

Girls Can Fly: Collaboration in Action

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Girls Can Fly

More than 100 girls and an equal number of mentors gathered for a day at the Museum of Flight in Seattle, Washington, to explore space and experience flight.

The girls were introduced to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) through a variety of hands-on experiences and virtual simulations designed not only to capture their imaginations but also to help them understand, **“yes, indeed, you can fly.”**

This unique experience, called Girls and Mentors Soaring Together, was the result of a partnership between the Museum of Flight and TechREACH, an afterschool organization focused on increasing student participation in STEM. The partners secured mini-grant funding from the National Girls Collaborative Project (NGCP) to make this event possible.

Through its mini-grant funding, **NGCP has helped over 200 programs** get girls interested in STEM activities and expose them to STEM careers.

Giving Girls Wings Together

Throughout the United States, many initiatives are underway to create gender equity in STEM. NGCP serves a unique role in that it facilitates collaboration with other girl-serving projects and provides access to information and resources that enhance the impact and effectiveness of these initiatives.

NGCP has developed Collaboratives in 38 states with the help of local Convening Organizations.

These local Collaboratives vary in focus areas and populations served but all have extensive networks of organizations and individuals engaged in pursuing the common goal of gender equity in STEM.

“It was an amazing experience for all girls and women. I wished that such a forum had existed for me, when I was 10 years old. The presenters provided such vast insights into the world of Aerospace. But the most important message for our girls was clearly stated as - persevere, follow your dreams, and always move forward towards your joy.”

— Tracey Masterson,
Girl Scout leader and Mini-grant recipient



Funded partially by the National Science Foundation, NGCP works to:

- **Maximize access to shared resources** within projects and with both public and private organizations and institutions interested in expanding girls' participation in STEM.
- **Strengthen capacity** of existing and evolving projects by sharing research-based exemplary practices and program models, outcomes, and products.
- **Use the leverage of a network or collaboration of individual girl-serving STEM programs** to create the tipping point for gender equity in STEM.

Why it Works

NGCP helps organizations increase their effectiveness in informing and encouraging girls to pursue STEM careers by using a distinctive model that creates a large-scale impact by combining:

- Championship by industry leaders
- Collaboration at the grassroots level
- Events and professional development opportunities
- Mini-grant funding
- Research and dissemination of exemplary practices
- Program information about organizations engaged in promoting STEM

Champions Board

NGCP is 'championed' by a prestigious group of professionals invested in closing the gender gap in STEM at all levels.

These professionals represent companies and organizations such as the Afterschool Alliance, Association for Women in Science, Cisco, Girl Scouts of the USA, Google, Microsoft, National Center for Women & IT, and the Society of Women Engineers.

Champions Board members connect NGCP on a national level to opportunities that benefit the project, spread the word about NGCP activities in their realms, and support the project within their own organizations.



“My participation in Florida Girls Collaborative Project (FGCP) events has been tremendously beneficial. The information I’ve received is relevant and pertinent to my work goals related to STEM programming. Before working with the FGCP it was time consuming and exhausting to navigate the glut of information out there regarding STEM and girls. Because STEM is only a portion of what I do in my job, I place great value and get a huge return on the time I invest attending FGCP.”

— Carl Holland, Girl Leadership Specialist,
Girl Scouts-Gateway Council

Collaboration

Numerous programs and initiatives have focused on increasing gender equity in STEM fields, but many of these programs and their staff are isolated from others doing similar work and do not benefit from sharing of resources or exemplary practices as is necessary to make large-scale impact.

NGCP addresses these issues by bringing together girl-serving STEM organizations, K-12 and higher education, professional organizations, and industry to provide more effective opportunities for girls in STEM.

By creating partnerships with others that serve girls and women in STEM, organizations can generate and carry out creative solutions and strategies that maximize the benefit beyond what one project or organization could accomplish alone, potentially reducing duplication of effort and organizational isolation while at the same time, increasing efficiencies and promoting sustainability of recruitment and retention efforts.

Events and Professional Development Opportunities

Each Collaborative hosts in-person events, providing networking and professional development opportunities for participants invested in providing K-12 STEM programming for girls.

NGCP Collaboratives have served more than 13,000 practitioners across the United States through events and webinars.

Participants who attend NGCP professional development and collaboration events report following up with people they meet, applying what they learned to their work, and increasing their awareness of and level of collaboration with other programs.

Program Directory

A key component of NGCP is the Program Directory, an online database that includes information about organizations working to increase the representation of girls and women in STEM.

There are currently over 2600 programs listed in the Program Directory, representing over 5 million girls.



Since August 2006, the NGCP website has received over 22 million hits and the Program Directory has received almost 6 million hits.



The Program Directory lists basic information about the organizations as well as their needs and resources, providing the opportunity for other organizations and individuals to search for potential collaborators.

Practitioners who utilize the Program Directory find partners and network with other programs through the directory and benefit from the opportunity to publicize their program.

Mini-Grants

NGCP Collaboratives provide mini-grants to organizations collaborating on a STEM project for girls in their region. The grants are \$1,000 (or less) and serve as the catalyst for two or more organizations to work together on a project.

To date, 205 mini-grants serving over 23,000 participants have been awarded by NGCP Collaboratives.

Mini-grant recipients rate their collaborations as effective, with 92% of respondents indicating the highest ratings of success. Partner organizations in 68% of the projects indicate they will continue the effort and 72% of partners indicate that collaboration with their partner has extended to other activities.

Sharing Exemplary Practices

NGCP partners with a variety of organizations that provide expertise in specific content areas to disseminate exemplary practices through Collaborative events, webinars, and through the NGCP website.

Partner organizations include the Assessing Women and Men in Engineering (AWE) Project, the Education Development Center, Techbridge, Girl Scouts of the USA, SciGirls, and Engineer Your Life.

NGCP aims to make exemplary practices accessible, building the capacity of girl-serving organizations to provide high-quality STEM opportunities to all girls.

NGCP webinars are one method for making current research accessible to a national audience. All webinars are free and open to the public and are archived on the NGCP website. Presentations have included assessing outreach activities, incorporating role models, best practices in collaboration, and current research on effective strategies for serving girls in STEM.

Enter your organization or program in the NGCP Program Directory today and search for potential collaborators: www.ngcproject.org/directory.



Girls Can Fly

How You Can Get Involved

There are many ways for individuals and organizations to get involved with NGCP to access valuable resources, collaboration opportunities, and professional development.

- **Participate in Collaborative events** in your local area.
- **Attend our free webinars** or view our webinar archive in which practitioners and researchers from across the country share effective strategies for working with girls in STEM.
- **Check out mini-grant awards** to find successful ideas for girl-serving STEM activities.
- **Make a donation** to the National Girls Collaborative Project and help support gender equity in STEM.
- **Subscribe to the National Girls Collaborative Project e-newsletter** to receive a monthly listing of resources, events, and NGCP collaborative news.

The NGCP's collaborative model is transforming the way practitioners and educators work to advance girls participation in STEM. Together, we can show all girls they can, indeed, fly.



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