

# Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Armenia

A Case Study Evaluation of a Partnership between Arizona State University and Yerevan State University



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This publication was produced for review by Higher Education for Development (HED) by Charlotte Moats-Gallagher, BlueStone Collaborative and Hrachia Kazhoyan, Caucasus Research Resource Center.



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## Acronyms and Abbreviations



<b>ACE</b>	American Council on Education
<b>ASU</b>	Arizona State University
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CGLS</b>	Center for Gender and Leadership Studies
<b>CE</b>	Collective Efficacy
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>DPD</b>	Difference, Power and Discrimination
<b>EDMC</b>	Entrepreneurship, Development, Marketing, Competitiveness
<b>EGM/GPLHP</b>	Expert Group Meeting on Good Practices in legislation to Address Harmful Practices against Women
<b>FIRS</b>	Fidelity of Implementation Rating System
<b>FSN</b>	Foreign Service Nationals
<b>FSO</b>	Foreign Service Officers
<b>HED</b>	Higher Education for Development
<b>HICD</b>	Higher Education and Human and Institutional Capacity Development
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources
<b>LGBT</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
<b>LSE</b>	Leadership Self-Efficacy
<b>MA</b>	Master of Arts
<b>MBA</b>	Master of Business Administration
<b>MS</b>	Master of Science
<b>MSU</b>	Michigan State University
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
<b>PINK Armenia</b>	Public Information and Need of Knowledge NGO
<b>Pri</b>	Program Implementer
<b>PO</b>	Partnership Objective
<b>PRIME</b>	Partnership Results & Information Management Engine
<b>RFA</b>	Request for Applications
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WID</b>	Women in Development
<b>WLP</b>	Women's Leadership Program
<b>YSU</b>	Yerevan State University



The Women’s Leadership Program/Armenia sought to increase gender equality and women’s empowerment in Armenia. Broadly speaking, this evaluation aimed to uncover indications of increased collective efficacy and self-efficacy by program implementers, administrators and beneficiaries as well as to discover indications of shifts in perceptions about the importance of gender equity and women’s empowerment in Armenian society.

### **Current Context for Gender Equity and Women’s Empowerment in Armenia**

The status of gender equity and women’s empowerment in Armenia is both complex and nuanced. The issue in Armenia is not one of lack of access by women to education, as it is in so many parts of the world. The 2014 World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index shows that Armenia ranks high over time in educational attainment. However, the Index also shows that *economic participation* has been significantly declining each year since 2007. *Political empowerment* of women has also been in decline; Armenia currently ranks 123 of 142 countries for political empowerment. Today, many female university graduates—more than half of the youth in Armenia—well-educated young women do not enter the labour market, but stay at home. Therefore, this talent pool is not participating in the economic and political development of Armenia. The findings of the Gender Barometer Survey for Armenia that was designed and implemented during the Women’s Leadership Program, begin to help us understand. Using the Gender Barometer Survey, more than 2000 people were interviewed across Armenia on issues related to gender equity and the results reveal a country that remains to a great extent rooted in traditional cultural values. In a very real sense this cultural context mutes the hopes and expectations of program sponsors and designers: USAID and HED. While it is true that women can be crucial catalysts for international development and modernization, it is also critical to recognize that (as one program participant put it) that the Gender Barometer Survey demonstrated that “countervailing forces are equally strong and authentically national.” Traditional views of gender equity and women’s empowerment are embedded in rural Armenia as well as with much of the male population in urban Armenia. Significant differences persist in the roles and status of women and men in Armenia, influenced by patriarchal culture and traditions. Cultural norms and stereotypes are quite rigid and account for a number of the obstacles facing women (USAID, 2010). The evaluation also revealed a resurgence of Russian influence towards traditional values that reinforce the status quo.

Further, Armenia sits within a complex geographical, geopolitical region with long-term conflict with the neighbouring countries of Turkey and Azerbaijan and a border with Iran to the south, which leaves just Georgia as the most likely a prospective regional partner for gender equity and women’s empowerment work. Armenia experiences a degree of geographic isolation that reinforces the cultural status quo.

In 2013, just as the WLP/Armenia was taking shape, the National Assembly adopted a law which sparked a debate in the society around the concepts of gender and gender equality. There was a well-organized campaign against the law—allegedly supported by outside Russian groups. Pressure was so great that the parliamentarians removed the word “gender” from the law. The law is now referred to as “Equal Rights of Men and Women and on Ensuring Equal Opportunities”. Program implementers describe their



work on the program and what has become for them a hostile climate...as “taking one step forward only to take two steps back”.

All of these factors have had an influence on this WLP/Armenia and evaluators see these factors as contributing to a general lack of readiness in Armenia for comprehensive and transformative progress in gender equity and women’s empowerment. That said, the WLP/Armenia has initiated important and incremental awareness raising around gender equity and women’s empowerment. The beginnings of change are evident and will be discussed throughout this report.

### **Program Vehicles: University to University Partnership and the Development of the Center for Leadership and Gender Studies**

The hub for this work, Yerevan State University, is a well-regarded university in Armenia and many of the countries government, business and other influential leaders are educated there. Going forward, the way that Yerevan State University deliberately models and supports gender equality and women’s empowerment will have direct and important ripple effects in Armenian society.

The main hallmark of the WLP is the establishment and institutional development of a comprehensive YSU Center for Gender and Leadership Studies (CGLS) as the first Center focused on gender equality and women’s empowerment in the Armenian higher education system. The program has introduced a series of other “firsts” into the fabric of YSU and to an extent, the Armenian society:

- Development of the first gender curriculum (Master’s Degree Program on Women, Gender and Development) in an Armenian University
- Design and implementation of the first competition for small grants as a countrywide program aimed at promoting gender research in Armenia
- The first Gender Barometer Survey of more than 2000 households in 2014

### **Evaluation Overview**

The evaluation was conducted to synthesize lessons learned in the partnership between Arizona State University and Yerevan State University and to contribute to the body of knowledge about the role of higher education in development by assessing the:

1. efficiency of management processes and systems;
2. relevance of program design;
3. effectiveness of program implementation;
4. impact of program intervention; and
5. potential for program sustainability.

More specifically, evaluators examined each of these items to generate knowledge about how the partnership of ASU and YSU has contributed to the promotion of gender equality and female empowerment in Armenia. An explanatory case study approach was chosen in order to describe the full, complex picture of the outcomes of the Women’s Leadership Program in Armenia. The main methods used were semi-structured in-depth face-to-face and skype interviews, a small group discussion, two surveys using structured questionnaires, as well as observations and project related documents. These sources of data generated multiple viewpoints, helped to better triangulate the evidences and create a

composite picture. Surveys were administered to the small grant recipients and the project team to collect their reflections on the relevance of the program, their experience with working with the CGLS, their assessment of the impact and their view of the sustainability of the CGLS. In addition, a group discussion was conducted with recipients of research grants and YSU scholars in residence at ASU. The transcripts of the individual interviews and the group discussion were produced, coded and analyzed using the criteria and categories provided by HED that were expanded to meet the unique needs of the evaluation. 10

### **Brief Synopsis of Sustainability Recommendations**

1. Research is a cornerstone for the sustainability of the CGLS. Evaluators recommend that the CGLS continue to leverage the momentum created around the gender equity/women's empowerment research agenda.
2. Curriculum is a cornerstone for the sustainability of the CGLS. Evaluators recommend that CGLS leverage the momentum created around the new Master's Degree program and design new initiatives for infusing gender equity and women's empowerment into the YSU curriculum.
3. Financial security is cornerstone for the sustainability of the CGLS. The CGLS needs a high-level fundraising plan.
4. The Center for Gender and Leadership needs to continue to develop ownership, agency, leadership capacity, an entrepreneurial culture, and a footprint that spans nationally, regionally and internationally.
5. YSU institutional leadership, commitment and support is crucial.
6. Develop sustained and strategic partnerships<sup>1</sup> and a corresponding public relations and communication strategy.
7. Engage men and boys as change agents and allies.

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<sup>1</sup> Key potential partners include: ASU, USAID/Armenia, USAID/DC, higher education network, NGO community, government and ministries, and international donors.

## Introduction/Purpose



This evaluation was conducted to assess the partnership between Arizona State University and Yerevan State University. As such it contributes to the body of knowledge about higher education in development, and in particular the role of higher education in advancing gender equity and women's empowerment. The focus of this summative case study evaluation was on higher order questions, and respondents were asked to synthesize and think deeply about their experience with this program.

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The lasting hallmark of the WLP/Armenia is the establishment and institutional development of a comprehensive Center for Gender and Leadership Studies (CGLS) at Yerevan State University. Many of the threads of this evaluation lead back to the function and sustainability of this Center.

This report follows standard protocols for qualitative evaluation and is organized around introductory material, a review of pertinent literature, evaluation methodology, findings and discussion, and recommendations for sustainability.

## Overview of the Partnership



In April 2012 Higher Education for Development (HED), in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), launched the “Women’s Leadership Program in Armenia (WLP-Armenia)”. The purpose of WLP-Armenia is to advance women’s leadership and promote gender equality and female empowerment in Armenia through a three-year higher education partnership between Yerevan State University (YSU) and a U.S. higher educational institution. Through HED’s competitive application and peer review process, Arizona State University (ASU) was selected to partner with YSU. Initiated in September 2012, the partnership’s end date is June 30, 2015. (Crane, 2014)

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The WLP-Armenia partnership is part of the broader Women’s Leadership Program which comprises five higher education partnerships in four countries (Armenia, Paraguay, Rwanda and South Sudan). The overarching objectives of the WLP include:

- Promoting and supporting the access of women to higher education and advanced degrees;
- Strengthening the institutional capacity in research and education on women’s leadership; and
- Promoting women’s leadership through higher education extension/outreach efforts in underserved communities. (HED, 2014)

The purpose of the broader effort is to support national and local development goals that promote gender quality and female empowerment.

The partnership between YSU and ASU is focused on improving the capacity of YSU to advance women’s leadership in Armenia through the establishment of a Center for Gender and Leadership Studies (CGLS) at YSU, curriculum revisions, faculty capacity building in policy research, support for YSU’s career development office and extension and outreach efforts to other nongovernmental organizations and higher educational institutions in Armenia. The objectives of the partnership are to:

1. *Enhance students’ knowledge and skills* and broadened attitudes related to women’s leadership and career advancement;
2. *Strengthen the capacity* of Yerevan State University to make research-based recommendations, with an emphasis on putting into practice national gender policy;
3. Develop Yerevan State University’s *capacity to deliver* coursework that addresses women’s leadership and gender equity; and
4. Promote *women’s leadership and gender equality* Yerevan State University through extension/outreach efforts.

The WLP-Armenia responds to USAID’s 2011-2015 Education Strategy, in particular to Goal Two: Improved ability of *tertiary and workforce development* programs to generate workforce skills relevant to a country’s development goals.



Evaluators drew on a wide range of sources to help understand and appreciate the Armenian context as it relates to gender equity and women's empowerment. The literature review begins with discussion of this context, and is followed by a discussion of best practices in university to university partnerships, the key implementation vehicle for this partnership. We then discuss trends and best practices for the development of women's leadership centers and institutes in the university environment. The review closes with a discussion of women and leadership theory which creates a philosophical base for this evaluation.

### Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment in Armenia

Significant differences persist in the roles and status of women and men in Armenia, influenced by patriarchal culture and traditions. Cultural norms and stereotypes are quite rigid and account for a number of the obstacles facing women (USAID, 2010). Further, while a cease-fire has been in place since 1994, Armenians still express feelings that two potentially hostile neighbors (Turkey and Azerbaijan) border their country. This sense of threatened conflict may well also maintain the "masculine" culture that dominates Armenian politics and the economic sphere (*ibid.*).

In its article 14.1, the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia guarantees the right to gender equality and outlaws gender-based discrimination. Armenia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1993, and the Optional Protocol on violence against women in 2006.

