

# **ToGetHerThere: Girls' Insights on Leadership**

## **Prepared by GfK Roper for: Girl Scouts of the USA**

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## **1** About This Study

## About This Study: Background

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This report presents the results of a study among girls aged 8-17, commissioned by Girl Scouts of the USA

- The overall goal of the study is to better understand how girls today view the concept of leadership.
- The research is being developed to inform and support the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Girl Scouts of the USA.

## About This Study: Research Goals

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The study is designed to:

- Raise awareness of the ways in which girls are engaging, or dis-engaging, in leadership roles
- Understand challenges girls face today in realizing their aspirations
- Motivate girls, as well as adults in their lives – family members, teachers, coaches, mentors, community leaders – to take steps to help girls embrace their potential as future leaders and strong women

## About This Study: Methodology

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The study was administered by phone using GfK's in-house CATI telephone interviewing resources.

- A sampling frame was constructed through RDD screening conducted by GfK. Specifically, using this sample of households with children, the presence of a girl in the 8-17 age range was verified.
- Telephone interviews were completed with 1,001 girls aged 8-17. Adult parents or caregivers were first reached to obtain permission to interview their daughter, and adults completed the household demographic portion of the questionnaire.
- The interview was approximately 20 minutes in length. Interviews were conducted between 12/6-22, 2011.
- Data was weighted by age of girls and region to US Census figures .

## **2 Executive Summary**

## Executive Summary

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### **Girls See Glass Ceilings In Today's Society. They Want More To Be Done To Create A Supportive Environment.**

- Almost 9 in 10 teen girls say there are more men than women in leadership positions today, things like Congress or heads of major corporations.
- Furthermore, close to 3 in 5 teen girls think that women can rise up in a company or organization but they will only rarely be put at the very top.
- And, 8 in 10 teen girls (81%) say the workplace could do a better job of meeting the needs of their female workers.

### **Despite That Reality, Girls Have A Long-term View Of Societal Progress And Are Confident About The Future In The Long Term.**

- More than 3 in 4 teen girls agree that girls today have it much easier than girls did 25 years ago.
- An overwhelming majority of girls (88%) believe a woman will be elected President of the United States in their lifetime.



## Executive Summary

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### **Most Girls Today Want To Make A Difference, Think They Have Influence, And Report Having Had Opportunities To Act As Leaders In Their Current Surroundings. But Some Psychological Barriers Exist To Full Leadership Experiences For Girls.**

- About 7 in 10 say they might be likely to interest and organize other students to get rules changed in school in order to make the school a better place, and over 8 in 10 say they have influence with their group of friends or classmates.
- 53% report having been elected, appointed, or asked to lead something vs. 46% report not having that opportunity.
- While most girls are positive that they want to and can lead in their current situation, most acknowledge the challenge of being a leader: 59% agree it is easier to be a follower than a leader, and a sizable minority (39%) also say a leader has to speak in front of a group and that they don't want to.
- There are also some ambivalent feelings about their own abilities: More than one-third (35%) say they wouldn't feel comfortable trying to be a leader. A strong minority (38%) are not sure if they are cut out to be a leader.

## Executive Summary

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### **Most Girls Want To Become Adults Who Embody Leadership Qualities. Nevertheless, Some Shy Away From Certain Aspects Of Leadership. When Asked To Define Leadership In Their Own Words, Girls Tend To Highlight People Skills And Being An Inspiring Role Model.**

- Leadership qualities girls would very much like to have as adults include: standing up for their beliefs and values (84%), trying to change the world for the better (68%), and bringing people together to get things done (64%).
- There is some ambivalence about embracing uncertainty: only 50% say they would very much like to be someone not afraid of uncertainty. And just 19% say that when they are older, they would very much like to be someone who is “in charge of other people and makes decisions that affect them.”
- When asked to define leadership in their own words, the greatest number of girls define leadership as “willingness to lead/to take charge” (36%), while more mentions are about how leaders are able to connect with others: as good role models (21%), inspirational and getting others involved (14%), and help others including the weak (13%).

## Executive Summary

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### **Other Than Parents, Teachers Are The Main Adult Group That Connects With And Encourages Girls. Immediate Family And Friends Also Make Connections With Girls; Neighbors And Community Leaders Are Less Involved. Moreover, There Is A Stark Picture Of Little Interaction With Adult Women Leaders.**

- The top 5 highest interactions reported as “often” are: adults being good role models (71%), praising things you do (67%), listening to you/trying to understand you (64%), respecting your opinion, giving your advice, helping you with problems – all 61%.
- When girls were asked which adults in their lives (other than their parents) are doing this type of connecting or interacting, teachers are clearly the No. 1 adult connection, mentioned by 53%, followed by a sharp drop to grandparents (25%), aunts and uncles (21%), and friends’ parents (16%)
- Only 6% mention neighbors, with lower numbers for coaches (4%), and parents’ friends (3%). Hardly any girls mention community leaders (1%).

## Executive Summary

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### **Successful Role Models On The National Stage Skew Towards The Entertainment Industry. Woman Business Leaders And Woman Scientists Are Very Rarely Mentioned.**

- When asked to “name a well-known or famous woman you look up to”, the highest percentage for an individual is 5% for Michelle Obama, Taylor Swift, and Rosa Parks respectively. A net of 13% mention political figures and 7% mention civil rights and women’s rights leaders, versus 21% for entertainers (11% for actresses, and 10% for musicians).

### **Girls Today Aspire To Wide Range Of Careers Beyond Traditional Paths Of Women.**

- In addition to teacher and veterinarian, it is notable that a sizable number of girls would like to be doctors (9%) and scientists (7%). Also among their top career goals are lawyers/judges (3%) and engineers (2%). Though just 1% say they want to go into business, be an elected official or be in the military, fewer than 1% say they want to be models or TV personalities.

## Executive Summary

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### Girls Report Limited Opportunities To Interact With Successful Women.

- A majority of teen girls say they have not been offered the opportunity to visit the workplaces of successful women in their community (60%) or serve on a committee with a successful woman (50%) in the last school year.
- From having women speak at their school about steps that have led to their success to working with girls in their community to help others, about 4 in 10 teen girls say they have had *no* such opportunities to interact with successful women in the last school year.
- Moreover, 12% of teen girls say that they have not had ANY recent experience with these types of interactions with successful women.

