



# MAKING THE CASE FOR CHANGE

Funding women's and girls' programs



## **OUR MISSION:**

Women's Fund of Miami-Dade is a catalyst for social change and economic justice with the goal of creating a community where all women and girls reach their full potential. Our grant making, along with advocacy, training and community building are the key elements used to achieve this goal.

## **OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE:**

Women's Fund believes that all women and girls have the right to equality, safety, opportunity and self-determination in every aspect of their lives. Our leadership role requires that we serve as a partner, resource and bridge linking grantee partners, donors and the greater community together to create a better understanding of the needs and opportunities that exist for women and girls.

## **OUR WORK:**

Empowers emerging organizations.  
Addresses the root causes of inequality.  
Funds innovative ideas into solutions.  
Levels the playing field for all women and girls.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women's Fund of Miami-Dade County (Women's Fund) began in 1992 with \$5,000 and the will to change the landscape of Miami's nonprofit world. When Women's Fund began, only 5% of nonprofit organizations in the county specifically targeted the needs of women and girls. In 2002, the Fund's grant making reached the \$100,000 mark and has increased ever since with the demand for funding dramatically increasing, too. Over the past 8 years, Women's Fund has received over \$6 million in requests for funding from 825 programs and has awarded \$2,392,250 to 310 projects. The average size of its grants is \$8,900. While grants are reviewed and distributed on an annual basis, many grantees have received multiple years of funding from Women's Fund.

In 2007, Women's Fund requested that all grantees begin to evaluate their progress using an online tool called, Making The Case. Created by the Women's Funding Network, an international association of women's funds, Making The Case helps grantees view their work from a social change perspective. The following report reviews data available in Making The Case for 116 programs that were funded from 2007-2009 and includes insights collected through key informant interviews.

## KEY FINDINGS:

- Over three-quarters of programs funded by Women's Fund focus on education in some way, including improving academic skills, increasing financial literacy, or providing comprehensive sex education.
- 91% of grantees work to shift the behaviors of women and girls, in order to build a sense of personal empowerment.
- More than half of the programs funded by Women's Fund work with girls ages 5-19, but many programs include women and girls of all ages.
- 95% of programs funded in the past 3 years work with low-income women and girls.
- While 63% of women working in Miami-Dade County are immigrants, they are not usually on the forefront of advocating for policy change. Yet, almost all of the programs working to advocate for policy change included immigrant women.
- Grantees believe that the value of the technical assistance, guidance, and networking opportunities offered to them by Women's Fund is at least as important the monetary support they receive.
- Funding from Women's Fund gives grantees credibility for their work and underscores the importance of supporting programs for women and girls. This credibility helps leverage additional funding from other sources.

- Grantees view Women’s Fund as a partner in their work and believe that alliance building, often with the assistance and guidance of Women’s Fund, is the single most important accelerator of their success.
- Successful program leaders build trust among the community, including skeptical partners or potential adversaries.
- The single largest barrier to success is the current economic crisis, both because of the disproportionate impact on the disenfranchised women and girls being served by grantees and because organizations are struggling to maintain funding for services, even as demand increases.
- Even when programs are not funded by Women’s Fund, the foundation continues to offer support and technical assistance that helps nurture the organizations and, at the same time, maintains open communication so that the Fund can be responsive to community needs as they emerge.

Women’s Fund offers organizations in the county opportunities that they cannot find otherwise; it is a risk-taking grant maker, willing to invest in start-up programs, organizations that provide services to deeply marginalized groups, and it tackles divisive topics like reproductive justice and sex education. The Fund also supports programs that try innovative approaches, that work in areas of community organizing and advocacy, and that are striving to challenge societal norms about women and girls.

The Fund envisions a Miami in which men and women receive equal pay for equal work, where quality, affordable child and health care are available for every family, where women and children are safe from violence, and where all children have access to the education necessary to grow, regardless of their sex. With nearly two decades experience funding programs for women and girls, Women’s Fund of Miami-Dade County has become a leading voice for the societal changes necessary to reach their vision. With new donors, an excellent reputation as a leader in the field, and a strong base of grantees who can see how their work influences the role of women in Miami, the Fund is poised to bring about true social change.

# MAKING CHANGE

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FOR

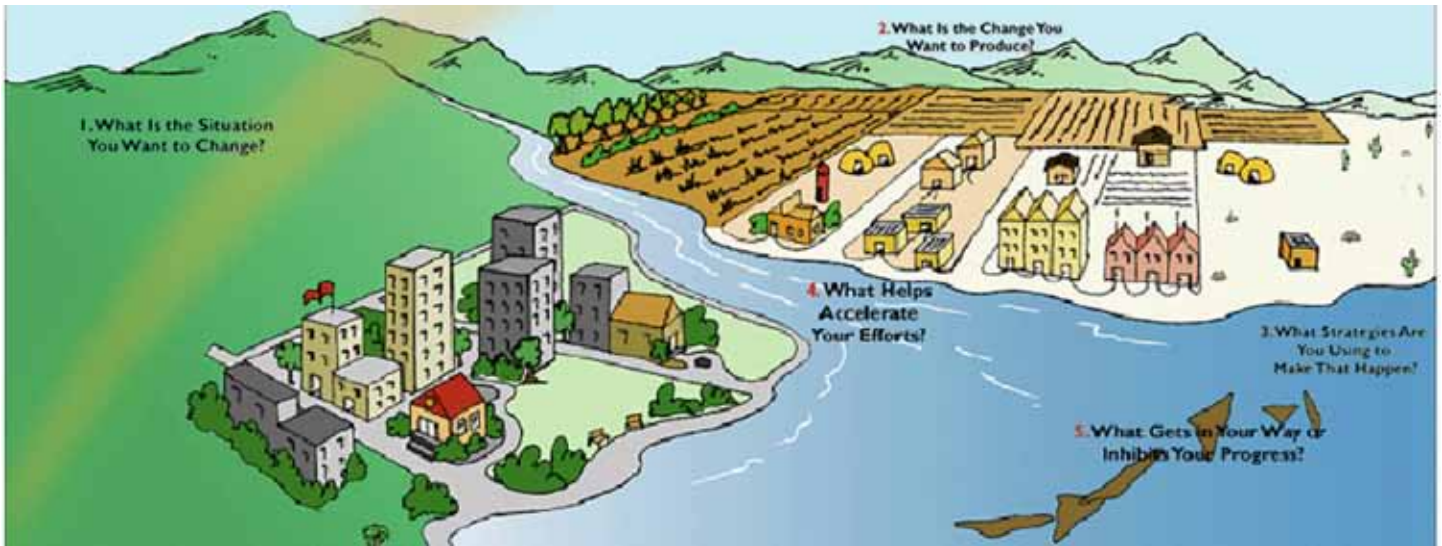
## FUNDING WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' PROGRAMS

