



**Texas Women's Foundation**  
STRONG WOMEN. BETTER WORLD.

Young  
Women's  
Initiative

**ntarupt**  
north texas alliance  
to reduce unintended  
pregnancy in teens

Community Partner

## **Dallas Young Women's Initiative: Year Two Evaluation Summary**

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### **Program Background**

The Texas Women's Foundation (TXWF) launched the Dallas Young Women's Initiative (YWI) in 2017 to empower and provide leadership opportunities to young women of color ages 16 to 24 from Dallas' southern and western sectors. The mission of the Dallas YWI is amplifying the voices and power of young women of color in Texas through a commitment to racial and gender equity and social justice, leadership, and collective action. The North Texas Alliance to Reduce Unintended Pregnancy in Teens (Ntarupt), is the TXWF community partner in Dallas for the YWI project.

### **Evaluation Questions, Data Collection & Data Analysis**

CORE is collaborating with TXWF, Ntarupt and the Young Women Advisory Council (YWAC) on a *formative, participatory, and developmental evaluation using mixed-methodologies*. The evaluation questions for Year Two were: 1) What are the emerging components of the YWI program? 2) In what ways do the young women of color benefit from participating in the Dallas YWI program? What are the individual benefits? What are the collective benefits? 3) In what ways did the YWAC implement actions related to local and national issues (i.e., the 2020 Census) and working group focus areas? What do the outcomes look like? The data collection activities included document and literature reviews, interviews with YWI program staff and YWAC, focus group with the YWAC, surveys, session observations and field notes. In keeping with our value orientation to include the young women in the design of this evaluation and validate emerging findings, the data analysis approach and emerging findings were also shared with the young women for feedback through the YWI Research & Evaluation Committee.

### **Participant Demographics**

Cohort Two of the Dallas YWI program initially recruited 22 Fellows, including six returning Fellows from the 2018 cohort. During the course of the program, three Fellows dropped out and three other Fellows did not actively participate in meetings, leaving a total of 16 active Fellows. The program sought to recruit young women of color with a broad range of experiences from diverse racial and ethnic groups, identities, and communities. Of the 20 Fellows who participated in the Demographics survey, 85% identified as a child of immigrants and 65% were Hispanic/Latino, 20% were Black/Non-Hispanic, 10% Asian, 5% Black/Multi-Racial. Of the 65% who chose Hispanic/Latino as their ethnicity, the majority noted their family's nationality as Mexican, followed by Honduran, Venezuelan, Colombian and El Salvadorian. Forty-five percent of the Fellows had a Bachelor's degree, 35% had some college, 10% were in high school, and 5% had an Associate's or Master's degree.

### **Key Findings: Emerging Components of YWI**

Cohort Two of the Dallas YWI program ran from January 2019 – May 2020. During this 18-month timeline, Fellows learned about issues impacting the community, advanced their skills in leadership and advocacy, and created solutions for other young women and girls of color in Dallas County through collective action around the census and their work group focus areas. The Fellows attended YWAC meetings that included 1) sessions on various topics led by local community leaders and women of color experts like the Dallas history, civic engagement, personal financial planning, census initiative retreat 2)

YWAC working group sessions to conduct research, to draft action plans, and to make recommendations in five issue areas - sexuality, representation, identity, education and mental health 3) grant-making committee meetings to bring together a small group of Fellows to identify organizations and projects in the community to award community grants and 4) research and evaluation committee meetings to include the young women in the design of this evaluation through youth-oriented participatory action strategies, share emerging findings with the YWAC, and help build their skills around research and evaluation. The Dallas YWI emerging components, structure, and activities have been strengthened and will be rolled out in Cohort Three for program consistency and replication at future sites.

## **Key Findings: Individual & Collective Benefits for Young Women of Color**

The young women who were interviewed named more than 60 emerging individual and collective benefits they gained from participating in the Dallas YWI initiative.

