



THE  
REPRESENTATION  
PROJECT

## IMPACT REPORT

# 2019 Oakland Youth Media Academy



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WOMEN'S VOICES NOW



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# INTRODUCTION

The Representation Project offered its first Youth Media Academy from June 10th to July 9th, 2019, in Oakland, California. Over the course of this program, girls learned how to make a short film—from concept to storyboarding, filming, editing, and other aspects of production. Participants also learned about social justice issues, community engagement, and political activism.

The Youth Media Academy was inspired by the work of filmmaker Jennifer Siebel Newsom. The goal of these academies is to train a new generation of content creators to harness media for social change. We partnered with GlobalGirl Media and Women’s Voices Now on this summer academy, which was sponsored by Adobe and Canon.

The purpose of this report is to assess the impact of the 2019 Youth Media Academy through analysis of a pre-survey that was administered at the start of the program and a post-survey that students completed at the end of the program. We begin with an overview of the survey, followed by impact data on knowledge acquisition, skill acquisition, self-efficacy, well-being, and life plans.

We find that the Youth Media Academy improved participant’s topical and technical knowledge, as well as boosting their self-efficacy and well-being. After attending the Academy, participants express greater interest in working in media and engaging in social activism. They were also more likely to say they aspire to leadership positions in their career, community, and country. In short, the Youth Media Academy had a profound impact on the girls’ lives in ways that will shape their future path.



