

## Girls and Economic Literacy

### Children have a higher poverty rate than other age groups

- ◆ In 2000, there were approximately 1,342,000 households headed by girls and young women ages 15–24. (10.5% of total female householder families.)<sup>7</sup>
- ◆ Of people living in poverty, 76 percent were women and children. Nearly four times as many children lived in poverty in the U.S. in 1999 as adults 65 and older. Of people in these age groups, 17 percent of children and 10 percent of adults over 65 lived in poverty.<sup>15</sup> (See also Figure 1.)
- ◆ Young women who make a successful transition into the labor force have a greatly reduced risk of becoming dependent on public assistance when they become adults.<sup>4</sup>
- ◆ Teenage women from poor families were less than half as likely to be employed as those in more prosperous families. These findings may reflect pre-existing differences among groups of young people — that is, “better connected” young women may get jobs during their early years, and may have more subsequent employment and educational opportunities.<sup>5</sup>

### Employment rates among girls and boys are similar

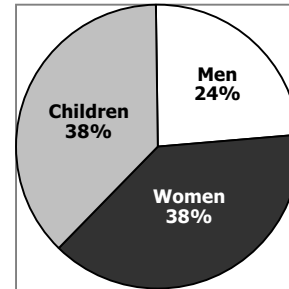
- ◆ At age 14, young women are slightly more likely than young men to work — 59 percent and 55 percent, respectively. Young women also are more likely to do freelance work (tasks on an as-needed basis, such as babysitting, etc.) than are young men. At age 15, the rates of employment are essentially the same (63% versus 64%).<sup>16</sup> (See Figure 2.)
- ◆ Working for pay during high school increases support for future job opportunities. However, research shows that some young women and young men who work more than 15 hours per week have lower academic achievement.<sup>12</sup>

- ◆ Gender is the key factor associated with variations in time devoted to housework. Researchers have found that household chores among children are generally sex-typed, with girls spending more time on a greater number of tasks than boys.<sup>8</sup>

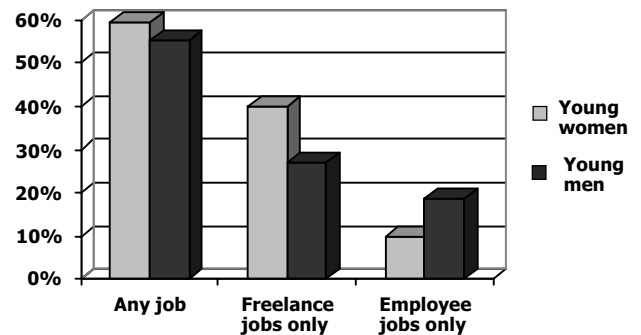
### Young women want opportunities to learn to manage their money

- ◆ When asked in a nationally representative survey, 33 percent of girls in grades 9–11 said they were “very interested” and 47 percent said they were “somewhat interested” in learning more about how to manage money. Only 4 percent said they were not at all interested.<sup>10</sup> (See also Figure 3.)

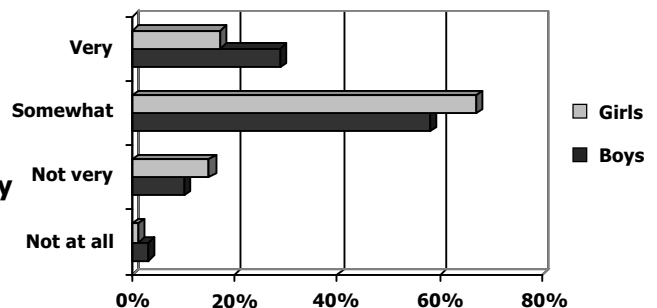
**Figure 1:** Percentage of people in poverty who are men, women and children, 1999.<sup>15</sup>



**Figure 2:** Percentage of young women and young men employed while age 14, 1994–1997.<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 3:** Responses of students in grades 9–11 when asked how knowledgeable they felt about money and finances, 1998.<sup>10</sup>



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## Girls and Economic Literacy (2)