### **Individual Benefits**

The findings for the individual benefits include: 1) Developmental Relationships, 2) Developmental Assets (Internal & External), 3) Leadership, and 4) Knowledge/Skills. As in Year One, each of the young women in Year Two who were interviewed narrated their lived experiences as the core motivation of why they do what they do as a young woman of color. Undeniably, their inspiration, learnings, growth, and actions were products of their own lived experiences. Those lived experiences in turn became an impetus and shaped the way they lived and defined what it meant to thrive as a young woman of color. They operationalized those lived experiences through their personal stories.

### **Developmental Relationships**

The Fellows described how the YWI initiative helped build strong relationships with one another. These were conceptualized through five elements and 20 actions of the ***Developmental Relationships<sup>1</sup> framework***. The framework describes elements and actions that make relationships powerful in young people's lives, helping them thrive and be successful in their lives. The Fellows provided several examples for the five elements that include: Express Care, Challenge Growth, Provide Support, Share Power, and Expand Possibilities. Of the 13 Fellows who participated in the interviews and focus group: **All 13 Fellows (100%)** agreed that the YWI program **helped increase or strengthen** 10 actions to build positive relationships among Fellows. They include: Listen, Encourage, Stretch, Empower, Advocate, Collaborate, Let me lead, Inspire, Broaden horizons, and Connect. **11 Fellows (90%)** agreed that the YWI program **helped increase or strengthen** 7 actions to build positive relationships among Fellows. They include: Be Dependable, Believe in me, Be warm, Expect my best, Navigate, Respect me, and Include me.

### **Developmental Assets**

The Fellows described how the YWI initiative helped them build Developmental Assets. These were conceptualized through four categories from the Developmental Assets framework<sup>2</sup>. The framework

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<sup>1</sup> Search Institutes Developmental Relationships framework describe how young people are more likely to grow up and be successful when they experience developmental relationships with important people in their lives. Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. Search Institute has identified five elements—expressed in 20 specific actions—that make relationships powerful in young people's lives (Source: Search Institute Developmental Relationships Framework).

<sup>2</sup> Search Institutes Developmental Assets framework describes various internal and external assets that are vital for the healthy development of all young people (Source: Search Institute Developmental Assets Framework).

describes various internal and external assets that are vital for the healthy development of all young people. Interestingly, the Fellows provided more examples for Internal Assets than External Assets. The internal assets that resonated most to the Fellows were associated with Personal Identity, Personal Values, Equality, and Social Justice. The Fellows also noted learning and developing their skills in Interpersonal Competence and Cultural Competence through YWAC. The external assets that resonated the most to the Fellows were Family and Adult Relationships and Support, Empowerment, Role Models, and Positive Peer Influence. Of the 13 Fellows who participated in the interviews and focus group: **All 13 Fellows (100%)** agreed that the YWI program **helped increase or strengthen** internal assets related to Personal Power, Self-Esteem, Sense of Purpose, Positive View of Personal Future, Cultural Competence, Interpersonal Competence, Planning and Decision-Making, Responsibility, Integrity, Honesty, and Equality and Social Justice. **All 13 Fellows (100%)** agreed that the YWI program **helped increase or strengthen** external assets related to Adult Relationships, Role Models, and Positive Peer Influence.

### **Leadership**

When asked about leadership and what it means to be a leader, the young women contextualized their responses in the traits, qualities, and behaviors of leaders. They reported that the YWI initiative has helped them develop leadership qualities that will allow them to be strong leaders in their future personal and professional lives. The leadership qualities they reported were empathy, personal power, integrity, purpose, collaboration, planning & decision making, and inspire others. The young women alluded to several leadership opportunities to guide, inspire, influence, and build confidence in others within their working group that they experienced as part of YWAC.

### **Knowledge & Skills**

The Fellows reported the deep knowledge they have gained around several topics like identity, personal financial planning, goal setting, civic engagement, census, grant-making, research and evaluation among others. They also reported feeling motivated by trainers and speakers who are women of color. In addition, the Fellows also reported numerous skills they have gained by participating in YWAC like organization, problem-solving, decision-making, collaboration etc.