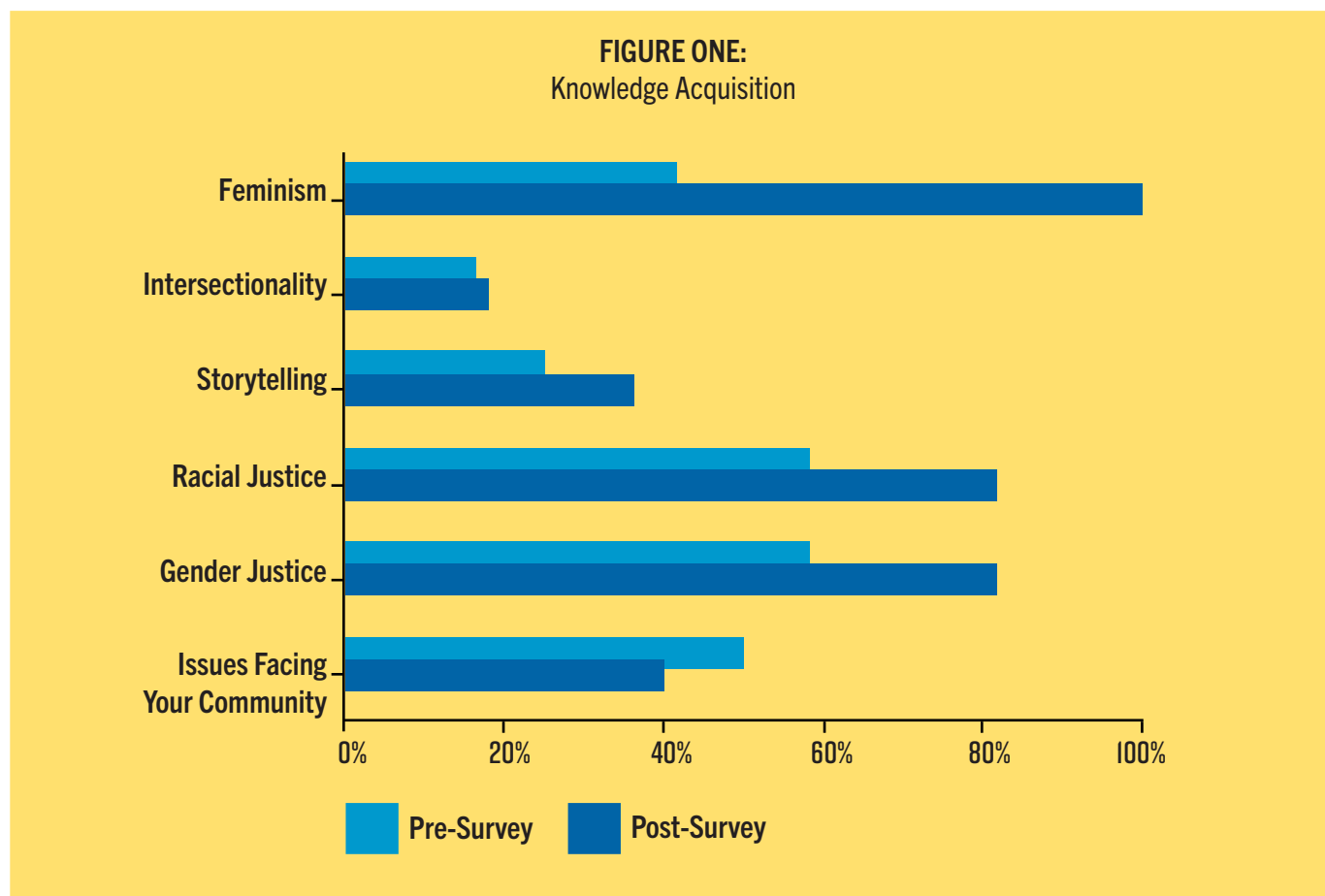
## SURVEY OVERVIEW

Twelve girls participated in the 2019 Oakland program. They ranged in age from fourteen to seventeen years old. Eighty percent of the girls identify as Latinx, while the remaining participants identify as Asian-American. All of the girls completed a pre- and post-survey.

# KNOWLEDGE

We asked respondents to tell us how knowledgeable they are about different subjects addressed in the Youth Media Academy. The statistics in Figure 1 below represent the percentage of girls who say they are “very” or “extremely” knowledgeable about each subject.

From the pre- to post-survey, girls’ knowledge of feminism, storytelling, racial justice, and gender justice improved significantly. Their knowledge of the concept of intersectionality stayed the same, while their knowledge of issues facing their community declined. We attribute the decline in knowledge about one’s community to greater recognition of how much is happening in the community after spending time conducting research on issues facing the community.

