

Radical Visions of Safety Learning Framework Summary

INTRODUCTION

In 2019, Alliance For Girls (AFG) along with Evaluation Studio began a research study creating space for girls and gender-expansive to define what safety and healthy relationships meant and felt like to them, and the basic conditions and practices they needed in order to achieve their Radical Vision of Safety.

From that study, a Radical Visions of Safety report (RVoS) was authored identifying 13 concepts used to characterize what safety meant and felt like for girls and gender-expansive youth. This definition of safety cut across varying intersectional racial, sexual, gender, and socioeconomic identities.

In 2022, to further embed the findings from the Radical Visions of Safety report, AFG commissioned Evaluation Studio to facilitate a series of Community Learning Exchanges (CLX) elevating and centering the knowledge and lived experiences of girls, gender-expansive youth, and their champions to build a framework grounded in their values and realities which would uphold and support the conditions needed to actualize these 13 definitions of safety.

Between June-August 2022, Evaluation Studio hosted three Community Learning Exchanges exploring existing evaluation frameworks, natural ecosystems, the RVoS definitions of safety, intergenerational considerations, and the roles and responsibilities of connected systems and environments. More details about the CLX is located in this summary's research methodology section.



ELEVATING WHAT IS RADICAL

As a part of the Community Learning Exchange, participants explored what made this the Radical Visions of Safety report and the accompanying framework so radical. The bullet points recap what makes this learning framework and definitions of safety radical.

- Radical is getting to the root of change
- Radical is creating space for communities and individuals to define the values and demand the conditions they want to live in.
- Radical is asking and expecting all conditions and needs to be met.
- Radical is not tying measures to funding
- Radical is flexible frameworks
- Radical is not asking grantees to do things that are not useful to the populations they serve
- Radical is intergenerational healing, learning, and building with seven generations past and seven generations forward in mind

RETHINKING TRADITIONAL EVALUATION FRAMEWORKS

The table below demonstrates the CLX process and iteration from exploring and taking a critical lens to traditional evaluation frameworks, to deconstructing and examining their relationships to them, to a vision of what could be different in order to truly serve girls, gender-expansive youth, and their champions.

TABLE 1: CLX Iterative Process For Creating A RVoS Learning Framework

Traditional Evaluation Frameworks ¹	Insights/Observations from CLX	Radical Visions of Safety Learning Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluation frameworks are created by academics, institutions, foundations, organizations outside of communities. ● Foundations and other organizations that exist outside of intended communities define what success looks like. ● Programs, grantees, communities, and individuals are the evaluated and, but not the foundations, larger institutions, and systems. ● Evaluations should provide quantifiable, generalizable lessons. ● Evaluators should be selected based on credentials that reflect traditional notions of expertise. ● Evaluators are the experts and final arbiters; grantees are beneficiaries. ● Credible evidence comes from quantitative data and experimental research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluation frameworks are transactional ● Most evaluation frameworks are linear and reflect cause and effect (if you do this, then this will happen). ● Evaluation frameworks don't take into account the messiness of life ● Evaluation frameworks are impersonal and rigid ● Some evaluation frameworks don't offer guidance in how to carry it forward ● Many foundations don't support work for after 18 years of age ● Accountability of systems is missing ● Prefer circles to squares ● Evaluation frameworks need space to individualize ● Many evaluation frameworks don't reflect interconnectedness of people and issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Centers values of community, reciprocity, and definitions of safety. ● Strengths and assets-based ● Starts with trust ● Foundations, systems, and institutions are held accountable, evaluated, and measured in their support of the same framework ● Evaluation framework is owned and created by the communities it's intended to serve ● Communities and individuals are the experts and purveyors of data, knowledge, and credible evidence. ● Takes into account the messy of life ● Flexible, evolving, and dynamic ● Pushes for flexible grants and doesn't tie awards to measures ● Evaluation in service to communities, girls, and gender-expansive young people

¹ Equitable Evaluation Initiative, <https://www.equitableeval.org/> characterizations of traditional evaluation frameworks, *Improving the practice of evaluation through indigenous values and methods*, Hulili