During the Soviet period, the public position of women in Armenia significantly improved. It promoted gender equality in the spheres of education and employment and political participation, however, in more than two decades since the collapse of Soviet Union, the role of women in political and economic life has declined.<sup>2</sup> For example, in the first Armenian elections after independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, women received a mere 6 percent of the seats. Currently, women are poorly represented in Armenian politics, and in the 2012 elections, women received just 11 percent of seats in the parliament, despite the fact that political parties are required by law to have at least 20 percent of the underrepresented gender on their party lists.<sup>3</sup> Women are particularly affected by the ongoing transition to a market economy, economic stagnation, and as a result, increasing levels of unemployment, poverty, and emigration of men (CEDAW, 2007)

The Soviet system was trying to keep a façade of equal opportunities, however, due to its core patriarchal structures and patterns, ultimately it was men in that social organization who were in the positions of power, decision-making, and control over the access to resources and "wealth" (Osipov, 2011:209).

The Soviet legacy continues to have an effect on the development of Armenia. The fall of the Soviet Union was followed by a period in which Armenian society rejected much of what was considered

<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (2000), p. 9-10

<sup>3</sup> See <http://kvinnatillkvinna.se/en/country/armenia/womens-situation/> [last accessed 03/28/2015]

“Soviet” in nature. In the absence of a legal environment to protect women’s rights combined with non-reinforcement of Soviet principles of equality, many reverted to traditional views and customs that were often at odds with notions of gender equality. The social construct of gender equality acquired over 70 years of Soviet rule was largely considered erroneous and was abandoned (USAID, 2010).

The USAID Gender Assessment/Armenia finds that while the National Action Plan for the Improvement of Women’s Status and Enhancement of their Role in Society for 2004-2010 addresses a greater range of issues (including women in decision-making, the economy, education, health, mass media and violence against women, monitoring indicates that the Action Plan is largely declarative and has not been implemented. (The prior focus was on women’s reproductive role, motherhood and family). The adoption of the National Action Plan was not followed with financial resources or national machinery for its implementation. Respondents to the USAID Gender Assessment noted an overall lack of political will to address gender inequalities and discrimination prevents progress in this area. Others commented that the government considers improving the status of women as lower in priority to other “more pressing” concerns, such as resolving the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, dealing with Turkey or establishing democracy.

The Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan (2011-2015), Gender Policy Concept Paper, Strategic Action Plan to Combat Gender-based violence (2011-2015), and the Law on Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men were adopted as the key components of the national anti-discrimination policy. Adopted in 2010, the Gender Policy Concept Paper formulates country’s general policy in the field of gender equality. It aims to create favorable conditions to foster “equal enjoyment of rights and opportunities by men and women in economic, social and political life” towards achieving “sustainable development, improvement of democratic processes and organization of vital social activities on the bases of true equality, solidarity, cooperation and tolerance for all social groups.” It focuses on improving gender outcomes in six areas: participation in decision-making and management positions; socio-economic sector, education; health; culture and public information; and gender-based violence and human trafficking.

Last year, to ensure the comprehensive accountability of the Government in the process of achieving gender equality a decision "On the procedure for monitoring the state policy programs on ensuring gender equality and for information exchange" was developed by the Government of Armenia.

**Table 1: Overview of Key Institutions, Policies and Laws on Women’s Issues and Gender Equality in Armenia (adapted from USAID, 2010)**

Armenia Ratifies the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	1993
Department on Family, Women’s and Children’s Issues. Ministry of Labor and Social Issues	Established 1997
National Action Plan for the Improvement of Women’s Status and Enhancement of their Role in Society	1998-2000
Council on Women’s Affairs	Established 2000

National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing their Role in Society	2004-2010
Armenia ratifies the Optional Protocol on Violence Against Women	2006
Gender Policy Concept Paper	2010
Republic of Armenia Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011-2015	2011
2011-2015 Strategic Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence	2011
National Assembly Law: Equal Rights of Men and Women on Ensuring Equal Opportunities”	2013

#### World Economic Forum’s Gender Gap Report: Armenia

According to the World Economic Forum’s Gender Gap Report, Armenia scores 103 out of 142 countries.<sup>4</sup> In terms of political participation, Armenia is in 123<sup>rd</sup> place.

Only 14 out of 131 seats in Parliament are occupied by women and the mayor of only 17 out of 915 settlements in Armenia are women, while, according to the recent sociological survey, a significant percentage of 1,200 respondents would like to see women holding the positions of Speaker of Parliament (45.1%), member of Parliament (82.2%, city/town mayor (48.6%), Regional Governor (46.3%), Government Minister (76.8%), Head of Condominium (67.3%) and even in the top positions of the country’s President (28.7%) and Prime Minister (34.0%) (Hovhannisyan *et al*, 2011:69).

Today many university graduates – more than a half of the youth in Armenia, well-educated young women do not enter the labor market, but stay at home and therefore, not only the national resources spent for their education are lost, but also the talents of those, who can participate in the development of the country. Table 2 shows the persistently declining trend from 2007 to 2014.

**Table 2: Gender Gap Index: Armenia – 2007-2014 Trend (World Economic Forum, 2014)**

<sup>4</sup> <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/economies/#economy=ARM> [last accessed 06/04/2015]

	OVERALL		ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION		EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT		HEALTH AND SURVIVAL		POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Gender Gap Index 2007 (out of 128 countries)	71	0.665	24	0.721	24	0.999	128	0.923	125	0.017
Gender Gap Index 2008 (out of 130 countries)	78	0.668	36	0.697	29	0.999	130	0.928	118	0.047
Gender Gap Index 2009 (out of 134 countries)	90	0.662	56	0.671	29	0.999	133	0.933	123	0.044
Gender Gap Index 2010 (out of 134 countries)	84	0.667	59	0.669	26	0.999	130	0.937	106	0.062
Gender Gap Index 2011 (out of 135 countries)	84	0.665	62	0.658	27	0.999	131	0.942	108	0.062
Gender Gap Index 2012 (out of 135 countries)	92	0.664	76	0.645	25	0.999	130	0.944	114	0.066
Gender Gap Index 2013 (out of 136 countries)	94	0.663	82	0.638	29	1.000	131	0.950	115	0.066
Gender Gap Index 2014 (out of 142 countries)	103	0.662	82	0.648	31	1.000	142	0.933	123	0.068

According to international organizations and development agencies<sup>5</sup>, in order to change this situation, Armenia needs a comprehensive approach that brings together all stakeholders and takes the necessary measures to advance in the creation of the enabling environment for women's rights. Addressing gender issues requires development of a strong advocacy machine and intensive promotion of equality.

In May 2013, the National Assembly adopted a law on Equal Rights of Men and Women and on Ensuring Equal Opportunities. The adoption of the law sparked a debate in the society around the concepts of "gender" and "gender equality." Some groups began disseminating misinformation on social network sites, targeting women's NGO's and rights defenders. These groups manipulated the wording of the law and began to associate "gender equality" with homosexuality, propaganda and pedophilia. Women's rights defenders were labeled "traitors of the nation", "destroyers of families," and a "threat to Armenian values." Some materials reportedly called for violence and destruction of property, targeting women's organizations and LGBT persons. The anti-gender campaign aimed at women's organizations, gender centers and individual researchers of women and gender issues.

In August and September of 2013, the Women's Resource Center reported to police that bomb threats had been received through Facebook. In November, the Women's Council chaired by the prime minister issued a statement expressing concern over the existing tension in the society generated by the misinterpretation of the terms "gender", "gender equality", and "gender identity" as well as the information campaign against women's NGOs. The council urged law enforcement bodies to be more vigilant in order to prevent such cases and, if needed, to punish the perpetrators strictly. The statement

<sup>5</sup> see <http://www.osce.org/cio/110334?download=true>, <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/armenia>, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/67620>, <http://www.socialwatch.org/node/12059> [last accessed 06/04/2015]



also reaffirmed the government's commitment to uphold its obligations under domestic and international law to protect and promote women's rights. (US Department of State, 2013)

According to the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator's 2013 Report for Armenia, many civil society organizations feel under increasing threat. This report also noted a marked upsurge in intimidation towards some rights-based NGOs, particularly gender rights activists in the wake of recently introduced legislation on gender equality. The UN played a key role convening the international community to speak out on safeguarding human rights and catalyzed the Government for the first time to make concrete, public, specific commitments on gender equality. (Busetto, 2014).<sup>17</sup>

### **Domestic Violence**

Armenia has not signed the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence yet and there is no specific legislation addressing domestic violence in Armenia. The Criminal Code does not define domestic violence as a crime and there is no dedicated government body or coordinating institution to implement measures aimed at tackling violence against women (CEDAW 2009, 5). Meanwhile, reportedly, there were 760 cases of domestic violence in 2012, and in two of them, husbands killed their wives. However, most women do not report domestic violence, seeing it as a private matter.<sup>6</sup> However, in recent years the issue has received some further attention in the media, as for example through a case in 2010 in which a woman died beaten by her husband and mother-in-law. Occasionally there are cases of kidnapping of women for forced marriage reported in Armenia.<sup>7</sup>

### **Employment**

Regarding employment, the Constitution prohibits gender-based discrimination and according to the Labour Code, gender discrimination in remuneration is illegal.<sup>8</sup> But, *de facto*, there is no right to equal pay for equal work and women's salaries are much lower than men's and, on average, a woman earns half as much as a man in a year.<sup>9</sup>

### **Health Care**

Armenia's health care system has been hard hit by the difficult financial situation in the country. The majority of the population cannot afford health care and there has been an increase in people becoming infected with tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases. According to statistics from 2010, the maternal mortality rate is 30 per 100,000 births, mostly due to substandard health conditions and poor maternal health care. In addition, public awareness of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights is generally poor, partly due to the fact that there is no education in Armenian schools on this subject. Selective abortion of female fetuses is common.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Aleksanyan, Mary (2013) 'Domestic abuse law dumped in Armenia', Yerevan: *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, <http://iwpr.net/report-news/domestic-abuse-law-dumped-armenia> [last accessed 03/28/2015]

<sup>7</sup> Thomas, Cheryl (2009) 'Forced and Early Marriage: a Focus on Central And Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Union Countries with Selected Laws from other Countries', EGM/GPLHP /2009/EP.08, UN Division for the Advancement of Women, Addis Ababa.

<sup>8</sup> Article 14 of the Constitution and Article 148 of the Labour Code.

<sup>9</sup> See <http://kvinnatillkvinna.se/en/country/armenia/womens-situation/> [last accessed 03/28/2015]

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

A needs assessment report was created regarding the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies at Yerevan State University. It was based on a survey done in late 2012. The purpose of the survey was to explore the expectations local and international organizations operating in Armenia had for the CGLS.

One of the instructive sets of findings were the reasons respondents gave for the existing gender inequality in Armenia:

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1. Marginalization of women's rights, issues, and gender equality. Importance attributed to gender and women's issues by the public and at the state level is secondary to military or social-economic issues. The state does not give priority and allocate budgeting for these issues because these issues are not considered as important.
2. Stereotypes and clearly defined cultural territory for the expression of women's and men's roles. Particularly, women's association with the family and men's with the public sphere.
3. Absence of trust and faith in women as state policy makers and leaders.
4. Women's passivity and refusal to become political and public leaders.
5. Lack of professional presentation of gender concepts in the academic sphere, as well as by NGOs, which leads to wrong and inadequate perceptions of gender concepts in society.
6. Chronic situation of "neither war nor peace" in Armenia that enhances traditional perceptions of masculinity and femininity in an already patriarchal society.
7. Rise of conservative and radical movements that propagate and advocate for traditional gender roles.
8. Fragmentation of the women's movement, on the one hand, and devaluation of women's rights activists and women's organizations, on the other.
9. Prevalence of donor-driven and short-term projects related to women and gender issues that do not lead to sustainable and long-term impact and changes.
10. Lack of mechanisms of accountability and the poor monitoring of National Action Plans and conventions adopted by the RA government on women and gender issues.

(Shahnazaryan, G. et al. (no date))

These views represent the thinking of specialists in higher education, local and international NGO's, and representatives of state institutions and provide an acute snapshot. Each of these ten factors is directly relevant to the WLP/Armenia.