## Executive Summary

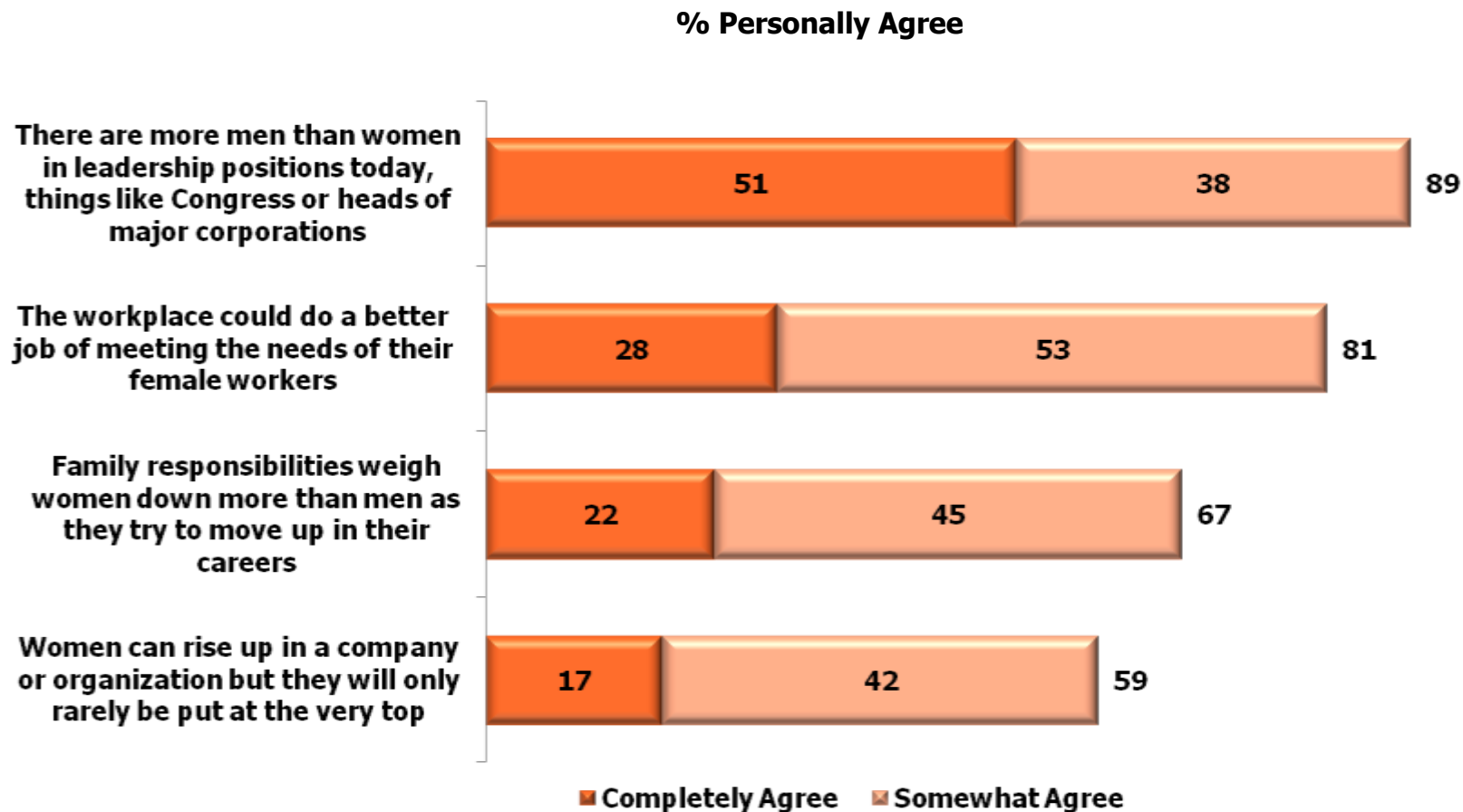
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### **Overwhelmingly, Girls Express Strong Interest In Having Women Leaders Reach Out To Them So That Girls Can Learn From Real World Successes Of Adult Women.**

- More than eight in ten girls are interested in each of the possible scenarios for interacting with successful women asked about in the survey:
  - having successful women work with girls in the community to help others (92% very/somewhat interested);
  - having successful women speak to girls in school or class about how to build confidence (88%);
  - having successful women serve on a committee with girls to affect change (86%);
  - having successful women speak to girls in school or class about how they have become successful (85%);
  - having successful women speak to girls about overcoming fears of public speaking (81%);
  - having successful women offer girls an opportunity to visit their workplaces (81%).

### **3 Realistic, But Hopeful, About Women's Leadership Roles**

**Glass Ceilings in Today's Society: Girls Want More Done to Create a Supportive Environment.** Almost 9 in 10 teen girls say men outnumber women in leadership positions today, things like Congress or heads of major corporations. Close to 3 in 5 teen girls think that women can rise up in a company or organization but they will only rarely be put at the very top. And 8 in 10 teen girls believe the workplace could do a better job of meeting the needs of their female workers.



Q.18 How strongly do you personally agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

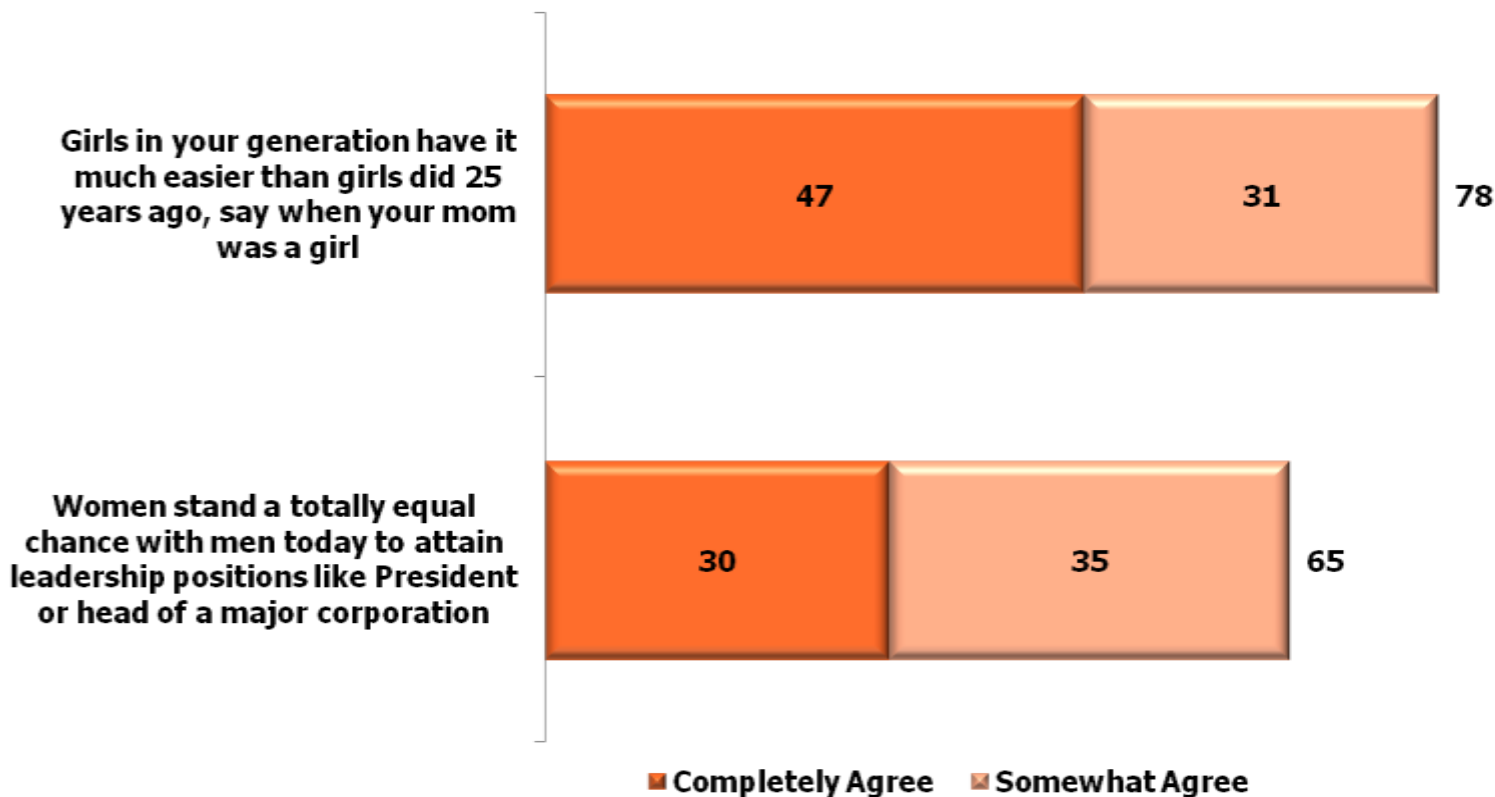
Base: Only of girls aged 13 to 17 (n=583)



**Though Realistic About Current Limitations, Girls Have a Long-term View of Societal Progress and Are Confident About the Future.** More than 3 in 4 teen girls agree that girls today have it much easier than girls did 25 years ago. Two-thirds of teen girls (64%) believe women stand a totally equal chance with men to attain leadership positions.

