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Indigenous Adolescent Girls' Empowerment Network (IMAGEN): Adapting the Girl Roster™ for Lakota communities

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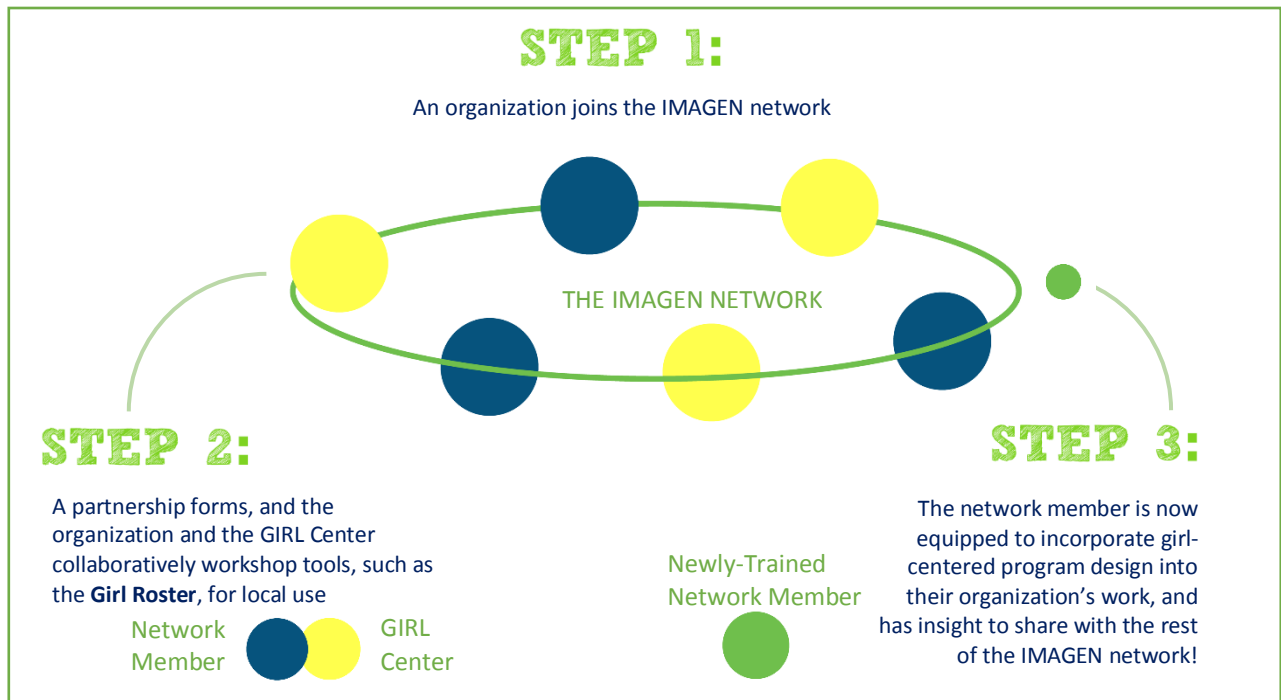
INDIGENOUS ADOLESCENT GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT NETWORK (IMAGEN): ADAPTING THE GIRL ROSTER™ FOR LAKOTA COMMUNITIES

A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND PARTNERSHIP

In July 2017, the White Buffalo Calf Woman Society (WBCWS) and the GIRL Center came together for a workshop on *Girl-Centered Program Design*, the *Girl Roster*, and how these two could be adopted and adapted into the organization's future programmatic work. Held at Her House on WBCWS' campus on the Rosebud Reservation in Mission, South Dakota, the week-long training came on the heels of the inaugural meeting of the Indigenous Adolescent Girls' Empowerment Network (IMAGEN) in March 2017 in New York City. That meeting was a first conversation between the GIRL Center and organizations such as WBCWS that work locally with Native American communities to understand the specific needs of adolescent girls in Indian Country. It opened the doors for collaborations such as the workshop described in this brief, and laid the groundwork for the IMAGEN Approach to supporting Girl-Centered Program Design among organizations looking to effectively meet the needs of Native American girls.

THE IMAGEN APPROACH

The members in the IMAGEN network bring a wealth of insight concerning the needs of the Native communities they serve, and the GIRL Center houses myriad programmatic tools and resources that have been tried and tested in global settings for several decades. The IMAGEN Approach is an adaptable process that links these two worlds, with the overarching goal of helping those organizations who are ready to incorporate girl-centered programming do so in a sustainable and impactful way. *The partnership builds an opportunity for the two organizations to adapt, test, and apply tools specifically created for facilitating Intentional Design*, with a long-view towards incorporating girl-centered programming into the organization's work.