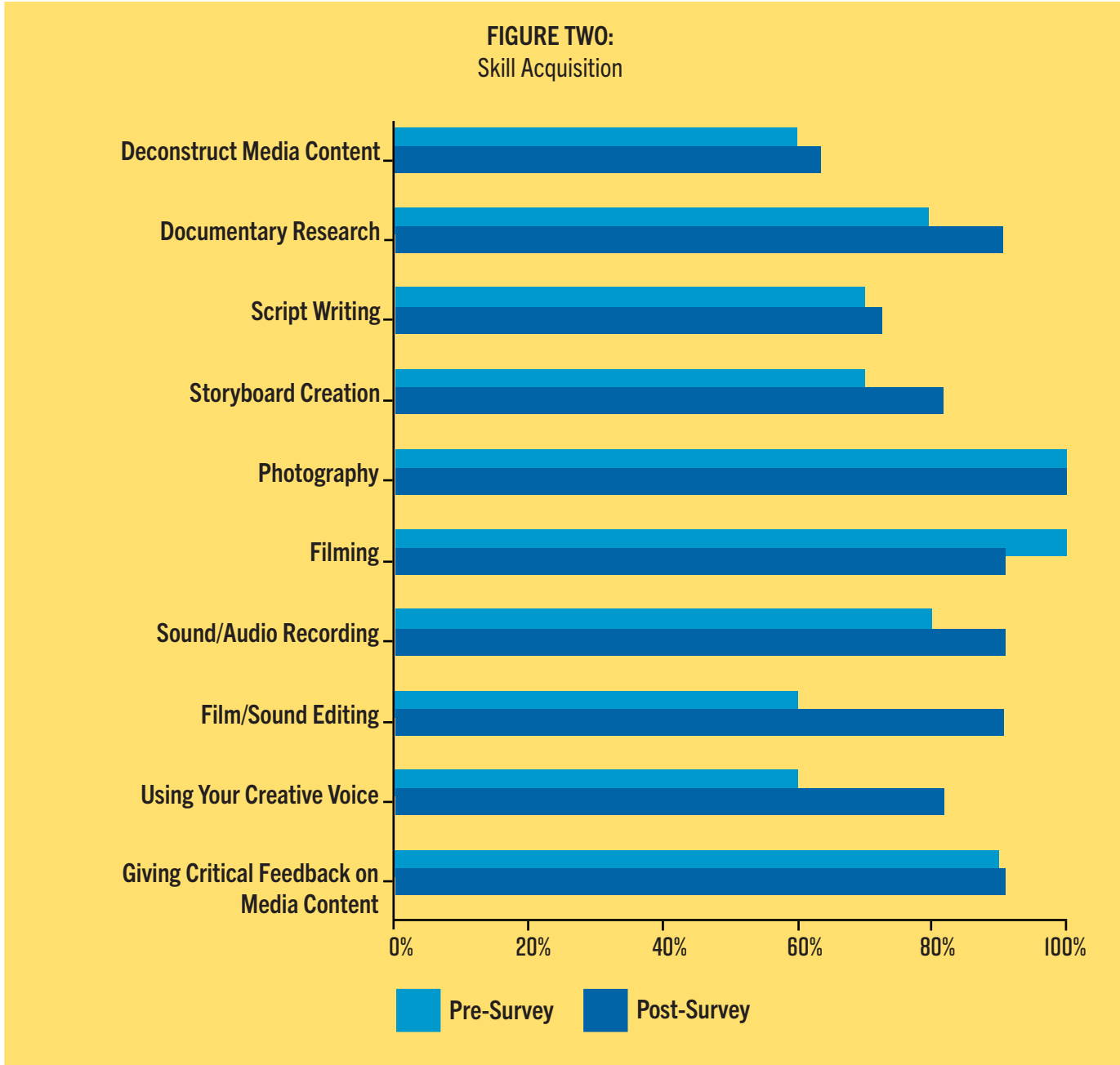


# SKILL ACQUISITION

We also asked Academy participants about their skill development in the pre- and post-surveys. Figure 2 reports the percentage of students who say they are moderately to extremely confident in their ability to complete each task.

Girls in the Youth Media Academy saw significant improvement in their ability to conduct documentary research, create storyboards, conduct sound/audio recording, film editing, and using

their creative voice. Surprisingly, fewer girls expressed confidence in their ability to conduct filming after the program, which is likely due to increased awareness of what professional filming entails.



We also asked a question about what new skills the girls learned in the Youth Media Academy. Most academy participants reported learning new technical skills related to filmmaking:

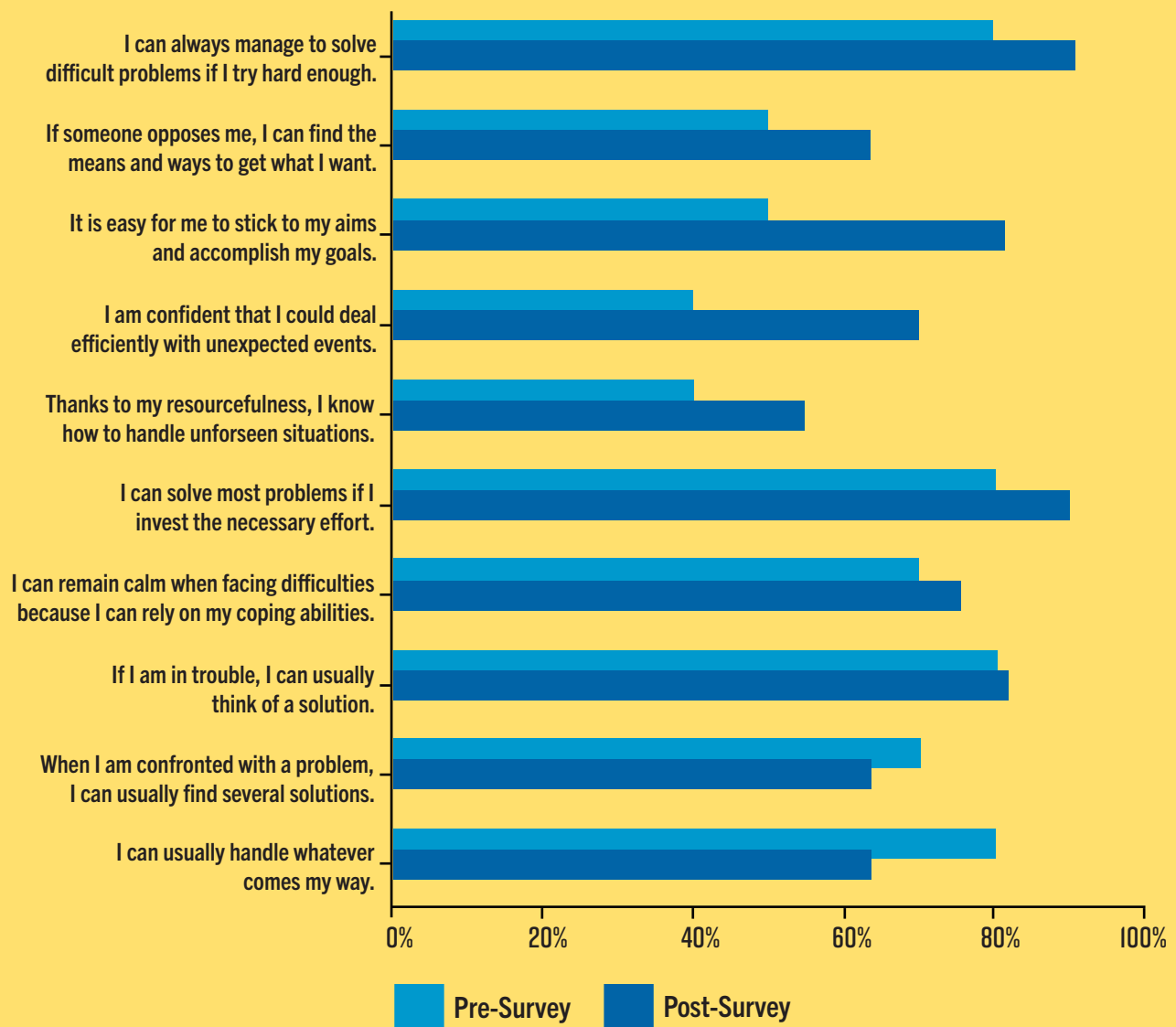
"I learned how to use very expensive cameras. I also learned how to edit!"	"Camera, video editing."	"I learned editing skills and how to use the boom and camera."	"I learned how to use a camera."
"I learned how to work a fancy camera, I learned how to use a boom pole and how to work with sound."		"What I learned to do at YMA was editing and how to work a camera."	"How to work with a camera."
"I learned how to edit, I didn't have any experience."	"I learned to edit films and work with cameras."	"I learned how to use a camera and how to set it up. Also the level it has to be."	

# SELF-EFFICACY

Participants were also asked to complete the General Self-Efficacy Scale, a validated measure of an individual's belief in their power to control their behavior, social environment, and goal attainment. People with higher self-efficacy are more optimistic and report more life satisfaction. People with lower self-efficacy are more likely to be stressed, depressed, have anxiety, and suffer burnout.

Scores on the General Self-Efficacy Scale can range from a low of 10 (low self-efficacy) to 40 (high self-efficacy). The average overall score did not shift significantly from the pre-survey to post-survey (26.6 and 26.3, respectively). However, most items did shift in the positive direction over the course of the program. More specifically, the girls in the academy saw an improvement on seven out of ten measures of self-efficacy.