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### % Personally Agree

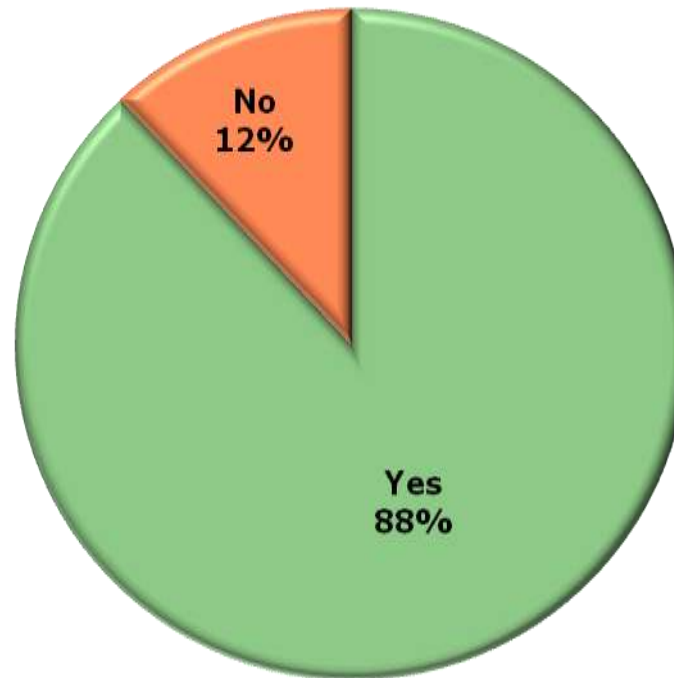


Q.18 How strongly do you personally agree or disagree with each of the following statements?  
Base: Only of girls aged 13 to 17 (n=583)

**Most Girls Believe They Will See a Madam President.** An overwhelming majority of girls (88%) believe a woman will be elected President of the United States in their lifetime.

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### Woman President Will be Elected in Their Lifetime

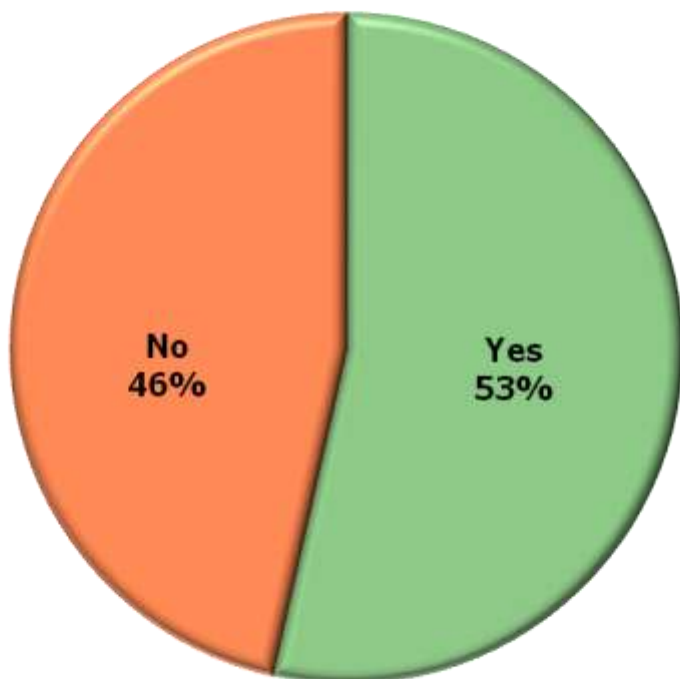
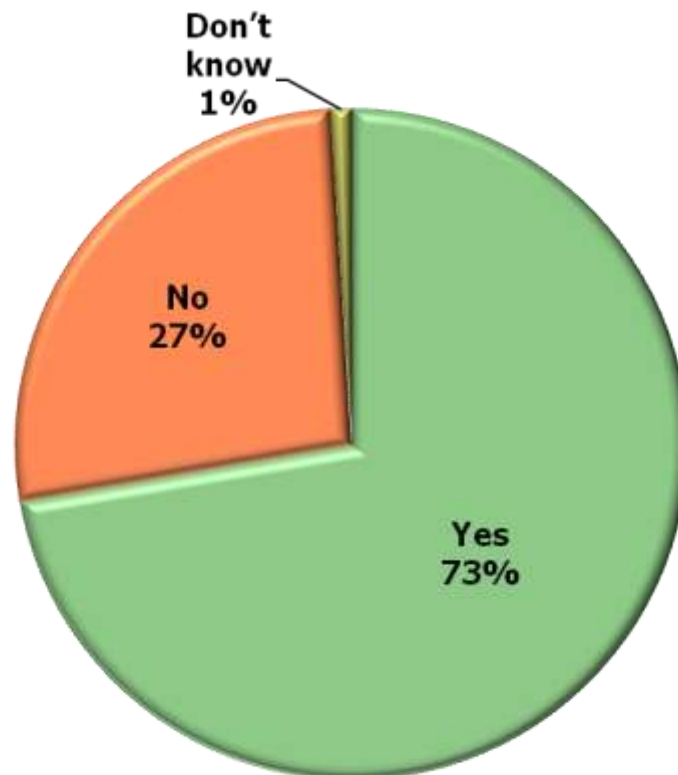


Q.1 Do you think a woman will be elected President of the United States in your lifetime?  
Base: Total Respondents (n=1001)

## **4 Girls Embrace Current Leadership Opportunities**

**Majority of Girls Have Had Opportunities to Act as Leaders in Their Current Surroundings.** More than half (53%) report having been elected, appointed, or asked to lead something vs. 46% not having this opportunity. Three-quarters (73%) of girls consider themselves "a leader;" and over 8 in 10 say they have influence with their group of friends or classmates (84%). Teens are more likely than younger girls to have been elected/appointed to lead something (64% to 42%), and though majorities of both age groups consider themselves leaders, teen girls are more apt to say this (80% versus 65%).

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**Been A Leader****Consider Themselves A Leader**