Women's Fund of Miami-Dade County (Women's Fund) began in 1992 with \$5,000 and the will to change the landscape of Miami's nonprofit world. When the fund began, only 5% of nonprofit organizations in the county specifically targeted the needs of women and girls. In 2002, the Fund's grant making reached the \$100,000 mark and has increased ever since with the demand for funding dramatically increasing, too. Over the past 8 years, Women's Fund has received over \$6 million in requests for funding from 825 programs and has awarded \$2,392,250 to 310 projects. The average size of its grants is \$8,900. While grants are reviewed and distributed on an annual basis, many grantees have received multiple years of funding from Women's Fund.

When Women's Fund began, it focused on increasing the number of women and girls served in Miami-Dade County, primarily by supporting direct service programs that improve self-esteem, provide alternative safe-havens to women fleeing domestic abuse, offer mental health services, or otherwise enrich the lives of women and girls. The founding members felt that nurturing direct service for

women and, particularly girls, would create a Miami where everyone could prosper. Supporting direct service programs that focused on the needs of women and girls enabled Women's Fund to attract new donors to these organizations, which, in turn, engaged a broader audience of people interested in these societal issues.

With more donors understanding the importance of supporting women and girls programming, Women's Fund is now poised to bring about real social change by supporting programs that tackle the root causes of discrimination against women. While still supporting direct service organizations, Women's Fund is moving forward to the next level by funding programs that use direct service and advocacy to challenge societal norms, change the behaviors of women and girls, and train leaders who can advocate for policy change. The Fund envisions a Miami in which men and women receive equal pay for equal work, where quality, affordable child and health care are available for every family, where women and children are safe from violence, and where all children have access to the education necessary to grow, regardless of their sex.



## TO BRING THAT VISION TO FRUITION, WOMEN'S FUND IS IMPLEMENTING A MULTI-PRONGED APPROACH:

**RESEARCH:** The **Portrait** of Women's Economic Security in Greater Miami, a research report funded by Women's Fund in partnership with established local foundations and city commissioners, and conducted by the Research Institute on Social and Economic Policy of Florida International University, lays the foundation for tackling key issues that impact women including: child care, wage theft, underemployment, fair wages, and long-term savings.

**COMMUNITY AWARENESS:** Women's Fund, using the **Portrait** report, launched an outreach campaign: Real Women. Real Voices. Real Impact to demonstrate the need for change in Miami-Dade.

**LEADERSHIP TRAINING:** Women's Fund initiated a series of trainings for its grantees on issues such as reproductive justice that helps grantees move from solely providing direct service to promoting social change.

**PARTNERSHIPS:** Women's Fund, working with its grantees and other organizations, has conducted press conferences to increase awareness about specific policies that hinder the success of women. The Fund also builds partnerships among its grantees through technical assistance, quarterly meetings, and networking opportunities.

**FUNDING:** Women's Fund is targeting social change through its funding, including encouraging grantees to develop leadership among their client base who can become advocates for change. The Fund is particularly interested in addressing the root cause of economic disparities in Miami-Dade, including altering policies that impact child care, health access, financial literacy, and career options for women and girls.

**DOCUMENTATION AND EVALUATION:** For the past three years, Women's Fund has required its grantees to record their progress using a social change impact tool, "Making The Case," that defines five types of social change action.

# MAKING THE CASE

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Created by the Women's Funding Network, an international association of women's funds, Making The Case evaluation tool helps grantees think about their work from a social change perspective. Domestic violence isn't just about helping one woman escape her abuser, it is about changing the way society views abuse. Helping a poor woman find a job isn't just about employment training, it is about creating a society where women, regardless of their background, have the same access to economic self-sufficiency as men.

In order to better understand the shifts necessary to make social change, Making The Case defines five types of actions that can be used alone, in multiple combinations, or as an interrelated continuum of change.

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## THE FIVE SHIFTS, AND THEIR ASSOCIATED IMPACTS, ARE DEFINED AS:

**DEFINITION:** An issue or idea is given new meaning. Impact: The community or society sees the issue differently as a result of the work.

**BEHAVIOR:** An individual does things differently and for the better, usually building a sense of personal empowerment. Impact: Individuals and/or the community act differently.

**ENGAGEMENT:** More people are engaged in an idea or action as a result of the work. Impact: Enough people get involved that they are noticed; a critical mass is reached in the sphere of influence.

**POLICY:** Groups target specific organizational, local, regional, state policies or practices that negatively impact women and girls. Impact: policies and/or practices have changed to better serve social change ideals as a result of the work.

**MAINTAINING PAST GAINS:** Earlier progress on issues is maintained in the face of opposition. Impact: societal interest in protecting past gains ensures positive policy change is a day-to-day reality.

This report looks at the information available in Making The Case from 116 grantees over the course of the 2007-2009 funding cycles. The grantees use Making The Case to identify their own goals in each of the five shifts and self-evaluate their own progress. Grantees receive funding for one year at a time, although most grantees received funding for multiple years.

