ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was written by the University of California, Berkeley research team, Gauthami Penakalapati, MPH and Professor Isha Ray. Gauthami Penakalapati participated in research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation, and writing. Professor Ray participated in the research design and interpretation. Rupali Singh, our invaluable research coordinator, organized data collection logistics and participated in data collection.

We thank Dhirendra Singh for making this research possible. We applaud his commitment and dedication to Milaan and the Girl Icon Program.

We would like to especially thank the young women and their families who participated in this research. They shared their time and extended the upmost hospitality. All of the young women in this study were dynamic, engaging, and full of life. We wish them happiness and success in whichever way they desire.
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The state of girls and women in India is well documented, and recent decades of public health campaigns and social and economic programs have targeted them specifically. Though girls and women’s lives have improved, they continue to get married early, are less likely to be employed, and have higher rates of undernutrition compared to their male counterparts. These same challenges are an opportunity for improvements. To fill the gap, Milaan’s Girl Icon Program (GIP) aims to nurture and empower girls to be change makers and leaders for an equitable world. The Girl Icon Program is a two-year leadership development for adolescent girls (12-18 years) who have demonstrated the willingness and ability to challenge social and gender barriers in their communities.

The GIP’s is supported by three pillars that drive its leadership development mission: 1) leading oneself with courage and confidence 2) leading others with leadership and influence; and 3) leading social change through collective action. In the first pillar of leading oneself, the GIP aims to build and develop girls’ confidence and self-efficacy by highlighting the importance of their voice. For the second pillar, GIs share their learning from the GIP to a peer group of adolescent girls in their community. GIs organize interested adolescent girls and meet twice monthly in their communities to translate learnings from the GI training; these peer groups are an opportunity for GIs to lead peer and translate learnings to influence improved health and social outcomes for girls in their communities. In the third pillar, GIs and their peer groups organize a social action project in which they address a social stigma (i.e. female child marriage or female infanticide) or community shortcoming (i.e. lack of toilets in the school). In combination, these three pillars provide the framework and organizational structure for the GIP.

This exploratory evaluation assesses the first pillar, leading self with courage and confidence. To date, this is the first evaluation of Milaan’s GIP and aims to build an evidence base of success and opportunities for improvement.
OBJECTIVES

This study is a collaboration between UC Berkeley (UCB) and Milaan Foundation to explore how Milaan’s Girl Icon Programming influences girls’ agency and capabilities. UCB researchers utilized a mixed methods approach with in-depth interviews and surveys; this multidimensional approach highlights trends and ensures findings at grounded in participant experiences.

The GIP aims to improve girls’ critical consciousness and agentic capacity by raising girls’ self-awareness, confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. We define the real-world practice of these indicators as self-positive behaviors, and we explore how Milaan instills and provides opportunities to practice these behaviors. In addition, we believe that participating in the GIP activates and strengthens girls’ self-positive behaviors and diversifies girls’ personal social networks. In the long term, Milaan hopes that participating in GIP will subsequently expand girls’ access to resources, knowledge, and opportunities.

Research Questions:

1. How does participation in the Girl Icon Program influence development and practice of girls’ self-positive behaviors?

2. How does participation in the Girl Icon Program influence the diversity of girls’ social networks?

Participating adolescent girls were organized into Girl Icons (GIs) or Girl Icon Alternates (GIAs). GIs were formal participants in the 2016-2018 cohort in Uttar Pradesh. GIAs were finalists for the 2016-2018 cohort; they completed the final in-person interview with Milaan staff but were not offered a position. All participants resided in Uttar Pradesh at the time of data collection.

The entirety of the study took place between 2017 and 2019 (Figure 1). Researchers made a preliminary visit to Lucknow and Milaan field sites in December 2017 to formulate research questions and determine scope of potential study. The first half of 2018 focused on developing research questions, obtaining institutional review board review from UCB, and creating research tools. Data collection took place over place between June and August 2018. Data translation, data entry, analysis, and report writing were conducted between October 2018 and September 2019.

The study design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and writing were conducted independently by UCB researchers. Milaan provided partial financial assistance for research costs, assisted in study participant recruitment with UCB oversight, and facilitated in hiring a research coordinator.
3. METHODS

3.1 Participant selection

Study participants include adolescent girls (15-19 years), their parent/legal guardians (estimated >30 years), and in some instances, a male sibling (> 12 years).

Six GIs were randomly selected from 2016-2018 GI Uttar Pradesh cohort. Milaan provided UC Berkeley with a roster of all participating GIs, and the research team used a random number generator (https://www.random.org/) to select six GIs. The GIAs were purposively selected after the GIs were selected. Milaan provided UCB a list of all finalists who participated in home visit interviews but were not selected as a GI. From this list, UCB identified GIAs as counterfactuals to the randomly selected GIs. UCB matched GIAs to GIs on the following ordered criteria: district, urban/rural region, grade, caste, and economic status. This matched pairwise design allowed us to compare self-positive behaviors and personal networks between GIs and GIAs. Milaan managers and staff supported UCB to identify potential GIAs, but UCB made the final decision in deciding who was most appropriately matched with the randomly selected GIs.

3.2 Participants recruitment

UCB worked with Milaan to recruit identified GIs and GIAs. Using a standardized script, Milaan staff called identified GI/GIAs to explain the purpose of the study and confirm their interest in participating. For GIs/GIAs ≤15 years, Milaan staff first sought parent/legal guardian interest in participating in the study and then spoke with the GI/GIA directly to assess their interest in participating. For GI/GIAs who were ≥16 years, Milaan staff talked to the GI/GIA directly to ask if they were interested. None of the GI/GIAs had a personal mobile, so Milaan often spoke to a parent, elder brother, and in some cases, a neighbor or hostel principal first before speaking with a GI/GIA.

In order to participate in this study, study participants were assessed through the following inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 1). GIs must be participants of the 2016-2018 GIP cohort and could not be a previous participant in the GIP. GIAs could not be previous or current participant in a GI peer group. Parents/legal guardians must be current care-takers of GI/GIAs and living in the same home as the GI/GIA at the time of data collection. Male siblings of GI/GIAs must be at least 12 years old to participate and must be unmarried and living in the same home as the GI/GIA at the time of data collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Inclusion</th>
<th>Exclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GI</td>
<td>Participant in 2016-2018 cohort of GI Program</td>
<td>Current or previous participants in GI Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIAs</td>
<td>Finalists (but not selected) for 2016-2018 GI cohort</td>
<td>Participant in GI peer group or declined an offer to participate in GI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers</td>
<td>Must be brothers of selected GI/GIAs; ≥ 12 years</td>
<td>Married, living outside the home, &lt; 12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>Legal guardians of GIs and current care-takers</td>
<td>Living outside the home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Consent

We collect verbal and written consents from all participants prior to data collection. The consent process varied depending on the age of the participant. Participants ≥18 years including GI, GIAs, male siblings, and their parents, completed a verbal informed consent prior to data collection. Participants who were 16 or 17 years were offered the option to participate without parent consent or participate with parental permission. We sought written permission from parent/legal guardians of participants ≤15 years prior to data collection. UCB also collected additional verbal consent for audio recording. No monetary compensation was provided to participants. During the data collection process, we provided snacks and cool drinks to facilitate conversation.

3.5 Data Collection

We utilized three data collection instruments: in-depth interviews (IDIs), egocentric social network survey, and a series of surveys focusing on self-positive behaviors and gender norms. GIs and GIAs participated in all three research activities, whiles their parents and brothers participated in the IDIs and the empowerment surveys. All data collection was conducted in Hindi; data collection tools were translated from English to Hindi Devanagari. All data were deidentified prior to analysis. Data was collected from a total of 43 participants (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IDIs</th>
<th>Empowerment Surveys</th>
<th>Egocentric social network survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GI</td>
<td>n=6</td>
<td>n=6</td>
<td>n=6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>n=6</td>
<td>n=6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>n=6</td>
<td>n=6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>n=4</td>
<td>n=4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIA</td>
<td>n=6</td>
<td>n=6</td>
<td>n=6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>n=6</td>
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<td>Father</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>n=4</td>
<td>n=4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>n=43</strong></td>
<td><strong>n=43</strong></td>
<td><strong>n=12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.1 In-depth interviews

The purpose of the IDIs was to understand individual beliefs and perceptions around gender norms, decision making responsibilities in the household, and adolescent girls’ goals and aspirations. GI and GIA families also discussed their interactions and experience with Milaan staff.

The interview took place using a semi-structured guide at the participants home. All GIs and GIAs interviews were transcribed into Hindi Devanagari and then translated into English. Other IDIs which were deemed high quality were also transcribed and translated. The remaining IDIs were translated directly into English from the Hindi audio recordings.

3.5.2 Egocentric social networks

The purpose of the egocentric social network survey is to understand GIs and GIA’s personal social connections. GI/GIAs were asked the following five questions:

- Who do you talk to for advice about everyday matters?
- Who do you talk to about personal matters?
- Who do you talk to for advice or guidance about your aspirations/dreams?
- With whom do you have arguments or disagreements with?
- Who else do you enjoy spending time with that you have not mentioned in the previous question.

