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**Application Narrative:**

***What impact are you trying to make for girls in WA State?***

A investment in a young women’s leadership potential is an investment in the positive transformation of communities across the globe. Y-WE is an all-girl community, and we prepare girls and young women from diverse backgrounds to step into leadership roles in their schools, communities and the world. Since 2011, More than 1500 community members have benefited from the skills learned by over 300 girls and 150 women participating in leadership, facilitation and cross-cultural training. Also, Y-WE is actively participating in the "2013 State of the Girls Summit" Advisory Panel keeping us informed on the progress of girls and women within our state. We foster the development of personal growth and developing a deeper connection to one’s neighborhood, community and the world, and we practice-shared leadership, building a sense of “solidarity” with other girls in the Y-WE community and beyond.

**Who we serve:** Y-WE provides mentorship and empowerment programs for teen women in the greater Seattle area. We serve a diverse group of girls, ages 12-18, and women mentors, ages 19-60+. The organization is open to young women from all walks of life. Currently, 90% of the youth are immigrants to the USA. 85% of the youth and 50% of the adults are women of color. Our youth and mentors also represent a myriad of family, sexual orientation, religious, political, and educational backgrounds. We offer our programs free of charge, and we invite families to contribute as they are able.

*Our Mission:* Young Women Empowered (Y-WE) prepares young women from diverse backgrounds to step into leadership in their schools, communities and the world. We do this through intergenerational mentorship, intercultural collaboration, and creative programs that equip girls with the confidence, resiliency, and future-planning skills they need to achieve their personal goals and improve their communities. We utilize a collaborative leadership model that is founded upon listening to the needs and desires of the young people we serve, teamwork, and shared facilitation.

The impacts we are making on girls are:

Learner Experience	Outcome/WFA Priority Alignment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports girls lacking self-esteem with creative outlets to express themselves and an encouraging environment in which to build their confidence.</li> <li>• Girls learn the creative facilitation process – life-long skill they can use in school and life.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WFA Priority # 5: Girls are <i>safe</i> and live free from physical, verbal, emotional and sexual violence.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls develop a strong sense of self.</li> <li>• Girls develop positive values.</li> <li>• Girls gain practical life skills.</li> <li>• Girls seek challenges in the world.</li> <li>• Girls develop critical thinking.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide women forum to share professional experience with girls.</li> <li>• Provide girls with the opportunity to align with peers and women from a wide range of countries, cultures, and religions.</li> <li>• Girls attend workshops that improve their literacy, college prep, resume writing, and job application skills.</li> <li>• Girls learn collective leadership and build solidarity.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WFA Priority #3: Girls have the education and skills that place them on <u>pathways to economic security</u>.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls develop healthy relationships.</li> <li>• Girls learn collaboration and team building skills.</li> <li>• Girls can resolve conflicts.</li> <li>• Girls advance diversity in a multicultural world.</li> <li>• Girls feel connected to their communities, locally and globally.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train girls how to plan social change projects and collaborate across cultures and generations.</li> <li>• Girls go out into their community and share what they have learned in Y-WE through talks, performances and creative writing.</li> <li>• Girls fundraise to sustain Y-WE programs and to offer scholarships to girls going to college.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WFA Priority #1: Girls emerge as <u>leaders in the change movement for women and girls</u>.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls can identify community needs.</li> <li>• Girls are resourceful problem solvers.</li> <li>• Girls advocate for themselves and others, locally and globally.</li> <li>• Girls educate and inspire others to act.</li> <li>• Girls feel empowered to make a difference in the world.</li> </ul>

**In service to that impact, tell us more about your activities and timeline. How much grant funding are you requesting? (Request can be for project or operating support)**

We are requesting WFA invite us to submit a proposal for \$30,000 for Y-WE Lead—a 7-month leadership and mentorship program for diverse teen women in the Puget Sound region. Y-WE was born out of the enthusiasm and

demand of the young women we serve. It all started in 2010 when we piloted a 7-month leadership program – Young Women on the Rise under the auspices of Power of Hope. The Women’s Funding Alliance provided support for founding the program. The program was a huge success – and the girls, mentors, teachers and youth workers banded together to continue the program and to build it with a goal of eventually offering year-round programs for girls and women. In May 2011, we launched Young Women Empowered (Y-WE) as a program of PYE Global (Partnership for Youth Empowerment), an organization that works with communities internationally to provide arts/empowerment programs for youth.