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WORKSHOP ON THE ROSEBUD RESERVATION

The White Buffalo Calf Woman Society (WBCWS), led by Executive Director Janet Routzen, provides services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking on the Rosebud Reservation. Over the course of a week, a staff team from WBCWS and facilitators from the GIRL Center met to discuss the concepts behind intentional girl-centered program design and the importance of avoiding “elite capture,” and worked to master the use and adaptation of the Girl Roster tool. Sessions included:

- **Making Girls Visible:** a discussion of how adolescent girls and young women are often excluded from programming, and why intentional design matters in identify the most-excluded girls.
- **Understanding the Accessible Community for AI Girls:** a discussion that examined the physical and social geography of girls’ lives in Rosebud, and the unique access that different segments of girls may possess.
- **Introduction to the Girl Roster:** a presentation on the purpose of the Girl Roster tool, how it has been used previously at the GIRL Center.
- **Girl Roster Technology Set Up and Testing:** a walk-through of the technology and set-up involved in the Girl Roster, with live demonstrations using Android phones.
- **Field Exercise:** the WBCWS team piloted the Girl Roster in one community on the reservation. The outcomes of this exercise are discussed at greater length in the side panel.
- **Lessons Learned from Field Exercise:** the WBCWS team and GIRL Center facilitators convened to discuss how their approach and the questions were received in the communities, in addition to logistical considerations.
- **Planning Next Steps:** WBCWS participants created a plan for moving forward with the Girl Roster and girl-programming for the coming months in five designated communities.

WHAT IS THE GIRL ROSTER?

The Girl Roster is a hallmark tool at the GIRL Center, created in the shadow of development programs that aimed to engage girls in their programming, but reached fewer than they could and primarily those who stood the least to gain. An Android-based application with a user-friendly output for program and monitoring purposes, the Girl Roster is a resource designed to assist organizations in enumerating the universe of girls in the communities they work. Framed as a short series of optional, non-sensitive questions, the roster provides an opportunity to visualize the breakdown of girls in the community by factors such as age, living situations, education, and marital status. This visual segmentation facilitates the intentional program design process.

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ADAPTING GLOBAL TOOLS TO WORK LOCALLY

Prior to and during the field exercise, modifications were made to build a Girl Roster that would be responsive to the context of the Rosebud community and WBCWS’ work. These changes included:

Removing questions that asked for # of persons or families living in a household

Due to local policies limiting household size, respondents were reluctant to answer or became suspicious of intent when asked this

In the local context, adolescents living without either biological parent but with a grandparent is common and a predictor of different needs

Including language that captured when an adolescent was living with a grandparent

Modifying the Girl Roster to be a Youth Roster

The Girl Roster was expanded to ask the same questions for both female and male adolescents, which will compliment WBCWS’ current and future work

COMMUNITY INSIGHTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Before Rostering Begins, Community Awareness is Vital

Immediately after the pilot rostering took place during the workshop, WBCWS shared negative reactions they received both during and after the exercise. Despite the community being aware of WBCWS' purpose as an organization, the staff conducting the survey were at times met with suspicion or rejection by potential respondents. The reasons varied from general suspicion to a belief that the survey was tied to federal government activity.

To resolve this moving forward, WBCWS created a series of public service announcements (PSAs) that were read over the widely-accessed radio station. These PSAs clarified the purpose of the rostering as a step towards creating programs for adolescents in the community, and explicitly stated the dates in which the team would be in certain communities. Additionally, the team collaboratively created a script to be read at the beginning of each survey that clarifies the intent of the rostering and explains how the information will and will not be used.

Timing Matters

Another initial challenge that was faced during the field exercise was the time at which the rostering took place. The WBCWS team went out to survey at approximately 10:45 AM in one of the communities hardest hit by unemployment. As a result, many households presumably did not answer their doors because they were sleeping. Additionally, the staff expressed concern in approaching some residences who were likely to have household members who use alcohol or drugs (meth use is a major problem in the community).

To resolve this moving forward, the team plans on carrying-out rostering activities later in the day.

Team Composition and Safety Need to be Assessed Prior to Rostering

The rostering team from WBCWS was comprised of the organization's full-time staff who had varying experiences of out-of-office outreach experience and training. As a result, there were some members who felt less prepared in going door-to-door. Some staff members had previous encounters through their work on violence mitigation at WBCWS that necessitated avoiding contact with specific members of the community. Additionally, there was significant concern about the dangers presented by unleashed and vicious dogs known to roam around the area.