## University to University Partnerships: Best Practices

The largest lens for this evaluation project focuses on the university to university partnership itself. Hence it is important to frame the practice of university to university partnership drawing on the literature and relevant best practices. Partnerships between universities can be a vibrant cornerstone of the internationalization scheme of the participating institutions. For many colleges and universities, such partnerships are no longer simply one tactic of internationalization among many, but rather a core,

driving philosophy. Institutions are rethinking their reasons for pursuing international partnerships (Sutton & Obst, 2011).

**Opportunities.** University to University partnerships have a life of their own and goals that are both varied and comprehensive including:

- Student learning, as global citizens and as future members of a global workforce;
- Curriculum building and course enhancement;
- Providing international learning experiences even for students who do not study abroad and even in disciplines that have historically had few such opportunities;
- Developing the international capacity of faculty and staff;
- Advancing research by connecting institutions and scholars with those who have similar strengths and interests;
- Supporting and enhancing the international ties and interests of the surrounding community;
- Tackling pressing global issues of health, education, economic development, environment; energy, conflict, inequality, human rights and social justice;
- Generating institutional capacity building;
- Pursuit of public diplomacy and other national priorities; and
- Shaping the global system of higher education in beneficial ways.

(List adapted from Sutton & Obst, 2011)

When programs that are important to the development goals of a country are ‘housed’ within an enduring institution such as a university, the chances for long-term change and impact increase. The globalization of higher education creates opportunities and new avenues for governments and can contribute significantly to development goals.

There is a continuum of international academic partnerships from what might be called “transactional” to what might be called “transformational” (Sutton, 2010, Sutton *et al*, 2012). Transformational partnerships combine resources and view linkages as sources of institutional growth and collaborative learning. They often produce new initiatives that go far beyond what was originally planned. Transformative, strongly committed, strategic partnerships can be seen as important actors in the emerging global system of higher education.

**Challenges.** Along with the opportunities that academic partnerships bring, there are also challenges to be met. Administrators, fiscal officers, and faculty need to be convinced of the value, avenues of support must be identified, and procedural and structural roadblocks that limit what can be done overseas must be addressed (Sutton & Obst, 2011). Key areas of challenge include, but are not limited to:

- Lack of policies, procedures and organizational structures for managing partnerships;
- International work has to earn its place alongside other priorities with regard to institutional mission;
- Funding difficulties;
- Significant differences in educational resources across nations;
- Challenges of meshing institutional policies, procedures and accepted business practices across nations; and
- Different educational cultures and accreditation systems.

Meeting challenges in institutionalization of the partnership's mission is especially important in establishing international linkages (Valentine *et al*, 2011).

**Sustainability.** There is often a natural evolution to the life of a partnership. Many good things may occur and the objectives set out may have been met or exceeded. Many other partnerships, however get going and without the necessary continuity of personnel, funding and inspiration they flounder and don't accomplish what is within reach. The following guidelines for sustaining academic partnerships are adapted from Barnes, 2011:

- *Define and articulate mutual benefit.* A vibrant sustained partnership must benefit both institutions in somewhat equal measure. Are the specific benefits to both partnering institutions articulated explicitly? How will the proposed activity [continue to] enhance research and teaching activities on both campuses? Has the partnership opened up new opportunities for external funding?
- *Engage the faculty.* Are there joint publications, successful co-written grant proposals, shared panels or joint presentations at scholarly meetings? Are there "faculty champions" at both institutions to ensure that real collaborative activities continue take place once the initial program has concluded?
- *Ensure administrative infrastructure and support.* Is the central international office ensuring adequate and effective administrative support? Are the support offices at both institutions responsive, well-staffed and able to provide the support that faculty and students need to make progress?
- *Develop a funding model.* What is the plan for sustaining the program/center after the initial years of support have concluded? How will joint research be funded over the short, medium and long term? Are there government agencies or foundations with opportunities that will be available to sustain the effort?

Ultimately, partnerships are about people. "The most effective international linkages, regardless of their size, scope, goals, and context, begin with people who put the common good before their own and cut across barriers to pull together whatever it takes to form that bridge" (Tartir, 2007)

## Development of Women's Leadership Centers/Institutes in Universities: Trends and Best Practices

The creation of women's leadership centers and institutes within universities is a vehicle for international development and specifically for advancing gender equity and women's empowerment. As such, it is useful to provide historical context and trends in developing such centers and to highlight some of the best practices and innovative models currently being used. The examples discussed provide highly relevant models that can be useful to the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies as it positions itself and develops its own niche in the global women's education movement and market. Deepening understandings of the competitors in the global educational marketplace and the importance of honing in on organizational niche can contribute significantly to long-term success.

Between the 1970's and 1990's USAID funded "Women in Development" Programs/Offices in more than a dozen universities in the U.S. These were created because there was a dearth of research and reliable data on major indices affecting women's lives and livelihoods, globally. There was a major gap in that existing research on health, education, economic development, etc. wasn't being disaggregated by gender--so that complex issues facing women specifically weren't being identified or investigated. Over the past 15-20 years, this situation has evolved and the gap has closed considerably, due in part to the earlier emphasis of USAID and the formative WID programs that were nurtured around the country. The vast majority of these original WID programs/offices are no longer in existence. Some have closed and more have evolved into centers and institutes that are more contemporary and relevant. Michigan State University provides a good example. There was a vibrant WID office at MSU supported by USAID for decades. That original office has evolved and reinvented itself into the *Center for Gender in Global Context*. This is an interdisciplinary center in International Studies and Programs focused on gender, feminist, and women's studies. Its affiliated faculty and students study how women and men from diverse racial, ethnic, national, and sexual backgrounds live in and engage with the world and how processes of global change affect gender relations locally, nationally, and internationally. Working in conjunction with the academic colleges, the center promotes undergraduate and graduate education, facilitates research and scholarship, and undertakes outreach and active learning initiatives. This Center provides an excellent comprehensive model for the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies at Yerevan State University. <http://gencen.isp.msu.edu/>

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Other models of university support to the vibrant women's leadership centers over a long period of time could be of interest for the YSU's CGLS to establish partnership links and gain knowledge in developing its sustainability prospects. Particularly useful is the experience of the Center for Global Women's Leadership. Supported by Rutgers University, it is part of a larger umbrella institute called the Institute for Women's Leadership: Advancing Women's Leadership for a Just World. <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/>

The original WID offices housed in universities would typically cover a wide range of global issues affecting women—such as health, employment, development, access to education, and economic empowerment. Some centers and institutes still take on the full range of emphasis areas, but there is a growing trend toward the development of specific niches. One such trend is creating women's leadership programs and affiliating them with academic units such as business schools. For example the Women's Leadership Program at Bentley University which is part of a Center for Women and Business, targeting students in the business school. Another such niche that is trending is health. For example, Drexel University has an Institute for Women's Health and Leadership. This effort is a government-university partnership, recognizing the vital role that both universities and governments have to play in the health sector.

<http://www.drexelmed.edu/Home/AboutTheCollege/DepartmentsCentersandInstitutes/Institutes/InstituteforWomensHealthandLeadership.aspx>

It is one of the original six academic health centers to be designated a National Center of Excellence in Women's Health by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Institute for Women's Health and Leadership carries forward the College's commitment to women's health and women's leadership in medicine and science.

Another specialized niche is exemplified by the Smith-Tuck Global Program for Women which describes itself as “the premier executive program specifically for women who are assuming leadership positions with global responsibilities.” This program fills an ‘executive niche’ and is a partnership between Smith College and a renowned MBA program at Dartmouth College.

<http://smith.edu/execed/?q=programs/smith-tuck-global-leaders>

Many (if not most) universities and colleges in the U.S. support “Women’s Centers”. Women’s Centers may host women’s leadership programs, they may house academic/research functions or they may be more general in nature and focused on “student services’. While these women’s centers are distinct from those entities discussed prior (that are more content and discipline related, i.e. leadership, business, health) they are important to mention nonetheless. They provide a crucial role on campuses and many different configurations exist. Davie (2002) has collected insights from Women’s Center Directors at institutions across the country [U.S.] on how to best build a women’s center that can improve the quality of women’s experiences in college. From her perspective the best centers aid colleges and universities in responding to particularly difficult challenges in higher education relating to gender. Her book focuses on the structural issues of creating and transforming a center and has chapters on how to create crucial components of women’s centers, such as leadership development programs, distinguished artists and scholars’ series, women-centered counseling services, resource libraries, publications and internship programs that involve both academic and experiential learning. The directors of women’s centers around the country provide an overview of some of the best practices related to responding to a number of very difficult challenges in higher education. Further, Vlasnik (2013) has compiled an extensive bibliography of books, journal articles and book chapters, dissertations and theses, an additional articles, reports and documents. Sources span from the 1970’s to 2013 and taken in full they choreograph the evolution of women’s centers in the US higher education system. The link for this resources is in the reference list of this document.

This discussion is meant to highlight the range of best practices/models that exist and draw attention to the wide range in structures and functions of women’s leadership centers and women’s centers affiliated with higher education institutions.

## Women and Leadership: Theory

The literature on women and leadership is both wide and deep. Subcategories of this literature include but are not limited to: organizing and leadership, social change, feminism in leadership, women and politics (U.S., Global Politics and Human Rights), women and work, history of women’s leadership, important figures (biographies, memoirs and interviews), women and educational leadership. The Rutgers Institute of Women’s Leadership maintains a useful bibliography titled, Women and Leadership which can be accessed here: <http://iwl.rutgers.edu/documents/research/WomenLeadershipBio.pdf>.

The Commission on Accreditation (2011) produced a thoughtful and annotated bibliography on women and leadership that focuses on women and educational leadership which can be accessed here: [/women-in-leadership-annotated-bibliography.pdf](#). Iowa State University maintains a leadership bibliography that includes sections on women and leadership both with and without an international focus. <http://www.weli.eng.iastate.edu/Conferences/Syracuse2004/Syracuse%20Biblio.LEADERSHIP.pdf>

These resources, while fairly comprehensive, represent just a portion of the literature and best practices in the realm of women's leadership.

Several models and key areas of theory informed this evaluation. It will be important to acknowledge the influence of context and culture on the implementation of the WLP/Armenia. Klenke's (2004, 1996) work was one of the first scholarly examinations of the complex interactions between gender, leadership and culture. Klenke argues that if we were to use one word to characterize the study of leadership that word is diversity; diversity of theories and paradigms; diversity of ethnicity and gender; and diversity of contexts. In recognizing the critical importance of context—political, intellectual, artistic, religious, scientific, social, cultural and international—leadership manifests itself differently. In this broader context, new leadership opportunities for women arise. Women have a critical role to play in a new social order to ensure that its goal, that is, the development of the potential of all people regardless of gender, ethnicity, social class or religion, is achieved. The contextual view encourages women to seek new leadership opportunities and take a leading role in the design of new contexts in which the social architecture of organizations and nations is not so much dominated by gender issues, but by human issues. The human rights angle is an important tool for gender advocates in Armenia.

By understanding the leadership context, women can become more influential in creating a climate more conducive to the acceptance of women leaders, and increase the demand for them as role models for both women and men. Ayman and Korabik (2010) also examine the relationship between leadership, gender and culture. Their work points out the problem with the fact that for decades, our understanding of leadership has been largely based on the results of studies carried out on White men in the United States and offers alternative models that discuss how gender and culture can have an impact on many aspects of leadership.

Women leaders in many parts of the world have leadership opportunities that never existed before as a result of technology, globalization and demographic shifts. At the same time objectifying women in contexts such as the media or the patriarchal ideology that permeates contexts such as the military and the church have changed very little. Klenke's (2011) more recent work theorizes and expands on her earlier work that the context in which women exercise leadership is critically important in shaping their leadership style.

Another key body of theory and models deals with the role of men and boys in gender inequality and women's empowerment. The evaluation will look for evidence of activity and shifts in this arena. In an interview, Victor Agadjanian of Arizona State University (Co-Director, Women's Leadership Program/Armenia), emphasized, "Of course, you can't really change women's lives unless you change men, so this partnership will also be about working with men—raising awareness about gender equality and getting leaders in education and NGOs on board intellectually, psychologically and culturally about the benefits of working on women's leadership and advancement issues." (Roen, 2013).