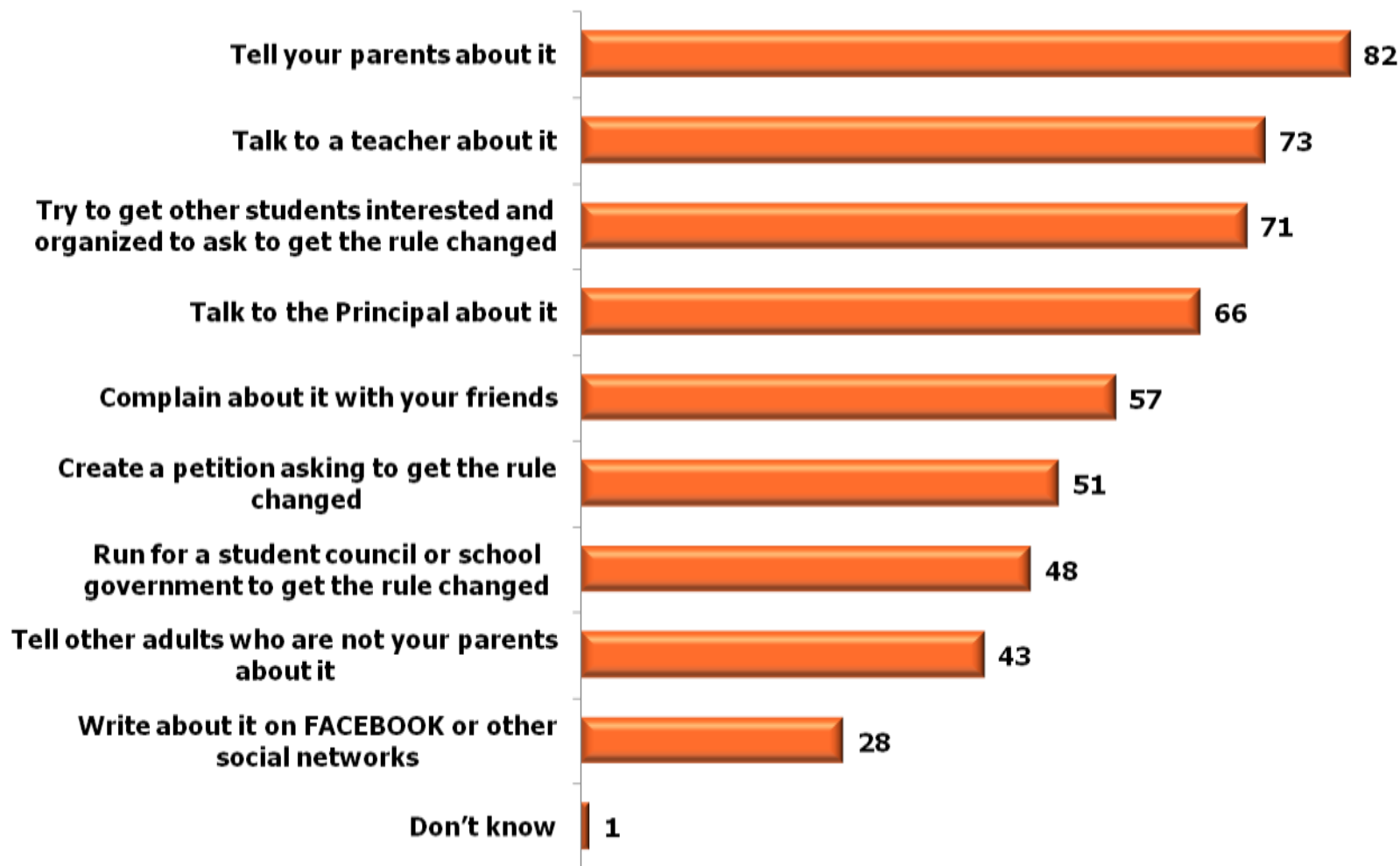
Q.3 Have you ever been elected, appointed, or asked to lead something?

Q.5 Would you say you are a leader?

Base: Total Respondents (n=1001)

**Most Girls Today Want to Make a Difference.** Asked what they might do to change an unfair school policy, about 7 in 10 say they might interest and organize other students to get rules changed (71%), and about half say they would create a petition (51%) or run for student council/government to get the rule changed (48%). Girls aged 8-12 are more likely than teens to say they would run for student council (53% to 43%); while teens are more likely to say they would complain to friends, tell other adults and talk about it on social media like Facebook.

### % Likely to do



Q.2 Think about a rule or policy at your school that you think is unfair, something that you think should be changed to make the school a better place. I'm going to read a list of things that you might do about it, and tell me which ones, if any, YOU might be likely to do.

Base: Total Respondents (n=1001)

**Girls Look to Lead in Many Areas of Life.** Given a choice of where they ideally would like to play a leadership role in their current life, girls look to outside activities, like sports, church, club, or community organizations, and among family or friends. Close to 3 in 10 say at school, or at work when they are older. Perhaps not surprisingly, younger girls are more likely than teens to want to lead at school or at home, while teens are more likely to aspire to lead in clubs or at work.

### Would Like to Be a Leader...

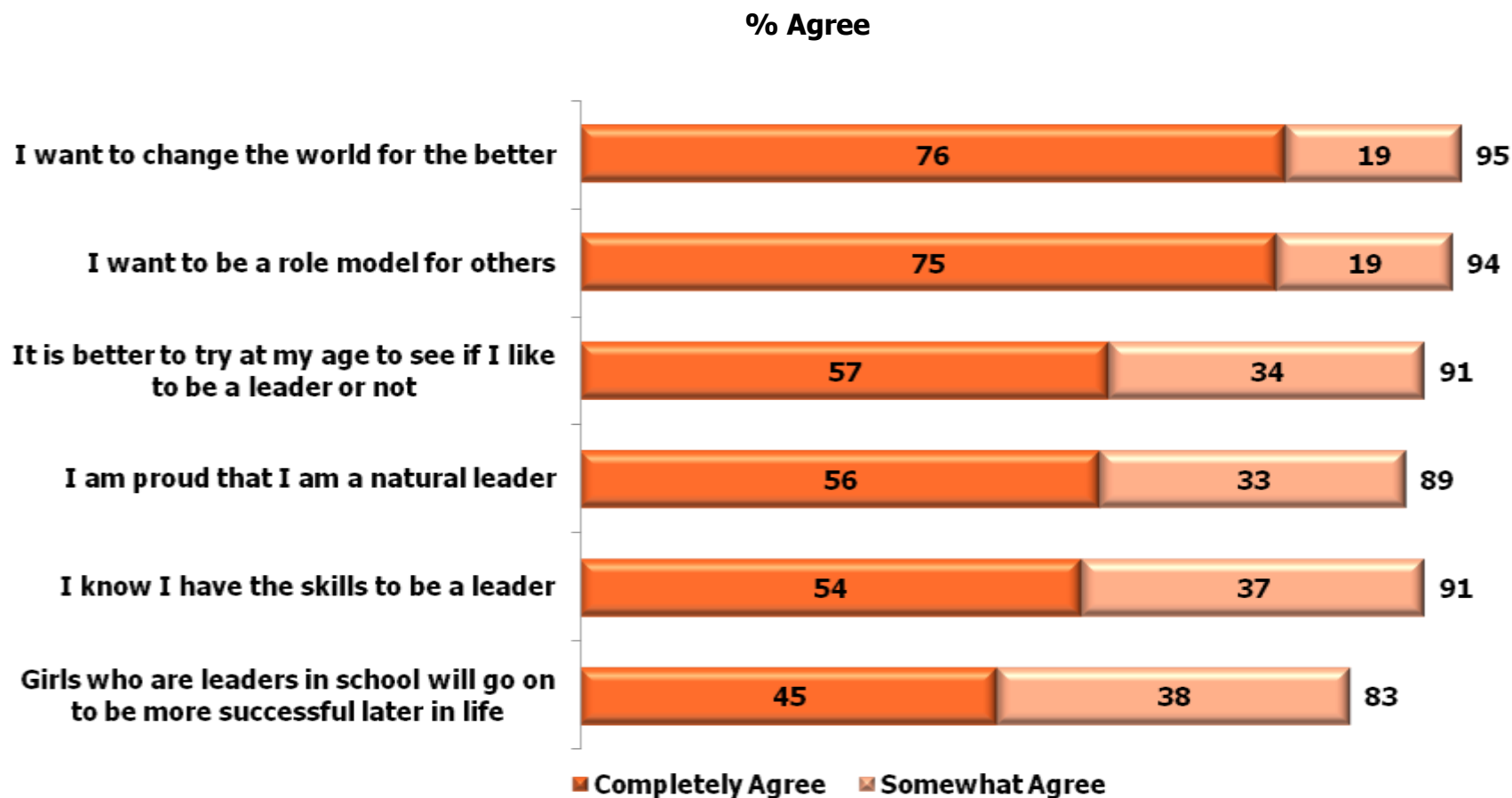
	%
<b>In Outside Activities</b>	
On a sports team	22
At church	21
In your community	15
In a club or organization	15
<b>Among Family and Friends</b>	
Among your friends	27
At home	15
Online or with social media	3
<b>At school</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>At work when you grow up</b>	<b>27</b>

Q.7 If you could choose to be a leader in some area of life, which one or two places would it most likely be? I'll read the list first, and then you can pick one or two.