## **THE GRANTEES COULD FOCUS ON MULTIPLE AREAS. THE MOST COMMON AREAS OF FOCUS WERE:**

76% focused on education, either by helping women and girls advance academically or by offering supplementary education on financial literacy, reproductive health, or self-esteem building

42% of grantees focused specifically on health

34% of grantees included arts/culture

24% of grantees focused on addressing gender based violence

21% of grantees tackled economic justice/development

## **OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF GRANTEES THAT PARTICIPATED IN MAKING THE CASE INCLUDE:**

Grants ranged in size from \$2,500 to \$25,000.

95% of grantees work directly with low-income women.

A majority of programs focus on girls from ages 5 to 19, but programs worked with women and girls of all ages.

The most commonly targeted shift is in behavior, however, many projects work in at least one other shift area.

While Women’s Fund grantees are just beginning to focus on social change, their first steps are starting to pay off. Child care workers are now engaged in policy making; girls from disenfranchised, low-income neighborhoods are talking about national health care reform; youth are learning that technology isn’t just a guy’s job; and more people in Miami-Dade County have learned that domestic violence isn’t just a women’s issue.

## SELF-DEFINED ABILITY TO EFFECT CHANGE AMONG FUNDED PROJECTS

(116 projects reporting; projects often worked in more than one shift area as defined by the grantee)

	Definition	Behavior	Engagement	Policy	Maintaining Past Gains
Projects exceeding goals	14	28	14	4	14
Projects meeting goals	32	54	31	13	22
Projects beginning to meet goals	16	23	13	9	7
No progress	0	0	1	1	2
TOTAL	62	105	68	27	45

**HERE ARE FIVE STORIES OF THE WOMEN’S FUND GRANTEES AND THE DIFFERENCE WOMEN’S FUND OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY MAKES.**

## SHIFT IN DEFINITION:

*An issue or idea is given new meaning. Impact: The community or society sees the issue differently as a result of the work.*

While projects in this area tackled a variety of topics, and used different strategies, all projects have an overarching theme of redefining the capacity of women and girls from socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. **Instead of viewing poor, and often uneducated women, as too broken to fix, Women's Fund of Miami-Dade grantees view these women as deserving a voice, and a chance, to improve their lives.**

## GRANTEES TACKLED IMPORTANT ISSUES TO REDEFINE:

Shifting the perception that victims of domestic violence are partially to blame in order to promote a broader understanding that women do not choose to be victimized.

Challenging the mainstream belief that HIV primarily affects gay men, not Latina or Black women.

Reshaping the outlook of socio-economically disadvantaged girls who believe that there is no accessible path to financial security.

Rebutting the mainstream media's portrayals of beauty, body image, and sexuality of girls and women.

## STRATEGIES TO HELP REDEFINE INCLUDE:

Development of a magazine written and run by, and for, black girls

Film analysis and creation of new films about successful women by low-income girls

Community outreach through poster campaigns, press conferences, presentations, and trainings

Development of training programs that target specific misconceptions

One grantee, ITWomen, seeks to redefine the public's perception of careers in technology, and in doing so, improve the economic security of women and girls in Miami-Dade County.

# REDEFINING WOMEN'S WORK

Year Program Established: 2005

Years Organization Funded by Women's Fund: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009

Grant Award: \$6,000, \$6,000, \$7,000, \$5,000

Girls/Women Directly Impacted: 2,816 (from 2007-2009)

Girls/Women Indirectly Impacted: 5,000

Number of Organizational Partners: 30

Science. Technology. Engineering. Math. Despite the influx of women in the workforce for the past fifty years, careers that build upon the foundation of math and engineering are still seen primarily as choices for men. This gender gap is readily apparent in the Miami-Dade County Public Technology and Engineering Schools where less than one percent of students are female. ITWomen, an association of women in the fields of technology and engineering, sees itself as a driving force behind addressing that gender gap. ITWomen works in two ways to address this gender gap: providing scholarships to girls pursuing college degrees in the field of technology and by offering a Role Models program that brings women who have careers in technology and engineering to girls in middle and high school.

"Technology and engineering jobs are considered non-traditional jobs for women," notes Sherry Giordano, Executive Director of ITWomen, "but I'm not sure why. Maybe it's that the first wave of women in technology hit a glass ceiling and the second wave saw their own parents laid off from jobs in the field." Ms. Giordano also notes that societal pressures to fit in, to avoid being seen as "nerdish, not fun," keep girls from exploring technology as a career option, especially among girls who come from families without a solid support system.

In an effort to break down those preconceived notions of both gender and cool, the Role Model program presents girls with an opportunity to meet women in the fields of technology and engineering who are vibrant, interesting, successful, and inspirational. "We want the girls in the audience to look at our role models and think, 'I want to be an engineer!'" exclaims Ms. Giordano. ITWomen believes that encouraging more girls to enter the technology workforce will not only improve their own earning potential, but also improve future technological innovations by having a more gender-balanced field.

The Role Model program partners with ten organizations and schools throughout Miami-Dade County, including many other girl-serving organizations funded by Women's Fund. Developing a multi-year relationship with these organizations allows girls to interact with a speaker from the Role Model program four times a year, for several years in a row. Role Models do presentations quarterly, for groups as large as 500, but preferably under 20 so that the leaders can engage girls in discussion.