For each question, GI/GIAs identified up to ten persons, or alters, who corresponded to the question. GI/GIAs could name the same alter for multiple questions. Once alters were identified, we collected additional information about their age, sex, frequency of interaction, and summary of their relationship with the GI/GIA.
3.5.3 Self-positive behaviors and gender norms

We highlight two psychological domains of self-positive behaviors among the adolescent girls: self-efficacy and resiliency. We used validated measures of self-positive behaviors in the generalized self-efficacy scale¹ and resilience scale.¹ These agentic measures focus on one’s ability to envision change involving one’s individual power within to perceive themselves capable of creating change and one’s individual ability to adapt and cope with change, achieve personal goals, and make difficult decisions, respectively. We assessed practices and beliefs of gender norms via the gender equity scale and a women’s social and economic empowerment. GIs and GIAs completed all four surveys while brothers and parents only completed the two gender norms surveys.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Demographic Information

Table 3 outlines demographic information for GI and GIA households. The GI and GIAs households are similar in many ways; households are a majority Hindu and household caste includes scheduled tribe, scheduled caste, other backward castes, and general caste. Compared to average GIA households, the average GI households have 5,000 INR more in monthly income and have, on average, one less household member. GIAs are more likely to live in joint and extended households compared to GIs. One GIA lives in a kutch type housing, and another GIA lacks household access to improved sanitation leaving the family to use a neighbor’s latrine or practice open-defecation (but lived in a semi-pucca type home). All households have access to piped improved water sources.

Participating GIs and GIAs are similar in age and current education status; they are in a mix of secondary, senior secondary, and post-secondary/college education (Table 4). Half of the GIs and GIAs are enrolled in college. GI mothers are on average, nine years older than GIA mothers, but both groups have similar limited education; 66% (n=4) of the mothers in each GI and GIA group never attended school. The primary difference between the mothers of these two populations is that all of the GIA mothers are housewives and are not employed whereas half of the GI mothers are earning income by selling street snacks, running a flour mill, and as a clothes washer. As a result, these mothers bring in, on average 3667 INR to the monthly household income. The GI and GIA fathers are of similar age and earn similar monthly incomes. GIA fathers are primarily small-scale farmers while GI fathers work a variety of jobs. There is one college educated father in the GI group while the remaining five fathers only completed primary and upper-primary school. One GIA father never attended school, and the remaining five fathers completed a mix of primary and secondary schooling.

Interviewed GI brothers are, on average, 18 years compared to an average 20 years old amongst GIA brothers. All of the four interviewed GI brothers are still in school, while only two of the five interviewed GIA brothers are in school. The remaining three GIA brothers are employed and working as shopkeepers (n=2) earning an average 2250 INR/month and as a daily wage laborer (n=1) who is uncertain about his monthly income. Both GIs and GIAs have elder brothers who were not interviewed but are employed and contributing to household income. Their contributions were included in the average monthly income measure.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Household size</strong></th>
<th><strong>7.83 (6-11)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Girl Icon</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monthly income</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,417 INR</strong></td>
<td><strong>Girl Icon Alternate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>(5,000-31,500)</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.83 (5-19)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rural n=2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Table 3: GI and GIA household demographics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Peri-urban n=4</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Family type</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nuclear n=3</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Joint n=2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion</strong></td>
<td><strong>Muslim n=1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Hindu n=5</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caste</strong></td>
<td><strong>Scheduled tribe n=1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Scheduled caste n=2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Other backward caste n=1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>General n=2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home ownership</strong></td>
<td><strong>owns home n=6</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landownership</strong></td>
<td><strong>land on which home is located n=4</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>agricultural land &amp; land on which home is located n=2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of home</strong></td>
<td><strong>Semi-pucca n=1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Pucca n=5</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electricity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Metered n=4</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Not metered n=2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drinking water</strong></td>
<td><strong>Improved n=6</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Improved n=6</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Rural: n=2
- Peri-urban: n=4
- Nuclear: n=3
- Joint: n=2
- Muslim: n=1
- Hindu: n=5
- Scheduled tribe: n=1
- Scheduled caste: n=2
- Other backward caste: n=1
- General: n=2
- Owns home: n=6
- Land on which home is located: 4
- Agricultural land & land on which home is located: 2
- Semi-pucca: n=1
- Pucca: n=5
- Metered: n=4
- Not metered: n=2
- Improved: n=6

10,580 INR
(5,000 – 25,500)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Girls Icon</th>
<th>Girls Icon Alternate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girls</strong></td>
<td>n=6</td>
<td>n=6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>17.2 (15-19)</td>
<td>17.7 (17-19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Education**    | Secondary n=1  
|                  | Senior secondary n=2  
|                  | Post-secondary/college n=3  |  
|                  | Secondary n=1  
|                  | Senior secondary n=2  
|                  | Post-secondary/college n=3  |
| **Mother**       | n=6        | n=6                  |
| **Age**          | 46 (35-56)  | 39.8 (35-50)*         |
| **Education**    | Never attended school n=4  
|                  | Primary n=1  
|                  | Secondary n=1  |  
|                  | Never attended school n=4  
|                  | Upper-primary n=2  |
| **Monthly income** | n=3, avg 3667 INR/month | NA                        |
| **Occupation**   | housewife n=3  
|                  | flour mill n=1  
|                  | snack vendor n=1  
|                  | clothes washer n=1  |  
|                  | housewife n=6  |
| **Father**       | n=6        | n=6                  |
| **Age**          | 50.5 (40-57) | 47.8 (42-60)         |
| **Education**    | Primary n=2  
|                  | Upper-primary n=3  
|                  | College n=1  |  
|                  | Never attended school n=1  
|                  | Upper-primary n=1  
|                  | Secondary n=2  
|                  | Senior secondary n=2  |
| **Monthly income** | 7167 INR (3500-17500) | 7030 INR (3250-13500) |
| **Occupation**   | autodriver n=1  
|                  | shopkeeper n=1  
|                  | daily wage labor n=2  
|                  | vegetable vendor n=2  
|                  | clothes presser n=1  |  
|                  | farmer n=3  
|                  | autodriver n=1  
|                  | artisan n=1  |
| **Brother***     | n=4        | n=5                  |
| **Education**    | secondary n=1  
|                  | senior secondary n=1  
|                  | post-secondary/college n=2  |  
|                  | primary n=1  
|                  | senior secondary n=3  
|                  | post-secondary/college n=1  |
| **Monthly income** | 2250 INR (n=2) |                          |
| **Occupation**   | student n=4  |  
|                  | printshop owner n=1  
|                  | shopkeeper n=1  
|                  | daily wage laborer n=1  
|                  | student n=2  |

* one GIA mother uncertain about her age  
** one GIA father passed away  
*** data for brothers who participated in the data collection activities.

Table 4: Study Participant Demographics
4.2 Quantitative measurements of self-positive behaviors and gender norms

All participants completed The Gender Equity Scale and the Women’s Social Empowerment measure.

The Gender Equity Scale score ranges from 0 to 4 with higher scores indicating more equitable attitudes towards women (Appendix A). The GIs, GI mothers, and GI brother have, on average, higher scores than their GIA counterparts (Figure 2). GIs have the highest scores of the entire study population. GIA fathers, on the other hand, have higher gender equity scores compared to GI fathers (2.42 vs. 2.03 respectively).

The GIs scores range from 3.00 to 3.76, and the GIA scores range from 2.38 to 3.59. The GI mothers scores range from 1.31 to 3.24, and the GIA mothers scores range from 1.72 to 2.66. The GIA fathers score range from 1.76 to 3.14, and the GI fathers scores range from 1.52 to 2.62.

Though we interviewed five GIA male siblings, we omitted one male sibling (12 years old) from the Gender Equity survey because we believed the Gender Equity questions were too challenging. One question pertained to sexual activity, and at the time of data collection, we noted that the brother might not be aware or comfortable with mature themes. We declined to interview one GI brother for the same reason. The four GIA brothers scores range from 2.13 to 2.31. The four GI brothers scores range from 2.28 to 3.66.

The Women’s Social Empowerment measure ranges from 0 to 100 with higher scores indicating that the respondent answered more questions that both sexes should be responsible for household activities (Appendix A). GI families including the GIs, their mothers, and brothers have, on average, higher scores than their GIA counterparts (Figure 3). GIA fathers have a slightly higher score than GI fathers.

GI and GIAs scores both range from 71.43 – 100. The difference in average scores between the two adolescent girl populations is a single question, so this difference is marginal. On average, GI fathers have lower scores compared to GIA fathers; GI fathers scores range from 14.29 to 71.43 while GIA father scores range from 42.86 to 71.43. GI mother scores range from 28.6 – 100, and GIA mothers scores range from 28.57 to 100. GI brothers scores range from 42.86 to 57.14 and GIA brother scored range from 28.57 to 57.14.

Comparing GI and GIA families, male siblings have the greatest differences in Gender Equity and Women’s Social Empowerment scores. The differences in the two surveys are marginal amongst the remaining family members.
The GIs and GIAs completed additional psychological measures of self-positive behaviors surveys: Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale and the self-efficacy Scale. The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale ranges from 1.0 (less resilience) to 5.0 (greater resilience). Among the GIs, the average resilience score was 4.27 (3.84 - 4.80) compared to GIAs who, on average, have a score of 4.02 (3.48-4.88) (Figure 4). The Self-efficacy Scale score ranges from 1.0 to 4.0 with higher scores indicating greater self-efficacy. The average self-efficacy scores for GIs was 3.70 (3.2-4.0) and 3.58 (3.0 – 4.0).