- ◆ Girls in grades 9–11 said that their mothers or stepmothers were the people who taught them the most about managing money — nearly double the rate at which their fathers or stepfathers taught them (50% and 27%, respectively).<sup>10</sup> (See Figure 4.)
- ◆ Girls in grades 9–11 indicated overwhelmingly that they would be interested in learning about altruism (99%), and also about how to pay for school (91%), how to stay out of debt (84%), and how to make money in the stock market (48%).<sup>10</sup>
- ◆ Young women were slightly less likely than young men to have been offered a course in financial education (56% and 65% respectively). Also, students from middle- to upper-income socioeconomic backgrounds were the most likely to have had access to such a course.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ When asked in a nationally representative survey, 71 percent of girls in grades 9–11 thought that most of the money in their future would come from hard work. (See Figure 5.) The same survey showed that 23 percent thought that most of the money in their future would come from the person they marry, from money they've already saved (23%), and from inheritance (19%).<sup>10</sup> (Participants could choose multiple responses.)

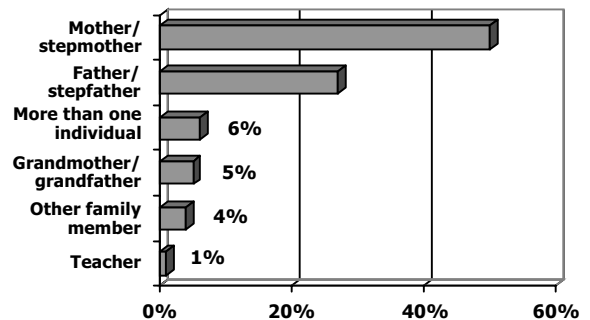
### Young women earn over half of all bachelor's degrees

- ◆ Degree completion is associated with increased employment opportunities and income potential. Among the class of 1994 freshmen, young women (50%) were more likely than their male peers (41%) to have earned a bachelor's degree.<sup>2</sup>
- ◆ Young women who are seniors in high school tend to have higher educational aspirations and are more likely to enroll in college than their male peers.<sup>2</sup> (See also Figure 7.)
- ◆ In 1970, women ages 25–34 with a bachelor's degree had median annual salaries that were equivalent to 57 percent of what men that age earned; in 1999, women with a bachelor's degree had salaries at 72.2 percent of men's.<sup>2</sup> (See also Figure 6.)
- ◆ Gender differences in college majors persist, with women still concentrated in relatively lower paying fields such as education, while young men are more likely than young women to earn degrees in engineering, physics, and computer science.<sup>2</sup>

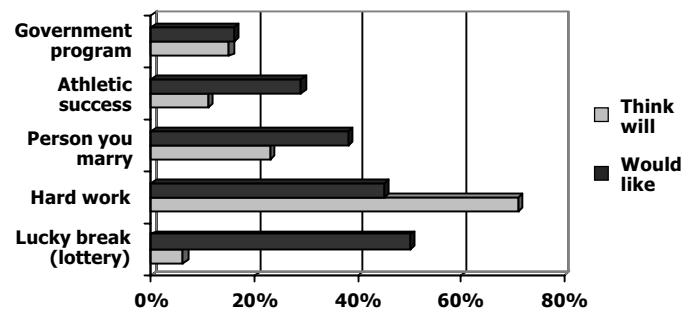
### Moving beyond sticky floors and glass ceilings\*

- ◆ One national study showed that 80 percent of women who had since become entrepreneurs reported that in prior corporate experience, they had to work harder than men to advance in areas such as salary, authority, status, perks, and bonuses.<sup>9</sup>

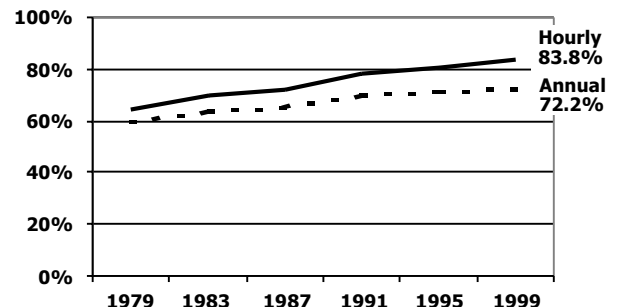
**Figure 4:** Responses from girls in grades 9–11 when asked, "Who has taught you the most about managing your money?"<sup>10</sup>



