

Girl Be Heard 2017-2019 Strategic Plan

Mission

Girl Be Heard develops, amplifies and celebrates the voices of young women through socially conscious theatre-making.

Core Value

Honoring the voices of those we serve.

Theory of Change

GBH creates safe spaces for young women (ages 12-21) to mobilize, share their stories, and create cutting-edge, politically--relevant theatre about social justice issues affecting them and youth around the world. Our unique listening model and ensemble-based programs provide an empowering community for youth to come together, and develop as writers, performers, feminists, and activists. GBH performances also inspire audiences to take action and create a world where girls are valued as leaders and change makers.

Strategic Planning -- How Did We Get to This Point?

Background/Her-Story

Girl Be Heard has gone from a scrappy, hungry, young start up to a job-creating, impactful nonprofit, inspired by social justice ideals, and renowned for work in low-income communities, locally and globally. When Co-Founders, Ashley Marinaccio and Jessica Greer Morris, first began working together in 2009 at the Estrogenius Festival, Girl Be Heard was called Project Girl Performance Collective. Bake sales were the revenue stream, street theatre was the norm, and it was a struggle to cover the cost of workshops/rehearsal space and fees to enter festivals such as The Fringe. Proskauer law firm was secured as Girl Be Heard's pro bono counsel (and remains to this day). 501c3 nonprofit status was attained in 2011, but due to the recession, and limited bandwidth, the Co-Founders did not go on payroll until July 1, 2013, the same year that the organization was rebranded under the leadership of Board Member Mark Fina who worked extensively with company members, staff and the Board. While working other jobs, the Co-Founders continued to meet with theatre company members every Sunday, direct and produce new shows, and grow the theatre company (which has over 200 members today). Dena Adriance also joined the team in 2013 as Founding Director of Education and pioneered efforts to take the Girl Be Heard program "out of Ashley and Jessica's head" and into a formal curriculum that has taken off in 12 Title 1 schools, two community-based settings in New York City, and in Trinidad and Tobago. While the organization has engaged in some strategic planning over the years (with Growth for Good consultants and graduate students at NYU Wagner School), the Executive Director has been raising funds for four years to work with strategic planning consultant, Marta Siberio.

During the last 18 months, GBH has experienced significant growth and change. Many of the goals in the 2013-2015 plan have been achieved, others have appropriately been put on hold or eliminated¹, and some new initiatives have emerged.

¹ Delayed items (which we still intend to pursue) are a Girls' Advisory Board/Leadership Council and an Artistic Steering Committee (to be folded into a larger "honorary board"). Eliminated items were a GBH Summit, GBH for Women and a GBH Book, which have all been deemed to be outside our core focus.

Girl Be Heard 2017-2019 Strategic Plan

In 2013-2015, GBH achieved the following goals from our 2013-2015 plan:

Education

- 1. Expanded after school programming from 2 schools in the 2013-2014 school year to 12 schools in the 2015-2016 school year.*
- 2. Produced mid-year and end-of-year Girl Power (Sunday Workshops) shows of consistent quality with high return rates each year.*
- 3. Created new workshops and educational materials for new works.*
- 4. Developed a mentoring program.*
- 5. Enhanced program evaluation capacity via the design and refinement of a monitoring and evaluation system.*

Performance

- 1. Pursued new performance opportunities for Touring Company. GBH has had over 50 performance opportunities each of the past 2 years.*
- 2. Developed new work. (one local and one global show per year). We have developed a mainstage show each year and have developed multiple global shows (for the US Mission in Geneva, Bermuda, Sarajevo, Trinidad, etc.).*
- 3. Marketed existing portfolio and increased demand for GBH.*
- 4. Developed staff.*
- 5. Engaged our audiences as measured via audience surveys.*

Global Advocacy

- 1. Cultivated strategic partnerships to expand touring and cross-cultural exchange opportunities, and created a strategic plan to fully leverage current relationships.*
- 2. Take GBH to four countries. We exceeded this goal, having been to six countries: Taiwan, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Bermuda, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Switzerland in 2013-2015.*
- 3. Secured dedicated funding for GBH global advocacy work via a 3-year grant from the Oak Foundation.*

3-Year Strategy and Goals

Our fast and significant growth has presented us with new challenges. Informed by our experiences, GBH is committed to implementing a more methodical approach to its programming, organizational development and fundraising. Our 2017-2019 Strategic Plan will continue our dedication to ensuring that GBH continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of young women and girls; strengthens our work with girl participants; provides further opportunities for girls to develop and share their voices; and brings global issues affecting girls center stage by empowering young women to tell their stories.

Our current core programming consists of the following:

- After-School Programming

Girl Be Heard 2017-2019 Strategic Plan

- Sunday Girl Empowerment Workshops
- Performances
- Cross-cultural Exchanges

While we will continue to implement our core programming, in addition, over the next three years, GBH will target these new priorities and goals:

Goal #1: Transform GBH into a cohesive, connected and racially just community.

GBH will consciously work to pursue racial justice² through the implementation of fair practices in the organization and elimination of implicit biases in its programming. GBH will become a more integrated community and all its stakeholders will have a clear understanding of their contributions and work together well.

Goal #2: Deepen our work.

GBH will work to deepen its programs, offering more skills and opportunities to the young women it serves.

Goal #3: Expand GBH programs to address the needs of youth (12-21), in partnership with social justice minded service providers.

GBH will expand its work to enhance offerings to current participants and also serve selected new communities and young women with targeted needs, such as girls in foster care and detention.

Goal #4: Demonstrate the impact of GBH programs.

The organization will work to strengthen its program models, and demonstrate how they positively impact the lives of girls.

Goal #5: Increase organizational sustainability.

GBH will take significant steps to become a financially sustainable organization. This includes diversifying its funding sources by adding large government grants; expanding its individual donor base to include grassroots fundraising, cultivating mid-level donors; creating a sustained giving program; and, adding new earned income revenue streams. GBH will also build organizational capacity to support these efforts and pay competitive wages to retain current staff talent and attract new individuals with needed skills to the GBH team.

² *Racial Justice [is defined] as the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all. Catalytic Change: Lessons Learned from the Racial Justice Grantmaking Assessment Report, Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity and Applied Research Center, 2009.*