

Girls Leadership Camps Factsheet

JA Girls in Leadership camp brings together girls from the ages of 14-19 to help them develop their life plans; learning important lessons on a variety of subjects including health, wealth, family, professionalism, etc. During a three-day period up to 200 girls are coached by prominent and accomplished professional women from influential companies, from government and from civil society. They begin to think about what kinds of jobs they aspire to have and what it takes to get there, they explore how many children they want to have, what kinds of schools they want their children to go to and the affordability of their lifestyles including school fees, health insurance and vacations. They begin to understand the implications of all their life decisions. The program helps young girls to think about life purposefully and to start that now. It triggers self-discovery, ambition to lead that goes hand in hand with practicing leadership among other things.

Modules take girls through different aspects of their lives that are components of success, like the importance of physical education and finding the balance between personal appearance and substance. 'The magic in you' helps them understand and optimize their personal gifts as well as overcome the limitations of their personal backgrounds, whether they be from poor backgrounds, broken families, low academic performance, etc. They learn etiquette, self-awareness, how to navigate difficult professional crossroads, finding the courage to make bold decisions in the workplace, build financial resilience, manage peer pressure, speak publicly. From their mentors in the camp they learn to demystify the myths of professional women.

An important component of empowering girls is ensuring that boys are able to understand the implications of marginalizing women leaders in the workplace and embrace gender diversity. In some cases, boys are introduced into the program, though their participation is intentionally capped at a third of participants. This is done in order to help boys understand and experience what feels like to be a woman in the minority at the top of leadership. JA Africa believes that is important to bring both genders on board and to create a situation where boys are enablers. We need to balance the needs to empower girls with the need not to leave boys behind. Girl child empowerment needs to be in a comprehensive context.