even if you are shy

I learned that we can make a difference to people's lives and come up with a plan

We are good presenters and are able to think of ideas

Individual Learning

I have discovered a new confidence within me

If I put my mind to something I can achieve it

I learned different skills such as leadership... and sometimes leading the group.

I've learnt that I can take a leadership role and talk confidently in front of a group of people. I've also learnt that I can think of creative ideas.

That I can make a difference even if it's doing something small.



A closer look

We asked a sample of schools to fill out an extra survey to collect some more detailed information about the impact of the PLC segment on students' personal development. Below are some highlights from the data we collected. Average scores out of 10 for the whole group are given below for each question.

When I left the Girl Leading residential, I felt excited and motivated to carry out my PLC.

Average score: 8.31

At the end of my PLC, I was proud of what I had achieved.

Average score: 9

Carrying out my PLC gave me a chance to practise being a leader.

Average score: 8.56

I would mention the work I did for my PLC on university applications, job applications or in interviews.

Average score: 9.69

Did you learn something at the Girl Leading residential that you found particularly useful when carrying out your PLC?

That it is important for girls to work side by side, spreading a powerful message and making an impact #GirlPower

I learnt how to present myself confidently in the public speaking workshop. This was very useful because I believe it improved my assembly presentation and left me with a life skill that I know will help in the future.

At the Girl Leading residential the one out of many important things I learned was to be myself and not be conscious about what people think of me, I learned this from one of the speakers.

In students' own words

“Programmes like this encourage and inspire girls to make a change.”

“I am very proud of every girl who took part in this residential because we all overcame fears and challenges while having fun and meeting new, inspirational people.”

“I think the whole Girl Leading experience was really important and valuable. The whole course really benefitted me, as I am now more confident and self-confident.”

What did teachers think about the Personal Leadership Challenges?

“When presenting their project, the girls were extremely confident and happy to let everyone know about their project and the impact it has made. They felt happy and very proud to be able to help others.”

“It helped the students bond and feel a sense of achievement. It has made students feel passionate about being able to make social change.”

“The overall experience and trip were extremely positive and worthwhile. I really see increased confidence in the girls.”

“One student has thrived in being given a project to implement. Simply having the opportunity to do something like this has given her a vehicle in which to use her skills in leading and determination.”

Mulberry Personal Leadership Challenge Evaluation

For Mulberry students, the Girl Leading residential was their Personal Leadership Challenge: it was a project they carried out in their school group to support the Let Girls Learn campaign in increasing girls' access to education around the world, in this case by empowering and enabling other girls to carry out their own actions in support of girls' education.

After returning from the Girl Leading residential, students completed a PLC evaluation together. Students' individual responses were collated to form one overarching PLC evaluation, quoted below. Individual quotes have been provided where these offer extra insights into students' experiences.

Did you make the difference you set out to make?

Yes.

'I think we showed the other schools that you can do anything you want and it doesn't matter about your background or postcode.'

'I think we did make a difference. They opened up throughout the weekend and we all shared our knowledge and had many interesting discussions.'

What evidence do you have of the difference you made?

The SLC collected evaluations from other students and were involved in the analysis of data.

'There was a girl in my Disruptive Leadership workshop and on the first day she barely spoke but eventually she became one of the main discussion speakers.'

'In my group I had a girl who was having a difficult time at school. Throughout the sessions, she shared her ideas and me and the whole group saw how much potential she had. Overall, I think her spirit was lifted.'

'I met a girl at my community organising workshop who was really happy that she was complimented on her debate skills and that really boosted her confidence.'

What skills did you use?

Public speaking, leading a team or group of people, creativity, writing, being organised, working in a team, campaigning, evaluating my progress, evaluating the progress of the whole group, campaigning, working with people in positions of power, planning a project.

What did you learn about yourself?

"I am very lucky to have the opportunities that I do get. I also learnt how to take a compliment and my self-esteem was boosted."

"That I need to speak up more to put my ideas out there."

"I learnt that I can do things that I didn't think I could do."



Conclusions

Girl Leading was successful in making a positive difference to students across our three main aims.

Both the residential and the PLC segment had a markedly positive influence on students' confidence and self-belief. Students' confidence in their leadership abilities also increased, particularly when given the chance to practise leadership independently through their Personal Leadership Challenges.

Students met a range of role models at the residential, and role models helped boost their confidence in their own ability to be successful. Access to role models was underpinned by the chance to learn new skills through workshops. Students also felt that their PLCs had given them opportunities to try out new roles, practise new skills, and refine skills they'd learned at the residential, which had been a further confidence boost.

Perhaps the biggest impact of the programme was in inspiring girls to take action to help other girls around the world: nearly all participating students felt the importance of helping other girls very strongly, and the vast majority of girls were able to take action effectively through their PLCs. This had a really positive influence on girls' confidence and self-belief, and helped them to believe in themselves as the leaders of a powerful movement for change.



Thank You

We would like to thank our speakers and facilitators, who joined us at the Girl Leading residential in April 2017. We'd also like to thank Kilve Court, especially Carly Kew and her team, who hosted and supported us throughout the weekend. Particular thanks are due to BBC Children In Need, whose generous support part-funded this programme.



Join Us

We aim to continue the work of the Girl Leading programme in the future, and to expand its reach.

We want to work with a greater number of young women, and to take Girl Leading into other regions of the UK: we know that working with young women from the broadest possible range of contexts and backgrounds will really enrich the programme, and will help to create a generation of diverse leaders whose leadership will reflect a broader and fairer range of experiences and priorities.

Our plans for Girl Leading depend on the continued support of our partners: schools who join the programme; individuals and organisations who volunteer their time and their expertise as speakers or workshop facilitators; and funders who support the programme financially or in kind. All of our partners do incredible work to help Girl Leading grow and thrive. We welcome enquiries from potential new supporters.

If you would like to get in touch about any aspect of Girl Leading, please contact Holly Green, Women's Education Officer and Programme Lead:

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