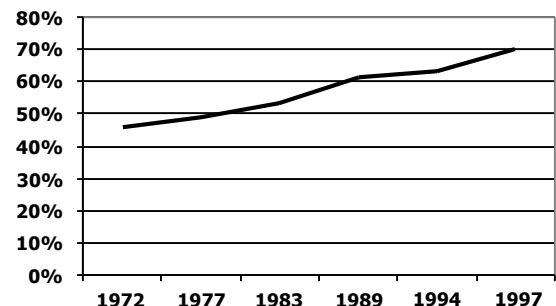
**Figure 5:** Responses from girls in grades 9–12 when asked, "Where would you like/do you think most of the money in your future will come from?"<sup>10</sup>



**Figure 6:** Women's earnings as a percentage of men's, 1979–1999.<sup>14</sup>



**Figure 7:** Percentage of young women who enrolled in college the October following high school.<sup>2</sup>



## Girls and Economic Literacy (3)

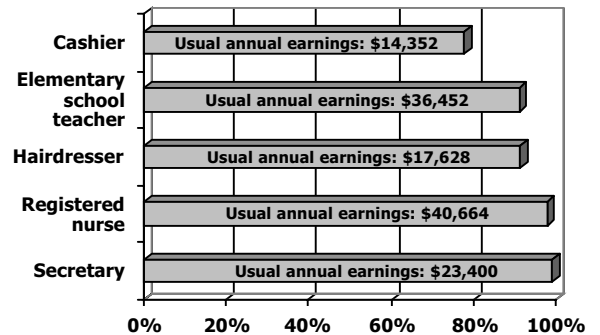
- ◆ Research has shown that women in organizations have often been excluded from formal information-sharing networks, negatively affecting their advancement within the corporate environment. Even women who advanced to the top reported that speaking against politically accepted norms often became a negative turning point in their careers.<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ In 2000, 26 percent of women worked in traditional occupations (75% or more of employees in a job are women). Some observers argue that when women are “crowded” into a few job types, the abundant supply of those workers causes wages to be depressed.<sup>17</sup> (See Figures 8 and 9.)
- ◆ In 1997, women owned about 5.4 million privately held businesses in the U.S., employing 7.1 million people and contributing \$819 billion to the economy. As of 1997, 17 percent of women-owned firms in the U.S. were owned by a woman of color.<sup>6</sup>

### The teen market is estimated to be worth \$140 billion

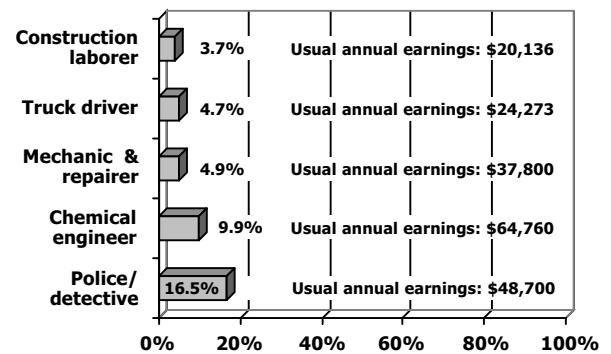
- ◆ Girls and young women are the targets of more marketing efforts today than ever before. One of the youth markets is sometimes called “tweens” — the segment of young people ages 7 to 14, who, unlike children, have the financial resources to make big-ticket purchases, and unlike adults, often need permission of a parent before they can make such a purchase.<sup>13</sup>
- ◆ When it comes to money, 38 percent of girls in grades 9–11 in a nationally representative survey described themselves as “savers”; the remaining 62 percent called themselves “spenders.”<sup>10</sup>
- ◆ Apparel is the most important product category to girls and young women, consuming the greatest proportion of their disposable income.<sup>18</sup> (See also Figure 10.)
- ◆ When asked about their financial future, 54 percent of girls in grades 9–11 felt “confident,” while 4 percent reported being “worried.”<sup>10</sup>

\* The term “glass ceiling” refers to artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing into management-level positions. “Sticky floor” refers to organizational blocks to advancement that many entrepreneurs thought prevented them from career progression.