Base: Total Respondents (n=1001)

**Girls See Leadership as a Useful Skill.** Overwhelmingly, girls report wanting to affect change and be a role model. Although the intensity declines slightly, majorities would like to try leadership experiences at their age, and feel they have the ability and skills to be a leader.

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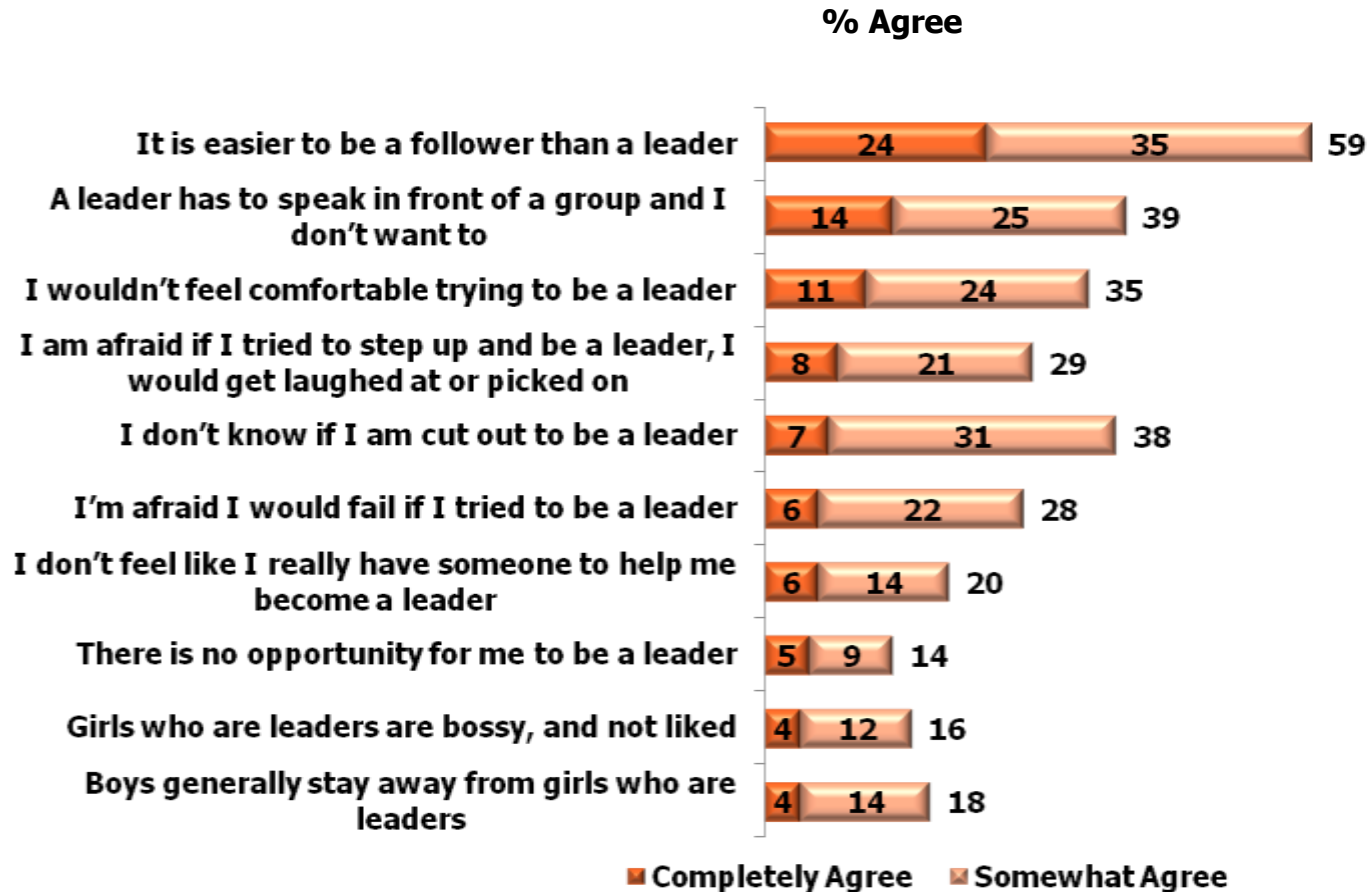
Q.11 I'm going to read some statements that girls have made about leadership. For each one we want to know how strongly you personally agree or disagree with each – whether you completely agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or completely disagree.

Base: Total Respondents (n=1001)

## **5** Barriers to Future Leadership Experiences



**Some Psychological Barriers Exist To Full Leadership Experiences For Girls.** While most girls are positive that they want to and can lead in their current situation, most acknowledge the challenge of being a leader: 59% agree it is easier to be a follower than a leader, and a sizable minority (39%) also say a leader has to speak in front of a group and that they don't want to. More than one-third (35%) say they wouldn't feel comfortable trying to be a leader. A strong minority (38%) are not sure if they are cut out to be a leader.