**FIGURE THREE:**  
Self-Efficacy Scale



# WELL-BEING

We also asked participants a series of questions about their well-being that are related to mental health. Respondents completed the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS), a well-respected measure that assesses self-reported individual well-being at a particular point in time.

The WEMWBS is comprised of seven questions that measure different aspects of mental health and well-being:

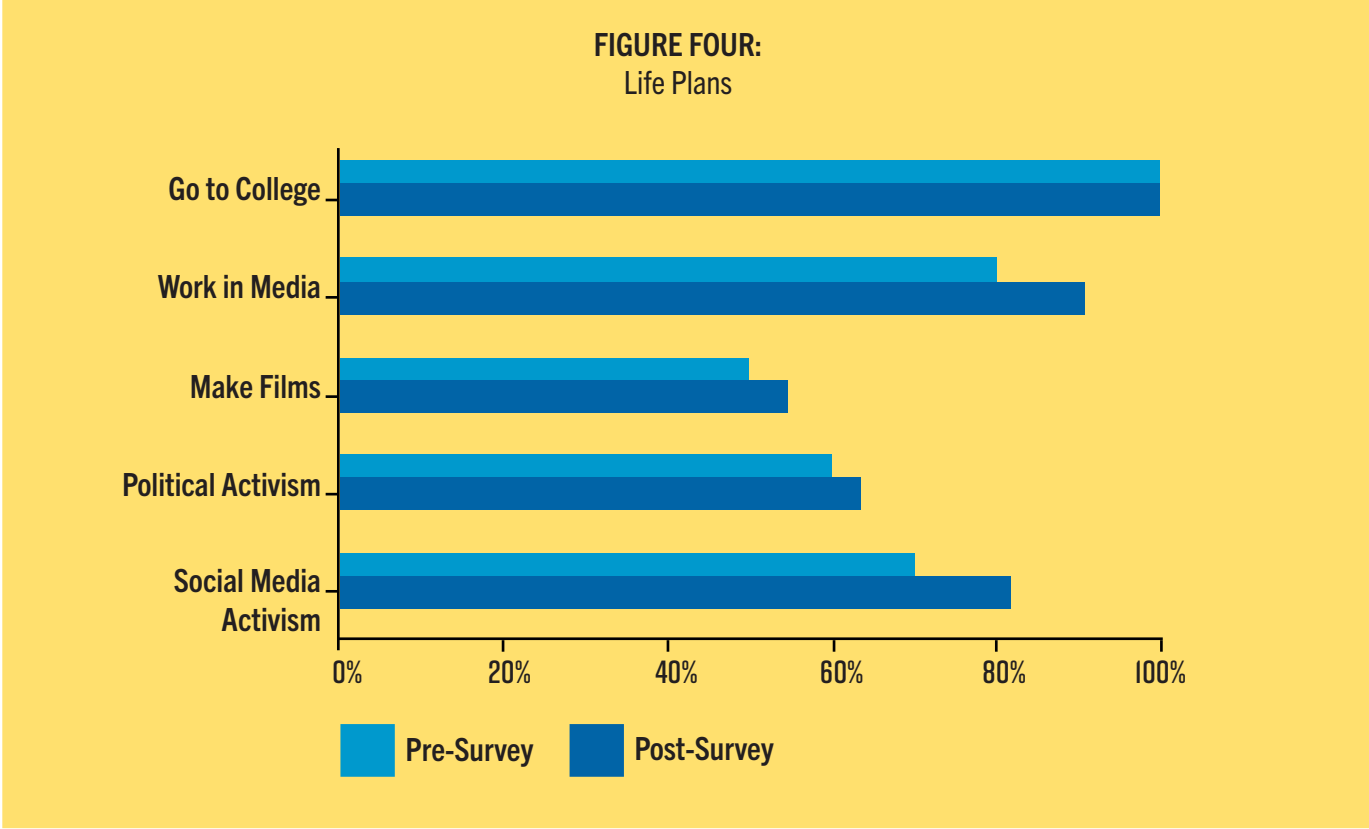
1. I've been feeling optimistic about the future.
2. I've been feeling useful.
3. I've been feeling relaxed.
4. I've been dealing with problems well.
5. I've been thinking clearly.
6. I've been feeling close to other people.
7. I've been able to make up my own mind about things.