The small sample size of this study limits us from statistically testing differences between GIs and GIAs and between their respective family members. However, we can visually note that the scores between the GI and GIA adolescent girls are similar in all four measures.
4.3 Egocentric Social Network Surveys

The egocentric social network surveys were completed with the GIs and GIAs. One GI survey was misplaced; the following data are from five GIs and six GIAs. As noted in 3.5.2, the survey asked GIs and GIAs five questions to elucidate the makeup of their social networks. For each question, GI/GIAs could identify up to ten persons, or alters, who corresponded to the question.

We assess sex and kinship of the alters. Kinship categories include kin (immediate and extend family members), friends, and non-kin (teachers, coaches, and other non-kin adult relationships). For Questions 1 – 4, GIs and GIAs could mention the same individual for each of these four questions.

On average, GIs name five more unique alters in total compared to GIAs (Figure 5). GIs name more female alters though both groups note similar numbers of male alters. In addition, GIs and GIAs have similar number of kin and friend relationships. The most significant difference is among non-kin adult relationships; GIs have, on average, seven more non-kin adult connections compared to GIAs while GIs have one less friend alter compared to GIAs.

Figure 5: Average unique alter identification in egocentric social network survey (Q1 to Q5)
Figure 6 outlines the average number of identified alters per question. Note that an individual alter can be named for multiple questions. GIs have, on average, a greater number of alters compared to GIAs. Q1 and Q5 have the greatest difference in average alters size with marginal differences in Q2, Q3, and Q4.

A majority of GIs and GIAs total alters are family members (immediate and extended) (Figure 7). GIs have a greater percentage of non-kin adult relationships compared to GIAs (32.9% vs. 12.1% respectively), while GIAs have a greater percentage of friend relationships compared to GIs (30.3% vs. 18.5%). Among female alters, GIs have an equal mix of family (38%), non-kin (38%), and friends (24%). GIAs, however, had a majority of female alters who are family (51%) followed by friends (41%). GIs have a significantly greater percentage of female non-kin adult alters compared to GIAs. Interestingly, GIs and GIAs have similar kinship relationships with male alters where >70% are family members, 19% are non-kin, and <10% are friends.
Figure 7: Demographics of total alters identified by GIs (left) and GIAs (right)
The following questions describe the kinship relationships across the five questions administered in the egocentric social network survey.

4.3.1 **Who do you talk to for advice about everyday matters?**

On average, individual GIs noted greater number of alters compared to GIAs (Figure 8). In total, the GIs name six additional alters compared to GIAs. Among both populations, over half of the identified alters are family members though GIs have more non-kin alters compared to GIAs at 26.5% and 9.3% respectively. When breaking up the alter demographics by sex, a majority of the GIA female alters are family while GIs have more female non-kin alters than GIAs. A majority of GI and GIA male alters are family kin.

![Figure 8: Q1: Demographics of Q1 identified by GIs (left) and GIAs (right)](image)
4.3.2 Who do you talk to about personal matters?

GIs and GIAs both named a total of 31 alters, and over 70% of the identified alters are family (Figure 9). Friends and non-kin adults make up similar proportions in both groups. Over 70% of the alters are female, and the identified male alters are majority family members. Overall, GIs and GIAs do not discuss personal matters with non-kin adults.

Figure 9 Q2: Demographics of Q2 identified by GIs (left) and GIAs (right)
4.3.3 Who did you talk to for advice or guidance about your aspirations/dreams?

GIs typically discuss their aspirations and dreams with family members (39.5%) and non-kin adults (42.1%) while GIAs often share with their family members (57.5%) and friends (32.5%) (Figure 10). GIs have significantly more interactions with non-kin adults than GIAs (42.1% vs. 10%). Nearly half of GI's female alters are non-kin adults (45.8%) while half of GIAs' female alters are friends (50%). The majority of GIAs' male alters are composed of family members (77.8%), but 86% GI's male alters are composed of family members and non-kin adults. Overall, GIs seek advice about their aspirations and dreams from a diversity of social sources while GIAs are often limited to family and friends.

Figure 10 Q3: Demographics of Q3 identified by GIs (left) and GIAs (right)
A majority of the GIs and GIAs have arguments/disagreements with family (Figure 11). Among the GIs, a majority of the disagreements occur with male family members (58% n=10). GIAs’ disagreements with family are split evenly between male and female family members. Among female alters, GIAs argue the most with their friends, followed by family, and finally, non-kin adults. GIs argue the most with family members, friends, and non-kin adults. Among male alters, both GIs and GIAs have a significant majority of disagreements with male family members.
4.3.5 Who else do you enjoy spending with that you have not mentioned in the previous questions?

In response to this question, both GIA and GIs identify more female alters than male alters (Figure 12). GIs mention a majority non-kin adult (83%) compared to GIAs (17%). GIAs continue to identify family members (44%) and friends (39%). Amongst the female alters, GIAs name more friends (53%) compared to GIs (7%); 85% of GI's female alters are non-kin adults. Amongst male alters, both GIs and GIAs identify male family kin and non-kin adults; neither population name a male friend.

Figure 12 Q5: Demographics of Q5 identified by GIs (left) and GIAs (right)
Aspirations & Future Plans

Adolescent Girls

GIs and GIAs have similar career aspirations; they both believe that “hard work” and “family support” were core requirements to “achieving anything.” GIs and GIAs typically noted government professions including teachers, police officers, army officers, and district magistrates. Girls in both groups feel that family support is essential to success. One GI noted that “I just want Mummy and Papa support my education. If they are there with me, I can easily achieve my dreams.”

Beyond career goals, GIs and GIAs have similar life aspirations including enjoying a “happy, free life” that is “smooth, hassle free” and “ordinary.” Both groups hope to “fulfill dreams.” Girls desire for a life different from their parents, financially and socially. For example, one GI said “the aim of my life is that I want to be big [referring to someone of influence and of standing] because I know my parents are very poor.” Another GIA notes that “earlier, girls were not allowed to talk in front of elderly people and they were shooed away whenever they tried to say something. They were not allowed to step out of home and were married off at a very early age. I want to stay away from all of this.”

Table 5 Career goals and career plan-B options of GIs and GIAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career goals</th>
<th>Career plan-B</th>
<th>Career goals</th>
<th>Career plan-B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher, computer science engineer, Indian police service (IPS), teacher, district magistrate, army officer</td>
<td>IPS, teacher, social worker, railways diploma, further education, no plan B</td>
<td>Teacher, police, cricketer, Olympic karate champion, optometrist, police</td>
<td>IPS, electrical engineer, small works (beautician, stitching, drawing), fashion boutique, further education, no plan B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.1 Aspirations & Future Plans
Mothers and Fathers

Like their daughters, GI and GIA parents also believe that “hard work” is essential to success. By providing financial support, parents believe they were doing everything possible to support their daughters’ goals - the rest is up to their daughters themselves. Unfortunately, most parents are unaware about concrete next steps beyond schooling to support their daughters’ aspirations.

GI and GIA mothers are aware of their daughters’ aspirations, and they vouch for their daughters’ goals. Mothers comment that their daughters are already working hard, and that as mothers, they “want her to study as much as she wants, so that she can become whatever she wants.” In general, GI and GIA mothers spoke about their daughters “becoming something” and being able to “stand on her own feet” but that it was also up to “destiny” because they “don’t know what the future holds.” Mothers want more for their daughters noting that daughters “should not remain like us” and that they must take “appropriate steps forward.”

In addition to getting a “good education,” mothers are holding gendered expectations for their daughters. One GI mother notes that “household chores are important, respecting guests is important, studies, everything.” A GIA mother wants her daughter to “only have good qualities. She should talk properly with everybody.” Both GI and GIA mothers are concerned about how their daughters are viewed; they want their daughters to “earn a good name” for themselves.

In contrast to mothers, a majority of fathers often do not know about their daughters’ career aspirations. One GI father shares that “I leave in the morning and return in the evening. She mostly discusses all this [regarding goals and aspirations] with her mother and never says anything to me.” When asked what he hoped for his daughter’s future, one GI father wants his daughter to become a doctor but acknowledged that he “never asked her what she would like to become.” Another simply left it to fate stating that “she will get whatever is written in her destiny.” Another named jobs he believes are appropriate including pilot, basketball coach, or engineer; his daughter is keen to come an army officer. There is tension between fathers and daughters; one father wantss his daughters to become an IAS [Indian Admiration Service] officer, but “she wants to be something else.”

Unlike mothers, father spoke more about their daughters’ characters than of concreate career aspirations. Fathers mention that daughters should not have “illicit relationships” and that she “should be in good company, she should talk to nice people.” A majority of GI and GIA fathers are concerned about their name and future standing in society. One GI father commented that “if she [his daughter] concentrates properly on her studies, then if she gets a job or does business, then she will also earn a name, and so will we.” Other GI fathers expect their daughters to “bring glory to her mother and father” and have respectable careers “for the village, for the future.” One GIA father noted that his daughter can do “whatever she wants so that she makes me proud, so that people say that she is my daughter.” Another GIA father wants his daughter to join IAS so that “she can make me and my community proud one day.”