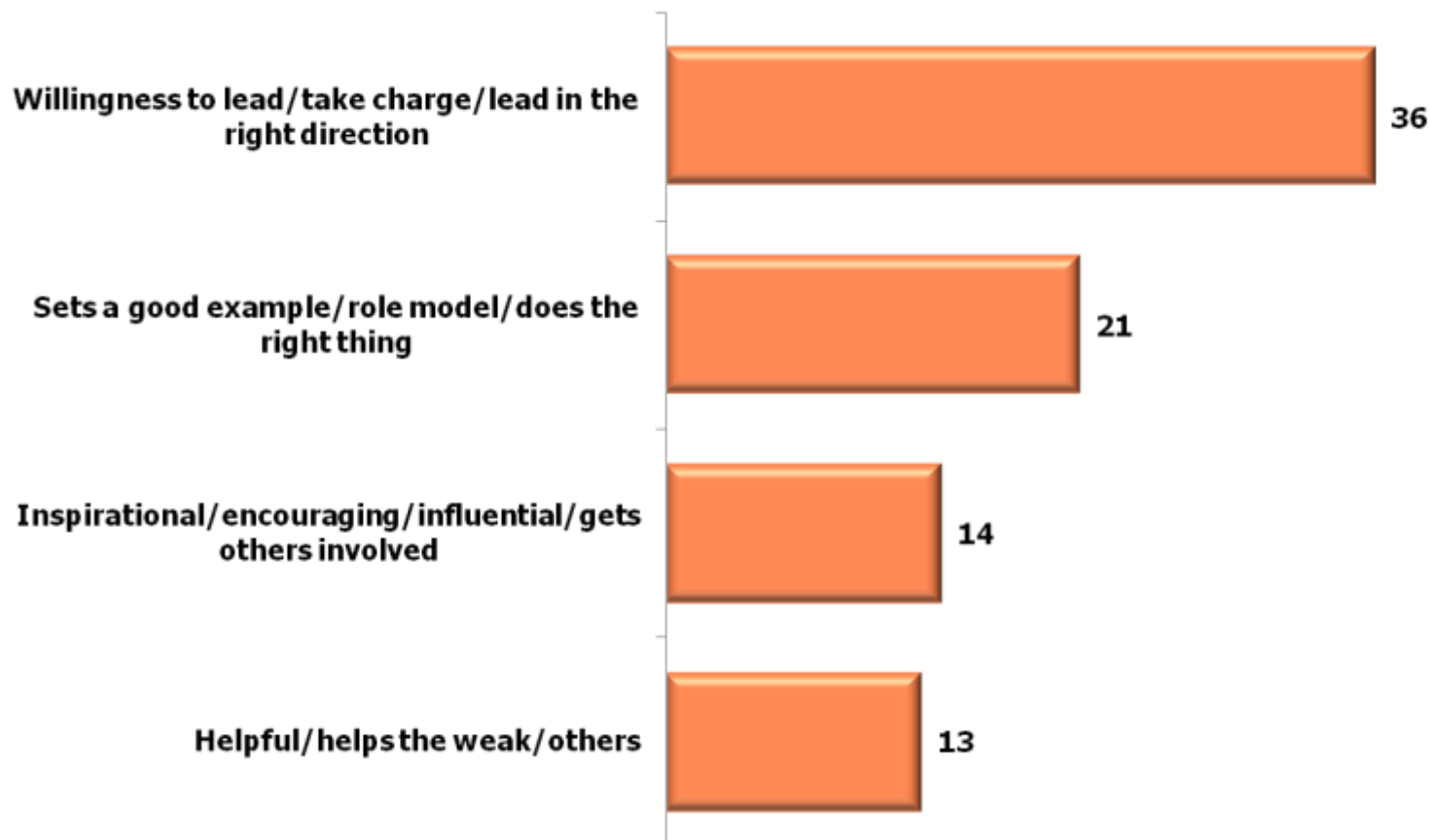


Q.11 I'm going to read some statements that girls have made about leadership. For each one we want to know how strongly you personally agree or disagree with each – whether you completely agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or completely disagree.

Base: Total Respondents (n=1001)

**When Asked To Define Leadership In Their Own Words, Girls Tend To Highlight People Skills And Being An Inspiring Role Model.** Though the greatest number of girls define leadership as “willingness to lead/to take charge” (36%), more mentions are about how leaders are able to connect with others: as good role models (21%), being inspirational and getting others involved (14%), and helping others including the weak (13%).

### Top 4 Mentions

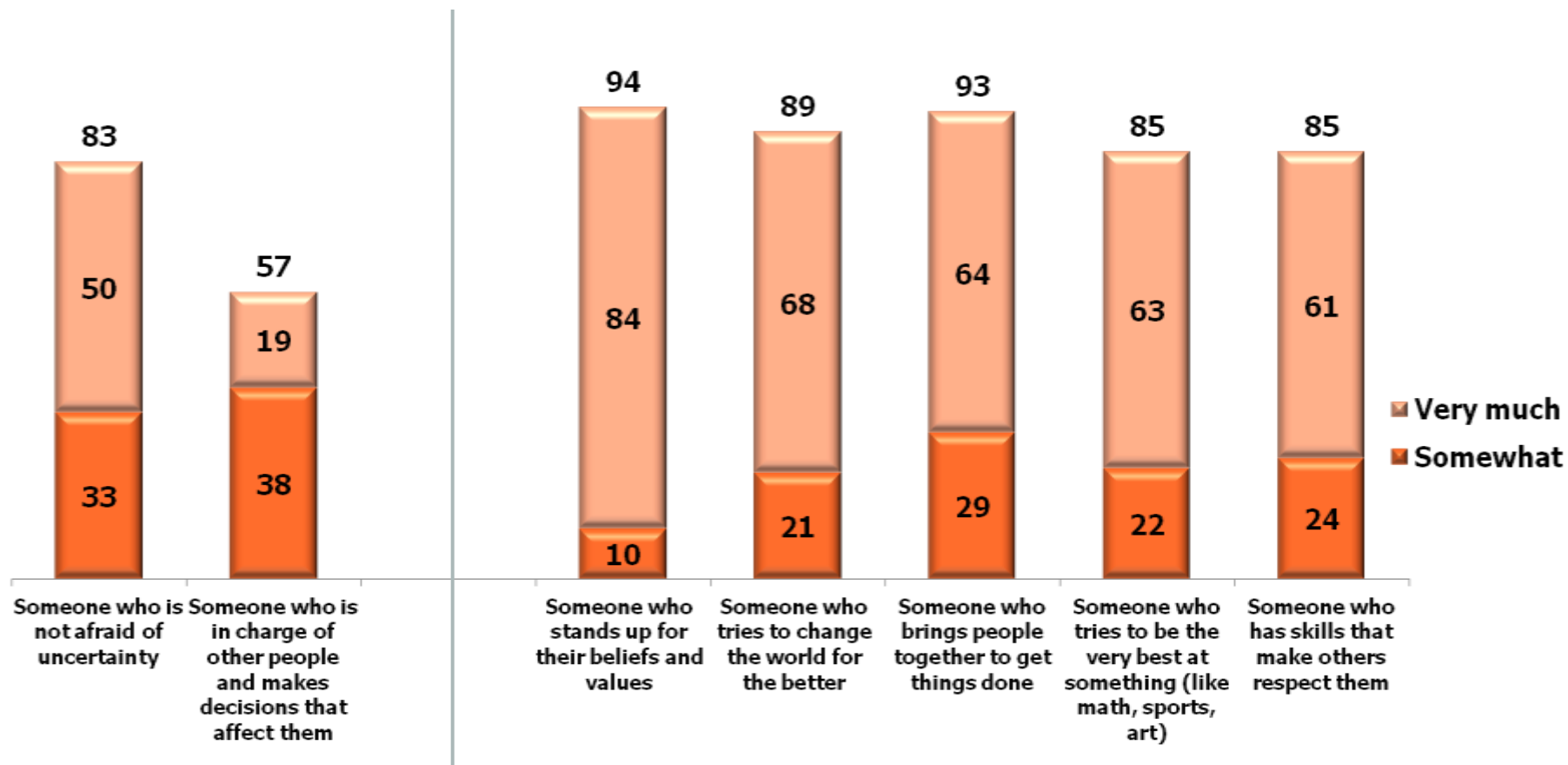


Q.8 In just a few words, explain what leadership means to you. There are no right or wrong answers. Just tell us what comes to mind when you think about leadership.

Base: Total Respondents (n=1001)

**Most Girls Want To Become Adults Who Embody Leadership Qualities:** standing up for their beliefs and values (84% say very much), trying to change the world for the better (68%), and bringing people together to get things done (64%). **Nevertheless, Some Shy Away From Certain Aspects Of Leadership:** only 50% would like very much to be someone not afraid of uncertainty, and just 19% would like to be someone who is “in charge of other people and makes decisions that affect them.” Younger girls seem more wary of these qualities than teen girls (for example, just 16% would very much like to be in charge of other people vs. 22% of teens, and 42% would very much like to embrace uncertainty vs. 58% of teens).

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Q.9 I am going to read some statements. For each one, please tell me how much you would like to be that kind of person in the future when you are older – very much, somewhat, not too much, or not at all.

Base: Total Respondents (n=1001)

**Girls Today Aspire to Wide Range of Careers Beyond Traditional Paths of Women.** In addition to teachers and veterinarians, it is notable that a sizable number of girls would like to be doctors (9%) and scientists (7%). Also among their top career goals are lawyers/judges (3%) and engineers (2%). However, just 1% say they want to go into business, be an elected official or be in the military, fewer than 1% say they want to be models or TV personalities.

