



# Global Grassroots

CONSCIOUS SOCIAL CHANGE FOR WOMEN

## THE YOUNG WOMEN'S ACADEMY FOR CONSCIOUS CHANGE RWANDA & UGANDA MEASURING OUR IMPACT AMONG GIRLS

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### ***On what it feels like to be a young woman creating change in your community***

*Being a young woman who is creating change in her community, it feels awesome. This is because there are few young girls in the community who can do this may be because they feel they are not worth it. And therefore, being one of those that are having impact of the community, feels good to see myself making a change in my community...It is constructive in a way that it encourages my people to start making decisions that can help the community because they have been inspired by a young woman who is creating change.*

**- Mugwaneza Phionah**

*It feels so great. I say so because change is one thing we can never run away from and I know that it does not happen just like that, but rather it begins with us. I also believe that with the conscious change that we as the young women will carry out, many girls out there shall be inspired and step out to start causing changes in their diverse communities.*

**- Bedayika Racheal**

*To me, I feel so empowered, motivated and courageous seeing myself having passion for my people in my community and seeing that there is a change in their lives just because of my effort and courage plus confidence...I also feel so challenged and come to realize that it needs one to take a step for change to happen. It gives me a view and peace of mind that I can make a change in my community no matter the age, financial needs, so that it shows me that if I am to do it, then I should start it now but not wait for others do it or wait for tomorrow to come because tomorrow will never come.*

**- Nakafero Doreen**

*It feels great and motivating to see that I as a young woman, I am creating change in my community. I feel complete because I am also contributing to the society positively. It feels important because in the early African culture, a woman was less important and could not contribute anything transformational in society, but today I am so happy to see that a young woman can also have a say on the transformation of community.*

**- Bazira Judith**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Global Grassroots' overarching mission is to catalyze women and girls as leaders of conscious social change in their communities. Our Young Women's Academy for Conscious Change is a program for recent high school graduates held during the nine-month gap between high school graduation and university enrollment, when the risk of giving up their educational pursuits is greatest. Our program gives young women their first opportunity to initiate their own ideas for social change in their home communities. We deliver a 40-hour experiential curriculum that combines mindfulness training, mindfulness-based leadership skills, social entrepreneurship tools and mind-body trauma and stress management practices to enable young women to develop into compassionate leaders. With our seed funding and ongoing support, our students carry out a viable plan of their own design for community change benefiting other girls. Through personal growth work, our curriculum deepens their sense of self-confidence, agency and courage to contribute towards social change, while our incubator provides concrete skills and opportunity to design and operate their own ideas. Finally, we provide a \$500 scholarship for each graduate towards their university education.

According to researchers Brooke Feeney of Carnegie Mellon University and Nancy Collins of University of California at Santa Barbara, the definition of thriving is "coping successfully with life's adversities and actively pursuing life opportunities for growth and development." There are five components of thriving:

- hedonic well-being (happiness, life satisfaction),
- eudaimonic well-being (having purpose and meaning in life and moving toward life goals),
- psychological well-being (positive self-regard),
- social well-being (deep and meaningful human connections, faith in others and humanity, positive interpersonal relationships), and
- physical well-being (health)<sup>1</sup>.

Global Grassroots' Academy goes beyond the work of a single scholarship, vocational training program, leadership program, mindfulness program, experiential education program, trauma-healing program or community service program. Our integrated approach across all these domains helps girls thrive and results in ripples of impact from each girl's work within themselves, their community and for their future. Here are highlights from our impact:

- **Girls Education:** To date, 100% of our participants have continued on with their university education and not one has become pregnant or married early.
- **Ripple Effect:** In 2015, our 13 Ugandan students reached a total of 2848 people in seven months, an average of 219 per venture. We invested a total of \$1977 in grant funding for these ventures, an average of only \$152 per project, or \$0.70 per person impacted by their programs.
- **Confidence:** In 2015, when asked how ready and able they were to create social change in their community, we saw a stunning 167% increase in students who responded "very able"-

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1. <sup>1</sup> B. C. Feeney, N. L. Collins. "A New Look at Social Support: A Theoretical Perspective on Thriving Through Relationships." *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 2014; DOI:[10.1177/1088868314544222](https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868314544222)

from 38% of respondents before the program to 100% as of graduation seven months later among all our Rwandan participants.

- **Sense of Power:** In 2015, we had a 75% increase among our Rwandan students who felt powerful to change their own circumstances as well as a 75% improvement in their sense of power to change their community’s circumstances. In Uganda, we achieved a total of 69% of students who felt the highest level of power to change their own circumstances, and 62% who felt the same in their community, representing a 100% gain in seven months.
- **Self-Awareness, Self-Management & Mindfulness:** After seven months, in Rwanda we saw a 31% improvement among students who felt they could usually describe how they felt at the moment in considerable detail, and an 18% increase in scores among Ugandan students. Ugandan students showed a 28% increase in those who felt they could notice their thoughts without judging them, and in Rwanda we saw a 15% improvement. Finally, our students in Rwanda demonstrated a 21% improvement in accepting the things they know they cannot change, and we saw a 21% increase in Uganda among those who felt they could accept the thoughts and feelings they had.
- **Post-Traumatic Stress:** Among Ugandan girls who participated in our program in 2014, we saw the following decrease in cases where students reported “quite a bit” or “extremely” to the following symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder before the program began compared to the time of program completion seven months later:

PTSD Symptom	Before Program	After Program
Repeated, disturbing <i>memories, thoughts, or images</i> of a stressful experience.	45%	0%
Repeated, disturbing <i>dreams</i> of a stressful experience.	36%	0%
Avoiding <i>activities or situations</i> because <i>they reminded you of</i> a stressful experience.	55%	11%
Feeling <i>irritable</i> or having <i>angry outbursts</i> .	27%	11%
Having <i>difficulty concentrating</i> .	33%	10%
Being " <i>super-alert</i> " or watchful or on guard.	50%	33%
Feeling <i>jumpy</i> or easily startled.	20%	0%

- **Relationship Skills, Responsible Decision-Making and Social Awareness:** In 2015, among girls in Rwanda, there was a 35% increase in how often young people helped or got help for someone who was hurt, and a 22% increase in Uganda. There was a 50% increase in standing up for someone who was being picked on in Rwanda and a 29% increase in Uganda. In Rwanda there was a 41% increase in helping carrying things for someone they didn’t know and an 18% increase in Uganda.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Global Grassroots delivers on all six dimensions of economic empowerment identified by Nike’s Girl Effect, including advanced financial knowledge and access to resources. In 2015, 33% of our Rwandan students and 63% of our Ugandan students had access to savings by the end of our program (excluding our \$500 university scholarship), compared to 0% and 13% respectively before our program.

## **WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO: The Issue, Needs & Opportunity**

Global Grassroots has been operating in Rwanda since 2006 and in Uganda since 2013. In the 1994 genocide, more than 800,000 Rwandans were killed in just 100 days. At the end of the conflict, 70% of the population was female. While Rwanda has made women's participation in government a priority, at the grassroots level, women and girls often lack both the understanding of their legal rights and the capacity to protect and enforce those rights. Girls' education remains a critical priority.

Northern Uganda is a more recent case. From 1986-2006, the reign of terror of the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), famed for its brutality including kidnapping as many as 10,000 children who were forced to become combatants and sex slaves, caused widespread insecurity and humanitarian crises throughout the region. As the LRA retreated into neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo, returnees and the displaced have been slowly rebuilding, but the trauma of war and violence takes generations to heal, and poverty exacerbates the ability of young people to rise above any history of violence.

Post-conflict, women and girls typically make up the majority of a population, left to head households without the assistance of men, while often suffering from the traumas of violence. As the primary caretakers of their families and communities, women naturally have the greatest insight into the critical issues facing their society; further, they have a unique understanding of the issues' underlying root causes. As such, they are critical in defining priorities for families, communities, and national government. Yet women often have the least access to the financial resources, education, skills training, and other support services needed to advance their ideas for social change or attend to their own rehabilitation needs. The circumstances facing their daughters are even more sobering:

- One-third of girls in the developing world will be married before the age of 18. (*UNICEF, 2010*)
- Half of all first births in the developing world are to adolescent girls. (*Population Council, 2007*)
- In sub-Saharan Africa, fewer than one in five girls makes it to secondary school. (*Center for Gender Equity, 2006*)
- In Rwanda, only 4% of girls complete high school. (*UNICEF*)
- In Uganda, 85% of girls leave secondary school early (*World Bank, 2011*)

Even among those few girls who make it to secondary school, they may face a lack of sanitation facilities and access to supplies during menstruation, thus they may stay home from school one week each month to avoid bullying and stigma due to their inability to attend to personal hygiene needs. Gradually they fall behind. During school breaks, they are pressured by their families to find jobs, are courted by male predators, and are at highest risk of teen pregnancy and abuse. Consequently, many leave school, undermining their potential to end the cycle of poverty, complete their education and become leaders in their communities. Finally, those with the potential to overcome these obstacles and attend school – even leadership academies – still have little opportunity to experiment with leadership skills outside the classroom.

Global Grassroots is working to serve this precise niche – providing opportunities for women and girls to heal from the trauma of war, develop their leadership potential and become leading change agents by designing and implementing their own ideas for social change.

## **WHAT WE DO: Global Grassroots' Young Women's Academy for Conscious Change**

Global Grassroots' Young Women's Academy for Conscious Change is innovative in its unique fusion of (a) mind-body trauma healing techniques for our participants who are survivors of violence or who may be working with vulnerable populations, (b) our mindfulness-based leadership program that helps develop self-confidence, courage, and compassionate leadership skills, and (c) skills training, grant funding and high-engagement coaching to help these young women build sustainable non-profit organizations from scratch to self-sufficiency. The level of due diligence we conduct and the support we offer is unparalleled, and the target populations we serve are those most often overlooked for their potential as change leaders. We and our participants are succeeding with this comprehensive and holistic approach. Here's a closer look at the program model and curriculum.