Majority of the fathers believe that they are supportive of their daughter’s goals though they are not aware of the details. One GIA father noted that “I am providing her with all the facilities. Whatever she asks for, whatever is possible for me, I do everything for her.” Financial support is typically viewed as the parent’s sole responsibility. One GI father mentioned that “the maximum we can help is invest money and it is up to them to study.” As I will note later, these progressive statements around continued education come with restrictions.
A brother’s age is a primary predictor of involvement in their sisters’ lives. Younger brothers are aloof to their elder sisters’ aspirations, but brothers, who are 2-3 years older than the GIs and GIAs have strong relationships with their sisters. These elder brothers are highly supportive of their sisters’ career goals. They are aware of their sisters’ “dedication” to their work, and they proactively voice their support for their sisters to their families and teachers. One GI brother claimed that “I am the only one in the family who supports her the most because I am the eldest” and another “fought” with a computer science teacher who did not teach his sister.

Interestingly, elder brothers take ownership of their sister’s goals. One GI brother mentioned “I want to make her a computer science engineer because I think she is capable of becoming one.” Another GIA brother claimed that “I believe that I will be able to make a doctor.”
Though girls can confidently voice their aspirations, they do not have concrete steps in place to achieve their career goals. For example, girls do not name specific exams or training programs required to become government officials. They are confident about needing to “study further” and passing bachelors and master’s programs, but they do not provide additional details. Instead, they spoke in generalities about studying and working “hard.” Simply, a majority of girls lack consistent guidance and mentorship to plan for their aspirations. Only one girl, a GIA, with goals of becoming an optometrist mentioned that she was able to speak to doctors who were able to provide general advice.

Elder brothers who are also students and have access to smart phone are able to provide some guidance by either speaking to peers or searching the internet. Mothers and fathers, however, are unable to provide suggestion, guidance, or long-term support. All the girls are more educated than their mothers and save for a single GI, all the girls are more educated that their fathers as well. One GIA mother noted “I’m not literate and I don’t have information. If I had information, I would have informed the children.” One father bluntly noted that “I can’t do anything. I can’t go anywhere. I don’t have information. So, we don’t play a role in making or destroying her career.”
4.4.2 Marriage vs. Education

Girls

A majority of the GI and GIAs expressed interest in continuing their education; those in secondary school hope to continue into college and those in college yearn to continue into graduate programs. Only two girls discussed marriage as part of their life aspirations, but marriage was always an unsaid next step among mothers and fathers. Girls believe that society is “too conscious regarding girls and their characters. Parents are afraid of the stigma and humiliation. Hence they marry [girls] hurriedly.”

Mothers and Fathers

Financial security is the most important factor for parents weighting between their daughter’s education or marriage. Overall, mothers and fathers wish for their daughters to continue her education as long as financially possible. Mothers know that their daughter’s marriage is certain, but they do not seem fixed on a timeline. Instead, they spoke about it taking place sometime in the future. One GI mother wanted her to daughter to continue her education, and “then later I will think about [daughter’s] marriage.”

Fathers may have timelines in mind for their daughters’ marriage though they did not share it explicitly. One GIA father aimed to get his daughter married in the next two-three years unless “she gets a job else she can go and study further if she wants”

Interestingly, though fathers expressed their willingness to financially support their daughters’ education, their claims are not supported by other family members. For example, one GI father mentioned that “The maximum we can help is invest money and it is up to [name redacted] to study.” But his son contradicted his father stating that his parents were already “looking for a boy” and talking about marriage proposal for their GI daughter. Another father noted that he “made sure that she [his daughter] should study” but the mother shared that he was keen on “investing” in the sons and educating the GI daughter “a bit.” Another GI mother noted that her husband does not see a “need” for their daughter study further beyond 12th standard.

Brothers

As mentioned previously, elder brothers who are close in age to GI/GIAs have strong opinions about the prospect of their sisters’ marriage. One GI brother wants his sister to “get a job and stand on her own feet and is capable of making her own decisions” before she got married. Another GI brother wants his sister to “educate herself so much that she should not feel the need to get married in the first place. And if ever she gets married, she should be strong enough to take care of herself:”
4.4.3 Family Support

Fathers and elder brothers are the primary household decision makers, and their support is essential for girls’ futures. Girls have strong relationships with their mothers, but mothers’ influence are limited in these households.

Girls have limited interactions with their fathers resulting in weak relationships. Fathers, simply, do not know much about their daughters; fathers and daughters do not seem to communicate as often as mothers and daughters or as brothers and sisters. Mothers mediate and translate daughters’ needs to fathers. Fathers often noted that it was a mothers’ duty to know their daughter concerns. One GI father commented “I have never asked anything of [GI name]. Her mother takes care of her” and another said that “only her mother” can tend to the daughter. Fathers are too busy to talk to their daughters but provide money when required.

Brothers, however, are a source of allyship and support for their sisters. Elder brothers who are a few years older than their sisters, in particular, are the most influential. They vouch for their sisters in a variety of ways including: supporting their sisters involvement with Milaan, encouraging investment in their sisters education, and even delaying marriage. This brother-sister partnership is evident in three GI and one GIA experiences. One GI brother noted that if his parents pressure his sister to get married, he will “take a strong decision and will not give up [preventing the marriage].” Another GI brother came in support of his sister when their father was not willing to send the GI to Milaan; the brother explained that “Papa told me that my sister won’t step out. Then I told my Papa that she should go out and this is the need of the hour. So Milaan become our flash point.” One GIA brother is heavily invested in his sister’s education and sought advice from her principal about her education. The brother commented that “she should be well educated” because “she is the youngest one and she is better in studies also. She takes keen interest in studies.” These instances highlight elder brothers who use their household power in support of and in defense of their sisters’ well-being and future opportunities.
Families are insular and distrustful of their neighbors and community members. Fathers do not interact with people in the village much because “people tell wrong things” and “people start making stories.” In many cases, neighbors and community members scrutinized GIs and their family’s affiliation with Milaan. Communities are suspicious of GI’s activities because they are unaware of GIs and Milaan’s intentions, and they are suspicious of GIs traveling outside the community. One GI noted that neighbors spread “strong rumors that in pretext of going Milaan, girls are getting kidnapped.” GIs have increased visible mobility in contrast to other female adolescents in the community. As a result, GIs are concerned that community members think ill of them because they might be “up to many things” and that “it’s wrong if [girls] go outside.” A GI noted that “people think that I always roam around” and another commented that “many people indulge in rumor mongering about my whereabouts.” One GI brother commented that people “don’t know what she is doing, maybe doing wrong things and having affairs with boys and all.” A GI brother believed that neighbors have “negative thinking” because they believe “nothing happens by being involved” with organizations.

GI parents attribute neighbors’ concerns to jealousy. One father noted that “people living around, they create nuisance because they feel that she’s moving forward and their kids are staying behind.” GIs also believe that neighbors that community members are jealous because they “don’t want to see girls progressing.” GI’s in general, have risen above these rumors with support from their families. One GI noted that her family “understands,” and her mother informs curious neighbors about her daughter’s whereabouts. In light of relatives’ lack of support regarding her daughter’s participation in Milaan, one mother counseled her daughter to “not listen to people whoever is trying to stop you. Do what you feel like and go beyond your own expectations.”

Two elements of Milaan programming visible to communities are the peer group meetings and the community action projects. Peer groups have mixed receptions in communities. A GI mother commented that a few mothers are happy that her GI “takes meeting” and explains “various kinds of issues” to their daughters. In contrast, another GI noted that her community spread rumors about her receiving money from Milaan and that she was not sharing her funds with her peer group participants. The GI’s brother became involved and removed the girls who were complaining about not getting compensated. In addition, communities have lukewarm reactions to community action projects. One GI commented that “many people were laughing and were saying that don’t understand what kind of craziness this is” Another GI noted that she “faces some kind of problems” doing social action projects. One father commented that neighbors take his daughter “lightly and always make fun of her.”

Despite the inconsistent support from neighbors, parents cared about how they and their daughters are perceived by their community. Mothers counseled daughters to “conduct [herself] nicely so that neighbors don’t get a chance to point fingers at us.” Another commented that a “girl should walk on the correct path. So that nobody looks at them in a wrong way.” The meaning of the “correct path” is nebulous; one GI mother describes it as “studying well and progressing” but it also likely means adhering to traditional gender norms.

Community perceptions have an outsized influence on fathers. GIs, mothers, and brothers provided extensive evidence that father often sough “outside” advice about their daughter’s life decisions. One GI father was skeptical about enrolling his daughter into academic coaching outside the village because he “was worried about what villagers will think and [they will] say that girl is going out alone and all.” A GI father was influenced by his friend when considering her acceptance to Milaan; according to the GI brother, his father agreed to enroll the GI into Milaan because the father “was ready only because [his] friend told him.”