### Top 15 responses

	%
<b>Teacher</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Veterinarian</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Doctor</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Musician or artist</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Scientist</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Nurse</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Journalist or Writer</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Lawyer/judge</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Professional athlete</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Engineer</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Chef</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Dancer</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Fashion designer</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Architect</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>2</b>

Q.10 At this point, what would you MOST like to be when you grow up? [8-12 YEAR OLDS]

After you finish school, what would you MOST like to be? [13-17 YEAR OLDS]

Base: Total Respondents (n=1001)

## **6 Girls Report Limited Involvement With Women Leaders**

**Girls Report Positive Interactions with Adults In Their Lives.** Girls were asked about interactions with adults, other than their parents. The top 5 highest interactions reported as “often” are: adults being good role models (71%), praising things girls do (67%), listening/trying to understand girls (64%), respecting their opinion, giving advice, helping with problems – all 61%.



Q.12 I'm going to read a list of things that adults might do. Not counting YOUR PARENTS, think about other adults in your life or around you. How often, if ever, do they do these things – often, sometimes, rarely or never?

Base: Total Respondents (n=1001)

**Teachers are Clearly the No. 1 Adult Connection.** Other than parents, teachers are the main adult group that connects with and encourages girls (53%). Fewer cite grandparents (25%), aunts and uncles (21%), and friends' parents (16%). Only 6% mention neighbors, coaches (4%), and parents' friends (3%). Hardly any girls mention community leaders (1%). Girls in both age groups are equally likely to cite teachers; younger girls are more likely than teens to cite grandparents/aunts/uncles, while teens are more likely than younger girls to cite friend's parents, church leaders, and coaches.

	%		%
Teachers	53	Parents/mom/dad	2
Grandparents/grandma/grandpa	25	Youth group leader	2
Aunt/uncle	21	Activity directors/instructors/leaders	1
Friend's parents/mom/dad	16	Girl Scout/4H leader	1
Church/church leaders	9	Adults/leaders/at school/in my community	1
Sister/brother/sibling	7	Principal	1
Friends	7	Babysitter/daycare provider	1
Family/family members/relatives (unspecified)	7	In-laws/step-parents/step-children (any)	1
Neighbors	6	Godparents/godmother/godfather	*
Coaches	4	Other	2
Parent's friends	3	Nothing	1
Counselor/therapist	3	Don't Know	*
Cousins	3		

Q.13 OTHER THAN your parents, which adults, generally, in your life do things like [2 ITEMS FROM ABOVE] IS THAT A TEACHER, OR A NEIGHBOR OR WHAT?  
Base: Those coded "OFTEN" OR "SOMETIMES" for any things adults might do (in Q12) (n=999)

**Girls report limited opportunities to interact with successful women.** A majority of teen girls say that they have not been offered an opportunity to visit the workplaces of successful women in their community (60%) or serve on a committee with a successful woman (50%) in the last school year. From women speaking at their school about steps that have led to their success to working with girls in the community, about 4 in 10 teen girls say they have had no such opportunities to interact with successful women in the last school year. Moreover, 12% say they have not had recent experience with ANY of these types of interactions.

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### % Saying Never

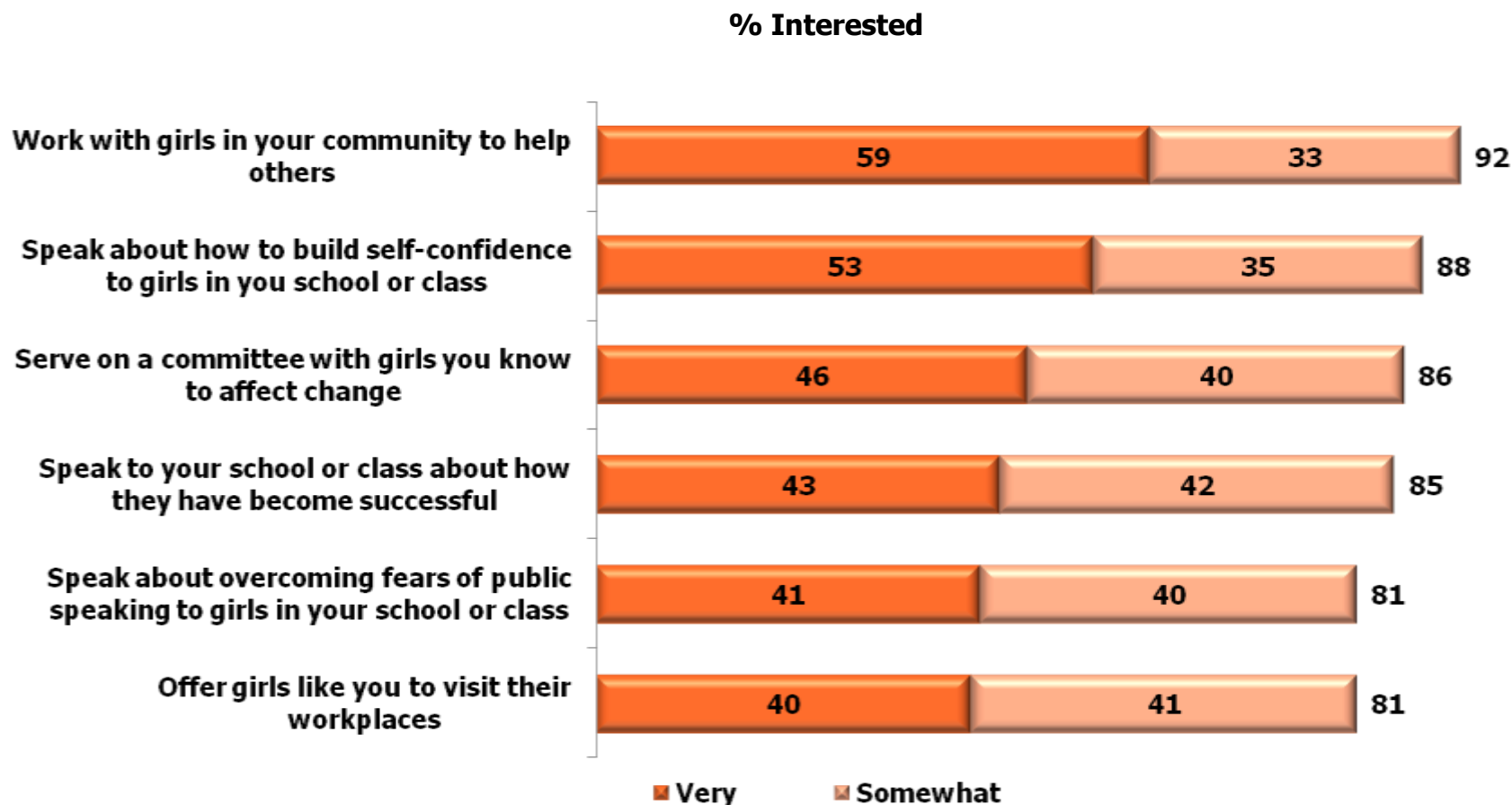


Q.15 Women who are leaders in their work or community sometimes reach out to girls to offer advice or opportunities for girls to learn to become leaders. Thinking about last school year, how many times, if ever, did you have any of the following experiences? First, how many times did a successful woman....  
Base: Only of girls aged 13 to 17 (n=583)



**Overwhelmingly, Girls Express Strong Interest In Having Women Leaders Reach Out To Them So That Girls Can Learn From Real World Successes Of Adult Women.** More than 8 in 10 girls are interested in each of the possible scenarios for interacting with successful women asked about in the survey -- from having successful women work with girls in the community to help others to having successful women offer girls an opportunity to visit their workplaces.