### **Project Seeking Funding: Y-WE LEAD**

Y-WE Lead serves 50 girls ages 14-18 and 2 women mentors 1 and up. The goal of the program is to prepare young women to live happy, healthy, purposeful lives and to be engaged leaders committed to building a positive future for themselves and the world. The program begins in early fall and lasts for 7 months. Girls and mentors meet one Saturday a month to develop leadership, cross-cultural skills, confidence, communication skills, creativity, and future planning skills. In addition to the large group meetings, smaller groups of girls and mentors meet on a regular basis. Throughout the 7-month period, girls and mentors attend two residential weekends and build a strong, enduring community of girls and women. We strive to ensure our programs are inclusive, especially since 95% of the girls in the program come from low-income families. The daylong monthly meetings build community and girls and mentors bond, explore topics of importance to young women, and have fun together. We provide every girl scholarship as well as meals and transportation. Girls in turn, participate in the Y-WE community by helping at our events, using their skills to contribute in their schools, and taking on community projects, giving talks and volunteer work.

### ***What do you think is innovative about your approach?***

**Geographic and Cultural Diversity:** Many programs focus primarily on girls who attend the same schools and live in the same neighborhoods; Y-WE brings girls and women together from all walks of life. Our participants are from public and private schools; from American-born families and first generation immigrants; from as far as Whidbey Island to West Seattle to Redmond. We provide all programs tuition-free and ask families to contribute to our scholarship fund as they are able. We provide transportation for all girls who need it. These policies, and our broad outreach efforts, insure that ALL young women who want to be part of our programs have equal access. Thus, we are able to serve a very diverse, intercultural and intergenerational group of women and girls who are committed to building a better future for themselves and the world.

**Creative Facilitation Skills.** Our program model employs **PYE Global’s Creative Community Model** which is used in 7 countries with proven results. This makes us unique in four specific ways: (1) We use the systematic application of arts-based practices to increase confidence, personal presence, creativity, motivation and purpose. (2) Our lead facilitators, teaching artists, and program advisors are highly skilled with years of experience in creative facilitation and group process. This allows us to successfully develop a positive and safe learning environment that encourages the creative development of the girls as well as all of our mentors. This creative environment in turn engages women mentors who are innovators and leaders in their fields. (3) As part of our leadership curriculum we focus on what it takes to build positive learning communities with girls and women, thus providing the girls with the skills to develop their own communities of support as they move into college and beyond. (4) We use a life-coaching model that provides girls with concrete skills for envisioning their desired futures and charting plans to achieve their goals.

**Girls lead and learn by Doing.** We also involve our girls and women in fundraising events and campaigns. We train them on how to sustain social change projects so that they can take that knowledge and apply it to their own goals. For example, when our intern Rahwa was a high school senior, she led the planning and production of our first International Dinner in 2010. Under Rahwa’s leadership, the event successfully raised \$10,000 in scholarship funds to support future Y-WE participants! Not only did she and her team do the behind the scenes work of putting on a successful event, they gained the skill to confidently stand up in front of an audience of 300 people, sharing their talents through poetry, song, and dance and speaking clearly and compellingly about the need for young women’s leadership programs. Rahwa now says, “Through planning the dinner I learned that I have the skills necessary to achieve my own goals and really make a difference in the lives of others.” This is the Y-WE difference – we involve girls and young women in all aspects of our program.

### ***In some cases, Women’s Funding Alliance may consider making grants larger than \$30,000. If you were to receive a larger grant, what one thing would you most want to achieve?***

Our goal would include increasing the number of girls we serve to 400 and 200 women annually by 2014. To reach this goal, we would target girls who live in underserved or underrepresented communities, increase our large scale events like the career day, increase our program offerings including adding another summer camp opportunity. We also want to start an alumni chapter of Y-WE young women to keep them engaged while they are away at college and starting their careers. We envision Alumni helping with recruiting girls and as mentors, facilitators.