4.4.4 Community Support & Challenges

Families are insular and distrustful of their neighbors and community members. Fathers do not interact with people in the village much because “people tell wrong things” and “people start making stories.” In many cases, neighbors and community members scrutinized GIs and their family’s affiliation with Milaan. Communities are suspicious of GI’s activities because they are unaware of GIs and Milaan’s intentions, and they are suspicious of GIs traveling outside the community. One GI noted that neighbors spread “strong rumors that in pretext of going Milaan, girls are getting kidnapped.” GIs have increased visible mobility in contrast to other female adolescents in the community. As a result, GIs are concerned that community members think ill of them because they might be “up to many things” and that “it’s wrong if [girls] go outside.” A GI noted that “people think that I always roam around” and another commented that “many people indulge in rumor mongering about my whereabouts.” One GI brother commented that people “don’t know what she is doing, maybe doing wrong things and having affairs with boys and all.” A GI brother believed that neighbors have “negative thinking” because they believe “nothing happens by being involved” with organizations.

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A few GIAs who are positive deviants also experienced negative feedback from their community. A GIA athlete noted that people comment on her playing outside and expressed skepticism about “what she must be doing and all.” Another GIA mother has tiffs with neighbors; “some people are against her” because her daughter “live(s) like a boy” with short hair and jeans.

Overall, girls have limited experiences of community support. The few instances of community praise and praise is the result of visible public acknowledgement. A GI commented that “whenever I win medals, people praise and talk about me. My neighbors and relatives feel proud that I have so many certificates in my name.” One GIA is celebrated by her community when she wins karate champions; “when you are successful, people want to come closer to you,” but when she lost, “people did not bother.”

Overall, study participants felt their communities are “not good.” Male alcoholism, domestic violence, female isolation, and the male adolescents who roam and harass girls create a “bad environment.” Parents, concerned about their daughters’ safety, further limit their daughters’ mobility and force them to cover their face and head. One GI believed that her father restricted her movements because he “saw boys commenting on girls and sometimes eve teasing them. I think that’s the reason he stops me from doing something and going out.”
4.4.5 Gender Norms

Six of the GIs and three of the GIAs confidently discussed the gender inequity in their communities, and how these inequities impact their education, access to mobiles, mobility, household decision making, male/female relationships, and belief in their capabilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Access to Mobiles</th>
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<td>Girls repeated that society did not place equal importance to their education compared to boys. GIs commented that “in our community and in our village, aspirations of girls are not given any importance. The biggest problem is that girls are discouraged to go for higher studies. Most of them are told to discontinue after 12th standard.” A GIA noted that “girls are not being educated and are told to do household chores.” Another GIA noted that her parents “sent [her] brothers to study in good schools and they sent [her] to a government school to study.” Mothers have difficulty supporting their daughters because “they also don’t go against the wishes of their husbands and hence don’t come in to support their own daughter’s education.” Mothers and elder brothers are instrumental in convincing fathers to continue a girl’s education. One GI mother noted that her husband was not interested in continuing their daughter’s education, so she began working in order “to make her [daughter] study further.” Elder brothers, as previously described, often conflict with fathers in order to support girls’ education. Two GI brothers lobbied their fathers to fund their sister’s education and delay marriage. Curiously, one father who hoped to continue his son’s education at risk of his daughter commented that when girls “try to go ahead in life through education themselves, people are jealous of them and try to suppress.”</td>
<td>Girls commented on the gendered access to mobiles and the internet. Though nearly all families had at least one mobile phone, they were “brick” phones that did not access the internet. Mobile usage conflict with gender norms: “the village will say that the girl is not interested in studies and she is just busy on her mobile.” A GI commented that “boys here operate mobiles and girls do house chores which I didn’t like.” One GI father bought a mobile phone for his son which the GI uses at times, but she must show her father that she uses it for “study purposes” only. Another GI also uses her elder brother’s phone, but her brother does not allow her to keep a phone because he believes “that girls should be depressed” otherwise they cause “drama.” Three girls (two GIAs and one GI) have access to smart phones because their college programs require Android phones to access course materials. Cost is limiting factor, and girls note that they waited years before purchasing a smart phone. Other college going girls lamented that their lack of access to mobile internet hindered their education because “everything in college is now online.”</td>
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Mobility

Secondary and post-secondary schooling is the primary reason that girls left their villages or townships. One GIA noted that “I’m the first girl in my village who’s studying and living outside.” In a unique case, another GIA is an athlete and travels for competitions, either alone or with her brothers. There is a limit to how far parents allow their daughters to travel for school. One GI commented that “most parents don’t allow their daughters to go in a faraway college and insist them to study nearby itself, however, the college is bad.”

Compared to GIAs, Milaan provides an opportunity for GIs to “step outside of” their communities. Parents are concerned about the distance girls traveled for Milaan training. A GI noted that her mother “got afraid of the fact that I have to go far from home for the training.” Another GI family attempted to stop the GI from attending training because Lucknow was “too far away,” commenting “you are all alone and a girl. How will you travel and where will you go?” Parents slowly became more comfortable with their daughter’s transit, and one GI commented that she had to “built trust” with her parents to ensure that “nothing wrong [was] going to happen.”

Mobility is not correlated with autonomy; girls’ movement continue to be restricted and monitored by parents, family members, and community members. A GI father noted “Other than the house, other than studies, she doesn’t need to step outside the house.” A GI must obtain parental permission to visit nearby friends, but she does not “go out to roam around.” Another GIA is prohibited from going alone to the market despite her attempts “to reason with them [her family]. Girls simply do not “go around the village” or step out in the evening. One GI noted that her “family objects and restricts” her from going out at night. Another commented that once the “clock tick 5 in the evening,” girls have to restrict their movements and “stay behind the four walls of their home.”

Brothers do not have the same mobility restrictions; one girl commented that girls who “go out” are “immediately termed characterless” while brothers “can come home late at night.”

Mothers’ mobility is also limited. One GI mother is employed outside of the home as a washerwoman, but the remaining two employed GI mothers operate their income earning businesses from inside their home. One mother commented “I just do my work and mostly stay at home.” None of the GIA mothers work, and they do not often venture outside of their homes. For all of the mothers, their day-to-day chores often kept them busy from sunup to sundown. As a result, their interactions with non-kin (aside from neighbors) is miniscule. One GIA mother noted that “I speaker to [GIAs] father and then he speaks to someone else. I don’t go outside to speak to anyone.” In contrast, fathers are unrestricted in their movements; they travel outside their homes and villages and engage with non-kin in daily interactions.
**Household Decision Making**

Household decision are gendered, particularly in the GIA households. A GIA father noted that he takes all of the household decisions because his wife “doesn’t have those qualities.” The situations in GI households are mixed because half of the mothers are employed and bringing in household income. These mothers are vocal about their ability to contribute to important household decisions (i.e. purchasing electronics, child schooling, marriage) though they do not make these decisions independent of their husbands. Two GI mothers (both employed) heavily influence household decision making, but in remaining GI and GIA households, fathers have the final decision. Mothers in these households commented that the “family sits together to talk” but that their “decisions or advice are not considered.” Fathers commented that their wives managed all household chore related decisions but are not involved in strategic decision making (i.e. major purchases).

GIAs and GIAs are not involved in household decisions because girls must “study and do [their] work.”

**Relationships**

Male-female friendships are atypical and regarded with suspicion. A GIA brother attending college noted that “if a girl goes to college and if she talks to any boy regarding her studies, it is taken in the wrong way. If a boy talks to a girl, it is made to be a very big issue and it creates a lot of problems.” One father advised his daughter that if she were to have “illicit relations with anybody, or I see you laughing, interacting with anybody, then I will give you strict punishment, and it will be bad for you.”

**Capabilities**

Girls are aware about the household work imbalance between their mothers and fathers. Girls note that “women face so many problems” and “work all day.” These beliefs are supported by elder brothers. One commented that his “mummy is very hard working and [his] father does not acknowledge that.” He continued that girls are capable of taking their own decisions and “they know very well what is good for them.” The primary limitation, however, is community perceptions and beliefs; girls “only worry what will people say and then quit,” disregarding whatever they “think and want.” Participants commented that families and communities care more about the success of their sons compared to daughters noting that the “success of a girl is not given much value.”

A majority of fathers did not note gender specific challenges. One GI father commented that “women and girls don’t face any issues here” claiming that society dictates “what a woman should do...how she should behave. Only then she is good.” One GIA father noted that his daughter struggles because she manages multiple activities including “taking care of everything” and household chores while always being mindful of her safety and security. One girl summarized women’s challenge stating that “Whatever kind of injustices [women face], they quietly [bare] the brunt of everything.”
4.4.6 Milaan

Motivation to apply to Milaan

GIs and GIAs have similar reasons for applying to Milaan. The monetary support offered upon completing the Girl Icon Program is a primary motivator. The prospect of funding also motivate parents to support their daughters in the application process.

Teachers and principals are the primary adults who encourage GI and GIAs to apply. When girls apply through school, their families are not aware of their daughter’s submission. In some cases, teachers identified specific GIs/GIAs about the program, forgoing other female students. In one unique instance, a teacher did not share the application with the future selected GI. According to the GI, the teacher saved the application for another student who was the class monitor. When the GI asked if she could apply, the teacher asked the GI to first complete the application and later reviewed it before submitting it. One GI received the application because she was in the top 80% of her 10th standard class. Another GIA received the application from her teacher who thought of “helping out.” GIs commented that their families were happy when they got accepted into Milaan.
Knowledge

All GI’s commented on the distinct differences between the knowledge acquired at school and the knowledge acquired via Milaan. School focuses on “studies only,” but Milaan discusses topics such as the differences between sex and gender, lack of gender equity, and “things relevant to society.” Girls provided rich examples of the lack of gender equity in their homes and communities, and they boldly expressed their disdain towards existing gender and social norms.