Global Grassroots' Young Women's Academy for Conscious Change in both Rwanda and Uganda provides an avenue for vulnerable young women who have recently graduated from high school to advance their own solutions to the issues that matter most to them and to develop their capacity as mindful change leaders in their community. Our program takes place during the nine-month gap between high school graduation and university enrollment to reduce the risks of teenage pregnancy by occupying the students in constructive community engagement and learning activities. Our program gives young women their first opportunity to apply their leadership skills and give back to their villages.

**Selection:** Through local partnerships, Global Grassroots targets the most vulnerable, yet high potential, high school students. Past programs have included teenage mothers, those who are HIV positive, and those who are the heads of their orphaned households. Our current partner is Cornerstone Development, an international NGO focused on leadership and academic development of young people as future national leaders in East Africa. Cornerstone operates boarding schools for high-performing students from impoverished communities and diverse backgrounds (in terms of religion, socio-economic status and ethnic group) for the last two years of high school before university. In fact, some of the students are the first within their village to complete their secondary education.

**Training:** The first phase of our program takes place in January, a two-week intensive experiential program, adapted from our long-standing women's curriculum. All training takes place at the boarding schools from which the participants have recently graduated, and it is within this familiar environment that they develop a comprehensive plan for the individual social ventures they will carry out in their home communities over the following six months.

We believe that those of us who work to advance a more just society have a responsibility to create that change with the same integrity and justice we hope to see in the world. Thus, essential to our work preparing young women for their role as change agents is first to help them invest in a process of inner awareness and growth. Our Academy incorporates experiential personal transformation practices in mindfulness, meditation, self-expression, deep listening, conflict resolution, breathwork and somatic tools to help these future change leaders expand their sense of self-awareness, develop tools for transforming oppression and suffering, cultivate compassion and initiate change responsibly. Exploring and overcoming challenges with change, fear, limiting beliefs and reactivity within themselves fosters empathy and understanding of how others experience change. Further, those serving the vulnerable need to honor their own needs for restoration. Thus, they are introduced to our mind-body trauma healing techniques, which

we practice daily so that they can experience the physiological and psychological benefits of the practice over time, and understand what it means to have a daily practice for their own self-care and resilience so that they may avoid the pitfalls of burnout, disillusionment or abuse of power. Finally, by helping young women map out their gifts, passions, capabilities, assets and inner power that can be leveraged for social change, we deepen their sense of agency, as they identify ways they are already equipped to make their own unique contribution. The students complete their January training with a comprehensive business plan for their non-profit community service project, lesson plans for any content they will be teaching, start-up and operating budget and a draft needs assessment to conduct to establish a baseline understanding of their issue.

**Implementation:** In February, the students return to their villages across the country to implement their programs. We provide up to \$500 in seed funding to cover 100 percent of their start-up expenses to conduct their baseline issue study, register their organizations, purchase materials, conduct their program services, cover transportation and communications costs, and any operating expenses. The young women arrive home with greater self-confidence and self-esteem; this confidence continues to increase as these social change agents initiate their ventures as unpaid volunteers and gain valuable experience in public speaking, working with local authorities and community leaders to advocate for resources, and educating and inspiring others. Local Global Grassroots staff visits each young woman in her home community in February and July to provide on-going high-engagement support and validation of their work.

**Mid-Point Convening & Reflection:** At the mid-point of the program, after three months of local operations, each group of students reconvenes. It is during these sessions that our girls distill and integrate their actual experiences. They deepen their personal growth practices and self-reflection, review their progress, learn how to develop financial and programmatic reports, design social impact assessments, plan for the next three months, and analyze what it means to be a mindful leader in practice.

**Graduation:** After their final three months of operations and after measuring their impact, all of the participants return to their respective training locations in August a third time to present their final financial, programmatic, and impact reports on their community service program and to reflect on the personal meaning of their experience. They then graduate from the program and are awarded a \$500 scholarship to cover fees for one semester at university. This helps alleviate the pressure from family to work during their vacation and provides another way we can invest in their continued education.

Our program's unique fusion of social entrepreneurship tools, mindfulness practices, conscious leadership skills, team-based problem-solving, and mind-body trauma healing provides young women with an avenue to heal from traumatic experiences, develop social-emotional intelligence, become confident in their professional and academic abilities, succeed in creating positive change in their communities, and develop as self-aware and compassionate leaders. We help young women envision a future for themselves that includes university, making them less likely to succumb to pressures that would end their higher education dreams. These new leaders of change also gain the confidence and self-esteem that will be essential for their success in university – and beyond. As our students tell us after completing the program, they now know they have the capacity to change their world – confidence and tools that will guide them throughout their lives. Following is an overview of the modules contained in a typical training program:

## Program Overview

### YOUNG WOMEN'S ACADEMY FOR CONSCIOUS CHANGE - 2015

#### WEEK 1

	<b>DAY 1- Monday</b>	<b>DAY 2 - Tuesday</b>	<b>DAY 3 -Wednesday</b>	<b>DAY 4 - Thursday</b>	<b>DAY 5 - Friday</b>	<b>DAY 6 - Saturday</b>
<b>Morning Practice 8:30 – 9am</b>	Introductions, Pre-Assessments, Registration	Module 3: Intro to Breath~Body~Mind (BBM), Trauma and Stress Management	BBM Practice	BBM Practice	BBM Practice	BBM Practice
<b>Morning Session (9am – 12pm)</b>			Module 7: Becoming Whole: Understanding Change in the Self and Other Session 1 (2 hours)	Module 9: Developing a Solution, Target Population, Theory of Change, Characteristics of a Strong Venture	Brief Venture Presentations on Issue, Mission, Vision, Theory of Change, Target Pop & Solution: Test Project Logic	If needed, continue Brief Venture Presentations on Issue, Mission, Vision, Theory of Change, Target Pop & Solution: Test Project Logic
<b>Tea break around 10:30</b>			Module 8: Mapping Stakeholders Session 1 (1 hour)			
<b>Mindful Lunch 12-1</b>		<i>Starting on Day 2: Wait to eat together, begin with grace or Thich Nhat Hahn contemplation together (have different girl lead), 20 min silence, then community lunch, create chore list for alternating clean up</i>				
<b>Afternoon Session (1pm - 4pm)</b>	Social Issue Discussion (& Forming Teams if Interested)	Module 5: Cultivating Self-Awareness for Transformation	Module 7: Becoming Whole: Understanding Change in the Self and Other Session 2 (1 hour)	Module 10: Staying Attuned: Deep Listening, Respecting Local Wisdom, Inquiry without Imposition	Brief Venture Presentations on Issue, Mission, Vision, Theory of Change, Target Pop, Solution and CSC: Test Project Logic	<i>FREE BLOCK: Use time for additional presentations, to allow students to make adjustments to their venture solution or to teach anything that did not get enough attention</i>
	Module 2: Social Issue Diagnosis	Module 6: Mission & Vision	Module 8: Mapping Stakeholders Session 2 (1 hour + group work)			
<b>Group Work Time (4pm - 5pm)</b>	Work on problem trees	Work on personal asset list, mission, vision	Work on stakeholder analysis	Work on target pop and solutions		
<b>HOMEWORK</b>	<b>Personal Journal:</b> Record Miracles, Draw communities <b>Social Venture:</b> Problem Trees	<b>Read Articles</b> <b>Personal Journal:</b> Sharing affirmations, miracles <b>Social Venture:</b> Personal Asset List and Mission & Vision	<b>Personal Journal:</b> Personal change insights on 50-50, 3 breaths, miracles <b>Social Venture:</b> Stakeholder Analysis	<b>Personal Journal:</b> Truths, deep listening, reflections on CSC <b>Social Venture:</b> Designing presentations of solutions, theory of change , CSC	<b>NONE! MOVIE NIGHT:</b> GIRLS RISING (play DVD from computer)	<b>Personal Journal:</b> Quiet night of reflection. Write about what it feels like to be a young woman who can create change.

**WEEK 2**

	<b>DAY 7 - Monday</b>	<b>DAY 8 - Tuesday</b>	<b>DAY 9 - Wednesday</b>	<b>DAY 10 - Thursday</b>	<b>DAY 11 - Friday</b>	<b>DAY 12 - Saturday</b>
<b>Morning Practice 8:30 – 9am</b>	BBM Practice	BBM Practice	BBM Practice	BBM Practice	BBM Practice	BBM Practice
<b>Morning Session (9am – 12pm)</b>	Module 11: Ensuring Balance: Self-Care & Stress Management	Module 14: Issue Studies, Measuring Impact, Metrics of Evaluation	Module 16: Steps to Implementation, Resource Needs & Program Plans	Module 18: Issue Study Surveys	Module 20: Venture Budgets	Finish Venture Plans or teach anything that needs more attention
	Module 12: Setting Goals and Activity Plans			Community Challenge	FREE BLOCK – individual work time or tie to teach anything missing.	
<b>Mindful Lunch 12-1</b>	<i>Wait to eat together, begin with grace or Thich Nhat Hahn contemplation together (have different girl lead), 20 min silence, then community lunch, create chore list for alternating clean up</i>					
<b>Afternoon Session (1pm-3pm)</b>	Module 13: Exploring Dominant Power, Power from Within	Module 15: Transforming Fear, Failure, Learning and Decision-Making	Module 17: Communications and Conscious Conflict Resolution	Module 19: Leading from Within: Ethics & Conscious Leadership	Module 21: Basic Bookkeeping, Financial Reporting and Break-Even Analysis	Review of Skills/Frameworks  VENTURE PLANS DUE (may need 1-2 days to finish), Post-Training Assessments,
<b>Group Work Time (4-5pm)</b>	Developing goals for programs and outcomes, activity plans	Work on metrics worksheet	Work on steps for implementation, resource list, program plan and communications plan	Work on ethics policy and issue study questionnaires	Work on budgets and break-even analysis	Overview Program Next Steps  Next day will be Award Letters & Closing Celebration
<b>HOMEWORK</b>	<b>Personal Journal:</b> Design a Self-Care Plan, power statement, intentions, miracles <b>Social Venture:</b> Develop program goals & outcomes, and activity plan	<b>Personal Journal:</b> Write about limiting beliefs, fears, affirmations and learning from failure <b>Social Venture:</b> Develop metrics worksheet for each outcome	<b>Personal Journal:</b> Reflect on experience of conflict <b>Social Venture:</b> Develop steps for implementation, program plan, resource list, communications plan	<b>Personal Journal:</b> Consider how you will incorporate mindfulness into your venture <b>Social Venture:</b> Develop ethics policy, develop issue study questionnaires	<b>Personal Journal:</b> Write about what you will do as a daily contemplative practice during your work at home. <b>Social Venture:</b> venture budgets, break-even analysis and ledger templates	