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluators are objective. ● Evaluation funding primarily goes to data collection, analysis, and reporting. ● Time frames/short-term outcomes as indicators of good stewardship. ● Evaluation in service of foundation goals. ● Trust/relationships come from doing the work, but are not the starting point. ● Evaluation measures and goals often reflect values and outcomes of dominant societies. ● Expectations of improved measures is the responsibility of individuals, adults who work directly with communities, and grantees. ● Grantees adjust and adapt programming outcomes to reflect evaluation expectations and measures. ● Grantees' awards are tied to evaluation measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluation frameworks can be limiting in using gender terms ● Evaluation frameworks are not written by youth ● Evaluation frameworks need agreements ● Evaluation frameworks don't recognize preexisting trauma ● Evaluation frameworks don't reflect reciprocity ● Evaluation frameworks condition grantees and individuals to prioritize and choose fundamental needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluation for the purpose of learning, healing, and community knowledge creation, solution-building, and decision making process ● Evaluation benefits communities based on communities' defined values
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RADICAL VISIONS OF SAFETY LEARNING FRAMEWORK

The RVoS Learning Framework reforms and expands upon traditional evaluation frameworks in the way it builds an ecosystem of accountability and power to include, de-silo, and dismantle who we think of as decision-makers, caretakers, storytellers, visionaries, researchers, benefactors, and experts. The RVoS Learning Framework positions and weaves a shared and interconnected architecture of continuous learning and collaboration.

When the RVoS Learning Framework was presented at AFG's World We Imagine Conference on October 11, 2022, a multigenerational audience with varying roles and responsibilities shared what resonated about the workshop as a whole - emphasizing reconnection, relationships, community, empowerment, engagement, community-building, youth leadership, reciprocity. When asked what they connected with many said expanding research methods, moving from judgment to learning, the way that youth voice is centered.

RADICAL VISIONS OF SAFETY LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Expanding Methods

- Participatory Methods
- Decolonized Methods
- Storytelling
- Personal Narratives
- Oral History
- Holistic look at spiritual, emotional, mental, family, social etc.
- Surveys, interviews, focus groups

Radical Visions of Safety Definitions



Expanding Interconnected Insights

Using learning questions to frame the data collected in order to expand collaboration and interconnectedness. From this data, these stories, the collective meaning making what can we learn about...

Example Learning Questions:

- How is the community healing?
- Do our partners trust and value our support?
- What changes are we seeing in policies, practices, and systems over time?
- How well are "we" supporting our nonprofit partners in achieving RVoS?
- How have communities been involved in decision-making and solution building?

Collection & Analysis done by:

- Girls & Gender-expansive youth
- Families
- Programs and practitioners
- Communities
- Researchers