One girl commented that “we always use to think that men work so hard and get tired after working the whole day. But we realized that women work harder than men.” Another commented that “when I joined Milaan, I wasn’t aware of many things like discrimination in our society and the natural and equal rights of women.” One girl commented that her father believed that everyone should listen to him because he is an elder member of the family, but she now believes that, in a marriage, both “husband and wife should be considered as equal and both should have equal rights.”

Milaan’s training informs girls about their rights as it pertains to the dowry system, child marriage, and domestic violence. A GI commented that “earlier, I wasn’t of these things…I got to know how girls are suppressed in their own homes.” One GI noted that “school teachers told us about our rights, but Milaan taught me how to use them.”

All of the GIs highlighted Milaan’s menstrual hygiene management education. Milaan addresses the stigma and silence around the topic, encouraging girls to discuss the issue with the family and friends. Girls commented that they “openly started talking about menstruation at home.” Another said she talked to her father about menstruation too. Mothers are nervous at their daughter’s openness to discuss such a taboo topic. One mother scolded her daughter, telling her to not discuss “such things” with males; the GI retorted that “there is no reason to hide it” and “at least brother can help me with medication.” The same GI noted that her mother “didn’t like what [she] was saying and was quite afraid of all this.”

GI’s eagerly shared their newfound understanding of gender vs. sex with their families, particularly their female kin. One GI commented that she “learned about gender and had a discussion about transgender...with [her] didi (sister).”

Motivation to apply to Milaan

Milaan staff provide much needed mentorship and guidance for many of the GI’s. Girls commented that Milaan provides the “guidance which I was craving badly.” Another commented that “before joining Milaan, I had no dreams, no aim. Nobody has guided me. I only used to stay and at home, no one guided me.” GI’s named specific Milaan staff members as sources of support because they “understand me well,” and girls are confidence that Milaan staff would be able “to do something.”
Girls talked about themselves as two different selves: one before Milaan and one after Milaan. The girls post-Milaan are brimming with a sense of identify and belief in their capabilities. For example, a GI felt that “earlier I used to think that being a girl, I can’t do anything. I can’t go out whenever I feel so, but after joining Milaan, I got to understand that even I have rights. Even I can do something for myself and take decisions regarding my life.” Another girl said that she “started taking stand for myself after joining Milaan” and began to articulate her aspirations to do an BA and MA with her parents. Milaan’s programming instills a sense of self-positive behaviors.

Self-Positive Traits

Girls talked about themselves as two different selves: one before Milaan and one after Milaan. The girls post-Milaan are brimming with a sense of identify and belief in their capabilities. For example, a GI felt that “earlier I used to think that being a girl, I can’t do anything. I can’t go out whenever I feel so, but after joining Milaan, I got to understand that even I have rights. Even I can do something for myself and take decisions regarding my life.” Another girl said that she “started taking stand for myself after joining Milaan” and began to articulate her aspirations to do an BA and MA with her parents. Milaan’s programming instills a sense of self-positive behaviors.
4.4.7 Traits of Self-Positive Adolescent Girls

Self-positive adolescent girls exhibit a multiple of traits that support a sense of identity and belief in their capabilities. We identify these traits in all six GIs and in three GIAs. These GIAs were positive deviants in their communities due to their participation in athletics, to their travels outside the community for college, and to their non-gender conforming attire. These three GIAs have consistent family support which allows them to pursue their interests and encourage their positive deviance.

Comfort with independent mobility

All six of the GIs were expected to travel “outside” their communities for training. One GI shared that before Milaan, she was “scared to go alone” to a nearby town, but now, she has “the confidence to travel alone.” By the end of their trainings, all of the GIs were comfortable with traveling by themselves and on public transportation. One GIA travels frequently for competitions and is comfortable traveling alone to major cities including Kolkata, Mumbai, and Pune.

Knowledge of resources

Self-positive adolescents have a vague sense of the necessary steps required to achieve their career goals. Instead, they spoke about studying hard and continuing their education. GI/GIAs seek advice from secondary school teachers and college professors, and GIs also speak with Milaan staff about their education and career oriented next steps.

In addition, self-positive girls know about crisis resources. One GI commented that “I can seek police help since I am an adult now and nobody can force marriage on me.” Another GIA was a female representative of her community’s Child Protection Community. Information and knowledge of resources are often used in the services of others. Another participant provided a domestic abuse helpline number to her family in support of her sister. When a GIA realized that her sister was in a betrothed arrangement at 12 years old, she notified her parents that they both “can be put behind the bars.” Her father was “upset and said that [she] should not be the one who should be interfering in this,” but the GIA insisted that “if [she] is not going to talk about it then who else will talk?” Another GIA convinced her family to disavow her elder sister’s dowry by convincing her father that “these days, nobody asks for dowry.”
Community Service

The community action projects and peer groups force GIs to publicly engage in their community and with stakeholders. Girls in both groups encourage their female peers to continue their education. When a peer was skipping class, a GI went to her friends’ home and spoke to her parents to encourage their daughter to continue school. Another GI spoke out against casteism in her school when her classmates refused to eat with another girl who was in a lower caste. These girls viewed themselves as role models to other girls in the community. According to GIs, the girls participating in their peer groups “think of becoming like [GI].” They ask GIs about their experiences, and one GI noted that she feels that her “influence on people is growing.”

Self-positive GIAs, also, conduct similar activities. One GIA rides a motorbike and inspired a few girls in her community to also learn to ride motorbikes; the GIA commented that girls will be inspired from her to study so that they can “also progress in life.” Another athlete GIA commented that “whenever I go to stadium for practice, I can see many girls like me there.” This GIA noted that she wasn’t just a role model for girls, but boys also follow her when she goes practice.

Expressing oneself

A dominant element of self-positive traits was girls’ ability to “express oneself.” Expressing oneself is used in highlighting one’s wants and needs. Girls’ ability to express themselves contributes to their self-esteem and ability to vouch for themselves. GIs shared that they were not able to “express” themselves openly but Milaan leadership training allowed them to “express themselves in a much better way.” One GI noted that being able to express herself at home was the “first step towards what [she] wants to achieve.” GIAs also highlighted experiences in which they shared their feelings and needs to others. One GIA reprimanded her father when her brothers were served more food and she “reminded him that [she] was also [his] child.”

In addition to speaking up in the household, girls also became more vocal at school and in front of elders. Many girls commented that they were once afraid of talking to people and unable to “muster courage to speak to big or elderly people of in front of a crowd.” Since Milaan, one girl started “raising [her] voice and expressing [herself].” A GI commented that “I didn’t use to talk much in class or with teachers. After joining Milaan, I started sharing [my] experiences.” One girl commented that before Milaan, she “wasn’t able to talk confidently in front of others.” But Milaan “takes the hesitation out and teaches how to talk to others.”
Conflict and Negotiation

As girls began to identify experiences of gender inequity in their households, they resisted their parents’ gendered expectations. This creates household conflict where girls must negotiate. Girls resisted gendered household chores such as cooking and cleaning. One girl spoke back to her father saying “Papa told me to serve food to my brother. I gave back and refuse to do it and told my brother to do it yourself.” Girls also argued for their education; one GI commented “I fought with them [her parents] saying that when my brother can study then why not me?” In some cases, girls ignored their parents’ wishes and acted independently. One GI took a career-based exam in spite of her parents’ restrictions. Another GI enrolled herself in college without informing her parents. In these instances, girls resisted their parents’ gendered expectations resulting in conflict.

Belief in one’s capabilities

Overall, practicing these self-positive behaviors improves girls’ beliefs in their own capabilities. Girls do not want “only boys to enjoy all the freedoms, but girls also should be given equal rights and equal freedoms.” In their communities, girls are “under tremendous pressure;” they fear that they will get married if they do not focus on their studies yet “aspirations of girls are not given any importance.” Despite these challenges, one GI claimed that “I have learned about my rights, and I am capable of doing many things now.” Another noted that “I have gained a lot of self-confidence after joining Milaan.” Two GIs enrolled in college without their parent’s permission. One of them felt empowered to choose her own subjects and has “been choosing [her] own subjects in every class.”
The development and practice of self-positive behaviors are not encouraged in households and communities in part because these self-positive behaviors are not compatible with existing gender norms. One GI noted that her eldest brother believes that girls should “be depressed” and not “speak too much” otherwise they cause ruin and drama. Neighbors advised GI families to not send their daughters out because of safety concerns. At home, girls are often in conflict with male kin, and outside the home, girls describe challenges with men and women.

The GIs and GIAs who exhibited self-positive characteristics are met with conflict and resistance from their families and communities. Conflict is defined as arguments, differences in opinions, or tension that arises from two or parties in disagreements. The conflicts described by participants were around daughters continuing education, clothing choices, and mobility.