Duban's work with the OSCE provides us with a relevant and contextually (regionally) appropriate blueprint for working with men and boys on issues of gender equality. This work confirms what other studies have revealed—that there is a great potential for men to become agents for change. Indeed it is a key finding that without the active participation of men and boys, for example in refuting gender stereotypes and adopting non-traditional roles, progress will remain one-sided.

In 2003, the UN Secretary-General noted:

Men in many contexts, through their roles in the home, the community and at the national level, have the potential to bring about change in attitudes, roles, relationships and access to resources and decision-making which are critical for equality between women and men. ...Men should therefore be actively involved in developing and implementing legislation and policies to foster gender equality and in providing positive role models to promote gender equality in the family, the workplace and in society at large”.

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This sentiment is as relevant today as it was more than a decade ago. Achieving gender equality requires short-term high return projects alongside initiatives that take a long-term perspective on social change. The OSCE publication provides an intensive resource on effective practices to engage men and boys.

### **The Value of a Human Rights Framework**

The global content and trends that increasingly espouse a human rights-based approach to development is a crucial underpinning for the program being evaluated. The human rights framework presumes that societies function well when all their members have the opportunity to participate in development processes and their rights and freedoms are duly respected. The human rights-based approach is about empowering the rights holders to know and claim their rights and increasing the ability and accountability of duty bearers – the individuals and institutions who are responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling rights.





### Evaluation Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation (articulated in the scope of work provided by HED) are to examine the:

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1. efficiency of management processes and systems;
2. relevance of program design;
3. effectiveness of program implementation;
4. impact of program intervention; and
5. potential for program sustainability.

More specifically the evaluation team examined each of these items to generate knowledge about how higher education partnerships can contribute to the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. Thus, we investigated the following questions:

- (1) How did the partners make decisions or use the results based-management systems to contribute to the outcomes of promoting gender equality and female empowerment?
- (2) To what extent were the program activities and interventions adapted for the local context to contribute to the outcomes of promoting gender equality and female empowerment?
- (3) To what extent have the intended outputs and outcomes of promoting gender equality and female empowerment been achieved or are likely to be achieved and how were the results effected by program fidelity?
- (4) What were the outcome results of the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women by this partnership and to what degree are the outcome results attributable to implementation of the project? Is there evidence that outcome level results had a wider effect than anticipated, e.g. YSU-private sector partnership?
- (5) To what extent are the program effects (development results and/or host-county and U.S. higher education partnership) likely to continue over time after funding has ceased? What aspects of the program have the best chance of continuing and what would be the major factors that would influence these lasting effects?

The team used guiding questions provided by HED to uncover findings in each of the five objective areas. The focus of this evaluation was “to generate knowledge about how higher education partnerships can contribute to the promotion of gender equality and female empowerment.” Evaluators aimed to illuminate an understanding of how the partnership was managed (What worked? What didn’t work? And why?) with particular focus the outcome level results of **improving the perception of gender equality** and **increasing the self-efficacy of females**, as measured by the indicators GNDR-3/GNDR-4 . The activities associated with these outcomes of increased perceptions of equality and self-efficacy are an integral part of the design of the Women’s Leadership Program.

### Evaluation Methodology: Explanatory Case Study

An explanatory case study approach was taken. Our goal with this case study evaluation was to create a full, complex picture of what occurred with the Women’s Leadership Program in Armenia. In conducting the evaluation, we used the description proposed by the USAID: “Case study as an evaluation method is

a means of learning about a complex instance, based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained through extensive description and analysis of that instance taken as a whole and in its context” (USAID, 2013). We used purposive samples so that we could learn what occurred, why it occurred and what relationships exist among observed events. As a summative case study evaluation, the aim of the evaluation was to be to focus on higher order questions and ask respondents to synthesize and think deeply about their experience with this program. While we recognize the importance of specific outputs and the detailed tracking that has driven this program, our emphasis as evaluators was on distillation and encapsulation of the overall success of the program, its benefits to participants and beneficiaries and the critical lessons learned. The lasting hallmark of the WLP is the development of a comprehensive YSU Center for Gender and Leadership Studies (CGLS). Many of the threads of this evaluation will lead back to the function and sustainability of this Center.

## Data Collection

The main sources of information used were semi-structured in-depth interviews, small discussion groups, two short surveys using structured questionnaires, observations and documents. Using multiple sources of data generated multiple viewpoints and helped us to better triangulate the sources and create a composite picture.

### *In-Depth Interviews*

Interviews are the foundation of case study evaluation. We used semi-structured interview protocols, as open-ended questions give evaluators a better chance of learning about the perceptions and experiences of those being studied. The underlying assumption is that respondents experience the world in unique ways, and the object of the interview is not to standardize their experiences, but rather to understand them.

We tape recorded the interviews as it is hard to get accurate quotes without tape recording. We use quotes to help demonstrate that we have captured respondents’ perceptions and feelings accurately. We felt at the outset that we would not be able in this study to deploy the time and funds needed to create full written transcriptions of the tapes. That said, we ended up fully transcribing the majority of interviews so that we could get to the depth and complexity required of an evaluative case study.

See **Appendix A** for a list of stakeholder interviewees. **Appendix B** provides a master interview guide that includes questions to be posed to the key informants in this program. **Appendix C** provides **Trends in Partnership Implementation which helped** inform the methodology and served as an initial investigative framework.

### *Survey*

A survey was administered to all of the small grant recipients and other project participants. We gathered participant reflections on the relevance of the program, their experience with working with the CGLS, their assessment of the impact and their view of the sustainability of the CGLS. In order to ensure the highest rate of return, we sent out the survey via email and asked that respondents reply by either email or by regular mail if they preferred anonymity. We also facilitated a group discussion with a willing subset of the full group.

Survey questions included:

1. Are you aware of the partnership between ASU and YSU?
2. How do you assess the strength and importance of the ASU-YSU partnership?
3. How would you describe the importance of promoting gender equality and women's leadership in Armenia?
4. Following your experience with the project, have you longer term plans for continued work on gender equality and women's leadership issues?
5. What additional knowledge and skills do you need?
6. How could the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies support your activities?
7. Overall, how satisfied are you with the results of the project?
8. In what specific ways has the project influenced the recognition of gender equality in the Armenian society?

### *Group Discussion*

Evaluators held a 90 minute group discussion with recipients of research grants and YSU scholars in residence at ASU. This complements the data that we got from surveying all of the grant recipients.

The rationale for group discussions was as follows: We believe that organized discussion with a group of selected individuals is a suitable way not only for gaining information about their views and experiences gained from their participation in the program but also for obtaining several perspectives about the results of the program, its relevance and sustainability options.

The benefits of group discussion include gaining insights into people's shared understanding of the issues of women's leadership and gender equality in Armenian society and the ways in which the perceptions of the individuals are influenced by their group views. This allowed us to identify the individual views vis-à-vis the groups' view. These group views as well as individual attitudes, feelings and beliefs are more likely to be revealed via the group interaction. Compared to individual interviews, which aim to obtain individual attitudes, beliefs and feelings, group discussions elicit a multiplicity of views and emotional processes within a group context.

Interaction between participants highlights their view of the world, the language they use about an issue and their values and beliefs about a situation. Interaction also enables participants to ask questions of each other, as well as to re-evaluate and reconsider their own understandings of their specific experiences. Another benefit is that discussions can elicit information in a way which would help us determine why an issue is salient and reveal what is salient about it (Hollander 2004, Morgan 1988) and we can better understand the difference between what people say and what they actually do (Onwuegbuzie *et al.* 2009, Peregman & Curran 2013). If participants show a diversity of understandings, we can map their attitudes and better articulate their behavior. In addition, we believe that compared to individual observation methods, a group discussion can get more information in a shorter period of time. Having mentioned that, we are also aware of the limitations – for some people the discussions can be less empowering and even threatening, especially for passive or shy participants that are afraid of being judged by other members of the group. Nevertheless, a productive atmosphere can be easily created if the participants appreciate the discussion's practical value and share a belief that it can make a difference. Coding and analysis of these transcripts followed the description below.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

Because of the limited number of respondents, the collected data was coded and processed manually. As information accumulated, points of agreement and disagreement among program participants, interesting recurring themes and categories of insights emerged. Evaluators created a running master list of themes that surfaced throughout the interviews and group sessions.

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The transcripts of the individual interviews and the group discussion were produced and then coded using open coding. Evaluators coded the data gathered via the Master Interview Guide using the criteria and categories provided by HED. Evaluators expanded on the categories to meet the unique needs of the evaluation.

### Efficiency of Management Processes and Systems

- Results-based management
- Timeliness of activities
- Use of Resources (human, financial, non-financial)
- Feedback loops/communication

### Relevance of Program Design

- Local and national development priorities
- Responsiveness to beneficiaries needs
- Reflection of funder strategies
- Causal linkages in the results framework

### Effectiveness of Program Implementation

- Progress vs targets
- Program fidelity

### Impact of Intervention

- Intended results directly attributable to intervention
- Unintended results
- Local ownership
- Regional engagement
- Businesses affected
- Government agencies

### Sustainability Potential for Program

- Financial resources management
- Non-financial resource planning and management
- Results based management
- Institutionalization
- Stakeholder engagement
- Continued relevance of program design

This enabled evaluators to identify trends and outline the evidence in the form of direct compiled input of project participants and stakeholders that can be utilized in the descriptive analysis. Our goal was to

create a transparent path of inference to let the reader know how the evaluators reached the conclusions they did and to present a plausible story that is adequately documented.

The evaluation team analyze and organized data by type of stakeholder: students, faculty, partnership implementers, etc.

NOTE: All raw data collected as part of this evaluation (survey data, interview recordings, etc. has been submitted to HED with the Final Evaluation Report.

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### Self-Efficacy: Background

Given the importance of self-efficacy to the WLP/Armenia and to women's leadership programming more generally, it warrants some discussion and background definition framing.

The theoretical underpinnings for self-efficacy in this evaluation draw on Bandura's (1997a, 1997b) construct of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is specific to a domain (i.e., leadership skills) and develops through successful mastery experiences that build an individual's confidence in their ability to achieve specific goals. *Collective efficacy* is related to individual efficacy and refers to the shared belief by members of a group to work together effectively to accomplish a goal (Frankenberg 2004).

Peterson et al, 2011 find that the concept of self-efficacy helps explain why people's behavior may differ widely even when they possess similar knowledge and skills. Behavior is better predicted by one's beliefs regarding one's capabilities to bring about change than by the reality of what one is actually capable of doing. Bandura (1986, 1977a, 1997b) specifies four sources that can be used to form self-efficacy. The most effective source in creating a strong sense of efficacy is *mastery experiences*, or success in meeting challenges that are essential if one is to build a robust belief in one's potential efficacy. Success achieved in the face of adversities are particularly beneficial. Bandura (1997a, 1997b) explains that developing a sense of efficacy through mastery experiences is not a matter of developing ready-made habits, instead it "involves acquiring the cognitive, behavioral and self-regulatory tool for creating and executing appropriate courses of action to manage ever-changing life circumstances" (p.3)

Social models provide the second self-efficacy source, *vicarious experiences*. Seeing people similar to themselves succeed by perseverant effort raises observers' beliefs that they, too, possess the capabilities to master comparable activities. The third source, *social persuasion*, illustrates how self-efficacy is heightened if significant others express faith in one's capabilities rather than conveying doubts. The fourth source is *physiological and emotional states*...how one feels, either physically or emotionally (Kavanagh & Bower, 1985).

### Evaluating Self-Efficacy

To gain a full understanding of self-efficacy over the duration of this program, evaluators would have recommended the development of a comprehensive tool such as a tailored self-efficacy scale (populated by interviews using a structured questionnaire. To be effective and show the changes resulting from the program this would have been implemented at the onset of the program, at the mid-point and again at the close of the program to gather end line data.