**“SUPPORT FROM WOMEN’S FUND OF MIAMI-DADE MEANS EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD TO US. IT IS AN HONOR AND A GREAT VALIDATION OF OUR WORK. THEY DON’T JUST GIVE US MONEY, WE ARE PART OF A REALLY WONDERFUL NETWORK OF OTHER PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT WOMEN. IT IS REALLY WOMEN’S FUND OF MIAMI-DADE THAT CEMENTED THE ROLE MODELS PROGRAM.”**

The Role Model Program, combined with other national initiatives, and the increase in awareness about technology in general, is beginning to make an impact. Alejandra Lorenzo, IT Specialist for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and a speaker for the Role Model Program explains, “I have been mentoring children for years through NOAA, but ITWomen gives me the venue to talk to these girls and say, ‘hey, you can do this.’ It used to be that I couldn’t even get a girl from a local college to intern in my office because they just weren’t interested in the field. I think the work we’re doing is helping to change that.”

While the Role Models work to help reshape the girls’ definition of technology and engineering as a career choice not only for boys, ITWomen also helps work with local employers to understand that it is valuable to encourage more girls to enter the field of technology and engineering. ITWomen also sees itself as an advocate for addressing the gender gap in technology from outside the IT world, too.

“We keep pounding the drum,” Ms. Giordano explains. “We serve as speakers, talking with as many people as possible about the importance of women in the technology field.” Ms. Giordano is realistic about the organization’s impact, but knows that work they do is part of a larger national effort to address the disparities among career options for women and girls. As ITWomen redefines what it means to be an engineer, they are also redefining paths for girls who are living in disadvantaged communities. “What we offer to the community are opportunities for girls to change their lives, their families, their incomes, and ultimately the workforce in South Florida.”

## SHIFT IN BEHAVIOR:

*An individual does things differently and for the better, usually building a sense of personal empowerment. Impact: Individuals and/or the community act differently.*

Because of the funding history of Women's Fund, which supports direct service programs for women and girls, 105 of the 116 grantees focused at least some aspect of their work on shifting behavior among women and girls. A majority of funded programs seek to prevent women and girls from becoming trapped in the cycles of poverty and/or violence.

### SOME OF THE BEHAVIORS TARGETED INCLUDE:

- Eliminating risky sexual behavior, including unplanned pregnancies
- Preventing domestic violence and violence against women
- Helping women gain economic self-sufficiency through financial literacy and wider range of career choices
- Improving self-esteem
- Creating better access to mental health
- Educating women about legal issues related to immigration or incarceration

### OF THE 26 GRANTEES THAT EXCEEDED THEIR OWN GOALS IN THIS AREA, THE MOST COMMONLY USED STRATEGIES INCLUDE:

- Developing leadership of the participants
- Offering skill building, counseling, and training opportunities for participants
- Improving public awareness of the problem

Over the past two years, Women's Fund has begun to encourage organizations to move beyond providing only direct service to see how services for women and girls are a part of a long-term process that can bring about social change. While Women's Fund strongly believes in women-centered social services, the foundation also realizes that individual change is only one step along the way to changing the way society views poverty, career options, mental health, educational opportunities, and a woman's role in the world.

In an effort to engage their partners in this discussion, Women's Fund began to offer trainings on reproductive justice, as well as grants specifically targeting social change from that perspective. Urgent, Inc. is an example of the evolution of a program working to shift behaviors among girls.

# FROM TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION TO TEEN ADVOCACY

Year Program Established: 2001

Years Organization Funded by Women's Fund: 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009

Grant Award: \$2,500, \$4,000, \$5,000, \$6,000, \$7,500, \$10,000, \$10,000, \$8,000, \$7,500

Girls/Women Directly Impacted: 185 (from 2007-2009)

Girls/Women Indirectly Impacted: 300

Number of Organizational Partners: 23

When The Rites of Passage Pregnancy Program began in 2000, with a small grant from Women's Fund, Urgent Inc. founders were attempting to break the cycle of poverty by preventing teens from becoming pregnant. At its core, the program offers life and social skill development, health education, career development, and exposure to arts and cultural events. The program is offered through the school year and during the summer, with older girls participating in paid internships and younger girls attending summer camp.

While the girls who participate see the program as an after-school girls' "club," the research-based intervention involves ongoing evaluations and screenings for risky behaviors, job readiness, and a self-efficacy scale to determine how responsible the participants feel about their life decisions. To date, the "club" activities have had impressive results, including no pregnancies among the year-round participants and 100% of girls who were seniors last year received their high school diploma and are now either in college or vocational school.

As the program has grown, so, too, has the overall goal of the work. As Saliha Nelson, Vice President, explains, "At first, we just talked about STD education, about HIV. We now see our work through a reproductive justice framework. We used to say, 'these are the contraceptives available, take your pick,' now we talk to the girls about the cost of contraceptives, what are their health rights, is there a public policy that hinders your access to contraceptives, and what does the national health care debate mean for your reproductive rights?"



The next step for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program is to empower girls to make changes in those policies. Currently, Urgent Inc. is working with the University of Miami Youth Law Clinic and Advocates for Youth to identify health policy that impact youth and young adults. While the girls in the program are just beginning to understand what public policy is, Ms. Nelson is hopeful that the partnership with the Law Clinic will help give the girls the opportunity to develop an advocacy platform. “First we want girls to become aware of the different policy issues affecting them, then help them decide which of those policies most impact them and finally they will begin to advocate for social change through the arts and social media outlets.”

What began as a program with a \$2,500 budget, is now a program that operates on \$230,000 a year. Even though Women’s Fund provides less than \$10,000 a year of that overall budget, the support is a critical piece. “The thing I love the Women’s Fund for is that they are always pushing their partners to look at our work in new ways. I wasn’t familiar with what reproductive justice really is and the Women’s Fund offered two years of training about it.” Through the trainings, Ms. Nelson began to understand how to connect the shift in behavior of her girls on an individual level, to a shift in behavior that leads to social change. Instead of working solely to prevent girls from getting pregnant, the program is striving to have those same girls change the policies that make it harder for them to succeed.