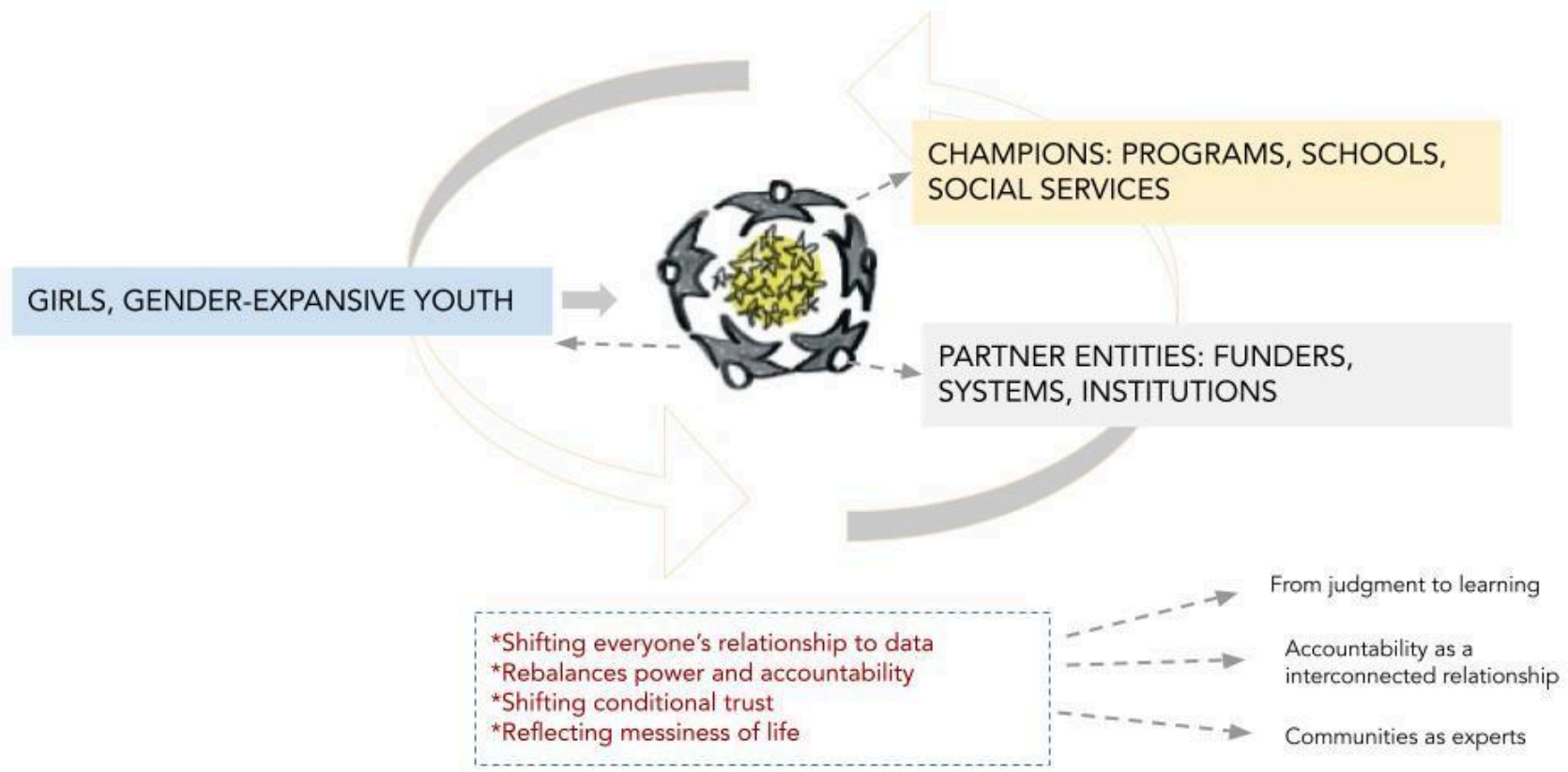
Data collection on:

- Youth
- Programs & Practitioners
- Families & Communities
- Foundations
- Systems & Institutions

Expanding Approach

ECOSYSTEM OF SUPPORT

The RVoS Learning Framework is built on interconnected relationships between girls and gender-expansive youth, champions, and partner entities looking to support this work. Alliance For Girls is the foundational space advancing the integrity, accountability, advocacy, and practical implementation of the framework.



RECOMMENDATION: BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEM OF SUPPORT

The RVoS Learning Framework is built with a shift in three key areas - expanding methods, expanding approaches, and expanding interconnected insights. What that means is that all the players - Girls and Gender-expansive youth, Champions, and Partner entities - engage, share, and learn with equanimity. Girls and gender-expansive youth are not just students and participants, but they are experts, storytellers, researchers, and decision-makers. Similarly, Champions are not just caretakers and staff, but they are experts, decision-makers, power players, and researchers. Partner Entities are not just decision-makers and experts, but they are learners, students, caretakers, participants.

The Radical Visions of Safety Learning Framework was presented at the Alliance For Girls’ World We Imagine conference on October 11, 2022. Based on the feedback from that workshop and findings from the Community Learning Exchange, Evaluation Studio recommends Alliance for Girls develop a technical assistance architecture built for all players to effectively engage and understand how to expand methods, expand approaches, and expand interconnected insights:

TABLE 2: Technical Assistance Matrix

Technical Assistance Includes:	Content:	For:
Capacity Building	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RVoS Toolkits, Promising Practices <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Activities and approaches for providing RVoS safety. 2. Starting and sustaining trust 3. Stakeholder, Youth/Adult, and Community Partnership 4. Policy and Advocacy 5. Narrative Change 6. Expanded Research Methods 7. Interconnected Insights <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Collective meaning making, solution-building, and turning research into action 8. Buy-in 9. Creating Learning Questions 	Girls and Gender-expansive youth, Champions, and Partner entities
Trainings and Workshops		
Toolkits		
Communications and Outreach		
Resource Brokering		