In households, girls and fathers often disagreed on the daughter’s desire to continue education. Five of the six GIs described conflicts with their fathers about continuing their education beyond secondary school. As described previously, fathers and male kin believe that higher education is unnecessary and costly. Girls argued that their brothers were allowed to study despite limited funds, but that girls were expected to “stay at home” and work. One GI brothers described that the distance between his father and his sister is increasing because she is “so stubborn” and his father “does not listen to [them].” The same brother felt that his sister’s voice would cause future challenges noting that “if a person is living as she desires, then there will be problems for her” because one would have to “face a lot of issues.” Interestingly, fathers often claimed that they never argued or had disagreements with their daughters though this was always contradicted by girls, brothers, and mothers.

Brothers and mothers are often on the same page as their daughters. Girls have a stronger and more communicative relationship with their mothers, and so girls are able to discuss and explain their concerns. One mother described having daily arguments with her GI daughter about the differences between boys’ and girls’ chores and expectations at home. GI and GIA mothers are often a buffer between unsupportive fathers, kin, and community members. One mother did not inform her extend family about her daughter’s participation with Milaan because they would “make fun” of the family. Another GIA mother mentioned that she had a “tiff” with her neighbor who made disparaging comments about her daughter’s hair and “boy-like” mannerisms. Elder brothers close in age rarely argued with their sisters; instead, they often came to their sisters’ defense to their parents.

Outside the home, some girls are defamed by community members about their mobility and their clothing choices. Neighbors, typically women, offer unsolicited advice and commentary on girls’ clothing and their travel outside the community. To avoid being the subject of community gossip, mothers want their daughters to dress conservatively; one mother prevented her daughter from wearing sleeves tops. The GI commented that her mother “only listen(s) to other people and (doesn’t) know who all is saying these things.” One GIA said that her community taunted her and her family by raising doubts about her father’s ability to control the GIA’s movements and her clothing choices. Conflict with neighbors dissipated after public acknowledgements of success; one GIA commented that most of the detractors became friends after she won competitions; noting that “when you are successful, people want to come closer to you.”
Girls who voiced their needs and spoke up and spoke out are viewed as stubborn. Families are not comfortable with their daughters pushing back on their wishes; parents, and fathers in particular, believe they know what is best for their daughters without considering their daughter’s needs. One GI commented that after Milaan training, she was speaking more confidently with her family about attending college and as she gradually became “more firm in front of [her] parents, they [became] angry with me.” Her parents believe that she has “become more stubborn after joining Milaan. They think that [her] behavior has changed completely and [she] was much better before [Milaan].” This GI’s brother felt that his sister’s change is “good but not so much” because her “stubbornness” is causing unbearable tension in the family; the brother suggests that his sister “bring about 5-10% change” to appease the family. He believes that she would be able to better achieve her goals by doing “some work in the house” and staying as “everyone wants [her] to stay so that [she] can stay [at home] and achieve the target of becoming a teacher” so that she can make her own decisions once she secures a job. Another GI is “adamant” about wearing jeans despite her parents’ reservations. In response to their parent’s lack of support, two GIs registered themselves into college without their parents’ knowledge. When parents came to find out, girls were scolded, but these two GI frequently commented that they “don’t listen to anyone” in their families anymore.
Girl Icons clearly benefit from the Milaan Girl Icon Program. All of the GIs exhibit self-positive behaviors, behaviors vital to developing their capabilities. From this study, we highlight the interconnected environment in which the GIP implements the first pillar of leading self: self-positive behaviors, gender and social norms, and generational conflict (Figure 13). By nurturing girls’ agency and voice, these elements create an environment in which girls build and develop critical consciousness, confidence, and self-efficacy.

The GIP fosters girls’ self-positive behaviors; girls, in turn, challenge existing gender and social norms and resist against generational dissonance. Generational dissonance represents the foundationally different lived experiences and expectations between parents/elder and their daughters. The cyclical relationship between gender and social norms and generational dissonance makes it difficult for parents to relate their daughters’ lives and subsequently, feeds into the gender and social norms and expectations which, in turn, reinforce the generational dissonance between adolescent girls and their parents/elders.

Figure 13: Interconnected environment of GIP’s pillar of leading self
Practicing self-positive behaviors causes tension between established gender and social norms and the monumental generational social shifts between parents and their children. Parents’ life experiences are economically and socially varied from their children’s experiences. Parents do not have similar career goals or aspirations when they were adolescents themselves. Mothers were typically married in their mid to late-teens, and fathers quit schooling to being laboring in their teens. In contrast, none of the girls in this study are married or formally employed (though all girls have many physical household responsibilities), and parents are waiting until their daughters completed their education or have a job before thinking of marriage.

In addition, parents have experienced a significant number of adverse childhood experiences including a parental death during childhood and dire poverty. Overall, the adolescent girls in this study are being raised in more financially stable households compared to their parents.

Girls have more experiences with the “real world” than their mothers and in some cases, their fathers as well. By simply traveling to and attending school and college, girls are more mobile and interact with the boys and men more so than their mothers. As indicated in egocentric social networks, GIs are increased connections with non-kin males and have greater access to adults outside of the household. Parents do not trust their daughters’ decision-making skills and question their daughters’ capabilities. Parents have limited access to resources, but they want the last word about what was best for their daughters without considering her knowledge or experiences. Parents want their daughters to “stand on their own feet” but place limitations on their mobility and involvement in household decision making, limiting their daughter’s experiential practice.

An additional example considers GI’s comfort with openly discussing challenges and needs around menstruation. GIs express relief and sense of purpose when highlighting the social taboos around menstruations. But as they discuss their needs with family members, mothers are nervous and “afraid” at their daughter’s openness to discuss such a taboo topic. Girls’ self-positive behavior of expressing themselves challenges long standing cultural norms around menstruation. Mothers, whose menstrual experiences were likely shrouded in secrecy, feel uncomfortable.

Elder brothers, close in age to their sisters, are buffers between sisters and parents. Since they often have similar educational experiences, elder brothers are sympathetic and aware of gender equities. These brothers argue with parents to support their sisters’ access to higher education and to delay her marriage. Leveraging elder brothers’ decision-making powers and influence is an effective method to bring Milaan gender equity lessons into the home.

Overall, poverty significantly influences decision making. All participants in this study are in low-income communities, and some households are in dire financial situations. Limited household funds are often directed to sons who are more likely to receive more food, attend better schools, and continue higher education. Fathers are hesitant to support daughters’ education beyond secondary school, and as a result, GIs and GIAs eager to attend college must solicit mothers and brothers support or enroll themselves in college without parental permission.

Generational dissonance between families/communities and daughters causes a significant amount of conflict. As girls resist gender norms with their self-positive behaviors, they are confronted with conflict from their families and communities. Though self-positive girls believe in their capabilities and voice their concerns and needs, they are often ignored. Girls are seen as incapable of making their own decisions and surviving in the “real world.” Though girls trust themselves and believe in their abilities, they do not have the option of making mistakes otherwise their families and communities would tout it as evidence of established gender norms that limit their decision-making and mobility. As a result, girls have to repeatedly practice self-positive behaviors to act against the wishes of their parents, creating tension and conflict while practicing self-positive behaviors. Unless girls take drastic action, such as enrolling into college without their parents’ knowledge or permission, their ability to change their lives may be limited.
Thus self-positive behaviors are a crucial pathway to girls’ empowerment. We argue that self-positive behaviors, however, are interim outcomes because they are necessary but insufficient steps to empowerment and girls’ abilities to make strategic life decisions. Self-positive behaviors are on the pathway to the development of agency, resiliency, and voice – traditional measures of empowerment. The self-positive behaviors as interim outcomes provide an opportunity to appreciate small but significant steps towards empowerment. In addition, interim outcomes allow girls to start at varying levels for different self-positive behaviors. For example, a rural girl stepping outside of her home without her parents’ permission is an act of rebellion and development of her capabilities. For another who frequently travels outside her community, asking her brothers to help with the household chores is her form of personal growth. In both cases, girls are exercising mobility and expressing onself but in difference capacities.

The following are examples of indicators to measure girls’ ability to express oneself – one of the six identified self-positive behaviors. Girls’ ability to express oneself can be measured by girls comfort with public speaking, speaking with and negotiating with elders and those with greater authority, speaking with non-kin males, and verbal self-defense. These multiple indicators allow for a multi-faceted approach to assessing girls’ ability to express themselves and offers an opportunity for girls to diversity a multitude of skills.

Future evaluations must consider the second pillar (leading others via the peer groups) and third pillar (leading social change through collective action projects). Both of these pillars address the structures of community constraints by developing girls’ leadership and negotiation skills. Though communities may suppress girls’ agencies, the purpose of the peer groups is to develop a voice that speaks for girls and attempt to shift community norms through collective action projects. For example, previous GIs organized public plays around female infanticide to share knowledge and resources. Evaluating knowledge, attitudes, and practices of social and gender norms among families and communities would be an effective method to gauge if GIs are raising awareness and shifting norms.

Finally, adolescent girls are not a homogenous group. Their experiences and social conditions such as caste/class, gender identity, religion, disability, and sexual orientation all affect their engagement with Milaan’s GIP. Interim outcomes must be attuned to these specific intersectional needs.

