



# The Power of Data: How Research Advances Social Change for Women and Girls

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March 13, 2014

# About WCW

WCW is a premier women- and gender-focused research, theory, and action institute housed at Wellesley College, a leading women's college in Wellesley, Massachusetts, USA.

For 40 years, WCW's scholarship and programming has informed public policies and programs and helped define state-of-the-art content knowledge related to women, girls, and gender.



# The Power of Data: 3 Questions

1. How can we *make research integral* to the process of social change work, rather than an afterthought?
2. How can we *build women- and gender-related research capacity* worldwide?
3. How can we create a *culture of research-in-partnership*?

# Data Is Now Essential

- There is growing recognition that effective measurement and sophisticated statistics are essential to advancing women's and girls' equality and empowerment.
  - Dialogues on the MDGs and the emerging post-2015 development agenda
  - Melinda Gates' July 2013 article on ForeignPolicy.com
  - UN Global Gender Statistics Programme

# Increasing Data Demand

- Funders of all types are requiring hard evidence that the programs they fund are effective.
- Policymakers, advocates, and development agencies demand data as evidence of impact.
- Media outlets – print, broadcast, and online – are in need of accessible, easy-to-understand data.

# Organizations Need Data

- Women's social change organizations (NGOs; CBOs; and grassroots, advocacy, and activist organizations) need data to demonstrate that their programs effectively move the needle on social change.
- The challenge: In-house research capacity may be limited, because it is not the organizational focus.

# Researchers Ready to Partner

- Women- and gender-focused research institutes, like WCW, have the expertise and focus to provide high-quality research in partnership with social change organizations and funders, while also providing data for policymakers, advocates, and the media.
- In the U.S. and globally, there are numerous women- and gender-focused research institutes (some affiliated with colleges and universities, others free-standing) that are ready to partner.

# Research Accelerates Social Change

- In today's world, competing interest groups make their case using research, and rigor helps sort things out.
- Social change efforts that are supported by *rigorous research* have a competitive advantage in the marketplace of ideas.



# Accelerating Research Capacity Globally

- *Global research equity* is now a social justice target itself – can every country / region meet its research needs?
- How can research organizations around the world partner in equitable and socially- / culturally-conscious ways?

# Some Issues to Watch & Prepare For

- The “data revolution”
- Data disaggregation
- Big data
- Measurement standards
- Measurement dialogues
- Research literacy
- Research translation
- Global research equity

# UN Global Gender Statistics Programme



- New Gender Statistics Manual
- UN Minimum Set of Gender Indicators
- Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) Project

# Examples from WCW

Research that Moved the Needle...

# Out-of-School Time

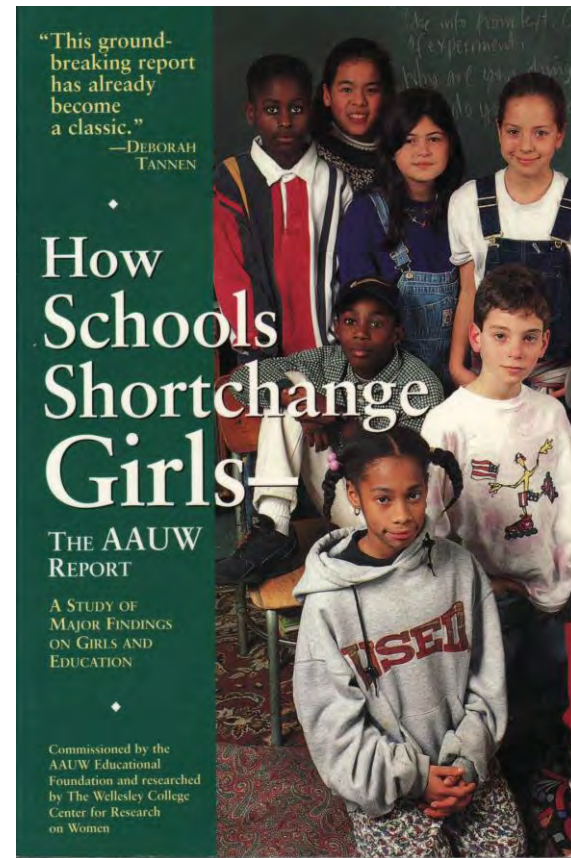


- 1980s: Influenced the IRS tax code to exempt infant-toddler programs and afterschool programs.



# Gender Equity in Education

- 1990s: Our collaborative report with the AAUW influenced federal legislation on programs for girls in science and math, shaped public discourse, and led to new community-based programs for girls.



# Family Violence in the Military

- 2000s: Our research on domestic violence in Navy families led to new prevention and intervention policies and programs in the U.S. Navy.





# Gender Based Violence in Schools

- 2013: The *Shifting Boundaries* intervention, designed to help middle schools reduce gender-based violence, was showcased by both the White House and the U.S. Department of Education as an evidence-based program and best practice.





# Final Question

How can we – research institutes, on-the-ground organizations, advocates, policymakers, and funders – collaborate to produce the evidence base that moves the needle on gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment?

A world that is good for women  
is good for everyone.



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