**“I CREDIT THE WOMEN’S FUND FOR WHAT WE ARE TODAY.”**

# SHIFT IN ENGAGEMENT:

*More people are engaged in an idea or action as a result of the work. Impact: Enough people get involved that they are noticed; a critical mass is reached in the sphere of influence.*

In order to bring about social change, many organizations reach out to other community groups in an effort to create discussions that alter the landscape of how we view one another. Of the 116 grantees reporting in Making The Case, 59 worked to create a shift in engagement. All but three of these organizations also simultaneously targeted shifting individual behaviors.

## SOME OF THE AREAS THAT GRANTEES FOCUSED ON INCLUDE:

- Raising awareness of discrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered youth
- Eradicating gang violence among girls
- Raising awareness of domestic violence, particularly among immigrant populations
- Demystifying the legislative process
- Drawing attention to the specific needs of the growing female homeless population

## STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE A WIDER AUDIENCE INCLUDED:

- Press conferences
- Community-wide meetings
- Training sessions
- Development of new coalitions and strengthening existing ones
- Work with academic institutions on research, including involvement of interns in grassroots efforts

**At the core of all successful efforts to engage broader communities, organizations had to build trust, sometimes among skeptical leaders, think creatively about building alliances, and rely on the support of other Women's Fund grantees.**

One organization, Unite for Dignity, first had to build trust among women from various immigrant communities, challenging their own fears of other immigrants, in order to develop a unified effort to fight for immigrant rights. After building these relationships one-by-one, the women worked together to determine how to engage the community at large.

# FROM A SMALL GROUP TO A GROWING COMMUNITY

Year Program Established: 2008

Years Organization Funded by Women's Fund: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009

Grant Award: \$7,500, \$7,500, \$7,000, \$20,000

Girls/Women Directly Impacted: 34 (from 2007-2009)

Girls/Women Indirectly Impacted: 300

Number of Organizational Partners: 35

In 2008, with support from Women's Fund, Unite for Dignity, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to create leadership in immigrant communities, developed a new Community Stewards program that offers women an opportunity to learn more about their legal rights as workers. These women, of different ages and nationalities, all work in the cleaning and caring industries as housekeepers, nannies, and food service workers. Yet, they speak different languages, hold different beliefs, and often live their lives surrounded by members of their own cultural communities. These beliefs and fears often lead to discord among immigrant groups, yet "we believe that if each community stays on their own, we'll never get anywhere," explains Winie Cantave, Director for Unite for Dignity, "but if we can work together, and appreciate what each other has and respect our differences, then we can all work towards the same goal."

During the Community Stewards program, Unite for Dignity uses roundtable discussions to address the participants' mistrusts of other groups and, at the same time, teaches how the participants' rights have been infringed. Many of the Stewards had been victims of wage theft; that is, they were repeatedly paid for fewer hours than they had worked. Prior to starting the program, many of the women thought they had no choice, but to accept the payment they received. Fear of losing jobs, having problems with immigration authorities, and lack of support from family and friends, prevented these women from speaking up. After participating in the Unite for Dignity program, however, several of the participants chose to work with the Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center (FIAC) to pursue legal action against their employers.

One such participant, Silvia Cubides, a Colombian-born woman who worked as a hotel housekeeper, learned during the Community Stewards program that her former employer should have been paying her overtime. Working with FIAC and Unite for Dignity, Ms. Cubides filed a successful lawsuit and inspired other former co-workers to join in on a class action lawsuit. Ms. Cubides is now a committed activist, working to mobilize other low-wage women in an effort to engage a larger audience committed to improving working conditions for immigrants.



With momentum from the 2008 Community Stewards, interns from Florida International University, and the encouragement of the Women’s Fund, Unite for Dignity developed a plan to reach out to churches in various immigrant communities and speak about worker and immigrant rights. Not all the churches, however, were interested in allowing activists to address their parishioners. “The companies that employ a lot of people in this area are also donors to the churches,” Ms. Cantave hypothesizes, “I think there was a lot of concern that they would lose money if we started talking from the pulpit.”

The Stewards wanted to engage a larger audience, but questioned how to do it with the reluctance of the churches. The women realized that if they started a small catering business, they would be able to meet two goals: earn income from their work and have a non-threatening way of approaching the parishioners. Slowly, the churches began to open their doors to the catering business by hiring the women to cater receptions after the services ended. As the women served food, they also offered assistance, passing out flyers about workers’ rights. Building the trust of the church members, and the churches themselves, Unite for Dignity helped the parishioners identify other cases of wage theft, and connected those in need to FIAC for legal assistance.

The shift in engagement isn’t just about the impact Unite for Dignity has had on its participants or the immigrant communities, but also about the organization itself. Ms. Cantave recalls that she had never considered domestic violence as part of her curriculum for the Community Stewards program, until attending the quarterly roundtable of Women’s Fund’s grantees, many of whom work in the area. “After that Women’s Fund roundtable, we had our monthly leadership meeting of the Community Stewards and I thought I need to find out if this is a situation here and we talked about it. I realized that some of our Stewards were victims and needed help.” The Community Stewards program now involves discussion about domestic violence and serves as a referral source to domestic violence agencies.

**“WHEN WE STARTED THIS PROGRAM, THERE WAS A WALL AMONG THE DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS. WE DESTROYED THE WALL BY ENGAGING AN HONEST AND STRAIGHT-FORWARD DIALOGUE THAT CREATED A SENSE OF COLLABORATION.”**

# SHIFT IN POLICY:

*Groups target specific organizational, local, regional, state policies or practices that negatively impact women and girls. Impact: policies and/or practices have changed to better serve social change ideals as a result of the work.*

While the work of Women's Fund has included advocacy work on behalf of women and girls, only 16 of the grants funded in the past three years target changing public policy as part of their goals. The Fund encourages organizations to tackle policy change and funds organizations that do.