Coaching	10. Grants and funding a. Paradigm shift b. Resources for this work	
Consulting		

NEXT STEPS:

1. Develop a better graphic representation of the RVoS Learning Framework
2. Hosting a number of listening sessions and workshops presenting the Radical Visions of Safety Learning Framework to multiple audiences - schools, public serving entities, government, girls and gender-expansive youth, funders, etc. - so that it can evolve and be dynamic.
3. Developing "measures" or "indicators" to understand if it's "working."
4. Create a community of practice bringing together girls, gender-expansive youth, champions, and partners to collectively identify the kinds of technical assistance needed to sustain a system of support.
5. Develop RVoS technical assistance with tangible steps towards implementation
6. Advocate the paradigm shift in grant and funding spaces
7. Examining barriers for implementation
8. Develop a player cohort model for experimenting with piloting the learning framework
9. Pilot the RVoS Learning Framework with a few AFG member organizations and funders

APPENDIX A: CLX PROCESS AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Evaluation Studio engaged in a participatory research approach for the Radical Visions of Safety Learning Framework, which employed methods borrowed from Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR), Emergent Strategy², and feminist research methodologies. The RVoS Learning Framework is designed for Girls³, Champions and CBOs, Alliance For Girls (AFG) members and non-AFG members, policymakers, funders, schools, and stakeholders who run programs or fund programs for girls and gender-expansive youth.

To construct the learning framework, Evaluation Studio and AFG identified six primary research questions to be answered through a Community Learning Exchange (CLX):

1. What are the indicators of Safety?
2. What are the outcomes of Safety?
3. What are the practices (outputs) to support the indicators and outcomes of Safety?
4. How do you measure the indicators and outcomes of Safety for girls?
5. What do girls and girl-serving organizations see as a framework that reflects their values and needs?
6. How can this framework be flexible and generative?

Conducted between February 2022 to September 2022, Evaluation Studio employed a process of summary, review, planning, and community engagement to build a pilot evaluation framework. Steps include:

- Reviewing the Radical Visions of Safety (RVoS) data and report
- Collecting and aggregating all relevant documentation and data
- Conducting a stakeholder assessment to align framework objectives
- Creating the RVoS Brief
- Recruiting and convening a Community Learning Exchange (CLX) with girls, girl-serving organizations, and key partners to co-create an evaluation framework
- Synthesizing and reporting the CLX findings to create a pilot RVoS learning framework
- Creating a RVoS learning framework summary to include findings from the CLX, AFG conference feedback, and introduce the pilot Radical Visions of Safety Learning Framework

² Brown, A. (2017). *Emergent Strategy*. AK Press.

³ Girls refers to gender-expansive youth (cis girls, trans girls, non-binary youth, gender non-conforming youth, gender queer youth and any girl-identified youth).

The Community Learning Exchanges revisited the Radical Visions of Safety research study through the lens of girls and gender-expansive youth and champions in an intergenerational space. The CLX provided the opportunity for former RVoS participants to re-engage with the definitions they created, and also extend and apply a vision of how girls' definitions of safety could be met across multiple stakeholders and systems. The three guiding questions of the CLX were:

1. How is the RVoS and the CLX subverting institutional knowledge and power?
2. What is a community learning exchange and why does it matter?
3. How will the CLX contribute to creating an RVoS framework?

The CLX was a three workshop series that began with outreach and recruitment of participants through email and phone calls from May 13, 2022 to June 9, 2022 by five AFG and ES team members. During this time period, ES and AFG directly reached out to over 70 youth and programs and send an email blast to 194 AFG members. The CLX participants included 17 total participants, 8 of whom were from the original study.