Empowerment is a personal journey and participants start on different levels. The diversity of opportunities and experiences make it challenging to provide a comprehensive empowerment curriculum. Milaan’s Girl Icon Program provides essential empowerment training for girls who may not otherwise receive this type of opportunity; the program is an excellent stepping stone; expanding girls critical consciousness and providing a supportive and structured environment for them to develop and practice self-positive behaviors. By practicing these skills as young women, we hope that their exposure will encourage them to voice their resistance to gender and social inequities as adult women in households, work places, political spaces, and in their communities.
6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are organized into topical buckets: encouraging family support, Girl Icon programming, monitoring and evaluation, and miscellaneous suggestions.

6.1 Encouraging family support

These recommendations concern Milaan communication with families during interviews, trainings, and beyond. Parents are concerned that Milaan’s training requires their daughters to travel “outside” to cities which they have limited exposure. In some cases, parents were surprised that travel was a requirement for participation. To assuage these fears, Milaan staff should notify families the locations of trainings and offer to arrange travel logistics.
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<tr>
<td>Parents concerns about daughter’s travel</td>
<td>Clear and continued communication about the travel requirements for training and other Milaan activities. Milaan should offer to arrange travel logistics and/or provide group travel arrangements. During the final interview process, parents should be notified that participation in the program would require travel; one GI noted that Milaan “didn’t reveal earlier that if I get selected for Milaan, then I have to go to Lucknow for training purpose and that to for six days. So it came as a surprise for us, especially for my mummy.”</td>
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<td>Fathers not involved in Milaan interviewing; could be linked with their lack of understanding of Milaan’s purpose</td>
<td>Facilitate relationships with fathers/male head of households. Fathers/male head of households should be requested to participate the home visit interviews. This is challenging since they are mobile, but their support is crucial. This relationship can be fostered during the phone interview stage.</td>
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<td>Engaging parents in GI education and programming</td>
<td>Provide updates on trainings to parents; Milaan could send girls home with printed pictures from training activities and/or have printed newsletters to send home with girls. Though some parents are illiterate, they may appreciate photos and visually seeing their daughter’s photo as evidence of their daughter’s participation.</td>
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<td>Lack of community support and knowledge of Milaan programming</td>
<td>Public acknowledgement of GI at the community can motivate neighbors and families to support GI. Publicly highlighting GI’s work and background in local newspapers, posters, radio, and newsletters would be an excellent way for families and communities to legitimize girls’ capabilities. This public acknowledgement of daughters’ accomplishments is important for parents and communities. Milaan does a good job of promoting selected GI in media, but families may have a difficult time accessing this information. In addition, Milaan could also highlight one (or several) GI families at graduation ceremonies. Parents might appreciate the acknowledgment.</td>
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<td>Engaging elder brothers into GI programming</td>
<td>Elder brothers who are also students, unmarried, and close in age are their sister’s primary cheerleaders and allies. These brothers use their household decision making capital to promote their sister’s opportunities and wellbeing. Because brothers are influential family members, Milaan must consider organizing training specific to elder brothers to promote their allyship and participation in their sisters’ success.</td>
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### 6.2 Girl Icon Programming

These recommendations focus on the GI programming with suggestions for program implementation, training topics, and structural changes to support GIs.

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<td>Community support, feelings of loneliness</td>
<td>Inviting two GIs from a community/village: having two GIs from the same community could benefit the girls and their families in many ways. The GIs would have a partner in their GI experience. Parents may feel more comfortable with Milaan knowing that another local girl is also in the same program; this could facilitate coordinated travel and social action projects. Focusing on having a dual GI presence in communities could strengthen Milaan’s presence in these families and communities.</td>
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<td>Girls have little to no experience interacting with non-kin males. Families and communities view male friendships with suspicion further limiting girls’ interaction and experiences with male peers.</td>
<td>Girls have limited male relationships outside the home; primary and secondary schools are often gender segregated, and college may be the first time when many girls are interacting casually with non-kin males their own age. Training aimed at fostering healthy and safe relationships could be valuable to make girls feel safe. In addition, girls should be able to identify behaviors related to unhealthy and harmful relationships and also be able to seek resources for support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental health and resiliency training</td>
<td>Girls face constant adversity. Mental health skills and practices, such as self-compassion and meditation, can be valuable tools to feed resiliency.</td>
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<td>Lack of guidance and mentorship about achieving career goals</td>
<td>Girls have concrete career goals but do not know the steps to achieve them aside from “studying hard.” Girls can benefit from having a local mentor who can provide strategic career guidance. A local mentor should be an individual who understands local policies and challenges and is aware of girls’ situations and experiences. These mentors are likely to be more relatable to girls and their families. The previous mentorship program involved mentors who lived in New Delhi; girls and mentors may have difficulty connecting because these relationships are not starting on equitable footing.</td>
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<td>Speaking with adults and elders</td>
<td>GIs commented that Milaan helped them become comfortable speaking up and communicating with adults and elders. To encourage girls to feel comfortable with adults during training, guest speakers should be encouraged to dialogue with the girls rather than lecture and speak at them. During training observations, some guest lectures communicated via a call-and-response in which girls were expected to acknowledge the speaker, but there was limited engagement of active, organic conversation. Repeated interactions with adults during training will equip girls with communication strategies for peer groups and community action projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity of training topics</td>
<td>Girls may experience additional challenges not stated in this report. In addition, girls may experience different challenges from cohort to cohort. During trainings, it would be wise to solicit training topics from girls themselves. By providing opportunities for influencing (and potentially leading trainings), Milaan could provide a safe space for girls to practice self-positive behaviors.</td>
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<td>Milaan staff at trainings encompass multiple roles when working with adolescents. Their close interaction with adolescents has implicit bias.</td>
<td>Milaan staff are teachers, guidance counselors, and mentors, and they are highly influential in shaping a GI’s experience. However, there is a noticeable power differential between Milaan staff and GIs. Girls referred to Milaan staff in a deferential and respectful manner. Milaan staff can benefit from training about working and engaging with adolescents. Staff and girls are likely coming from different backgrounds and experiences, and formal trainings might provide staff with the tools to connect and engage with girls.</td>
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6.3 Monitoring and evaluation

Rigorous data management system should include baseline, midline, and endline surveys to collect information on agency, decision-making practices, relationship with family, and other interim outcomes. Process evaluations will allow Milaan to implement and test programming to develop evidence-based programming. In addition, this database of data will facilitate considerations of randomized control trials and other rigorous evaluations. Milana could benefit from understanding specific girls’ needs to tailor girls’ training to focus on upcoming challenges. For example, girls who are currently in secondary school vs. those are in senior-secondary school and preparing for college might require different training.

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<td>Digitization of data</td>
<td>At the moment, the interview evaluations are all collected on paper. This information should be transferred to a digital medium to allow for future data analysis and to protect the data from loss or damage.</td>
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<td>Efficacy of peer groups and community action projects</td>
<td>Currently, there is no formal assessment of the benefits of the peer groups (Pillar Two: Leadings Others) and community action projects (Pillar Three: Leading Social Change). These elements of Milaan programming are poorly understood. In practice the community action projects are encouraging girls to navigate relationships with adults, and Milaan staff are aware of girls’ progress. Girls, however, shared challenges with executing their projects and expressed concern that their communities did not understand the purpose of the projects. In addition, the efficacy of the peer groups is unknown. Future evaluations should explore how girls participating in these groups find the programming.</td>
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<td>Mental health and well-being data collection</td>
<td>Mental health challenges due to gender inequity is common in India. Milaan is in a unique position to collect mental health and well-being data from their participants. Female adolescent mental health is unexplored in India, but it a burgeoning issue. Some families are coming from dire circumstances and understanding girls’ adverse childhood experiences might help tailor trainings and identify girls who might need intensive support or follow-up. In addition to collecting data on mental health and well-being, Milaan can incorporate mental health training and practices into their programming. Milaan could also benefit from collecting healthcare access data (i.e. last visit to doctor).</td>
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6.4 Additional Suggestions

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<td>Financial literacy</td>
<td>Milaan already requires girls to have their own bank account in order to participate in training. This is an excellent step to ensure financial independence. Additional trainings about savings, debt management, and contract agreement can assist girls with the skills to monitor their financial well-being. At the moment, they are likely to be reliant on their fathers and brothers, and later, their future husbands.</td>
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<td>Technology literacy</td>
<td>In the IDIs, GIs identified the gendered nature to technology and internet access. A few girls had access to smart phones and computer classes, but they were predominantly in peri-urban communities and enrolled in college. Access and comfort to technology is crucial to future success. In addition to learning how to use mobile and computer technologies, GI should also be aware of safe internet practices.</td>
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<td>Extended mentorship with a GI alumni mentorship</td>
<td>GI who graduate from the program are ideal mentors themselves. Current GIs could benefit from having older GIs as peers and mentors especially when organizing community action projects. This has a two-fold benefit: it continues to engage GI alumni with the program and it provides guidance to current GIs.</td>
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<td>Promoting friendship during training</td>
<td>During trainings, girls seemed close, but GIs rarely mentioned other GIs during the egocentric social network survey though they frequently mentioned Milaan staff. This could be because girls did not have means to keep in touch with other GIs.</td>
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<td>Additional monitoring to understand the ideal staff:Girl Icon ratio</td>
<td>During the observed training, the ratio of staff to Girl Icons seemed unmanageable. Consistent and continued M&amp;E will support finding the ideal ratio for the benefit of staff and Girl Icons alike.</td>
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