## THE PUBLIC POLICIES TACKLED BY THE GRANTEES FALL INTO THREE CATEGORIES:

Employment policies: ensuring fair wages and legal protection for immigrant workers

Health policies: including the abolishment of the HPV vaccination requirement for immigrant women, access to affordable contraceptives and the availability of comprehensive sex education, and adequate funding for research on breast cancer

Education policies: including removing gender gaps in hiring in science and technology fields and changing suspension policies of the Miami-Dade County schools

While programs are just on the cusp of making significant policy change in Miami-Dade, they are engaging women in policy work in ways that have not happened before in the community. **In particular, immigrant women, who make up 63% of the female workforce in Miami-Dade, are not usually first line policy advocates. Yet, the majority of women involved in Women's Fund of Miami Dade grants working in this area are immigrant women.**

## STRATEGIES USED TO WORK ON POLICY CHANGE INCLUDE:

Trainings that build leadership capacity among women

Trainings that provide information on how public policy is made and ways to influence policy

Advocacy days where groups of supporters joined together to visit with state legislators

Press conferences

Community outreach to raise awareness about specific issues

Meetings with key community leaders

Since its inception, the Alliance for Early Care and Education has been working to alter public policies that impact women, both because the majority of the early childhood educator workforce is female, and because women are more likely to be impacted by the lack of availability of affordable, quality child care.

# FROM CHILD CARE WORKERS TO COMMUNITY ADVOCATES

Year Program Established: 2007

Years Funded by the Women's Fund: 2009

Grant Award: \$5,000

Girls/Women Directly Impacted: 30

Girls/Women Indirectly Impacted: 85,000

Number of Organizational Partners: 10

In 2007, a small group of women who were all child care center owners and directors met for a cup of coffee. Frustrated by mounting regulatory requirements, the women decided that “it was time to stop complaining and do something about it,” recalls Linda Carmona-Sánchez, a founding member of the group and now President of the Alliance for Early Care and Education.

The Alliance was formed to change public policies and raise awareness about the importance of early childhood education. Despite state increases in licensing, programmatic and professional credential requirements, reimbursement rates for subsidized child care are at a historic low. The Federal Child Care Development Block Grant, which is the primary source of funding for child care assistance, requires states to establish a fair market rate every two years to determine their reimbursements for childcare services. States are encouraged to reimburse providers at the 75th percentile of the fair market rate for children who are enrolled in a subsidized childcare program. Yet, when the Alliance analyzed the data, it became clear that reimbursement rates for subsidized childcare in Miami-Dade County are only 53% of fair market value and payment rates had not been adjusted for many years. With 60 percent of all children under 5 in the county qualifying for subsidized childcare, and approximately 27,000 funded slots, the difference between authorized reimbursements rates and actual payments can mean the breaking point for child care centers.

“We have all these new requirements about staff credentials and quality standards, but no money. Instead of \$3.20 an hour per child as authorized by the State, we are being paid \$2.11 and there has been no increase in 10 years,” explains Ms. Carmona-Sánchez. “Ninety-seven percent of childcare centers are run, owned, and staffed by women. That speaks to the issue of undervaluing women and, in Miami-Dade County, it’s particularly immigrant women.”

**“SUPPORT FROM WOMEN’S FUND OF MIAMI-DADE GOES FAR BEYOND THE ACTUAL CASH. THE CONNECTIONS WE MAKE THROUGH THEIR QUARTERLY ROUNDTABLES, MEETING THEIR BOARD, AND HEARING FROM OTHER PARTNERS, ARE INVALUABLE. THE PRESTIGE OF A GRANT FROM THE FUND HAS ALSO ALLOWED US TO LEVERAGE OTHER MONEY. I’M VERY HAPPY ABOUT OUR PROGRESS, AND WORKING WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES. THAT ALL HAPPENED BECAUSE OF THE FAITH WOMEN’S FUND HAS IN US.”**



Ms. Carmona-Sánchez had an idea to create a Community Forum to engage community leaders, legislators, and childcare providers. 200 people attended the event.

State legislators, including the House Chair on Pre-K Appropriations, and leaders from the Early Learning Coalition and the Children’s Trust gave presentations from their perspective on the reimbursement rates for childcare services. Childcare workers then ranked their concerns and developed a policy agenda.

In order to take action on that ambitious agenda, the Alliance asked people to sign up for a bus trip to Tallahassee where childcare providers could meet with legislators. Ms. Carmona-Sánchez was unsure how many people would sign up, particularly as immigrant women who make up a majority of the childcare workforce are often uncomfortable advocating for themselves. She was worried that they would not recognize that taking a day away from their center to advocate for change was an investment in their future.

Ms. Carmona-Sánchez was pleasantly surprised, “we thought we’d be taking 10, but we ended up taking a bus of 42 people.” During the ride, the early learning providers got an education of their own about how a bill becomes a law, how to advocate for change, and how to speak with their legislators. The Alliance members were able to preserve funding for Florida’s Voluntary Pre-kindergarten program and subsequently get the local Early Learning Coalition to agree to annually adjust the childcare reimbursement rates. More importantly, they succeeded in raising visibility about the issue in a larger forum.

The Alliance has secured appointments to strategic policy-making boards at the state and local levels. Input from the organization is now welcome at meetings of the Early Learning Coalition, which is the state created non-profit agency that administers childcare subsidies and the Voluntary Pre-kindergarten program at the county level. Legislators, as well as advocates, are still talking about last year’s trip. Childcare workers from Duval, Hillsborough, Broward and Monroe Counties have all asked to participate in next year’s advocacy events.

The Alliance intends to build on the policy agenda from last year and continue to advocate for increasing funding for early childhood education. Ms. Carmona-Sánchez believes their work is not only about policy change, but also about giving women the tools to make lasting change for themselves. “Up to this point, we have allowed somebody else to make the decisions for us. If I can make it so women who are child care providers are engaged enough to speak up, if I get communities mobilized, and parents are involved, then I can sleep at night.”