**WHAT WE TEACH: The Principles That Guide The Capacities We Cultivate**

*Conscious Social Change*, a term coined by Global Grassroots founder, Gretchen Steidle, is a process led by responsible and ethical change agents who engage in their own mindfulness practice and personal growth while striving to advance positive change for the common good. Conscious Social Change is driven by one’s inner wisdom, uses a direct-experience learning methodology to understand change, and embraces compassion and respect for all stakeholders, including our opposition. In a consciousness-based approach, the same principles of deep inquiry used for self-awareness are applied to identify, understand, and transform underlying issues, not symptoms, among others.

<b>Conventional Model<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Conscious Social Change Model</b>
Outer-driven (we try to achieve what society says we should – wealth, status, beauty)	Inner-driven (we ask what we feel most passionate about and called to do in the world)
Self-focused (we look at what’s in it for us)	Other-focused (we look at how we can benefit the common good)
To create change, we tell or force people, and are motivated by our needs, thus creating a sense of division: us vs. them; we use threats of punishment or rewards (sticks or carrots) to get people to comply with what we want	To create change, we begin with self-examination to understand how much of the problem is our own; we develop compassion for others; we seek the insight and participation of others in designing a solution; we stay attuned to the changing reality, and we look to collaborate
The results are incremental change within the norms of behavior, often without people changing at a deep level – instead they are just complying to avoid punishment or to get the reward	The results are systemic change at the root and individual transformation that lasts

Steidle has identified Five Principles of Conscious Social Change, which form the foundation of our experiential curriculum and teaching methodology:

**Principle ONE: Cultivate Presence**

A 2010 Harvard University study found that our minds wander, on average, 46.9% of our waking hours, and that we are actually less happy when our mind is wandering than when we are aware of the present moment.<sup>3</sup> The first and most fundamental capacity we teach is mindfulness and self-awareness so we may develop the ability to be fully present with ourselves and others. The more we practice cultivating our ability to be “in the moment,” the more likely we can notice when we need to attend to our own needs, and the less likely our pain or stress will influence our emotional state. The more we can be with what we are experiencing, even if it is uncomfortable, the more likely we will be able to endure other moments of difficulty (including being with someone else in pain). With more practice, we come to understand the underlying

<sup>2</sup> Quinn, Robert, *Change the World: How Ordinary People can Achieve Extraordinary Results* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000) 124- 131

<sup>3</sup> Killingsworth, Matthew A. and Daniel T. Gilbert. (2010). A Wandering Mind is an Unhappy Mind. *Science*, 330, 932.

reasons for our own fears and anxiety, which leads to greater empathy and compassion for those who challenge us, possibly because they too are suffering. When a leader works to deepen their self-awareness, they have a greater likelihood of making mindful decisions that are not distorted by personal agenda, ego, or abuse of power.

**Principle TWO: Become Whole**

The second principle is to go beyond just noticing, and actually being proactive in addressing our own stuff – our wounds, fears, limiting beliefs and shadows that can distort our perspective and cause us unconsciously to harm others while protecting ourselves. The unexamined self has been at the root of many activist movements that have turned violent as well as leadership attained through oppression and prejudice. Change begins within ourselves. When you realize how your own reactivity in times of stress, fear, or anxiety can unintentionally harm others, you can change that behavior. Further, you are more likely to seek to understand the destructive behaviors of others, and work to find a solution that will get at the roots of their pain, not just the symptoms of their actions. And, when you understand how change is difficult from your own personal experience, you are more likely to have compassion and patience when trying to get someone else to change. This form of leadership results in decisions significantly more sustainable and change that is more deeply transformative.

**Principle THREE: Ensure Balance**

The third principle is using presence for balance and self-care. By committing to ongoing personal transformation practices, we can more easily attend to our own need for balance so that we avoid burnout and discern when it is necessary to take a step back from our social change efforts to restore ourselves. This ensures we stay whole, grounded and completely available to do our work in the world. Leaders who embrace mindfulness, self-care and wellness practices ensure they foster a healthy balance and address proactively the need for renewal.

**Principle FOUR: Stay Attuned**

The fourth principle is using presence to stay attuned to the needs of our beneficiaries, so we do not get stuck on our own agenda or abuse our power. Conscious change involves engaging all stakeholders in understanding an issue, setting a vision together and working collaboratively to design a solution that remains flexible as needs shift. Rather than getting attached to one activity that may no longer meet needs over time, solutions are designed to work at the root level of an issue and are evaluated and adjusted as necessary to ensure they are still working to alleviate that issue. Staying attuned means that we honor that every individual has wisdom and a contribution that comes from their unique life experience, and that they may have a role to play in the larger ecosystem. It means we listen deeply, avoid “us” vs. “them” approaches, and seek to understand the needs of all involved. Conscious Social Change thus allows for the most effective and innovative ideas to move forward, which in turn are more likely to be sustainable because of their informed, inclusive, responsive and creative nature.

**Principle FIVE: Lead from Within**

The more we listen to ourselves through mindfulness, the more we are able to identify our individual calling. Conscious change agents are guided by an inner sense of purpose and strive to create a benefit for the greater common good. Their presence, passion and example support others in finding their own purpose too. Change agents who cultivate and leverage their unique gifts are also often working at the cutting edge of social innovation. Driven by their mission or vision, they combine experimentation, resourcefulness, and evaluation to see what works. They

do not get stuck on one method or program, but are continually driven to evolve their understanding and response. Conscious leaders are willing to mentor others, but are also not afraid to seek guidance for themselves when needed. They look at everything, including conflict, "failure" and challenge, as a chance to learn, and even as they lead, they also know when to step back where it is not always up to them to fix things. They take responsibility for their own role in a collective problem, and they are willing to step up and work collaboratively and decisively towards a solution. Finally, conscious leaders ensure those working together are inspired by a common cause, which energizes collective efforts

### **WHAT WE HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH: Learning & Outcome Objectives**

Global Grassroots aims to have a transformative impact on an individual and collective level, including on our graduates and the broader society in which they operate. We are deeply committed to our effectiveness, our culture as a learning organization informed by our beneficiaries, and our ability to leverage scarce resources to maximize social value creation.

We evaluate our effectiveness in meeting these goals and objectives through pre-and post-training assessments, and we evaluate personal transformation and knowledge comprehension as applied by participants throughout the venture implementation phase. Further, to ensure the success of each venture, each participant builds impact goals and evaluation measures specific to their social issue into their design. Prior to launch, participants are required to conduct a baseline study of their target issue, which forms the basis of a detailed impact assessment after program completion. We then conduct site visits, inspect bookkeeping, interview beneficiaries, evaluate program reporting, host focus groups, utilize completion surveys, and require personal reflection essays from the girls. After each program, we review our curriculum and regularly make adjustments to our program design to improve the clarity, depth, and breadth of our material.

#### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the training, our objectives are that our participants will be able to:

- Understand the five principles of conscious social change and the relevance of mindfulness to social change
- Use reflective practices for personal self-awareness, emotional self-regulation, stress management, strategic decision-making, courage, addressing conflict and opposition, and learning from personal experience
- Work collaboratively and with a participatory approach to ensure attunement to the needs of others, including use of deep listening skills and conscious conflict resolution methods that empower and support the self-sufficiency of others
- Understand their own assets, passions, capabilities, and gifts that can be leveraged to contribute meaningfully to the common good
- Diagnose an issue at the root and systemic level, develop goals and metrics for evaluation, measure impact, and analyze findings
- Design and articulate a solution with a comprehensive venture logic integrating their mission, vision, theory of change, program model, goals, and budgets
- Develop a budget, manage a grant, conduct basic bookkeeping, develop a financial summary and financial report from itemized transactions, and make strategic decisions based on an analysis of budgets vs. actuals
- Lead a mindfulness exercise or trauma-healing practice of their choice

- Reflect and share about their venture challenges, problem-solving processes, personal experiences working with others, and draw meaning from their experience
- Have a clear sense of personal purpose and a belief in themselves as a change leader
- Use a tool box of concrete and transferable venture planning and management skills

**Capacities**

Global Grassroots is investing in an intensive and detailed monitoring and evaluation process, incorporating the five pillars of social emotional learning advanced by the Collaborative for Academic and Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL). These include self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making and relationships skills. Our model of Conscious Social Change goes beyond social-emotional learning to impact these additional capacities:

- Mindfulness of and ability to survey emotions, thought-patterns, and physical needs while simultaneously aware of the external environment
- Recognition of fears, limiting beliefs, attachments, shadows, and compulsive reactivity and how to attend to these wounds so that they do not drive unconscious behaviors
- Attunement to the needs of others, including use of deep listening skills and conscious conflict resolution methods that empower and support the self-sufficiency and agency of others
- Sense of power, well-being, and capacity to create change
- Ability to recognize negative coping behaviors and engage in positive methods of self-care
- Understanding of one’s own assets, passions, capabilities and gifts that can be leveraged to contribute meaningfully to the common good with a sense of inner-driven purpose
- Understanding of change from personal experience, and how to support transformation in others through understanding, compassion and collaboration

**Outcomes and Metrics:**

Following are our outcome objectives and the specific evaluation metrics used to assess our progress on each objective and the range of capacities listed above:

Objective	Metric and Tool or Instrument Utilized
100% of participants will have acquired advanced venture planning and venture management skills	This is measured by a participant’s ability to launch and operate a social venture. Staff make two site visits and girls reconvene twice where their financial bookkeeping is evaluated and analyzed, they discuss their implementation and operational successes and challenges, they measure their impact through local issue studies and provide updates on their program and outcome goals.
75% of ventures will have had a measurable impact on the social issue each was designed to address	Each venture leader develops a concrete set of program and outcome goals, associated metrics, methods for evaluation and survey instruments in order to carry out a baseline issue study and final impact assessment in their community among their beneficiaries.
100% of participants will be able to reflect on and articulate the meaning or significance of their	We reconvene our students twice – once for a week at the midpoint and once for a week at the end – where participants reflect on their experiences in large groups,

Objective	Metric and Tool or Instrument Utilized
experience in the program, what they learned, and what capacities they have developed (all of which contribute to their self-confidence)	small groups and through reflective essays and our pre-training, post-training, and final assessments. We support each student in the process of integration and finding meaning in their experience, including learning from challenges, identifying their own assets, defining what it means to be self-aware and contemplating any level of personal transformation. We also use a six-part Likert scale for self-confidence and selected questions from the Acholi Psychosocial Assessment Instrument (APAI) to measure self-worth. <sup>4</sup>
100% of participants will have shown an increase in self-awareness (feelings, values, thought patterns, physical needs, personal strengths, areas for learning)	We use an adapted set of questions from the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale- Revised (CAMS-R) <sup>5</sup>  We also use the Short-form Self Compassion Scale <sup>6</sup>
100% of participants will have increased their social awareness (compassion and sense of responsibility to others in need)	We use a scale devised to measure empathy in 8- and 9-year old children by Alison F Garton and Eyal Gringart of Edith Cowan University <sup>7</sup> .  We also use the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) <sup>8</sup>
90% of participants will have increased their self-management capacity (regulating stress, emotions, impulses, and goals)  90% of participants will see improvement in their sense of well-being, including in their scores for post-traumatic stress	We use the PTSD Check List -17 (PCL-17) to measure symptoms of PTSD and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), the most widely used scale in psychology to measure the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. <sup>9</sup>  We also ask our students questions about their perceived level of wellbeing or difficulty of life, and engage them in dialogue about ways they have used mindfulness to manage their emotions and responses to others.
100% of participants will have demonstrated responsible decision-making (ethics, concern for others, well-being of self and	We use selected questions from the Acholi Psychosocial Assessment Instrument (APAI) <sup>10</sup> , which was developed to measure depressive symptoms, pro-social behavior and misbehavior among child soldiers in Northern Uganda. We

<sup>4</sup> Betacourt, Bass, Borisova, Neugebauer, Speelman, Onyango, & Bolton, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Feldman, G., Hayes, A., Kumar, S., Greeson, J., & Laurenceau, J. P. (2007). Mindfulness and emotion regulation: The development and initial validation of the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale Revised (CAMS-R). *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*, 29(3), 177-190.

<sup>6</sup> Raes, F., Pommier, E., Neff, K. D., & Van Gucht, D. (in press). Construction and factorial validation of a short form of the Self-Compassion Scale. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*.

<sup>7</sup> Alison F Garton and Eyal Gringart of Edith Cowan University, *Australian Journal of Education and Developmental Psychology* Vol. 5, 2005, pp 17-25.

<sup>8</sup> McCullough, M. E., Emmons, R. A., & Tsang, J. (2002). The grateful disposition: A conceptual and empirical topography. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, pp 112-127.

<sup>9</sup> Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24, pp 385-396.

<sup>10</sup> Betacourt, Bass, Borisova, Neugebauer, Speelman, Onyango, & Bolton, 2009.

Objective	Metric and Tool or Instrument Utilized
community, intention, respect) and relationship building (cooperation, resolving conflict)	also have an 11-point Likert scale for pro-social behavior in school and community. Further through discussion, essays and assessment of their venture management we ascertain the degree to which our girls are able to demonstrate responsible decision-making, relationship-building and conflict resolution.
75% of participants will have reached a normalized sense of personal power	We ask our participants questions about their sense of power to change their personal circumstances and community circumstances. We also ask them questions about their views on women’s rights and empowerment.
75% of participants will have adopted some form of mindfulness or contemplative practice on a daily or weekly basis and have developed a self-care plan to protect against stress and burn-out	We ask participants what practices they continue to use to support their own mental and emotional wellbeing and how often they practice. We also require each student to develop a self-care plan for dealing with stress, fear and opposition prior to initiating their ventures.
90% of participants will feel very capable and ready to advance future social change in their communities	We ask for their self-reported sense of readiness and capability. And we ask their dreams for their future.

### OUR IMPACT: Ripple Effects

Global Grassroots’ work goes beyond the work of a simple scholarship, vocational training program, leadership program, mindfulness program, experiential education program, trauma-healing program or community service program. Our integrated approach across all these domains results in exponential impact through the ripples from each girl’s work within themselves, their community and beyond.

**Supporting Girls’ Education:** In Uganda, girls have a staggering 85% drop-out rate from secondary school. The life time cost of girls dropping out of secondary school in Uganda is estimated at US\$ 9.7 billion, or 33.55% of GDP. Simply finishing primary school means an increase in earnings of 24%. There are an estimated 261,064 adolescent births per year in Uganda, which costs the country \$175 million; while each teen mother forgoes \$673 of annual income. This represents a total lifetime cost of 30% of GDP.<sup>11</sup>

In Rwanda, according to Girl Hub and The Ni Nyamping Generation, a Rwandan advocacy program by girls for girls, in the capital of Kigali, more than 30% of girls aged 15-17 do not attend school nor live with their parents. And it is known that 10% of girls with no education have sex by the age of 15 compared with 2% who have been to secondary school. More than

<sup>11</sup> Chaaban, Jad and Wendy Cunningham. *Measuring the Economic Gain of Investing in Girls Education*. The World Bank Human Development Network, Children and Youth Unit & Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network Gender Unit, August 2011.

50% of girls aged 15-19 think domestic violence is justified, and orphaned girls aged 15-17 are four times more likely to give birth than those living with both parents.<sup>12</sup>

Alternatively, when a girl completes her education, especially attending school during adolescence she is<sup>13</sup>:

- more likely to marry four years later
- less likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth
- more likely to have an average of 2.2 fewer children
- more likely to have healthier children
- more likely to send her children to school
- have a later sexual debut and more likely to use contraception
- less likely to be subjected to forced sex

During the gap periods during school vacations, girls are at greatest risk of getting pregnant and dropping out of school. Global Grassroots' program is intentionally designed to take place outside of school during the gap year between high school graduation and university enrollment to ensure they are engaged in important programming and to help them find purpose and meaning, such that they will continue to embrace their trajectory of education and self-development.

Further, we provide every young woman who completes our program a \$500 scholarship towards her university education, which is equivalent to most of the cost of one semester and about what they would have made through a paid job during the time they were enrolled in our program. While we are able to help mitigate risk of dropping out during the gap period and further support the costs of their higher education, we also ensure students benefit from having participated as a volunteer driven by their own internal motives. Finally, their Academy experience offers so many other dimensions towards their learning, self-awareness, wellbeing, leadership and change skills, and confidence, which we will discuss at greater length.

*Our Impact:* To date, 100% of our participants have continued on with their university education and not one has become pregnant. Granted, our current program in partnership with Cornerstone's Leadership Academies is only two years old, so we will be working with their alumni coordinators to continue to track their performance at university and their future choices.

**Economic Empowerment:** Nike's Girl Effect states that: To develop and emerge as successful economic citizens within their community, girls need to be<sup>14</sup>:

- equipped with financial knowledge and capabilities
- given access to financial capital and services
- given access to productive assets

<sup>12</sup> The Ni Nyampinga Generation – In numbers-Challenges for Rwanda's most vulnerable girls.pdf with data from the 2010 Rwanda DHS, downloaded from <http://www.girleffect.org/girl-effect-in-action/girl-effect-rwanda/>

<sup>13</sup> Women Deliver, "Invest in Girls Education" infographic and The World for Girls – Taking the Girl Effect to Scale.pdf, The Girl Effect

<sup>14</sup> How to Empower Girls With the Right Economic Assets, The Girl Effect

- made aware of their economic potential
- made aware that they have control over their future, and
- recognized as economic actors

### WHAT SHOULD WE CONSIDER AS ASSETS?

Assets are the building blocks of economic and social progress.

To begin preparation for her future economic empowerment, a girl needs **foundational assets**. These are basic human and social assets – behavioural competencies that include communication skills, financial literacy and confidence building.

Once a girl has mastered these skills, she is prepared to put into practice what she has learned and is ready for more advanced **financial and physical assets**. These give a girl options to generate income and develop saving behaviours, and equip her with the necessary skills to change her life and make an impact on her country's development.