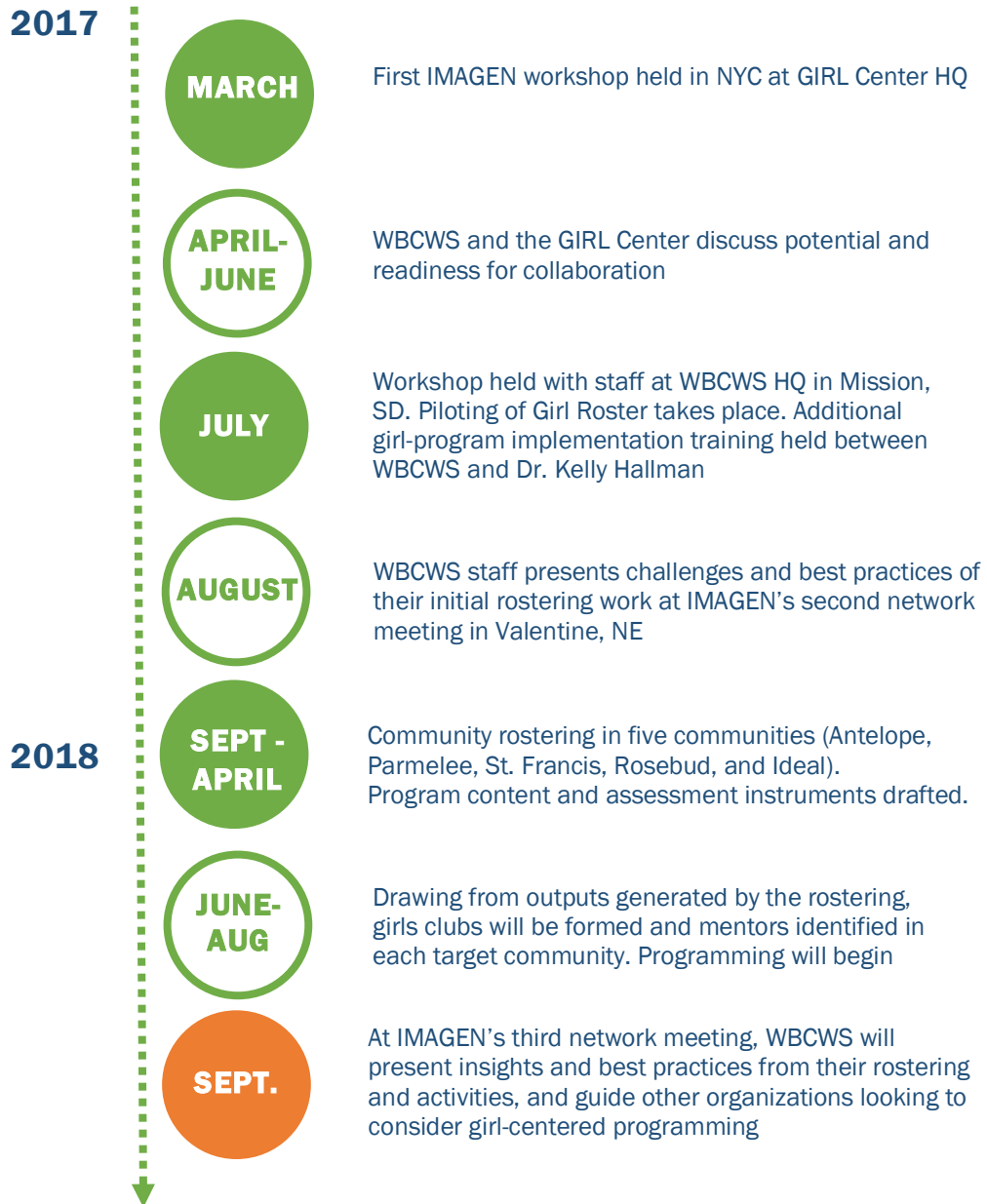
To resolve these concerns, the pairs were reconfigured to match newer employees with those who had more experience in dealing with potentially inflammatory situations. Additionally, WBCWS opted to adopt trios rather than pair teams. Prior to rostering, the team also reviewed the assigned houses to ensure that certain households would not be assigned to certain staff members. The concern about the dogs were addressed by using vehicles for transport between households (vehicular support is also necessary in this context, as communities are remote and often cover large areas). The team also decided to alert the police to their future activities to have additional support.