# MAINTAINING PAST GAINS:

*Earlier progress on issues is maintained in the face of opposition. Impact: societal interests in protecting past gains ensures positive policy change is a day-to-day reality.*

While 46 organizations identified “maintaining past gains” as a social change strategy, the vast majority of these programs viewed maintaining past gains as protecting their funding and the personal gains of their participants.

Programs also identified internal changes, such as program development, structure, and policies that will continue to be maintained as the organization grows.

## PROGRAMS THAT WORKED IN THIS AREA FACED OPPOSITIONAL THREATS TO PRIOR GAINS WHEN:

Staff at tentative, but necessary partners changed, thus leaving the success of the project’s goals in jeopardy

Anti-choice movement attempted to limit access for poor women in rural areas of the state

Changing immigration laws impacted the ability of programs to provide domestic violence services to immigrant women

Anti-immigrant messaging and behaviors impact the ability of domestic violence programs to assist women

Cultural, religious, or political beliefs fractured the volunteer-base of a program

## STRATEGIES THAT THESE PROJECTS USED TO CHALLENGE THE THREATS INCLUDED:

Used staffing changes as an opportunity to eliminate tensions between organizations

Development of a strong communications network among 8 abortion funds throughout the state in order to continue to offer help to women outside of their service areas

Organizations took public stances on poor treatment of immigrants, including challenging the detainment of Haitian migrants; while policies did not change, the community maintained trust in the organization’s commitment to immigrants.

One organization, Sisterhood of Survivors, a young organization with a powerful strategy, chose to advocate on behalf of other organizations in order to maintain past gains that benefited the whole community.



## A NEW VOICE FOR LONG-STANDING SERVICES

Year Program Established: 2008

Years Organization Funded by Women's Fund: 2009

Grant Award: \$25,000

Girls/Women Directly Impacted: 56

Girls/Women Indirectly Impacted: 1700

Number of Organizational Partners: 36

Sisterhood of Survivors (SOS) began in 2008, with a small group of women interested in changing the discourse of domestic violence. Unlike other domestic violence organizations in Miami, Sisterhood of Survivors consists solely of women who understand domestic violence from personal experience. Initially developed as a way for women to educate the larger community about domestic violence, and the way certain policies impact victims of violence, their independent voice and community organizing skills were quickly recognized as valuable to the community as a whole.

Facing difficult decisions about the county's overall budget, the Miami-Dade County Commissioners were set to eliminate all funding for social services. Other domestic violence organizations approached the staff of Sisterhood of Survivors and asked the organization to coordinate an effort to protect the social service funding. Realizing that cuts to any social service will dramatically impact women and children who are trying to leave an abuser, SOS coordinators and members agreed to lead the charge.

The group first began by holding conversations with social service providers to gauge their interest in building an alliance. Working with a broad range of organizations, many of which provide services that are not geared towards domestic violence survivors, SOS created a unified front. As the two day budget hearings approached, SOS created 500 stickers to distribute at the hearing that said, "Domestic Violence Services Save Lives." At the same time, three members of SOS received on-going training so that they would be prepared to provide public testimony.

The night of the first hearing, SOS members signed in at 2 pm to speak. The women waited nine hours to testify for two minutes each. "The Commissioners



were so moved by the story of one of our women that they gave her extra time,” explains Nilu Choudhury, SOS Community Organizer, “It was the first time County Commissioners had heard directly from survivors of domestic violence.” Unfortunately, the personal stories were not enough to protect the funding. SOS called a press conference.

“On our first conference call to organize the press conference, fifty organizations offered help, including using their office space for the press conference,” recalls Marcia Olivo, SOS Community Organizer, “but by that night, due to political pressure from the County, the organizations withdrew their public support and we had to postpone the conference.”

The setback, however, only confirmed for the two community organizers how important the independent voice of SOS is in Miami. In the end, SOS held the press conference in front of the building where the budget hearings were happening and speakers from Women’s Fund of Miami-Dade, Miami Workers Center, Human Services Coalition, and Mujer voiced their concern about the budget cuts.

Days passed and then SOS learned that 75% of the budget to community services had been restored. “We take full credit for that,” notes Ms. Olivo.

The members of SOS were thrilled to see how their work protected services, even if some of the services that were cut were vital to domestic violence victims. At the same time, being the lead organization on a campaign to protect these services, gave SOS a boost of credibility that will enable the organization to continue to build relationships throughout the community.

“We became superheroes!” Ms. Olivo exclaims, “People are talking about us now. Talking about what SOS did. Now other organizations refer people to us because they want our organization to grow.”

An important element of the young organization’s success has been the support of Women’s Fund. “They are very excited about our work,” Ms. Choudhury notes, “ and because of that have become strong advocates for our community organizing.” Ms. Olivo also adds that funding SOS was a risk for the Fund that seems to be paying off, “Women’s Fund has a commitment to improve the quality of life for women. They took the chance on us, instead of just funding domestic violence direct service work.”

**“WHEN IT COMES TO WOMEN’S WORK, WOMEN’S FUND OF MIAMI-DADE IS AT THE FOREFRONT.”**

# ACCELERATORS

## PROJECTS HAD SEVERAL SELF-IDENTIFIED FACTORS TO SUCCESS INCLUDING:

Strong alliances with other organizations. Many grantees developed these alliances through networking with other Women's Fund grantees.

Programs also spent considerable time building relationships with other organizations, including potential adversaries, in order to forward their missions.

Staff that are committed to work and have the necessary expertise to conduct the work.

Strong connection between the organization's values and the work of the project.

Planning that took into account the needs of the target population and various potential partners.

Having a clear message and mission that is easily understood by the target population as well as the general public.