In future programs evaluators recommend that program designers consider looking at how self-efficacy and collective efficacy functioned to bring about both individual and group-level normative behavior change. We suggest working with the same participants before (baseline) and after (end line) to determine if changes related to the program were significant or not. Leadership Self-Efficacy (LSE) and Collective Efficacy (CE) are indicators that could be tailored to fit the WLP/Armenia or other context. The desire would be to produce some valid measure of the potential of respondents to become agents of change themselves and to work together to achieve common goals. 30

Evaluators felt it could be useful to get some direct feedback from key participants to approximate self-efficacy using a retrospective survey with seven key questions. We administered this survey to staff of the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies.

## Women's Leadership Program-Armenia

### Self-Efficacy Survey

1. Do you feel that your work on the WLP increased (or decreased) your personal sense of confidence? Please describe.
2. Do you feel that your work on the WLP has helped to develop your own leadership potential? Please describe.
3. Do you feel you've had personal success in meeting challenges of implementing a complex program like the WLP? Please describe.
4. As part of this program, have you seen successes (by others) that have influenced your own sense of possibility with work on gender equality and women's empowerment? Please describe. Name people and their connection to the program.
5. Have there been specific individuals (connected to this program in some way) who have been especially important in supporting your work and expressing faith in what you are trying to accomplish? Please describe. Name people and their connection to the program.
6. In what other ways has this program changed you? Has it changed how you think about your strengths and weaknesses? Please describe.
7. Has your belief in your own capability to bring about positive change with this program changed over the course of this program? Please describe.

### Member Checking

Evaluators performed some informal member checking during the interviewing process by restating or summarizing information and then checking with participant to determine accuracy. There was one interview which was not recorded, due to technical difficulties. For this respondent, we sent a written transcript that was created during the call for the person to review. No changes were suggested and this is another form of member checking. Additional checks were made – and the views of one of the interviewed persons confirmed – upon the completion of the first draft of this report.

## Literature and Documentation Review

The evaluation team examined a wide range of reports provided by HED as desk review materials. The team focused on a comprehensive review of all documents available pertaining to the partnership, including progress reports and all other appropriate partnership documents. The team also reviewed a variety of best practices documents regarding gender, university partnerships, women's leadership programming in higher education settings, USAID evaluation strategy and other relevant reports produced locally and internationally.

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## Limitations of this Evaluation

1. The duration of this study was limited to 31 working days for the external US-based consultant and to 26 working days for the internal Armenian consultant. The week spent in-country doing fieldwork was compressed due to two national holidays, one which was unexpected.
2. The lack of budget for professional transcription of interviews took valuable time away from analysis and report preparation.
3. If time were not a constraint, evaluators would have interviewed students who used the services of the career center and faculty who were part of the higher education network.
4. The study was conducted in a limited timeframe with a specific purpose to assess efficiency, relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.
5. There was no external midterm evaluation that could have been used to compare midterm and ending findings. This would have been of help in developing recommendations under this evaluation.
6. There was no comprehensive tool such as a tailored self-efficacy scale used to gauge self-efficacy over the life of the program.
7. There was no formal tool such as a Fidelity of Implementation Rating System used to gauge program fidelity over the life of the program.



The findings explored in this chapter are purposely comprehensive and they provide thick description as necessary for an explanatory case study. Readers will get a real-time, complex sense of partner and beneficiary perspectives on the five key areas of: efficiency, relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Evaluators want readers to gain a sense of what the experience of being at the site would convey. To give reader a reference point, quotes are followed by a notation of the type of respondent:

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Pri-ASU=program implementer, Arizona State University  
Pri-YSU=program implementer, Yerevan State University  
YSU Faculty  
NGO beneficiary  
USAID  
HED

In reading these findings in their entirety, one will get a deep sense of ‘how’ this program was implemented and ‘what’ happened during the duration of the program. Each section concludes a discussion of findings, where evaluators explore the ‘why’ with the reader.

### 1.0. Efficiency of Management Processes and Systems

The following questions guided the data collection under this section:

- How did the partners use the results based-management systems to contribute to the outcomes of promoting gender equality and female empowerment?
- How did the partnership make decisions regarding implementation and did decision making processes contribute to efficient program implementation?
- What are the hallmarks (key characteristics) of the partnership between ASU and YSU?
- What have been the main benefits of the program to ASU and YSU?
- In your view, what worked and what did not work in the partnership in terms of planning, communication, coordination, implementation, evaluation?

Below are the findings, descriptions and quotes that we structured according to the following categories of indicators:

#### 1.1 Results-based management

- *PRIME Reporting System*

#### 1.2 Timelines of activities

#### 1.3 Use of Resources (human, financial, non-financial)

- *Evidence of institutional capacity building at YSU*

- *Evidence of CGLS leadership capacity building*

- *Evidence of capacity building at ASU*

#### 1.4 Feedback loops/communication



## Summary of findings

### 1.1

-/+<sup>11</sup> Findings show that the initial framing and process surrounding the results framework and development of indicators was difficult. There were difficulties born by HED in managing evolving standard indicators from USAID. In 2011, USAID reissued its educational and monitoring and evaluation strategies HED had to respond and adapt to all these shifts. There was a classic strain between the standard indicators of USAID and the actual needs of the program at hand, and there were great efforts and good intent, yet HED had difficulties in effectively communicating and leading the results framework and indicators process with the partner universities. All of this had a *delaying impact* on the program timeline.

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### 1.2.

-/- The problems with internal university policies for tendering and procurement took valuable time away from the program that could have been put toward advancing perceptions/awareness about gender quality and women's empowerment.

### 1.3.

+/+ Dealing with the differences in educational systems between countries is an expected part of university partnerships and it can be difficult to project exactly what issues will arise and how time consuming they may end up being. This program had its share of differences and they were well handled by program implementers. Working through the differences opens the door to real intercultural learning and capacity building between institutions.

-/- YSU institutional impediments to a smooth opening and operations of the CGLS affected the ability to deliver programming, and do reporting in a timely manner. Allocation and renovation of the premises of the Center took six months and there was a distinct disconnect identified between the program driven requests being made of the center and the actual capacity of the larger institution [YSU] to fulfil them on time. This also had a substantial effect on the sense of self-efficacy of CGLS staff. CGLS staff were not empowered to manage the CGLS budget directly and the arduous tendering and procurement processes of the university made it very difficult for the Center staff to be nimble and innovative. Their sense of "being in control" of the program was hence diminished.

+/+ The findings show strong evidence of institutional capacity building of several entities within YSU, including the YSU International Cooperation Office-Grants Department, the Career Center, and the CGLS.

+/+Vibrant, sustainable partnerships must benefit both institutions. Findings illustrate important capacity building at ASU to faculty, students and WLP administrators. Involvement in the WLP accrued contributions to ASU's global footprint, intercultural capacity and critical development of the project team which in turn builds capacity for future collaborative endeavors.

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<sup>11</sup> Key: This general scoring system (++ positive, +/- mixed but more positive than negative, -/+ mixed (more negative than positive), and -- negative) reflects evaluators' subjective opinion on the processes and/or outcomes described. This can also be interpreted as: excellent (+/+), good (+/-), fair (-/+), and poor (-/-).

1.4.

+/+ There was remarkably strong agreement about the overall communication and coordination for this program. Findings illustrate that the HED hub provided an open, responsive and efficient platform for all partners, over the duration of the program. The monthly calls were the key. The only exceptions were 1) as mentioned the early communication around results frameworks and indicators and 2) some concern regarding the continual transition of USAID-Armenia personnel which had effects on continuity of relationships and institutional memory.

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+/+ Program implementers appeared to gain a sense of collective-efficacy program-wide due to the high quality of communications.

### 1.1 Results-based management

The initial framing and process surrounding the results framework and development of indicators was difficult. There were difficulties born by HED in managing evolving standard indicators from USAID. In 2011, USAID reissued its educational and monitoring and evaluation strategies; HED had to respond and adapt to all these shifts.

There was a classic tension between the standard indicators of USAID and the actual needs of the program at hand and despite great efforts and good intent, HED had difficulties in effectively communicating and leading the results framework and indicators process to/with the university partners. All this resulted in delayed implementation.

“I was rather frustrated in the beginning that the procedure for developing results framework and reporting on PRIME that is so central to the HED operation I thought was extra-ordinarily bureaucratic... We basically **lost the first four months** on the project while they were drawing us into their fairly elaborate development of indicators and the whole results framework. So I learned from that episode and obviously we have to deal with that... There were delays with contracting, but then the **delays** even being able to move forward with full hiring and all until after a delegation from HED had come in January to ASU and we actually I don't want to say wasted but we took a long time and spent a lot of money bringing colleagues from YSU to go over these kinds of these rather convoluted results framework issues in which HED was still finding its way as well. I view that as a procedure and a process that we can do better on. Knowing that these indicators while some of them just have to adjust to the dictates of either HED or USAID ...they ought not stand in way of a prompt take off of the project because **ultimately there's always going to be a certain disconnect between reporting that takes place on indicators and reporting that takes place on a project.** And I think it's better to have reporting on a project than to have reporting on indicators, especially when the indicators don't always jive 1:1 with the project. I wouldn't want to make it seem as though this was a defining problem in the project, it's just that it was an early irritant but an experience from which we learned a great deal” (PrI-ASU)

“I think in this case, perhaps one of the challenges was that it seemed like a lot of the work was falling on the partnership director at YSU and so there wasn't at the beginning quite enough distribution of responsibilities across individuals to tackle some of the necessary things that had to happen to kind of kick start of get things going. But I think that once the staffing structure got into place, things seemed to be moving at a much quicker and smoother pace. So often I think

individuals just “do the work” and maybe implicitly they understand what the end results they’re working toward are but I think that one of the challenges with these higher education partnerships is that without being very explicit in what your objectives are, it makes the implementation much harder, and so because you are working across countries and across different institutions and different cultures not only within the countries but also within the institutions, you really have to spend the time at the beginning to set up a good program framework.” (HED)

### *PRIME Reporting System*

ASU program implementers expressed frustration and continue to question the “fit” of PRIME indicators and the actual WLP:

“Basically what happens is you live with these indicators and the PRIME becomes sort of a more or less effective way of responding to the indicators and whether that actually gives a good picture of what actually has happened on the partnership, is another matter but at least you learn to rather quickly streamline the responses and get the PRIME finished. On the other hand we can use those indicators on the PRIME to our own reporting purposes and we’ve tried to do that so. I haven’t read the PRIME reports as an outsider but it would be kind of interesting 5-10 years down the road to read those reports and see whether they bear any relationship to what actually took place on the partnership. “My concern—normally when you are trying to formalize what you’re doing it doesn’t take a whole lengthy time but in this case I actually think it did postpone the startup of the project. The fact that the project was under contract from September in 2012, but we didn’t get wrestling with these indicators, and then overly so in our week long session that involved travel of Armenian colleagues in January of 2013 when we just spent virtually several days working over the indicators and results framework. HED has been really good about adjusting to all of this – a marvelous job in trying to make sure that the reporting goes as smoothly as possible.” (Pri-ASU)

A HED Representative thoughtfully explains their perspective on implementation of the results based management system and the difficulties encountered:

“HED really tries to play the intermediary—we really try to help the partners understand the definitions and we also try to educate USAID about the challenges in using these indicators. We did actually have some orientation events for the partnership and Marilyn and I did travel to ASU when the partners were together there and spent a day or 2 going over them with them. I know that they’re complicated. I think that the challenge is that those indicators often are complicated but the concept of results based management is great. But for people who haven’t used it, it can become daunting and challenging and I think that in this case, again these are all fabulous researchers we are working with but maybe not the best program managers. They tended to get over ambitious about the indicators that they were going to use but I know Marilyn and I tried many-many times to say simplify...let’s just clarify what are the big outcomes that you want to see as the changes. You don’t need 20 indicators you just need a couple of really good indicators. And that was actually really difficult. Everyone in the room when we were there had a different idea of what they wanted to achieve and measure. So you had people who were working on the website development and they wanted all these exciting indicators about tracking website usage and

website hits and then you had the researchers who wanted these research intensive indicators. So you had different people around the table. I think that people viewed it as a waste of time, but had they taken it more seriously and understood that in that time period it was really important to have everyone agree on a simple set of results that they wanted to work towards and track [if this happened] the next two or three years of reporting would have been much easier.” (HED)

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We should note again that HED was concerned that the high number of indicators would become a reporting burden to the partners. YSU and ASU, however, felt strongly that the indicators were needed to capture outputs and outcomes and asked to keep them even if that meant a higher reporting burden for them in the future.