Mandated Reporting Carries Over into Rostering

A newer development for the roster in Rosebud, which has not been faced as often in its previous global contexts, is the understanding that the door-to-door process may reveal scenarios in which the staff member will have to fulfill their duties as a mandated reporter. As WBCWS is at its core a provider to victims of domestic violence, all staff are mandated reporters.

During the field exercise debrief, Janet Routzen reiterated the team's responsibility to alert authorities to problematic situations they witness. The team was also reminded to bring violence services support materials from WBCWS to distribute.

IMAGINING THE NEXT STEPS IN GIRL-CENTERED PROGRAMMING WITH THE WHITE BUFFALO CALF WOMAN SOCIETY



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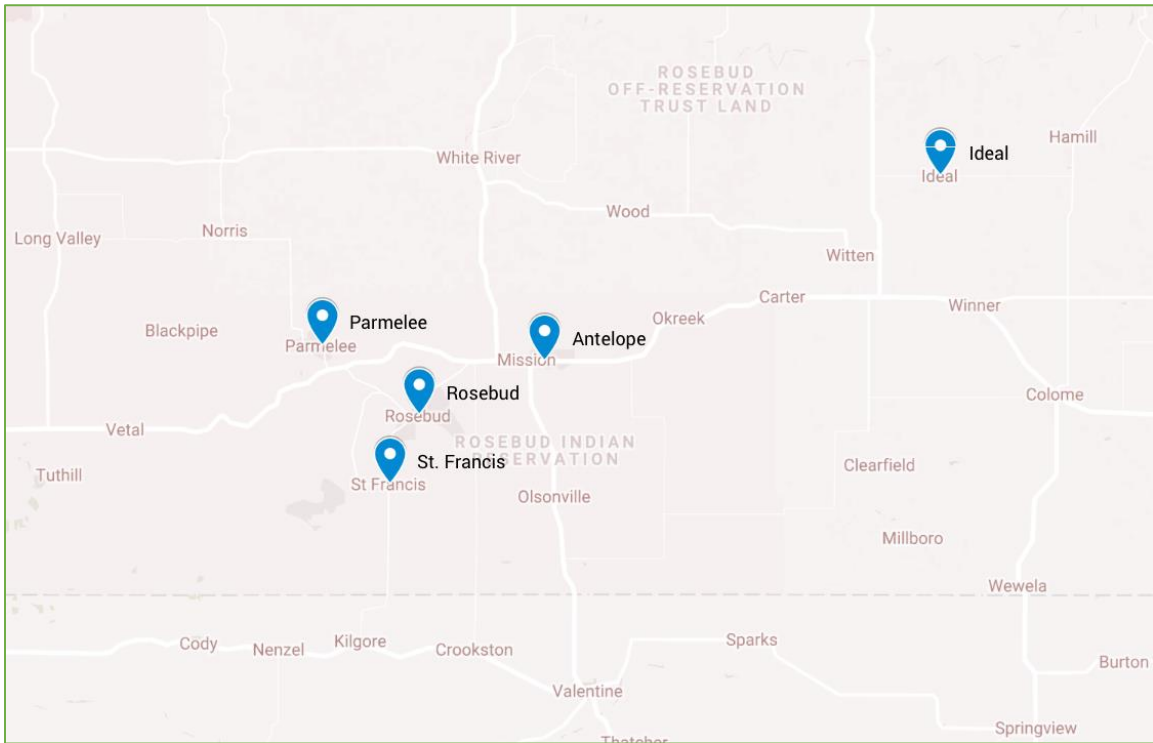
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IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

- Beginning in September, WBCWS will roster in 5 selected towns representing both the most populous communities of the Rosebud Reservation, and those of highest need. These five communities are highlighted in the map below.
- Simultaneously, WBCWS is scheduling community meetings and a convening with the Tribal Council so that residents understand the purpose of the Girl Roster and the intentions of the girl programs that will be carried-out by the organization.
- Building off of a benchmark exercise conducted during the workshop, WBCWS will develop an appropriate curriculum for the girls' clubs.
- As roster outputs are being assessed, WBCWS will draft job descriptions for girl mentors, and plan the structure and logistics for the girl groups. The groups themselves will be guided by two mentors and one staff member per group. Initial mentor training will begin in October.
- Continued assistance and support will be provided by the GIRL Center.

Five Program Communities for WBCWS Girl-Centered Work



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