The CLX included three workshops: two virtual workshops and one full day in-person workshop intensive:

- Workshop 1 (June 10, 2022): Orientation - 14 attendees (10 Adults/4 Youth)
- Workshop 2 (July 13, 2022): In-person Intensive - 13 attendees (9 Adults/4 Youth)
- Workshop 3 (August 24, 2022): Meaning Making/Analysis - 12 attendees (10 Adults/2 Youth)

The roles of the participants included:

- 6 working in programs
- 3 working in evaluation
- 1 working as an Executive Director
- 1 working as an attorney
- 6 youth

Participant List:

Name	RVoS Interviewee	Adult or Youth	Organization	Title
Alexis Dumonchelle	Y	Adult	Teen Success, Inc.	Evaluation and Learning Manager
Kim Nguyen	Y	Adult	LYRIC	Data and Evaluation Director
Tunisia Owens	Y	Adult	Family Violence Law Center	Housing and Gender Justice Project Coordinator
Alicia Contreras	Y	Adult	Center for Accessible Technology	Executive Director
Viviana Arenas	Y	Youth, 23	Alliance for Girls	Youth
Jocelyn Arenas	Y	Youth, 17	Young women's freedom center	Youth
Mindy Asperer	Y	Adult	Planned Parenthood Mar Monte	TPSP Program Director
Ayla Guerra		Youth, 15	Mindy's Daughter (15)	Youth
Darya Larizadeh		Adult	National Center for Youth Law	Senior Policy Attorney, Youth Justice Initiative
Valarie Sandoval		Youth, 17	Caras	Youth
Michelle Ramirez		Adult	BAWSI	Community Specialist
Kamaya Jackson		Youth, 17	Alliance for Girls	Youth
Marianne Ceballos		Adult	Unity Council	Associate Director of Youth services
Andrea Diaz	Y	Adult	MISSEY	Training Facilitator
Miari Stephens		Adult	Alliance for Girls	Program Coordinator

Vanessa DeNino		Adult	YR Media	Impact & Evaluation Manager
Yuki Guan		Youth, 17	YR Media	Youth

The first workshop was virtual and reviewed the Radical Visions of Safety brief and the definitions of safety defined by girls for girls and gender-expansive youth. This workshop also reviewed other youth-centered traditional evaluation frameworks and called for community reaction or feedback to traditional frameworks.

The second CLX workshop was held at Oakstop in downtown Oakland. This workshop was set up as foundational data gathering and an opportunity to construct the building blocks for the RVoS Learning Framework. The first half of the workshop utilized Adrienne Maree Brown’s Emergent Strategy model of manifesting nature and natural patterns to expand an understanding of potential structures and supports for a Radical Visions of Safety framework. The second half dissected ‘What is radical?’, radical ecosystems of safety, and making connections for RVoS.

The final workshop was virtual and presented the pilot learning framework. The goal of this workshop was to identify whether the data gathered in community with participants through the prior CLX workshops was reflected in the framework and whether participants understood how traditional frameworks can be represented differently through a learning framework defined by youth and community. Part of this workshop also focused on shared accountability and power.

Synthesis and Analysis

Following the CLX workshops, ES drafted an analysis plan and worksheet of 15 questions to be independently answered by two researchers. These questions included initial reactions and a deeper dive into the notes, quotes, and recordings from each workshop. After individual researcher analysis, ES researchers engaged in a meaning making process that included documenting, coding, and noting further questions that emerged from the analysis. Here are the summary findings that emerged from the CLX workshops:

- Evaluation frameworks are transactional
- Most evaluation frameworks are linear and reflect cause and effect (if you do this, then this will happen).
- Evaluation frameworks don’t take into account the messiness of life
- Evaluation frameworks are impersonal and rigid

- Some evaluation frameworks don't offer guidance in how to carry it forward
 - Many foundations don't support work for after 18 years of age
 - Accountability of systems is missing
 - Visually, participants prefer circles to squares
 - Evaluation frameworks need space to individualize
 - Many evaluation frameworks don't reflect interconnectedness of people and issues
 - Evaluation frameworks can be limiting in using gender terms
 - Evaluation frameworks are not written by youth
 - Evaluation frameworks need agreements
 - Evaluation frameworks don't recognize preexisting trauma
 - Evaluation frameworks don't reflect reciprocity
 - Evaluation frameworks condition grantees and individuals to prioritize and choose fundamental needs
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- ES met with AFG several times to collect feedback on the brief, CLX process and analysis, and in preparation for the AFG conference to present the RVoS Learning Framework to a larger audience.
 - ES collected feedback from the RVoS session at the World We Imagine conference in the form of a gallery walk and asked participants to reflect on the Learning Framework through sticky notes. These sticky notes were transcribed, coded and analyzed to incorporate into the final version of the RVoS Learning Framework.