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Q.17 Women who are leaders in their work or community sometimes reach out to girls to offer advice or opportunities for girls to learn to become leaders. How interested would be you in having a successful woman do any of the following? Would you be very interested, somewhat interested, not too interested, or not at all interested? How about

Base: Total Respondents (n=1001)

## 7 Role Models

**Successful Role Models On The National Stage Skew Towards The Entertainment Industry. Woman Business Leaders And Woman Scientists Are Very Rarely Mentioned.** When asked to "name a well-known or famous woman you look up to", the highest percentage for an individual is 5% for Michelle Obama, Taylor Swift, and Rosa Parks respectively. A net of 13% mention political figures and 7% mention civil rights and women's rights leaders, versus 21% for entertainers (11% for actresses, and 10% for musicians)

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	%		%
<b>Political Figures (Net)</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Athlete (Net)</b>	<b>2</b>
Michelle Obama	5	Mia Hamm	1
Hillary Clinton	2	Other athlete comments	1
Sarah Palin	2	<b>Miscellaneous (Net)</b>	<b>30</b>
Eleanor Roosevelt	1	Teacher/counselor	4
Michelle Bachman	*	Amelia Earhart	3
Other politician comments	2	Mother Teresa	1
<b>Actor (Net)</b>	<b>11</b>	Helen Keller	1
Selena Gomez	3	Other miscellaneous comments	23
Oprah Winfrey	2	<b>Family (Net)</b>	<b>17</b>
Emma Watson	1	Mom	11
Other actor comments	5	Grandma	3
<b>Musician (Net)</b>	<b>10</b>	Aunt	2
Taylor Swift	5	Sister	1
Carrie Underwood	1	Family friend	1
Katy Perry	1	Other family comments	*
Other musician comments	4	Nothing	8
<b>Civil and Women's Rights Leaders (Net)</b>	<b>7</b>	Don't know	3
Rosa Parks	5		
Harriet Tubman	1		
Susan B. Anthony	1		
Other civil rights comments	*		

Q.14 Can you give me the name of a well-known or famous woman that you look up to?

Base: Total Respondents (n=1001)

**Girls Admire Famous Role Models for Their Accomplishments, and Because They Help and Inspire Others.**

When asked why they look up to specific role models, the most often mentioned response, cited by close to 3 in 10, relates to what the person accomplished or that they are good at what they do. Nearly 1 in 5 say that it is because the person sets a good example or does the right thing. Close to 2 in 5 mention attributes that have to do with helping, caring about, and inspiring others.

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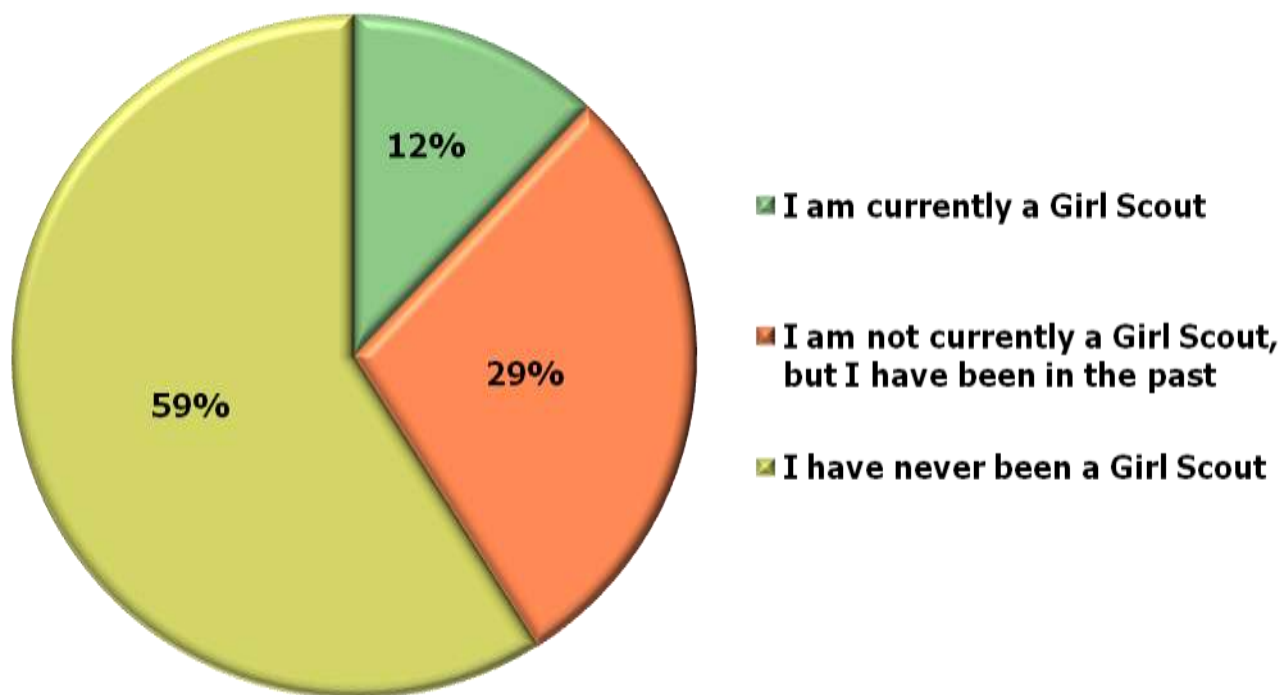


Q.14b Why do you look up to that person?  
Base: Total Respondents (n=1001)

## 8 Appendix

**Involvement with Girl Scouts.** Four in ten girls report some involvement with the Girl Scouts: 12% are currently a Girl Scout and 29% are not currently involved but have been involved with Girl Scouts in the past.

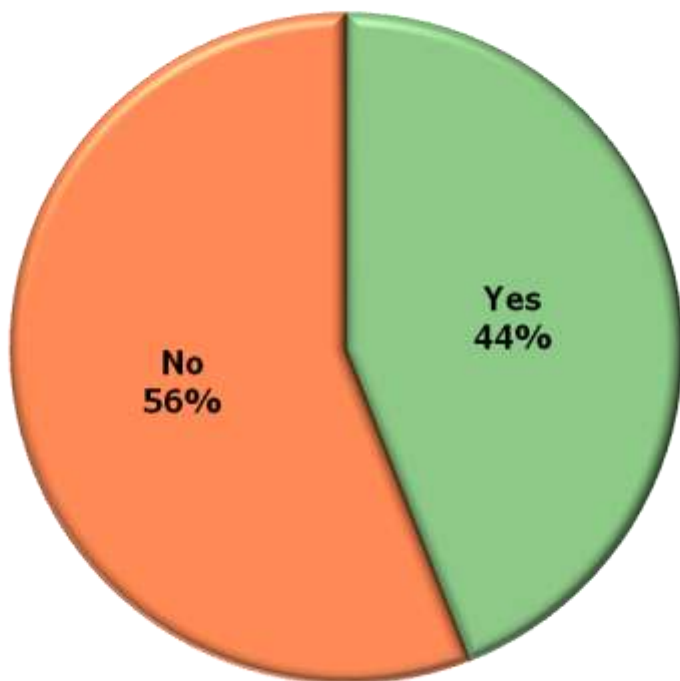
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Q.D1 Are you currently a Girl Scout, or were you ever one in the past (including Daisies, Brownies, or any other level of Girl Scouts)?  
Base: Total Respondents (n=1001)

**Girls Scouts Seen As Providing Leadership Opportunities.** Among girls who are or have been involved in Girl Scouts, more than 4 in 10 (44%) say they were given the chance to lead. Overwhelmingly, girls believe that Girl Scouts can help girls be good leaders (94%).

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Q.D2 Have you had chances to lead others girls in the Girl Scouts?

Q.D3 Do you think the Girl Scouts can help girls like you to be good leaders?

Base: Those coded 1 or 2 in D1 (n=419)