## 1.2 Timelines of activities

The previous section on results-based management revealed that the way the reporting system indicators, etc. were handled caused considerable delays at the start of the program. As implementation began on the YSU side there were also institutional impediments to a smooth opening and running of the CGLS that affected the ability to deliver programming and do reporting in a timely manner. There was a distinct disconnect identified between the program driven requests being made of the center and the actual capacity of the larger institution.

YSU launched the Center in May 2013 but then needed to remodel the room which became difficult due to internal YSU bureaucracy:

“We were only able to move in in November. It created difficulties –running an international conference, launching the small grants program from different places. People were unable to find us. It affected our work and reporting. The project responsibilities began much sooner and we had to find makeshift areas to work in the meantime. The USAID reporting system was new, very difficult and complex, (double and triple counting). It was not clear from the beginning who is supposed to do what, and eventually we decided that we should do everything because many things were missing in the report. Due to university processes (tendering) we had to wait for months for simple things like a pack of paper. While we understand that these procedures are in place in order to minimize corruptions, they affected the programs progress. Survey implementation was difficult-YSU couldn’t provide transportation—this also required a bidding process. The bureaucracy of YSU also impacts their PR efforts; a banner can take months. These things were discussed during monthly conference calls with HED.” (Pri-YSU)

Concerning the logistical problems within YSU that affected the implementation timetable:

“Time and effort on internal bureaucracy...the university actually changed its status from State to Foundation status, (within the last 3 months). Part of the reason was to change procurements but no changes so far. It is an issue of state policy for higher education institutions. There was a bad experience with a science project. They couldn’t deliver results (tendering procedures took too long and delayed buying chemicals). It’s an issue of the system in general. Foundations don’t need do tendering. With tendering you get the cheapest, not necessarily the best. However, YSU might keep its procurement policies because of the anti-corruption mission. (Pri-YSU).

However, HED explained that that delay at the inception period was filled with start-up activities, which were a planned part of the program implementation. The process took longer, mainly because there were significant delays on the partner end completing the needs assessment and baseline—all of which were needed to finalize the RF. HED representative felt that the time allocated to start-up was necessary and helped to ensure that the program would remain on track in the long-run.

### 1.3 Use of Resources (human, financial, non-financial)

Evaluators found that there was a robust use of resources by program implementers. There is evidence of a great deal of institutional learning and capacity building at YSU, ASU and within the CGLS. This is all important collateral that will help sustain efforts going forward.

There were differences in educational system contexts between countries. While grappling with those differences is an expected part of university partnerships, it can be difficult to project exactly what issues will arise and how time consuming they may end up becoming. This program had its share of differences. Working through the differences opens the door to real intercultural learning and capacity building between institutions. Following is a specific example where a program implementer is discussing the in-depth learning that goes on when a faculty member presents at a conference outside of their home country for the first time (a YSU faculty member attended a conference in the US as part of the WLP).

“How are conferences run in the US? Good to know. Do you get lots of questions in your country or do you not get many questions? Are they relatively benign or are they basically questioning everything that you’ve just said? How do you respond to that? How do you respond to even insulting questions? Or flattering questions? And then American scholars going to Armenia—the May conference in Yerevan is highlighting the small grant research. For American scholars-how is it different? A conference in Sweden may be a little bit different from one in Yerevan. The HOW is important. How are the papers presented? Are you going to get into the research methodology or just the results and very flowery speech? And dealing with the idea of ...What is time? Start at 9am, etc., (issues of time). Things like the personal space dance. May have just ruined a good contact if you don’t get this right.” (PrI-ASU)

#### *Evidence of institutional capacity building at YSU*

The findings show strong evidence of institutional capacity building of several entities within YSU, including the YSU International Cooperation Office-Grants Department, the Career Center, and the CGLS.

According to the YSU International Office (Grants Department),

“Some of this capacity directly benefits the mission of the WLP, such as the 2015-2020 strategic plan for YSU which now includes key performance indicators related to gender.” (PrI-YSU)

The capacity developed by the Grants Department will help with effective management of grants and contracts with international donor organizations. Some attempts by the WLP to build capacity, such as the attempt to form a Project Advisory Board were important lessons learned in that “boards are not a working part of the culture in Armenia.” (PrI-YSU)

ASU program implementers describe how capacity was developed within the Grants Department of the YSU International Cooperation Office:

“There was a subcontract a sub-sub award and that required the kind of reporting that we would expect of any grants and contracts office and that others would expect of our grants and contracts office in sub awards that we have. I have to credit Phil Caranno on this because I think he’s really helped to build capacity and to challenge our colleagues at YSU who just haven’t developed a streamlined research grants and contacts office. It makes it very difficult for international agencies to contract directly with the university. By insisting on good reporting from Jeannie and from Markarov I think we’ve carried our own partnership to a new level with YSU and ***we’ve learned a lot in the process*** and I think that they too are understanding about how grant reporting has to take place. There have been times when we had to post-pone making a quarterly payment because we just hadn’t received any kind of the invoice from them and the reporting wasn’t there as well. I think they understand what we need and that’s been a really positive kind of development out of the project. I think it’s more the institutional inertia that also has occasionally created burdens for Gohar. How does the CGLS for example extract funds out of a sub award? I’m sure Gohar has expressed her own frustrations at times about that. What we take as routine is really important for institutional capacity development.” (PrI-ASU) 38

“What we worked through with YSU is a lack of a Sponsored Projects office to be able to handle grants like this. There was a lack of a research infrastructure and a need to build this from scratch. YSU learned about managing administrative costs. Account for things needed to run the programs. Learned to craft budgets.” For example, YSU doesn’t have an indirect cost rate but that’s being discussed right now. ***I stressed the importance of operating within the confines of YSU and YSU gaining the capacity.*** At the end they did. They now have the tools and hopefully they realize they have the tools.” (PrI-ASU)

“University researchers are basically functioning as cowboys, getting their research run thru NGOs because a smooth running structure (grants and contracts office) at YSU is still being built.” (PrI-ASU)

In addition, the YSU’s Career Center enhanced its organizational capacity as well. The Career Center’s staff explained that before they hadn’t even set a schedule of trainings:

“In the past, it used to be ad-hoc. Now we have a schedule and it is full with students. Whatever happened here during the last three years, I attribute mostly to the program. We have developed different practices of disseminating and gathering information and the way we announce events. In the past students weren’t very interested in what the career center offered. Now the Career Center has mailing lists, we use Facebook and announcements on boards, we hand out flyers and all this has improved our way of outreach to the students. Now we do seminars joint trainings and roundtables with other entities looking to recruit students for employment. Moving forward, the Career Center is ***“not going to drop anything”***, they will continue as they have been. In September when Lilit comes back from maternity leave they will reconsider their work program and evaluate demand and see what new things they should be doing. We asked if they would you

think about reaching out to ASU and developing a mentoring relationship with their career office? They said “we would love to have these kinds of links with ASU.” (Pri-YSU)

YSU staff described their own initial difficulties in managing the first reports, the difficulty of using the “Arizona model” for Armenia and the differing cultural notions of time:

“They were difficult and complex. We (YSU) didn’t have the statistics being requested. We had to develop a culture of gathering data at YSU.” For example, a WLP form requested data on gender balance (admissions and enrollment data) for students at YSU. I went to a separate department and figured out how to obtain this data. We also now collect gender data on faculty and staff. Prior to the WLP, the data collected was in response to requests by the Ministry of Education. Now we go above and beyond. The new strategic plan for the university 2015-2020 will include some key performance indicators related to gender. (Pri-YSU)

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“Institutional shortcomings: can you build capacity per ASU models? If it is bounded by formal regulations? ASU has the budget of the whole country of Armenia.” (Pri-YSU)

“The beginning of a new tradition takes time...approximate Armenian time.” (Pri-YSU)

### *CGLS leadership capacity*

Findings speak to the critical nature of the leadership abilities of the Center Director and the rapid development of the CGLS organizational capacity that was required:

“Part of the project is to encourage people to like Gohar to be even **more entrepreneurial** than they are. She’s grown a lot on this project too, I think.” (Pri-ASU)

“The person that they’ve hired to head the institute [Center] seems to have a lot of charisma and fire herself and that can be very good and that can also create **its own set of challenges**. This has got a lot of aspects of looking at women’s empowerment built right into it.” (USAID)

“She was the only one doing gender. Her PhD was on gender, I saw her develop. She does well founded research. We need more professors like her. I feel that she’s very much alone. She represents gender issues academically a lot. **She’s tough but sometime it’s very difficult for her**. She’s struggled a lot. She knows the subject, she has outside exposure, and she reads and brings new ideas. **She finds a language that is appropriate with the Rector.**” (NGO beneficiary)

“The CGLS learned effective strategies to connect researchers with main stakeholders and policy makers. It is one of the most challenging issue in Armenia- most of the time, very valuable research just stays on paper, because no organization/institution connect research results and policy recommendations with decision makers and policy makers. Besides, CGLS also developed its capacities and learned strategies for how to connect researchers with NGOs for better lobbying and advocacy work.” (Pri-YSU)

“The CGLS learned how to design, plan, coordinate and implement nation-wide sociological surveys, and gained a unique position. **There is no center in Armenia that has such capacities and professional staff** to implement women and gender related surveys (professionals who have solid theoretical background in women/gender studies, using gender studies methodology, gender

sensitive researchers and interviewers, terminology translated in Armenian, research tools adopted to the local context, etc.)” (PrI-YSU)

The ongoing development of leadership capacity within the CGLS is of critical importance and will be discussed in the sustainability section.

### *Evidence of capacity building at ASU*

Vibrant, sustainable partnerships must benefit both institutions. Findings illustrate important capacity building at ASU to faculty, students and WLP administrators. Involvement in the WLP accrued contributions to ASU’s global footprint, intercultural capacity and critical development of the project team which in turn builds capacity for future collaborative endeavors.

“Our faculty benefited from learning about the experience of Armenian women they could include this in their courses taught in the US. We had an end of term event where the Armenian scholars talked about their experiences at ASU.” (PrI-ASU)

“I think it was beneficial to the faculty and students. Because ASU is a huge university it can be hard to connect with undergrads-they come, they go...the Armenian visitors came to all the events and had some interaction with undergraduates. Mainly though the grad students did benefit, the Armenian faculty sat in on seminars with our grad students they presented on the experience of Armenian women. Very lively exchanges.” (PrI-ASU)

“I think any **exposure in general to global challenges and global work is beneficial**; it contributes to ASU’s ambitions plans to expand its role, its global role and its connection to foreign institutions and its impact globally. That was certainly an important aspect.” (PrI-ASU)

“I think collaborating with a YSU foreign institution I think it was a very good experience for ASU. It helps develop institutional ties and **effective mechanisms of working with other institutions and different parameters and culture**, expectations and so on. Going back to the translational issues of dealing with working in a different cultural and political environment.” (PrI-ASU)

“I think it’s always good that we get faculty who may not have been involved in our areas of the world (Eastern Europe and Eurasia)-getting them involved. Often people are very US-based. We are always pushing people to travel there and interact. They [ASU faculty] had these 6 scholars in residence in their classes and our students get a different perspective people coming from a completely different background. The challenges of the language...what words don’t translate or are mistranslated on purpose for political reasons in the case of the word gender (and it means many things). In sitting in on classes it exposes the grad students (particularly in women and gender studies) to the research the scholars in residence were doing and the different societal situations that they are in. (PrI-ASU)

“One of the things that comes out of projects like this is the **development of our own project team**. I’ve learned to really value the work that others have put into this. There’s a teamwork that goes into something like this that is important for building institutional capacity.” (PrI-ASU)