HUMAN ASSETS	SOCIAL ASSETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Communication skills</li> <li>▶ Good health</li> <li>▶ Ability to work</li> <li>▶ Education</li> <li>▶ Literacy</li> <li>▶ Knowledge</li> <li>▶ Health, legal and economic information</li> <li>▶ Self-esteem</li> <li>▶ Bargaining power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Friends</li> <li>▶ Social networks</li> <li>▶ Mentors</li> <li>▶ Relationships of trust</li> <li>▶ Group membership</li> <li>▶ Confidence building</li> <li>▶ Access to wider Institutions of society</li> </ul>
FINANCIAL ASSETS	PHYSICAL ASSETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Cash</li> <li>▶ Savings</li> <li>▶ Access to loans</li> <li>▶ Vouchers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Identity card</li> <li>▶ Land</li> <li>▶ Housing</li> <li>▶ Transport</li> <li>▶ Personal assets (clothing, jewellery, household items)</li> </ul>

7 | GIRLEFFECT.ORG 

The outcomes from having access to these assets are that:

- Girls build supportive social networks (*Nike's Girl Effect*)
- Girls develop financial literacy skills that enable them to save and cover some of their expenses (*Nike's Girl Effect*)
- An extra year of primary school education boosts a girl's eventual wages by 10–20 per cent. An extra year of secondary school adds 15–25 per cent. (*World Bank, 2002*)
- Parents and community members see girls as economic assets worth educating (*Nike's Girl Effect*)
- Girls are less vulnerable to violence (*Nike's Girl Effect*)
- Communities are more likely to create pro-girl policies that support and protect their education and wellbeing (*Nike's Girl Effect*)

*Our Impact:* Global Grassroots' Academy for Conscious Change delivers on all six dimensions of economic empowerment identified by the Girl Effect, especially through the opportunity to develop a social venture from scratch. Students learn in-depth financial literacy and business management skills, including how to budget, plan a set of activities, manage a small grant, conduct bookkeeping for their transactions and prepare summary financial reports, analyze their actuals versus their budgeted expenses, and make informed decisions. These skills are easily transferrable to other endeavors outside our training program, and the impact of their increased level of financial responsibility is already evident after seven months. According to our 2014 Impact Assessment, 31% of our young women's program graduates had money saved by the end of the program, compared to 0% before training. In 2015, 33% of our Rwandan students and 63% of our Ugandan students had access to savings by the end of our program (excluding our scholarship), compared to 0 and 13% respectively before our program

**Venture Planning Tools & Implementation.** Global Grassroots is not just a training program. Plenty of programs teach skills, including vocational skills and financial literacy. But we are an experiential incubator. Our students have the immediate opportunity to apply all their tools and leadership skills in designing and implementing their own solution in their own community. These tools include problem-solving skills, the capacity to think creatively, strategically and logically, and the frameworks necessary to deconstruct an issue, and design an effective solution at the root and systemic level that engages and is sustained by the community. In addition to financial management, other skill sets include marketing and communications, ethics and risk analysis, mission and theory of change, curriculum content design and effective management and planning. Further, they learn how to establish goals, choose appropriate metrics for evaluation, design a survey instrument to measure their impact and evaluate their outcomes. The implementation experience includes going back to their home villages as a young woman and speaking with adults who are willing to listen and take seriously their ideas. Each girl then actually registers her work as an independent community-based organization with her local officials in her community and becomes responsible for leading a viable entity of her own design.

The core transformation that takes place as a result of our social entrepreneurship training is that our students now have (and know they have) the nuts-and-bolts tools to be able to create a solution again. They learn they have the capacity to manage opposition and conflict with concrete skills for stakeholder engagement, evaluation and conflict resolution, being trusted with and managing money competently, and being seen as an educated leader rather than a girl with no status. The extraordinary power of having a successful experience creating something from scratch based on their own ideas contributes directly to self-confidence, a sense of power, a sense of meaning, an embodied sense of what it means to be a leader, and the willingness to do it again. Again, while our program is only two years old, we fully anticipate that with this tool kit our change agents will not only use the Conscious Social Change method to address other issues they face, but will also engage in other leadership opportunities confidently and collaboratively with humility, compassion, curiosity and a willingness to learn that will serve them as wise and mindful leaders.

*Our Impact:* In an informal focus group conducted with a group of alumni from the same boarding school that our girls have attended, but who had not participated in our programs, we asked what was the most challenging thing for them post-graduation with which they still struggled. The young women agreed across the board that they struggled with self-confidence. We look forward to watching how our cohorts compare with this control group of similarly educated young women over the next few years as they complete their university education and go on to begin their careers. But we have already seen remarkable change through our first two cohorts. In 2015, when asked how ready and able they were to create social change in their community, we saw a stunning 167% increase in students who responded "very able"- from 38% of respondents before the program to 100% as of graduation seven months later among all our Rwandan participants. In 2014 in Uganda, we saw an increase of 82% (from 40% to 73%,) among those who answered "very able". In 2015 there was an increase from 62% to 85%. Given the very real success of each of the students' ventures, this offers strong evidence of the positive impact of this experience on a young woman's confidence, courage, competency and sense of know-how.

In 2015, between the beginning of the program and graduation, we saw an overarching 13% increase in Rwandan girls' Self-Management and Confidence Score. As part of this test, when asked how sure they felt things would work out well under certain circumstances, there was

- a 10% increase in confidence when you have to learn something new
- a 39% increase when someone is counting on you to do something
- a 64% increase in feeling sure even when you feel very unhappy

**Social Impact and Ripple Effects.** Not only has each young woman preserved her educational path, advanced her economic potential, learned a set of skills for making a difference, and has had the confidence-boosting experience of going through the process of starting something from scratch in her own community, but she has also successfully made a difference through her own ideas. There is nothing more powerful than to experience that your ideas have value and can make a difference. Our young students choose an idea of personal value, design something that works, and then see lives change. And they do so voluntarily.

Each girl touches dozens and sometimes hundreds of other lives. Not only does she have the opportunity for an education and all the benefits that we know are possible for a young woman who completes her education, but almost all of our students work to remove barriers for other girls to access school and encourage them to continue their own education. This includes fighting early marriage, educating about reproductive health to avoid teen pregnancy, raising awareness of the benefits of education and providing for economic needs to cover school fees.

CA	Phionah	LABO	Christine	Dinah
(153)	No of pupils in the primary school → 276	No of pupils in primary school → 108	No of pupils (primary) → 110	No of pupils (primary) → 270
(30)	No of students in the secondary school → 119	No of teachers → 53	No of secondary → 50	No of students (secondary) → 122
(5)	No of teachers → 05	53 teachers	No of teachers → 50	No of teachers (secondary) → 67
(2)	No of police → 02	Social workers → 3	L.O.J → 1	No of teacher (67)
(1)	Church leaders → 02	community kids → 2	Church leaders → 1	Church leader (17)
	No of parents → 05	Parents → 3	No of police → 2	Parents (107)
	No of health workers → 02	Total → 123	Street → 3	Total (3707)
			Total → 173	

**Our Impact:** In 2015, our 13 Ugandan students reached a total of 2848 people in seven months, an average of 219 per venture. We spent a total of \$1977 in grant funding for these ventures, an average of only \$152 per project, or \$0.70 per person impacted by their programs.

Several endeavors were designed to be self-sustaining and will continue, operated by others they have trained and trust in their community including teachers. While we can educate a single girl with a simple scholarship, if that same girl ensures over 200 others commit to their education – the ripple effects will be exponential.

**Volunteerism and Altruistic Behavior.** The power of conducting this work as a volunteer is significant. Several studies have demonstrated that individuals who act on internal motivation rather than external incentives find more meaning in their experience and are more likely to succeed in any such endeavor. A study of 11,300 West Point cadets showed that those motivated primarily by external motives, such as a desire to get a leadership position after school, performed worse than those who were internally motivated, such as wanting to be trained as a leader or wanting to serve their country.<sup>15</sup> They were less likely to graduate, be commissioned as an officer, get an earlier promotion recommendation and stay in the military after their five years of mandatory service. In another experiment, college students were asked to work on a puzzle, and half of them were paid. Those paid stopped working on it immediately after the experiment had ended, while those unpaid continued working on it and reported feeling more enjoyment in their experience<sup>16</sup>.

Our young women give up six to seven months of potential paid employment, that would have helped them save towards their college expenses, and often at the protest of their parents, to participate in our program and implement a social change program as an unpaid volunteer. Though the \$500 scholarship we provide to those who graduate is roughly equivalent to what they would have earned throughout this time, it is not communicated up front and thus does not serve as an external motivation for participating in the program.

*Our Impact:* Overall, the effect from having a social impact resonates not only in the community among others, but within each girl as her altruistic and pro-social behavior increases and her sense of meaning and self-worth deepens. Following is a selection of some of the shifts we have seen among our girls:

		% Change Rwanda	% Change Uganda
PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR			
	Have you helped or gotten help for someone who was hurt?	35%	22%
	Have you stood up for someone who was being picked on?	50%	29%
	Helped carry things for someone you didn't know?	41%	18%
SELF- WORTH			
	I know what I'm meant to do in this world	12%	5%
	I am a change leader	3%	8%

**Community Perceptions of Girls.** Not only does their experience offer a path for personal transformation and social impact on the girls in their community, but it also contributes to changing perceptions about the value of girls among adults, including parents, teachers and local leaders. This contributes directly to shifts in their commitment to support girls’ education. In the case of our program, some of our participants are the first to be educated in their entire village. They return from boarding school for the first time to present themselves as an educated leader to their communities. They engage with adults in registering their

<sup>15</sup> Wresniewski, Amy and Barry Schwartz. “The Secret of Effective Motivation”, *New York Times*, July 4, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> Brooks, Arthur C. “Abundance without Attachment”, *New York Times*, December 12, 2014.

organizations and building partnerships for the implementation of their programs. They have to pitch their theory of change and explain their goals then they have the chance to test their ideas through the delivery of their programs. They are being trusted for the first time with money through a grant from an international NGO, and they demonstrate their confidence, knowledge and commitment to giving back to their own community. What is the response? Usually resounding support.