### **Collective Benefits**

#### **Census Actions**

The YWAC Fellows' Census advocacy among people of color in Dallas County is vital to ensuring that every person gets counted; as it directly influences planning for education, nutrition, health programs, transportation, employment, and other community-level needs. In addition, the Fellows work will also help fight the inequities that communities of color face in Dallas County. From January 2020, the YWAC learned about the Census's impact on young women of color in Texas and Dallas, increased their knowledge about the plan for Dallas County and the 2020 Census, identified the role of the YWAC in Census activities, and specified actions of the Dallas YWAC in Census 2020 related to the group's areas of focus.

A total of 92%, or 12 of the 13 Fellows, reported in the YWI end-of-year program survey that the YWAC Census Initiative inspired them to participate in individual actions. For the Fellows, these **individual actions** entailed 1) using various social media platforms to educate family, friends, and co-workers about the basics of the census; 2) developing personal websites to tell their story and that of others and how that has an impact on the census; 3) creating videos to reach the younger population and encourage their own household to participate in the census; 4) talking to people in person about the census to address any misconceptions and negative feelings about participation; 5) using boards and/or

other organizations to raise awareness and participate in events; and 6) connecting with the local city and Mayor's office to educate themselves and become effective advocates for the census.

The YWAC took *collective actions* in support of the census through participation in local community events, as well as two internally formed committees that included the Outreach Committee and Social Media Committee. While the COVID-19 pandemic paused all in-person activities from March–May 2020, the Fellows still continued to implement committee-related activities virtually to sustain the momentum of their collective census work and actions. The YWAC collectively participated in Martin Luther King (MLK) Day March/Parade in Dallas, Fair Park Census event and the Dallas After School Annual Vendor Fair to spread awareness about the census.

The *Social Media Committee* consisted of 11 Fellows. They all worked to create content and a plan for the YWAC Fellows to share and raise awareness about the census through their personal social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. They did this through campaigns, short content posts, infographics, and engagement to educate their friends, family, and community about the importance of the census. The *Outreach Committee* consisted of five Fellows who worked to create Op-Eds about their own experiences as young women of color and how that intersects with and has an impact on the census. With the COVID-19 pandemic, this work was even more critical, as the inequalities regarding resources in communities of color were more evident. The Op-Eds have been drafted and will be forwarded for publishing in the Visible Magazine.

### **Grant-Making Committee Actions**

The YWAC grant-making committee members researched and recommended organizations with a mission to serve young women of color through programming and services in Dallas County. The committee awarded community grants to seven 501(c) 3 organizations for a total of \$35,000. The grants were awarded to local organizations that include CitySquare, Genesis Women's Shelter, House of Rebirth, North Texas Dream Team, Promise House, Vickery Meadow Youth Development Foundation, and I Look Like Love Inc. In spring 2019, grants were awarded to seven organizations that included Harmony CDC, Hispanic Women's Network, Kathlyn Joy Gilliam Museum, LULAC National Education Service Centers Inc., Parkland Hospital, and Promise House.

### **Committees and Boards**

During 2019 and 2020, several YWAC Fellows served on committees, boards, centers, or groups in the community to take actions and advance work for communities of color. In 2019 and 2020, those profiting from the Fellows' work included:

1. National Young Women's Advisory Committee
2. Jolt Levantate Leadership Institute
3. Ntarupt Board Member
4. Candidate for Leadership ISD
5. City of Cedar Hill Neighborhood Advisory Board
6. UNT Dallas Campus Safety and Security Committee
7. UNT Dallas Parking Appeals Committee
8. DISD Racial & Equity Council Board
9. DISD Racial Equity Office Works and Policy Committee
10. Board for Student Voter Empowerment Coalition
11. League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Youth State Director (also recipient of the LULAC National Woman of the Year Award)
12. City of Irving Planning and Zoning Commission
13. City of Dallas Complete Count Committee

14. Dallas-Fort Worth Urban League of Young Professionals Civic Engagement Committee
15. DISD Teen Board
16. 2020 DISD Bond Safety & Security Committee
17. Diversity & Inclusion Committee
18. Peer Mentor part of the University Career Development Center
19. Nominated to serve on the Board of Dallas City of Learning
20. Texas Healthcare Challenge – Women in Science and Healthcare Committee
21. Leadership ISD
22. Group to sensitize the Irving community on the Census
23. Student Voter Empowerment Coalition
24. Peer Mentor for the LGBTQ Center