# INHIBITORS

## PROJECTS ALSO IDENTIFIED SEVERAL ROADBLOCKS THAT PRESENT CHALLENGES IN THEIR WORK:

Systemic issues of race, poverty, xenophobia, and culture

Economic crisis throughout the country is diminishing the availability of funding for nonprofits; one organization noted that as a result of the economy, its funding has dramatically decreased, while demand for its services has increased over 150% in one year

Balancing the targeted population's understanding of the political process with the need to build leadership among women

Political pressures to maintain the status quo

Lack of funding to adequately staff a program, particularly when the program is on the brink of development or expansion

# INTERNAL FACTORS

	Inhibitor	Accelerator
Alliance Building	2.8%	65.42%
Board and Governance	6.54%	25.23%
Communications and Marketing	5.61%	41.12%
Financial Management	10.28%	27.10%
Resource Mobilization	20.56%	32.71%
Staffing	28.04%	53.27%
Systems	11.21%	9.35%
Values	3.74%	47.66%
Other	5.61%	4.67%

# EXTERNAL FACTORS

	Inhibitor	Accelerator
Economic	56.07%	8.41%
Environmental	10.28%	5.61%
Political	16.82%	11.21%
Religious	7.48%	3.74%
Social and Cultural	42.99%	27.10%
Other	3.74%	3.74%

# THE IMPACT OF THE WOMEN'S FUND OF MIAMI-DADE

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With 17 years experience funding programs that work with women and girls, Women's Fund of Miami-Dade County has become a leading voice for feminist social change in Miami-Dade.

**Women's Fund offers organizations in the county opportunities that they cannot find otherwise; it is a risk-taking grant maker, willing to invest in start-up programs and organizations that provide services to deeply marginalized groups, and it tackles divisive topics like reproductive justice and sex education.**

The Fund also supports programs that try innovative approaches, that work in areas of community organizing and advocacy, and that are striving to challenge societal norms about women and girls.

As much as Women's Fund positions itself as a leader in the field, the grantees see their funder as a true partner in the work. Women's Fund creates that partnership by holding quarterly Roundtables that bring grantees together to discuss roadblocks to accomplishing their work. The Roundtables also allow grantees to meet board members and other influential leaders who provide support and guidance to the grantees beyond the initial funding.

This ongoing relationship among the grantees and Women's Fund allows Women's Fund to be responsive to the needs of the community. For instance, when Haiti suffered a devastating earthquake in January 2010, the Fund worked with its grantees to develop fundraising efforts to support the Haitian community in Miami. At the same time, grantees are beginning to view social change as an element of their work, in large part because of the leadership of Women's Fund.

As Maritza Ejenbaum, Program Director at the Coconut Grove Girls Group of the Thelma Gibson Health Initiative, a group that empowers black girls from the West Coconut Grove community to break the cycle of poverty surrounding their families, explains, "It isn't just \$5,000. To have Women Fund of Miami-Dade's backing, their leadership, their advocacy, their support goes beyond just the money. And we need all of it."



The involvement of Women’s Fund in the grantees’ work also gives the organizations credibility and, in many instances, allows the organizations to leverage funds from other sources and build alliances with other groups. The credibility itself isn’t just a win for the grantee partners, however, it is a win for the participants, too. “They believe in the value of the girls; that they merited someone to fund this program,” notes Ms. Ejenbaum, “They make these girls feel like they are worth something.”

And how will Ms. Ejenbaum know that true social change has happened and Miami-Dade County has become a community that provides equitable opportunities for all women and girls? “Our goal,” she says, “is to one day have one of the girls become a donor, a board member, a leader in Women’s Fund of Miami-Dade.”

In fact, Women’s Fund has already seen that return on investment. In 1999, Lindsay Hyde, then a high school student at Southwest Miami High School, approached the Fund about an idea she had that would build self-esteem among girls. By partnering young girls with strong women, Ms. Hyde envisioned a Miami where girls would grow up to be strong, successful leaders themselves. Women’s Fund provided Ms. Hyde the \$1,200 to start her dream project; a project that she then replicated in Boston while a student at Harvard University. As she continued to grow the organization, Ms. Hyde became even more committed to the idea that building self-esteem and skills of young girls will lead them to become change agents in the community. At the same time, she realized the young mentors (now her college peers) also would be inspired to challenge the glass ceiling as they entered the workforce. Throughout her own career development, Women’s Fund of Miami-Dade County was there for Ms. Hyde, introducing her to other women’s funds, advising her on issues like finding office space, and constantly encouraging her to continue the work.

Ten years later, as the full-time director of Strong Women, Strong Girls, Ms. Hyde has returned to Miami-Dade County to spearhead the organization’s expansion. After winning national recognition for her work, building the organization’s budget to \$1.2 million and helping hundreds of girls, Ms. Hyde knows it is time to bring about social change in a community she holds close to her heart and Women’s Fund of Miami-Dade County will be right here with her.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Since 2007, Women’s Fund required grantees to report their outcomes in the Making The Case evaluation tool. This tool helps grantees self-evaluate their progress while, at the same time, focuses social change work into five types of strategies. This report analyzes the information available in Making The Case for the 116 evaluations submitted. Key informant interviews with staff of seven organizations were also conducted.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Women’s Fund of Miami-Dade County would like to thank the Women’s Funding Network for their support of this report as well as the donors who make all of the work of the Women’s Fund of Miami-Dade possible. Women’s Fund would also like to acknowledge the efforts of each grantee who participated in Making The Case and thank the organizations that participated in the key informant interviews.

This report was written by Gayle Goldin of College Hill Consulting ([www.collegehillconsulting.com](http://www.collegehillconsulting.com)). The graphic design was created by Jennifer Rodriguez.

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## **CONTACT INFO:**

Women's Fund of Miami-Dade  
2990 SW 35 Ave., Suite 2B  
Miami, FL 33133

Phone: 305-441-0506  
Fax: 305-441-0406

**WOMEN'S FUND OF MIAMI-DADE**

2990 SW 35 Ave., Suite 2B

Miami, FL 33133

[www.womensfundmiami.org](http://www.womensfundmiami.org)