With the majority of our girls' ventures, the impact was so positively received, local officials, school administrators and teachers ask for an expansion of the program to more girls and then later commit to continuing the intervention after the venture leader completes our program and begins her university education. This is an extraordinary testament among the entire community of what they see is possible when you educate a girl. Take Sharon's story for example.

*Sharon Aripa is a quiet, somewhat shy, happy young woman. She lives with her grandmother and nine other members of her extended family in a small village in eastern Uganda. Sharon hasn't seen her father since 2011; her mother, a teacher, lives four hours away. Recognizing how hard her mother has had to work to ensure that Sharon and her two sisters can attend school, Sharon has always been committed to doing well in her studies. And her participation in our 2015 Young Women's Academy was no different.*

*Sharon learned that most young girls in her community become pregnant lured by the hope that the men they engage with will provide for them so she decided to introduce students at two local primary schools to a better, safer way to help meet their basic needs, including school fees. Using part of a grant from Global Grassroots and small plots of land contributed by Amusus Primary and Star Nursery and Primary schools, Sharon and the students planted fields of tomatoes and more than 100 orange seedlings. Sharon used garden work along with classroom discussion, discipleship principles, and illustrated stories to engage pupils in conversations about early pregnancy, including the causes and risky behaviors that predispose young girls to early pregnancy, and the effects of and life skills necessary to avoid early pregnancy.*

*Over the six months of her venture's implementation, Sharon's efforts had a direct impact on 377 pupils between the two schools in two distinct ways. First, proceeds from the sale of harvested tomatoes will provide support for girls in this new school year. The orange trees are a longer-term economic solution. Second, the young girls in the two schools will now be more likely to stay in school and avoid the risky behaviors they formerly felt they had to engage in. School administrators and teachers at both schools have been very impressed with Sharon's venture and are grateful for the investment in their students' future and they all are committed to continuing the field activities and the open dialogue with the students.*

*Sharon is now enrolled in Kyambogo University, majoring in Education with a focus in Economics and Mathematics.*

**Meaning and Integration.** Finding meaning is defined by the ability to integrate and make sense of one's experience. Integration is an indicator of emotional intelligence. In Dan Siegel's book, *The Whole Brain Child*, he explains what integration means from a neurobiological perspective<sup>17</sup>: Our brains have different parts – the left brain, right brain, “reptile” brain stem and higher thinking parts of the brain – which all control different functions. Integration allows for linkages between these parts so that they operate together as a whole. Horizontal integration, for example, enables the left-brain functions of logical and organized thinking to coordinate with the right-brain emotional, creative and non-verbal functions. Vertical integration enables the lower-brain instinctual reactivity to be understood through the higher reasoning that enables connection and moral decision-making. Integration involves a process of rewiring and forming neural connections between these parts of the brain to allow these parts to work more harmoniously together over time.

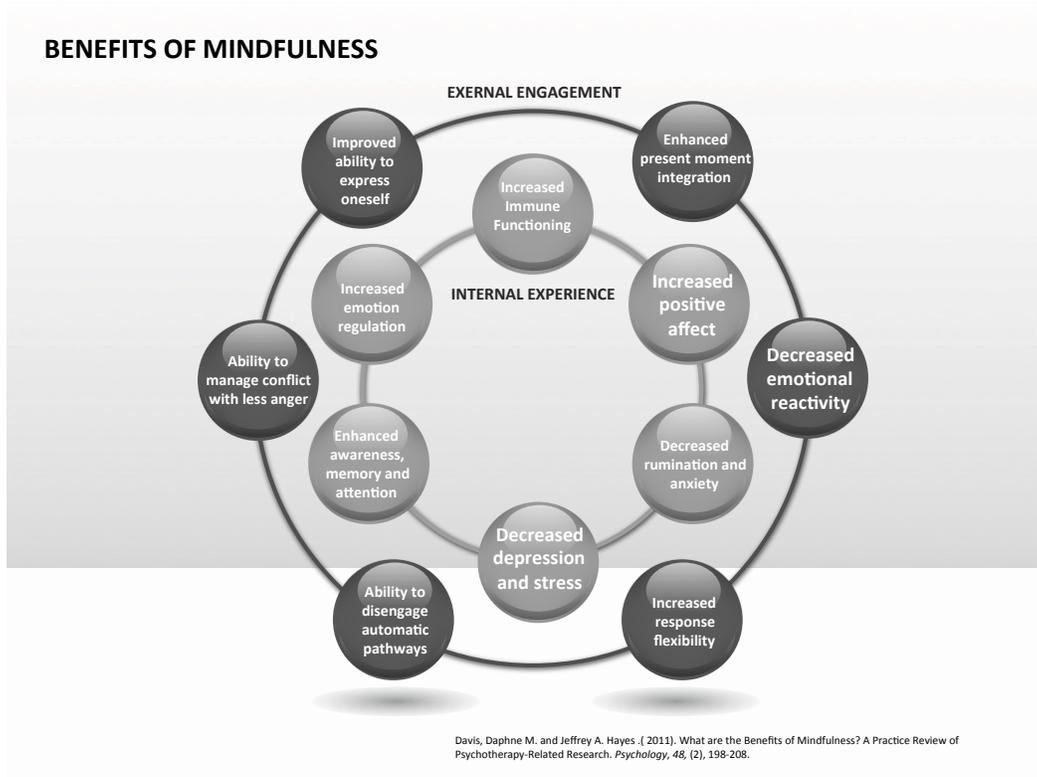
As our brains are not fully developed until we are 25, this is still deeply relevant for adolescent brains. As a result, integration allows youth a greater capability for learning from their experiences (higher brain functioning) rather than simply reacting to them (lower brain functioning), which helps foster meaning, empathy, compassion, connection and responsible decision-making. This is critical to a social change leader in their ability to advance long-term transformation. We have to be able to understand the drivers of change from our own experiences wanting change or struggling with adapting to change. When we find meaning and understanding through integration, we uncover a sense of greater understanding and connection with others. This means we are more likely to work collaboratively towards solutions-building rather than using the conventional paradigm of sticks and carrots to force short-term compliance on others. We also know finding meaning through integration is critical for wellbeing, resilience and happiness. This is why Global Grassroots actively works to support the capacity of our students to understand their experiences through contemplation and dialogue, to distill and find meaning, and to cultivate compassion and empathy through deep listening exercises, conflict resolution techniques, personal transformation exercises, journaling, contemplative practices and other forms of self-discovery. Consider Brenda's story:

*At our graduation ceremony in Uganda in August 2014, a young woman named Brenda told about growing up as an orphan after both her parents died when she was 11. Her teachers worried about Brenda for years because she always appeared depressed and she rarely spoke. Through our Young Women's Academy for Conscious Change, Brenda implemented a comprehensive program dealing with school drop-outs in her home village, where 50% of girls in her region had dropped out due to teen pregnancy, early marriage, and a poor farming season. She took 15 other orphans under her wing and sensitized the community to the value of girls completing school. This bright young woman developed a loan saving scheme among 27 girls and 10 parents to set aside school fees, found sponsorship for one orphan, developed a piggery project where the piglets were sold to raise more school fees, and convinced two drop-outs to return to school. Brenda said she attributes her self-confidence, her emotional wellbeing, her accomplishments, and her newfound joy to the work she did through Global Grassroots.*

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<sup>17</sup> Siegel, Daniel J. and Tina Payne Bryson. *The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture your Child's Developing Mind*. New York: Bantam Books, 2011. Pg. 6-9.

**Mindfulness.** Jon Kabat-Zinn has offered one of the most well-recognized definitions of mindfulness as “paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”<sup>18</sup> There is substantial research that shows a range of physiological and psychological benefits of practicing mindfulness. A 2011 meta-analysis of psychotherapeutic research found evidence to support all of the following benefits of mindfulness:<sup>19</sup>



**External Engagement:**

- Enhanced present-moment integration
- Improved ability to express one’s self
- Decreased emotional reactivity
- Ability to manage conflict with less anger
- Increased response flexibility
- Ability to disengage automatic pathways
- Ability to manage conflict with less anger

<sup>18</sup> Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994). *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life*. New York: Hyperion Books.

<sup>19</sup> Davis, Daphne M. and Jeffrey A. Hayes, Pennsylvania State University (2011) “What are the Benefits of Mindfulness? A Practice Review of Psychotherapy-Related Research.” *Psychology*, Vol. 48, No. 2, p. 198-208.

**Internal Experience:**

- Increased immune functioning
- Increased positive emotions
- Decreased rumination and anxiety
- Decreased depression and stress
- Enhanced awareness, memory and attention
- Increased emotional regulation

Global Grassroots believes mindfulness is essential to conscious social change, and we teach our participants a range of practices to cultivate their level of both self-awareness and awareness of their external environment. Mindfulness allows us to understand ourselves and others, attend to the needs around us responsively, creatively and compassionately, respond wisely in each moment, be guided by our own unique wisdom and purpose, learn from the circumstances around us and lead change for the benefit of others from the inside out.