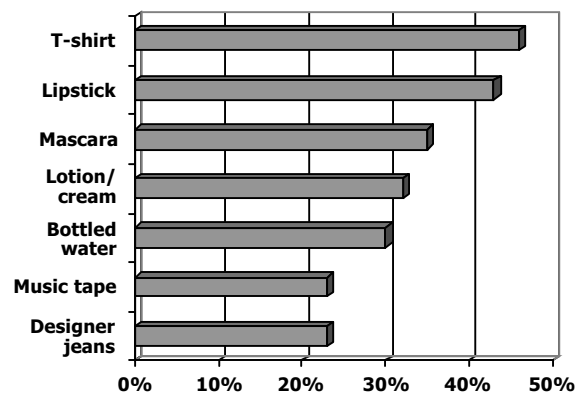
**Figure 8:** Percentage of employees who are women in five of the leading occupations of employed women, with usual annual earnings, 2000.<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 9:** Percentage of employees who are women in five of the traditional occupations of employed men, with usual annual earnings, 1998.<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 10:** Products personally purchased by girls and young women ages 13–19 over a three month period, 1998.<sup>18</sup>



## Girls and Economic Literacy (4)

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For more information on girls and economic issues, see these **Girls Incorporated® Fact Sheets**:

- ◆ **Girls and Math and Science**
- ◆ **Girls and Information Technology**

**Girls Incorporated®** covers girls and economic literacy in **Girls Inc. Economic Literacy**, where girls learn that money is neither good nor evil, but a tool to be used intelligently, saved or invested for the future, or given away to support something valued by the giver. Girls also learn about their role in the world economy. **Girls Inc. Economic Literacy** introduces girls ages 6-11 to banks and the concept of saving on a very concrete level, delaying gratification today to amass enough money for something one wants or needs in the future. The program also introduces girls to the concept of equal pay for equal work.

**Girls Inc.** is a national nonprofit youth organization dedicated to inspiring all girls to be strong, smart and bold. For over 50 years, Girls Incorporated has provided vital educational programs to millions of American girls, particularly those in high-risk, underserved areas. Today, innovative programs help girls confront subtle societal messages about their value and potential, and prepare them to lead successful, independent and fulfilling lives.

**Girls Inc.** reaches 920,000 girls ages 6–18 through programs and public education. Of the girls the organization serves, 70 percent are girls of color; 75 percent come from families earning \$25,000 annually or less; and 37 percent live with two parents.

**Girls Inc.** develops research-based informal education programs that encourage girls to take risks and master physical, intellectual and emotional challenges. Major programs address math and science education, pregnancy and drug abuse prevention, leadership, media literacy, economic literacy, adolescent health, violence prevention and sports participation.

**The National Resource Center (NRC)** is the organization's research, program development, national services, and training site. Research and evaluation conducted by the NRC provide the foundation for Girls Inc. programs. The NRC also responds to requests for information on girls' issues and distributes Girls Inc. publications.

**Girls Inc.** informs policy makers about girls' needs locally and nationally. The organization educates the media about critical issues facing girls. In addition, the organization teaches girls how to advocate for themselves and their communities, using their voices to promote positive change.

**Girls Inc.** is a nonprofit organization which receives 77 percent of its revenue from public support – corporations, foundations, government grants and individuals. The remainder comes from affiliate dues, fees, interest and dividends. More than three-quarters of the organization's functional expenses go directly to support program services for girls.

**Girls Inc.** national leadership focuses on developing innovative ways to leverage our most valuable asset – acknowledged expertise as the nation's premiere program provider and advocate for girls – to expand our reach to more than a million girls by the year 2002. Our leaders include Francis X. Burnes, III, Chair of the National Board; Joyce M. Roché, President and CEO; and Donna Brace Ogilvie, Honorary Chair.



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