Scores on this scale range from 7 (low well-being) to 35 (high well-being). On the pre-survey, girls scored an average of 16, indicating that participants are on the low end of well-being. By the end of the program, participants reported an average well-being score of 24—a statistically significant improvement over the course of the Youth Media Academy.

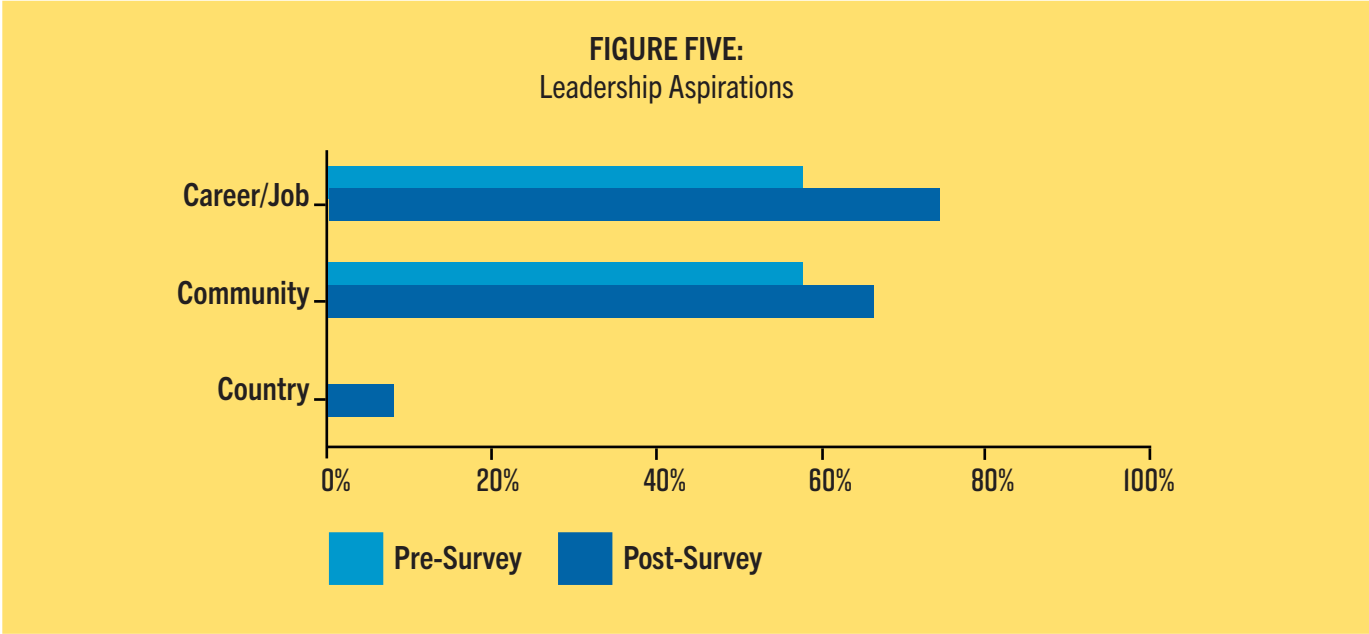
# LIFE PLANS & LEADERSHIP

Participants were asked a series of questions about future plans for their life, as well as a set of questions about their leadership aspirations. Figure 4 reports the percentage of girls who are moderately to extremely interested in pursuing each activity.

All of the girls in the Youth Media Academy entered and departed the program with the intention of going to college. After completing the Academy, the girls expressed a greater interest in working in media in some capacity and engaging in social media activism.



We asked Youth Media Academy participants about their aspiration to be a leader in their career, community, or country. As indicated in Figure 5, the percentage of girls who want to be leaders in the career, community, and country increased over the course of the program.