Global Grassroots trains our participants using a range of mindfulness practice to develop the ability to survey emotions, thought-patterns, and physical needs while simultaneously being aware of the present-moment external environment. We model and encourage students to develop a daily mindfulness practice using whatever techniques they have found most effective in quieting the mind, cultivating present-moment awareness and inviting relaxation. This is not only critical to social change, but learning in general. A meta study of 24 mindfulness-based interventions involving 1348 students found that mindfulness training increases the “cognitive capacity of attending and learning” with positive impacts to stress and resiliency, rendering students more capable of maximizing their education.<sup>20</sup>

*Our Impact:* We use selections from the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale- Revised (CAMS-R) to measure changes in mindfulness. Students are asked on a five- part Likert scale to rate how frequently they experience certain things from 1 (never) to 5(almost always). After seven months, in Rwanda we saw a 31% improvement among students who felt they could usually describe how they felt at the moment in considerable detail, and an 18% increase in scores among Ugandan students. Ugandan students showed a 28% increase in those who felt they could notice their thoughts without judging them, and in Rwanda we saw a 15% improvement. Finally, our students in Rwanda demonstrated a 21% improvement in accepting the things they know they cannot change, and we saw a 21% increase in Uganda among those who felt they could accept the thoughts and feelings they had.

**Empathy, loving-kindness and compassion.** Empathy, loving-kindness and compassion are also critical to effective leadership. Empathy is the capacity to feel what another is feeling, but compassion is the desire to alleviate the suffering that you witness in another. It is the driver of altruistic action or response that comes from empathetic connection. At the root of compassion and empathy are self-awareness and the awareness of our emotions and those of others. Further, it has been demonstrated time and time again in research studies over the last 20 years that practicing mindfulness helps to increase empathy and compassion for others as well as self-compassion, which reduces stress and negative emotion and increases positive emotion and

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<sup>20</sup> Zenner, C., Herrnleben-Kurz, S. and Walach, H. (2014). Mindfulness-based Interventions in Schools – A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 5, 603, 1-20. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00603.

altruistic responses<sup>21</sup>. One study demonstrated that non-judgmental acceptance results in more helping behavior, but those who also practiced present moment awareness also felt more positive emotion connected to that helping behavior.<sup>22</sup> Another study showed that with only 30 minutes of compassion meditation training per day for two weeks, altruistic behavior increased and neural changes were detected in the circuitry associated with more empathic concern, compassion and response to suffering<sup>23</sup>

A related concept is loving-kindness. Loving-kindness is an open state of feeling kindness, warmth and goodwill towards others and, like compassion, can be cultivated through specific meditations to evoke these feeling states. Emma Sappala, Science Director of Stanford University's Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education summarizes seven primary benefits of loving-kindness practices<sup>24</sup>:

- **Health:** Loving-kindness has been shown to increase positive emotions, such as love, joy contentment, gratitude and hope, reduce negative emotions, improved mindfulness and a sense of purpose, reduced stress, illness and depressive symptoms and increased life satisfaction.
- **Healing:** Clinical research has shown that loving-kindness meditation has been shown through clinical research to reduces migraines, decreases chronic pain, decreases PTSD and decreases schizophrenia-spectrum disorders.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** Practicing loving-kindness meditation activates and strengthens the areas of the brain responsible for empathy and emotional intelligence and increases gray matter volume.
- **Stress Response:** Loving-kindness meditation also supports resilience as evidenced in decreases in telomere length, a biological marker of aging, and increased activation of the parasympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system, a sign of relaxation and restoration.
- **Social Connection:** Loving-kindness meditation increases pro-social, helping behavior, compassion and empathy. It also decreases bias towards others and increases the perception of social connection.
- **Self Love:** Loving-kindness meditation has been shown to reduce self-criticism and improve self-compassion.
- **Immediate and Long-Term Impact:** In less than 10 minutes, loving-kindness meditation can improve feelings of social connection and, when practiced over time, can sustain such experiences months after initial training.

Global Grassroots introduces a variety of contemplative practices, including breath-based focused attention meditation, walking meditation, mindfulness of emotions, body and thoughts, compassion meditation, loving-kindness meditation, affirmations, yogic questioning methods,

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<sup>21</sup> Shapiro, Shauna. "Does Mindfulness Make you More Compassionate?", Greater Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life., February 27, 2013. [http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/does\\_mindfulness\\_make\\_you\\_compassionate](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/does_mindfulness_make_you_compassionate)

<sup>22</sup> Cameron, C. Daryl and Barbara L. Fredrickson. "Mindfulness Facets Predict Helping Behavior and Distinct Helping-Related Emotions". *Mindfulness*. October 2015, Volume 6, Issue 5, pp. 1211-1218.

<sup>23</sup> Helen Y. Weng<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Andrew S. Fox<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>, Alexander J. Shackman<sup>4,5</sup>, Diane E. Stodola<sup>2</sup>, Jessica Z. K. Caldwell<sup>1,2,6,7</sup>, Matthew C. Olson<sup>2</sup>, Gregory M. Rogers<sup>5</sup>, and Richard J. Davidson. "Compassion Training Alters Altruism and Neural Responses to Suffering." *Psychological Science*. March 21, 2012. 24(7) pp. 1171–1180.

<sup>24</sup> Seppala, Emma. "18 Science-Based Reasons to try Loving-Kindness Meditation Today!" October 28, 2014. <http://www.emmaseppala.com/18-science-based-reasons-try-loving-kindness-meditation-today/>

50-50 open awareness of self and other, mindfulness of and breath to avoid emotional reactivity, journaling, and other practices to cultivate the many benefits of mindfulness and to develop more self-aware, satisfied and compassionate leaders.

*Our Impact:* While it can be argued that many of our students who choose voluntarily to enroll in a program offering them the chance to design a social venture already have a strong degree of empathy, we still see some changes. Following are an example of the kinds of shifts we are seeing in our graduates after seven months:

	% Change Rwanda	% Change Uganda
I want to help people who get treated badly	18%	10%
I often feel worried about people that are not as lucky as me	19%	2%
When I am angry or upset at someone, I usually try to imagine what he or she is thinking or feeling	4%	9%
I sometimes try to understand my friends better by pretending I’m them	19%	30%

**Social-Emotional Learning.** When particular interventions are utilized in education programs to support an increase in self-awareness and pro-social behavior such as an altruistic response to suffering, this is called social-emotional learning. This has become a powerful force in transforming how we approach youth education today. A 2011 meta-analysis of educational programs that incorporate social-emotional learning revealed remarkable impact on youth academic performance, classroom behavior, decision-making, maturity, emotional stability, and motivation to learn.<sup>25</sup>

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified five pillars of social emotional learning, all of which Global Grassroots works to foster through our holistic and experiential program in mindful leadership and social entrepreneurship<sup>26</sup>:



- 1. Self-awareness:** The ability to accurately recognize one’s emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one’s strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.

<sup>25</sup> Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D. and Schellinger, K. B. (2011), The Impact of Enhancing Students’ Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development*, 82: 405–432. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x

<sup>26</sup> From CASEL website: <http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/core-competencies>

Global Grassroots works to support each of our students in developing the capacity to recognize their emotions, and then go even further to understand what underlies their emotions, including emotional reactivity, fears, limiting beliefs, attachments, shadows, and compulsive behavior. We work through mindfulness and personal transformation practices to attend to these wounds so that they do not drive unconscious behaviors. We measure our student's capacities through dialogue and journaling/self-reflective essays, and through assessments that test how well they are able to evaluate their feelings, interests, values and strengths. This area of impact is incorporated in our measurements of mindfulness, discussed above.

2. **Self-management:** The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.

Global Grassroots takes self-management one step further by supporting our participants in understanding how they typically respond to stress and learning proactive mind-body tools to promote stress management, trauma-healing and wellbeing. In addition to reducing stress and improving happiness, hopefulness and perception of wellbeing, this includes developing the ability to recognize negative coping behaviors and engaging in positive methods of self-care, including adopting a self-care plan for proactive stress management.

Global Grassroots works in post-conflict environments where transgenerational transmission of trauma from war and genocide, ongoing gender-based violence and chronic stress have wide impacts on youth. This is caused both by the impact of trauma on parent's availability to adequately parent their children and possibly also through epigenetic transmissions to the next generation, making them more susceptible to PTSD. Charles Portney, MD describes the environmental level of impact on children of trauma survivors:

*In clinical practice, patients with parents suffering with PTSD often describe damaged, preoccupied parents who are emotionally limited. Symptoms in parents such as traumatic reliving, emotional numbing and dissociative phenomena do not help a child develop a reasonable sense of safety and predictability in the world. These parents are also less able to respond optimally during usual developmental crises and help the world to be more comprehensible to the child. The parent suffering with PTSD also has difficulty modeling a healthy sense of identity and autonomy, appropriate self-soothing mechanisms and affect regulation, and maintaining a balanced perspective when life challenges arise. Instead, they can model catastrophic or inappropriately numbed and disassociated responses. Therefore, the parent's high levels of anxiety can significantly interfere with the child's developmental progress<sup>27</sup>.*

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<sup>27</sup> Portney, Charles, MD. "Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma: An Introduction for the Clinician" *Psychiatric Times*. April 01, 2003. <http://www.psychiatrytimes.com/articles/intergenerational-transmission-trauma-introduction-clinician#sthash.VNIATsim.dpuf>

Further, studies of twins have shown that 30% of the variance associated with the risk of PTSD is attributable to a heritable component of genetic vulnerability.<sup>28</sup> Though there is more research needed to definitively demonstrate a link between PTSD and epigenetically transferred PTSD risk to subsequent generations, it is likely that some impact is attributable to having parents who experienced trauma. And, for our youth, growing up with chronic stress from poverty, and the prevalence of gender-based violence in addition to the legacy of war and genocide, they come to us with great vulnerability despite their apparent successes and ambition. We feel it is critical to support wellness in our change agents so that they are better equipped to care for themselves and others through their work.