We did not see a shift in girls' confidence to lead. One-in-four girls (25%) say they have high confidence in their leadership abilities in both the pre- and post-surveys.

# BIGGEST IMPACT

We asked Youth Media Academy participants to tell us what they liked best about the program, what they learned, and what impacted them the most.

Some of the girls spoke about the program being empowering on a personal level:

“I learned about what I would like to do in the future and get more comfortable to share things about myself.”

“It gives me hope that I can achieve my dreams no matter the resources that I have.”

“I loved the lesson plans and self-reflective exercises.”

“[I learned to] be more considerate of other people’s feelings.”

“I learned more about myself and feeling more comfortable around people that I get to know.”

Other girls enjoyed the technical aspects of the program:

“It has affected my life. I want to do more things with a camera.”

“I learned to wait at the end of films and see the credits to appreciate the filmmakers.”

“I enjoyed when we went to film for our short films.”

“I enjoyed working with the cameras.”

“I loved viewing short films and learning about the technical terms like ‘b-roll,’ ‘depth of field’ etc. I loved the guest speakers. They gave me a new perspective on life and filmmaking.”

Some girls gave the Youth Media Academy a glowing review overall:

“Everything!”

“I really enjoyed everything I did in the program and the field trips we had. It was a good experience.”





# ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The Representation Project is the leading gender watchdog organization. Using film and media as catalysts for cultural transformation, The Representation Project inspires individuals and communities to challenge limiting gender stereotypes and shift norms. Jennifer Siebel Newsom founded The Representation Project, a 501(c)(3), in 2011 in response to the overwhelming public demand for ongoing education and social action in support of her first film, *Miss Representation*. Since then, The Representation Project released Newsom's second film, *The Mask You Live In*, and third film, *The Great American Lie*. The organization is well known for creating popular social media activism campaigns such as #NotBuyingIt, #AskHerMore, and #RepresentHer. The Representation Project offers robust youth programming to the next generation of media creators through school screenings, an online community for creators, summer media training academies, and annual educational summits focused on transcending gender stereotypes.

## Caroline Heldman, Ph.D., Executive Director



Dr. Heldman is the Executive Director of The Representation Project, Research Advisor for the Geena Davis Institute for Gender in Media, and Professor of Politics at Occidental College. She is the author of four books— *Protest Politics in the Marketplace: Consumer Activism in the Corporate Age* (Cornell University Press, 2017), *Women, Power, and Politics: The Fight for Gender Equality in the United States* (Oxford University Press, 2017), *The New Campus Anti-Rape Movement* (Lexington, 2018), and *Gender and Resistance in the 2016 Presidential Election* (Praeger, 2018). Dr. Heldman has worked as a political commentator for CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News, and she co-founded the New Orleans Women's Shelter, and the Lower Ninth Ward Living Museum.

## Youth Media Academy Staff

### Annie Delgado, Director of Youth Programs



Annie Delgado is the Director of Youth Programs at The Representation Project, the nonprofit organization founded by filmmaker and California's First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom. Annie is a high school teacher from California's Central Valley who has taught high school women's studies since 2008. In 2015, she was selected as a semi-finalist for California Teacher of the Year and was recognized in 2016 as a Champion of Change by the Obama Administration for her work with marginalized girls. She earned her degree in political science from Trinity University in Washington, DC, her Master's in Education from Chapman University, and her JD from Catholic University.

### Erin Semine Kökdil, Academy Instructor



Erin Semine Kökdil is a storyteller interested in building solidarity and inciting social change through film. Her work deals with issues of trauma, marginalization, and migration and has screened at IDFA, Hot Docs, Camden International Film Festival, and Palm Springs International ShortFest. Prior to becoming a filmmaker, she worked extensively with non-profits and community-led initiatives in the U.S. and Guatemala. She holds a B.A. in Latin American Studies and Spanish from Smith College and an M.F.A. in Documentary Film and Video from Stanford University.