The impact of chronic stress and PTSD on a person includes:

- Repeated, disturbing memories, thoughts or images of a stressful experience
- Repeated, disturbing dreams of a stressful experience
- Flashbacks
- Extreme emotional response when reminded of a stressful experience
- Physical response when reminded of a stressful experience (heart pounding, trouble breathing, sweating)
- Avoidance behavior
- Difficulty remembering stressful experiences
- Loss of interest in activities that once brought joy
- Feeling distant or cut-off from others
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Depression
- Angry outbursts
- Hyper-vigilance
- Insomnia
- Digestive issues
- Difficulty concentrating
- Easily startled, hyper-arousal

As such, we teach our students an evidence-based model for trauma-healing called Breath~Body~Mind© or BBM, which integrates ancient mind-body practices from Indian yogic tradition, Tibetan Buddhist practice and a form of breathing done by Russian Orthodox monks. It has been studied extensively and distilled down to this core practice by Dr. Richard Brown, Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at Columbia University and Dr. Patricia Gerbarg, Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at New York Medical College. A more complex version of this practice has been used with Tsunami and Katrina survivors, sexual violence survivors in Sudan, 9/11 first responders and combat veterans. By combining modern scientific knowledge with ancient healing practices from many cultures, BBM rapidly relieves stress, anxiety, sleep problems, and other symptoms of stress.

Global Grassroots tests our student's stress levels before and after our 40-hour training program and again at program completion after they have learned and practiced BBM for approximately 20-30 minutes each day. We use standard clinical test instruments such as

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<sup>28</sup> Kellerman, Natan P.F.. "Epigenetic Transmission of Holocaust Trauma: Can Nightmares Be Inherited?" *The Israel Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences*. Vol. 50 – No. 1 (2013)

the PCL-17, a checklist of 17 symptoms of PTSD. All of our survey instruments have been translated and back translated again into English to ensure accuracy of meaning.

*Our Impact:* Among Ugandan girls who participated in our program in 2014, we saw the following decrease in cases where students reported “quite a bit” or “extremely” to the following symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder before the program began compared to the time of program completion seven months later:

PTSD Symptom	Before Program	After Program
Repeated, disturbing <i>memories, thoughts, or images</i> of a stressful experience.	45%	0%
Repeated, disturbing <i>dreams</i> of a stressful experience.	36%	0%
Having <i>physical reactions</i> (e.g., heart pounding, trouble breathing, sweating) when <i>something reminded you</i> of a stressful experience.	45%	30%
Avoiding <i>thinking about or talking about</i> a stressful experience or avoiding <i>having feelings</i> related to it.	64%	50%
Avoiding <i>activities or situations</i> because <i>they reminded you</i> of a stressful experience.	55%	11%
Feeling <i>emotionally numb</i> or being unable to have loving feelings for those close to you.	20%	10%
Feeling as if your <i>future</i> will somehow be <i>cut short</i> .	20%	10%
Trouble <i>falling or staying asleep</i> .	9%	0%
Feeling <i>irritable</i> or having <i>angry outbursts</i> .	27%	11%
Having <i>difficulty concentrating</i> .	33%	10%
Being " <i>super-alert</i> " or watchful or on guard.	50%	33%
Feeling <i>jumpy</i> or easily startled.	20%	0%

3. **Social awareness:** The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others; recognizing and appreciating individual and group similarities and differences; recognizing and using family, school, and community resources. This includes pro-social behavior, empathy and gratitude.

Our program directly contributes towards social awareness through not only engagement in mindfulness behaviors that enhance the neural networks underlying empathy, compassion, loving-kindness and altruistic behavior, but also through the opportunity to voluntarily create a community service endeavor to help other young people in their community. We measure changes in pro-social behavior, gratitude, empathy and mindfulness, as discussed above.

4. **Relationship skills:** The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively,

cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.

We facilitate our participants in learning skills that contribute to healthy relationships, including conscious conflict resolution methods and role play, deep listening skills, learning how to recognize when you and another are reactive so as to use mindfulness to inspire curiosity, self-care and compassion, how to recognize the unique wisdom and assets of every individual and collaborate effectively with other stakeholders, and mentorship. We measure their relationships skills through assessments, in-class dialogue and personal journaling to assess pro-social helping behavior, building effective partnership, managing conflict and opposition, and seeking and offering mentorship. Data on our impact is incorporated in our measurements of pro-social behavior, detailed above.

5. **Responsible decision making:** The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and contributing to the well-being of self and community.

Global Grassroots' entire curriculum is geared towards logical and respectful decision-making. We begin by training leaders in mindfulness and the capacity to understand how change affects the self and others, so that decision can be made from a place of compassion and empathy as well as human understanding. We provide students with training in how to deconstruct a problem, analyze its parts and also evaluate it systemically, then build the optimal solution creatively by leveraging all of the assets available among stakeholders without attachment to one's own agenda. We use logic games, frameworks for problem-solving, creative expression, personal transformation work in dyads and groups to foster empathy, change theory, analytical exercises, case studies, simulations, role play and ethics frameworks to support an integrated, inner-driven and mindful approach to decision-making.

We evaluate our student's capacities for responsible decision-making throughout the implementation of their social venture. This includes monitoring their engagement with stakeholders, program delivery and content, appropriate use of resources and accurate reporting, and impact evaluation. We monitor through site visits, regular reporting, venture data analysis and participant feedback.

As one example of the extent to which our students go in making responsible decisions: In our 2014 cohort, one young woman was so profoundly moved by the trust placed in her when awarded her grant (around \$200 for her specific venture), that she sewed her grant money into the hem of her dress, then traveled 45 minutes to the closest bank to open her very first bank account to ensure the funds were kept safe.

In addition to the five pillars of social-emotional learning, we also measure the following, which we feel are strong indicators of self-confidence, self-awareness and pro-social behavior:

- **Sense of power.** We define this as the sense of one's own capabilities and power that comes from within to make decisions about their personal and societal circumstances. We facilitate our students in analyzing and understanding the dynamics of dominant culture and

the external power context in which they may operate, which may privilege and put them at a disadvantage. We also explore and cultivate holistically their perception of power that comes from their own sense of self. Finally, we evaluate their opinions on the opportunities and rights of women. We seek to find a growth, yet normalization of self-reported perception of power, as we do not want to be training leaders who believe all they wish to accomplish is up to them without consideration of others or who may abuse their power or impose their agenda on others. Instead, we are hoping to support the development of mindful leaders with a strong sense of agency, who understand how to draw upon their inner resources and opportunities and then use their potency with courage to move towards positive change for themselves and others.

*Our Impact:* In 2015, we had a 75% increase among our Rwandan students who felt powerful to change their own circumstances as well as a 75% improvement in their sense of power to change their community's circumstances. A total 88% percent of respondents said they felt the highest level of power in each category on a five-point scale. In Uganda, we achieved a total of 69% of students who felt the highest level of power to change their own circumstances, and 62% who felt the same in their community, representing a 100% gain in seven months.

- **Readiness and capacity to create change.** As discussed earlier, we look for our students to achieve a sense of ability and willingness to do it again, as an indicator that their experience in the program was successful and that they have the skills, self-confidence, agency and willingness to continue to act for change in their communities over their lifetime.
- **Conscious Leadership skills.** Finally, while the following skills contribute to many of the areas of social-emotional learning, wellbeing and mindfulness discussed above, we want to comment on three additional capacities of Conscious Social Change that we develop in all our students, which include:
  - Attunement to the needs of others, including use of skills that empower and support the self-sufficiency and agency of others. We not only help our students learn how to listen and collaborate with others, we teach them techniques for working with others through a questioning method that supports self-sufficiency, engenders respect and enables the empowerment of others. In effect, our change agents become effective facilitators themselves so that they can maximize the impact of the transformative work they have on their own beneficiaries without imposing their work in ways that are disempowering.
  - Understanding of one's own assets, passions, capabilities and gifts that can be leveraged to contribute meaningfully to the common good with a sense of inner-driven purpose. We train our change agents in how to identify their own inner and external assets and to recognize the same in others. This fosters a respect for diversity, skills for creative collaboration and problem-solving and a recognition that we each have something valuable to contribute to the whole. This also contributes to a deeper sense of meaning and value in each change agent and those she serves.

- Understanding of change from personal experience, and how to support transformation in others through understanding, compassion and collaboration. We learn through our own experiences why we always grasp at change yet have such difficulty adapting. We look at all challenges and failures as opportunities to learn, iterate and evaluate. We foster the creative mindset of a social entrepreneur in looking for patterns, gaps and prototyping solutions, while building the relationship skills of a mindfulness practitioner. We develop a greater understanding of what drives resistance and how to work from a participatory approach that fosters greater levels of buy-in, ownership, engagement and ultimately transformation that ensures change is sustainable, inclusive and responsive over time.

## **CONCLUSION**

During our years helping grassroots groups to advance social change, we have seen that the growth of the civil society initiatives founded by Global Grassroots graduates promotes profound transformation on both an individual and communal level. Though our Young Women's Academy for Conscious Change is still in its early stages and we have not yet had the benefit of several years of data to evaluate, we believe that participants are increasingly thriving as a direct result of our program. We know that Global Grassroots is a worthwhile investment especially given the multiple dimensions of impact and ripple effects of each young woman's work in her community. And while we do consider our young women successful because their higher education dreams have not been derailed, we know that their real success comes later: when they can determine their own path, living the life they choose, not one that has been dictated because of the circumstances of their birth, economic standing of their parents, or traumas that were thrust upon them before entering our Academy. And as each student finishes her formal education and moves into her professional life, we anticipate even greater demonstrations of her leadership abilities; after all, look what they were able to achieve before yet fully realizing their own capabilities