## 1.4 Feedback loops/communication

There was remarkably strong agreement about the overall communication and coordination for this program. Findings illustrate that the HED hub provided an open, responsive and efficient platform for all partners, over the duration of the program. The monthly calls were the key. A recurring refrain was how the partnership between Arizona State University and Yerevan State University was both “**personal and professional**” stemming from the prior collaboration and the strong interests of the ASU Program Director. The only exceptions were 1) as mentioned the early communication around results frameworks and indicators and 2) some concern regarding the continual transition of USAID-Armenia personnel which had effects on continuity of relationships and institutional memory. 41

“Between ASU and YSU I’ve worked with Alexander Markarov since the earliest years of the century and I think I know fairly well how things operate there and I think that the communication there has been really quite good. I very much value the **friendships** with Gohar and Alexander Markarov. Coordination and communication were good, really regular phone calls, emails and visits back and forth.” (Pri-ASU)

“HED has their protocols and reporting procedures, there’s so much oversight, almost too much communication.” (Pri-ASU)

“Very good communication. Marilyn did a great job of running the project, bringing all the parties together; I didn’t find any problems here.” (Pri-ASU)

“In the planning stages – it would have been better to plan with Sociology Faculty from the very beginning that MA program is going to be implemented at our Faculty. We were not aware about that until September 2014 when Rector made that decision.” (Pri-YSU)

“Regular communication was a big help plus regular phone conversations were helpful every month. They provided a sort of benchmarking, together we visualized and monitored. No problems.” (Pri-YSU)

“I think that Marilyn has been very easy to communicate with. The monthly phone calls keep reviewing all the major components of the project and she has been **very sensitive** to the rhythm of the project. In that sense I think she’s really done a very good job. We’ve never had any problem communicating...we hear back within hours if not within a day if there’s a question that comes up. To my knowledge the financial reporting has gone smoothly too.” (Pri-ASU)

“Regarding communication I think we’ve had a very effective communication. I can’t think of any problems. It’s very **intense**, and I must confess it has consumed quite a lot of my time. Communicating of course with the Center Director, with YSU administration, mainly Alex Markarov. With HED it’s been very intense and **very regular communication** and generally effective communication. There are some issues that I mentioned in the beginning--some institutional differences at YSU for example, administrative structure, decision making process, financial mechanisms are very different, apparently, and it helped that we communicated on a regular basis and if any issues came up we would **quickly clarify and resolve** the problem that would emerge.” (Pri-ASU)

Evaluators spoke with HED representatives about communication and the findings were positive:

“I hope it’s good. It seems good. There are times when it’s quiet, but in my perspective that’s when people are doing their work. I think it’s overall **collaborative**. There at times can be **frustrations** with HED but I suspect that ASU I realizes that sometimes we slow things down just to make sure that there’s no issues that arise later on down the road. Overall I would say it’s collaborative; I really enjoy working with everybody on the team.” (HED)

“I believe that we [HED] had a positive relationship with USAID. It is a challenge when you’re trying to work toward a common strategy knowing that there are so many different layers of context between on the ground and the high level strategy. And I see that where I sit here there are so many partnerships and they are all working toward higher education development to address other issues in the community and so they all have a common set of indicators but the contexts are all so different in every place. I think we worked well with USAID to try to find that balance of communicating to USAID where it would be difficult for our partners to implement some things that the mission had wanted or measure certain things in a certain way because of the context not necessarily being flat across the world. I think we had a pretty good relationship there.” (HED)

Program implementers raised the high turnover of personnel at USAID and we discussed the implications of this with USAID representatives both from the Mission in Armenia and the Washington D.C. headquarters:

“As you may have already heard from USAID side, the project has had different managers. There was a person, our gender specialist, who was involved at the beginning with the planning and designing and initial stages of overseeing it but then after she left the mission, the project was transferred to another office so I have taken the project manager role since December 2014 (so only 3-4 months) and for the past one month I have been away and so the alternate manager is overseeing it right now. [Another] thing to consider is that it [**the WLP/Armenia program**] **moved from one technical office to another**--it was in a program office and then the person who took over was with the democracy and governance office (so am I). So the program is housed at this technical office as opposed to being housed at the program office as it used to be. In terms of **institutional memory**—when you are within the same unit you have more interaction and you hear from your colleagues more often than when it shifts from one office to another. It was a matter of information transfer, I don’t think we experienced and specific problems with that or issues. It moved smoothly from one person to another but just as background information.” (USAID)

The suggestion going forward is for the CGLS/YSU to connect with Foreign Service Nationals to avoid the high level of transition endemic in the USAID mission. There was a recognition of the value of continuity for better program outcomes:

“There is always a rotation of Foreign Service officers (always someone new). I would say they [YSU] needs to utilize the Foreign Service nationals for better continuity. Engage Foreign Service nationals as activity manager or agreement officer representatives because they have longer institutional history. Gender is cross cutting and anything going forward would be best located in the USAID program office—cutting across all programs. From the perspective of the program office, it should be: “we have an asset at YSU and we have this gender component”, how can we leverage this? The Mission Director makes this call [regarding where various programs reside] in

collaboration with the program officer. **Consistency is important.** [The stance should be, this gender and women's empowerment program is a mainstay and **we need stability.**" (USAID)

"I found the communication to be effective. First of all there are the monthly calls that are good platform to exchange and catch up on what's happening. In terms of day to day communication I think maybe during the **transition periods** maybe the implementing partner maybe they experiences some times when they had to go back and resubmit because of the **transition on our part** but from my part I can say that all inquiries have been answered and in a timely manner, so I found it effective." (USAID)

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## 2.0. Relevance of Program Design

The following questions guided the data collection under this section:

- To what extent were the program activities and interventions adapted for the local context to contribute to the outcomes of promoting gender equality and female empowerment?
- Did program design consistently link activities and outputs logically to program outcomes and objectives?
- In your view what have been the main contextual obstacles/challenges affecting implementation of this program? By contextual, we are referring to broader forces beyond the ability of partners to control (cultural, political, economic, etc.)
- Please comment on the intended/unintended benefits and challenges you have encountered with this program.
- How useful do you feel your involvement in the program has been?

The findings, descriptions and quotes are structured according to the following categories of indicators:

- 2.1. Local and national development priorities
- 2.2. Responsiveness to beneficiaries needs
- 2.3. Reflection of funder strategies
- 2.4 Causal linkages in the results framework

### Summary of findings

#### 2.1.

-/+<sup>12</sup>The importance of the current context in Armenia on issues of gender equality and women's empowerment, at this time is at the heart of this program. The cultural terrain is highly complex and there is discord both inside the bounds of this program within YSU and out in the larger Armenian society. This context had a direct effect on the ability of the program to create positive awareness about gender equity and women's empowerment.

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<sup>12</sup> Key: This general scoring system (++) positive, +/- mixed but more positive than negative, -/+ mixed (more negative than positive), and -- negative) reflects evaluators' subjective opinion on the processes and/or outcomes described. This can also be interpreted as: excellent (+/+), good (+/-), fair (-/+), and poor (-/-).

-/+ The CGLS and partner NGO's find themselves on the 'frontline', working to increase public awareness and legitimacy while under pressure internally and externally. The current context had direct impacts on the self-efficacy and on the collective-efficacy of this program—at every major juncture the determination of key program implementers was tested by a public sentiment that was not yet ready for gender equity and women's empowerment to be front and center.

## 2.2.

+/- ASU partners showed a growing appreciation for the nuance and complexity facing the gender equity agenda in Armenia.

+/- Findings show that YSU is caught to some extent between competing constituencies. This is not new terrain for universities. With a diverse student, faculty and administrator population, many viewpoints exist on topics of gender equality and women's empowerment ASU shared important perspective, saying "there always has been and always will be opposition to the idea of having women's studies in US universities. Political forces, then, are a given.

With all experience gained, now the charge for the CGLS then is to thread its way through, recognizing the **long-term nature of social change**. A lot will depend on the CGLS crafting its own ownership and identity in the aftermath of this intensive partnership. This will be addressed further in the sustainability section. As one program partner put it, "the challenge is that countervailing forces are equally strong and authentically national—Armenian." The reality of the country-wide context provides the frame for this work into the future.

The question is also, in part, one of leadership. What kind of institution (society) is envisioned? What values will YSU strive for? Will gender equality and women's empowerment be legitimized as "an integral and mainstream part of the culture of the university"?

-/- No evidence was found of the WLP providing access for people with disabilities. This is regrettable and issues of access should be considered in future programs.

## 2.3.

From the earliest stages of the project cycle, HED cooperated with USAID, and the program was developed according to the donor's priorities and a USAID representative was instrumental at the initial conceptual stages of the program.

## 2.4.

The CGLS was envisaged as a hub for supporting the crosscutting efforts of YSU, local NGOs, and international agencies in training women for career success and professional and political leadership and for contributing to gender equality related public policy research. While some of these results are evident today, a longer timeframe is needed to observe the ways to sustain these deliverables and their lasting effects in order to assess whether and how those linkages in the results framework are working out.

## 2.1. Local and national development priorities

These testimonies provide a rich and diverse set of viewpoints, which taken in total get at the complex questions of program relevance. Everyone comes to this with an individual and personal set of experiences. There is evidence of the evolution of opinions as the study progressed.

“One of the major general concerns is that gender studies is a western idea and we have no local expertise on that.” (Pri-YSU)

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The gender law adopted by the Armenian Government sparked a backlash that gets at the heart of the struggle for the CGLS as it works to get established:

“After Armenia adopted the gender law, a smear campaign began focused on all those working on gender related work. The word gender was manipulated to mean all manner of perversions and homosexuality. We were portrayed as perverts. Gender is a curse now, and we have been losing ground in a sense. We have faced both irony and hostility. The wording in the law described gender as a social behavior, something constructed, that everyone can decide. This interesting wording created problems. The campaign was run by these pan-Armenian parental committees – they have them in post-soviet countries and in the churches. Also members of parliament are part of these committees. Due to the strength of the campaign the government decided not to use gender in the title of the law and it was changed to “Equal Rights of Men and Women on Ensuring Equal Opportunities”. Armenian has 2011-15 gender policy now its men and women. The domestic violence legislation also got a name change from gender based violence to violence based on sex. The gender barometer survey also created a stir. Center staff shared experiences they had out in the regions. A priest had a march and carried “no to gender” signs. We received a cold welcome from some in the regions. The campaign used a lot of media, talk shows, and these especially affected people in the region who watch (and believe) these shows. There were negative articles written about the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies saying that “USAID is destroying Armenia”. At one point a man came into the center yelling and making threats. The Campaign is well-funded and organized and involves the Russian parental committees’ geopolitical Armenian club. An Armenian assistant of Putin founded the parental committees. It is a KGB project; dangerous and well organized with support from members of parliament and a good budget” (Pri-YSU)

“Some of our obstacles are political and some are cultural. I believe it is a misinterpretation/ misperception about the gender policy. A government policy aimed at getting out of gender discrimination? Armenia is working on this the real actions vs. the wording is a possible problem.” (Pri-YSU)

A HED representative discusses the current context in Armenia and the need for a “thru line” that is thoughtful and future oriented:

“This is where HED sits with a lot of partnerships, this is a challenge that doesn’t have an easy short-term resolution in fact and needs a patient and long term approach. This is why we want higher education partners to work together...this is not your typical USAID direct intervention if you will. This is more intensive support for higher education institutions to engage with each other on some very important long-term issues. With this particular issue of the “campaign” it’s mixed in

with a much higher level of **distrust of the west** and the US in particular--the partners can't solve that one. It's **part of the context in which they operate**. One of the benefits here is that you have a highly respected higher education institution in YSU-which brings its own credibility and objectivity to the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies so I think that the Center probably will go through the permutations that it needs to go through at this particular point in time. I think it's kind of sad but true ...these are large cultural, political and social movements that higher education needs to operate within so sometimes the **thru line** for a particular issue like this-women's leadership is going to have to be very well thought out with cultural sensitivity." (HED)

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Following is helpful perspective from an ASU implementer who discusses how women's studies has always been controversial, even in the US, even now:

"One of the things that was a constraint that was hard to understand at the beginning...at the moment when we got the grant to establish the Center, the rector and appropriate decision makers at YSU were very committed to it and opened the doors to make it happen. But it was also the time when there was a political shift, more conservative and attacks on gender ...a backlash on women's issues. It was **hard to know what that meant in Armenian context**, I have been involved in establishing women's studies **in the US and there always has been and always will be opposition** to the idea of having it. So I have learned over the years how to navigate the environment and the environment in Arizona is pretty wacko in terms of state level politics and it's not just that its conservative but it's bizarrely conservative. So I would have no contact with the state legislature I would just turn it over to the paid people at ASU for them to deal with it [handling the backlash]. I know the women in Armenia weren't as supported as they could have been. Even by some of their male colleagues (not the administrators like the president) but other male faculty members. But that was the same in the US—a lot of my colleagues didn't support the idea of having women's studies in the US context either. But I couldn't make those kinds of generalizations because I wasn't there on the ground and I really didn't understand the politics. I just know that the institution itself created the Center and was moving forward with it. When I talked to the senior administrators they kind of minimized the attacks but I know the women felt attacked so it was kind of hard to calibrate it. We talked with the YSU faculty women who came to Arizona about how it was in the US. And how we handled different things, how you have to support each other, find ways to take care of yourself, etc. That was one of the challenges." (Pri-ASU)

## 2.2. Responsiveness to beneficiaries needs

There are layers of beneficiaries associated with this program. These include: women's NGO's, government agencies/ministries, YSU and ASU faculty and students, Armenian partner universities, as well as the Armenian society at large and the important subset of Armenian women. It is very difficult to create or discern a single profile of need for beneficiary groups. Issues of gender, women's empowerment, and women's roles in society are personal and multifaceted. What is known is that the program has taken major strides toward raising awareness and increasing the level of knowledge and discussion for the benefit of all key groups of beneficiaries.

“In order to explain why promotion of gender equality and women’s leadership is important for Armenia, one should look at a larger context and from the perspective of how Armenian society has been evolving over the last 24 years. In the background of political and economic upheavals, a lot of social transformational processes have occurred in the society, including rampant migration and increase of unemployment, further impoverishment and deprivation, marginalization of different groups, etc. It led to the deterioration of equality between different groups, including women and men. It is also worth mentioning, the overall national discourse has been increasingly influenced by different conservative and so called nationalist flows. In the context where woman is primarily accepted and praised for being wife and mother and baby girls are not born as they are not preferred in the society, promoting gender equality faces thick wall of arrogance and resistance and even personal threats towards those who wish to make a change for gender equality. Promotion of gender equality is of utmost importance to break through that arrogance and show people the other side of the coin. Doing that within the academic walls has a stronger strategic significance as youth’s perception is not rigid yet and they learn gender not only as an academic subject, but they obtain knowledge and skills for life. As I mentioned above, this program is unprecedented and should be sustained as long as possible and extended from a mere program to a separate Department of Gender Studies.” (YSU faculty perspective) 47

“The Armenian society is a stereotypical and patriarchal one, therefore it is important to raise the awareness of gender issues in terms of talking and thinking about gender equality and women’s role in society, thus promoting the very gender equality. And within this scope the YSU CGLS could be the very unit that could organize the above mentioned events.”(YSU faculty perspective)

“And yet despite these kinds of roles that they play their values are really quite traditional and when that then becomes a part of the national culture it defies this kind of expectation that USAID has that rests at the base of the whole project—that there is a kind of one size fits all of the role that empowered women are going to make in refashioning modern society. In part the kind of argument of Hilary Clinton and USAID is absolutely right on—that women are, can be the catalysts for international development and modernization of you want to use the old term in much of the Eurasian Islamic perimeter (Eurasian perimeter) but at the same time what the gender barometer survey is demonstrating is that the countervailing forces are equally strong and authentically national—Armenian, to a certain degree. And they’re embedded in rural Armenia as well as in much of the male population in urban Armenia. Certainly the gender barometer survey is opening that discussion up in ways that at the beginning of the project it never existed. I think that’s a very healthy...there are two ways of viewing it...one is that these headwinds that the project has faced from the public scorn of equating gender with homosexuality and all of that craziness...that that’s been just a debilitating factor, but on a deeper level I think this is actually a healthy challenge to USAID and to the underlying presuppositions of the project so as to demonstrate that the feigning of a feminist perspective in post- soviet space is obviously going to take a very different course than the way it has developed in the US and we ought to view that as not being exceptional but being what we would expect.”

“Particularly with bad relations with Turkey and with Azerbaijan and energy dependence on Russia, you know they’re kind of boxed in on many sides. Then you introduce this whole “what is this?” I remember having this whole problem with translation of words like “community” into Russian and what does that mean vs. in this case being gender. What does that mean ethically, morally, identity

—all those types of things sexual id, traditional values, relationship with the Armenian apostolic church, also close ties with Russia with Putin pushing very traditional type values religious and otherwise, it makes things difficult. But you keep the dialogue going and you keep ideas out there. From what I've heard from Gohar they've also had some physical ...I don't know how far it got but someone coming and trying to at least verbally threaten. Anytime you challenge the way things have been ...how can we make it better for the individual or the nation, the economy all those types of things opening up opportunities, new ideas, people are often afraid of what they don't know and understand or what changes it might bring and usually its I'm afraid of how its negatively going to affect me, not this will bring opportunities for my sons and daughters and grandchildren and wives and husbands and everybody else." (Pri-ASU)

There was a significant tension between traditional values and the goals of the women's leadership program. It is highlighted by this passage from YSU staff working on the WLP who spoke about the "level of comfort women have with their role in society...you can provide tools and opportunities but is it forcing/risking if they [women] are not ready? There has to be harmony from within and outside, between the world and the internal person, and it must be their personal choice." Another staff person added, "I see no hindering factors [for myself as a women]. If I had I would fight/speak but so far I haven't had obstacles." They talked about whether women are ready for community leadership—"are women ready for that kind of stress and responsibility? Mentally we feel the same as men but question whether we are the same physically. Staff said into all this enters the question of religion, which we prefer not to go into here." (Pri-YSU)

"We have more than 1000 followers on Facebook page. Our biggest challenge regarding the Facebook page is that some people are being aggressive on the page, (for example small grant applicants who didn't get selected for awards—and now coming out against gender work). (Pri-YSU)

Regarding bring YSU administrators and faculty along with this program, I had to say, "don't make obstacles to this program." The Department of Sociology viewed it as an asset especially in the second year. At first, the Department leadership felt excluded, and then they became more cooperative. Part of it is an issue of competition for students. Working with some Deans I had to say "it's part of international cooperation" and they said "ok we are going to become more international" and it was enough [to bring them on board]. For others, the approach that worked was "The Rector said and we have to do this". Sometimes this works." (Pri-YSU)

It is a complex question as to who the true beneficiaries are and there is a diverse (and evolving) set of stakeholders and potential stakeholders.

Evaluators found no evidence of the WLP providing access for people with disabilities. Program implementers shared an example whereby a woman who had been a recipient of a research grant was unable to attend one of the conferences and present her work because she was in a wheelchair and could not access the conference venue at YSU. This is regrettable and issues of access should be considered in future programs.

"YSU is not very friendly from disability rights perspectives; [even] the room allocated for CGLS is not accessible for disabled people at all." (Pri-YSU)



### 2.3. Reflection of funder strategies

From the earliest stages of the project cycle, HED cooperated with USAID, and the program was developed according to the donor's priorities. In fact a key USAID representative was instrumental at the most initial conceptual stages of the WLP:

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"I was involved really early probably early of 2012 and our Assistant Administrator said we have a Congressional earmark to obligate some money for women's empowerment in higher education. I said, yes there is probably a role for universities. He provided funds and I went out in early 2012 to the USAID missions and said I have some money to empower women in universities. I wanted to leverage the money I had and we got eight or so proposals and we got it down to 5 of which Armenia was one of them." (USAID)

### 2.4. Causal linkages

Generally, the results framework explains the causal relationships between results through a series of if-then statements defined by the theory of change under those linkages. Following that logic, we might consider that the development hypothesis rises from the lines linking the lower-level results to the higher-level results, and must refer to the evidence supporting those causal linkages (USAID, 2013b: 2).

In the project documents, the CGLS is envisaged as a hub for supporting the crosscutting efforts of YSU, local NGOs, and international agencies in training women for career success and professional and political leadership and for contributing to public policy research that advances gender equality.

To assess whether and how the causal linkages in the results framework have worked out, it is important to understand also the timeframe expected to deliver a particular result and the effect of that timeframe on the related causal linkages (USAID, 2000: 3). Thus, although ASU/YSU partnership and other stakeholders seem to share a vision of the importance of the Center, their perceived timeframes for the Center to become a full-fledged change agent differ. In addition, the situation on the ground prompted some adjustments during the implementation. As one of the participants of the group discussion said, "Perceptions (even of intellectual people) take time to evolve...one project is not enough, also needs to include the younger generation." (YSU)

"Too many things. Too intense. We talked about how it might have been better to get less funding over more time, and have less intensity. This would give more time to digest internally and externally." (Pri-YSU)

"There are demographic challenges for instance we are now trying to deal with the reality of a very small graduating cohort (people graduating with a bachelor's degree) that has to do with the changing structure of secondary education and so this years grad cohort from which we would draw applicants for the master's degree program is relatively small. Those are the kind of challenges that are kind of unfortunate in the sense of timing but it's a real life problem. We are dealing with this by making the program more attractive creating a system of scholarships of competitive scholarships that applicants can apply for as part of the grant." (Pri-ASU)

### 3.0. Effectiveness of Program Implementation

The following questions guided the data collection under this section:

- To what extent have the intended outputs and outcomes of promoting gender equality and female empowerment been achieved or are likely to be achieved and how were the results effected by program fidelity?
- Has the Women’s Leadership Program/Armenia (hereafter WLP) enhanced students’ knowledge and skills and broadened attitudes related to women’s leadership and career advancement? (Give specific examples)
- Has the WLP strengthened the capacity of Yerevan State University to make research-based recommendations, with an emphasis on putting into practice national gender policy? (specific examples)
- Has YSY’s capacity to deliver coursework that addresses women’s leadership and gender equity been developed? (specific examples)
- Have extension/outreach efforts at Yerevan State University promoted women’s leadership and gender equality? (EQ4)
- Can you describe the success of the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies in outreach to a) community groups, b) NGO’s, and c) local citizens?

This section discusses results under the Partnership Objectives 1-4 to illustrate the overall effectiveness of program implementation. Findings show to what extent the intended outputs and outcomes been achieved or are likely to be achieved.

#### Summary of Findings

##### Partnership Objective 1

**+/+**<sup>13</sup>The WLP met/exceeded expectations with the development of 13 new courses for the Women, Leadership and Development master’s program.

**-/+** Improving perceptions/awareness about women’s leadership and gender equality had mixed results due to the socio-political context in Armenia.

**-/+** Self-efficacy had mixed results as well; another area where the current socio-political context took a toll.

##### Partnership Objective 2

**+/+** The WLP exceeded expectations for increasing research capacity and created an impressive success for the program. A future step will be developing mechanisms and partnerships for consistently getting research recommendations infused into relevant national gender policies. Findings show a great deal of capacity development in the area of applied research. Critical building

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<sup>13</sup> Key: This general scoring system (+/+ positive, +/- mixed but more positive than negative, -/+ mixed (more negative than positive), and -/- negative) reflects evaluators’ subjective opinion on the processes and/or outcomes described. This can also be interpreted as: excellent (+/+), good (+/-), fair (-/+) and poor (-/-).

blocks are in place. That said, this work is still in its infancy. Key questions include: Are the recipients of small grants now in a position to leverage their research and apply for continuation funding? Is YSU in a position to hold additional small grants competitions? Can the CGLS raise funds for this?

-/+ The findings do not show a focused strategy for carefully honing and *packaging* specific research to target specific national gender policies, nor evidence of targeting of specific Ministries as collaborative partners for specific initiatives. How, for example, might the Gender Barometer Survey be taken up by relevant Ministries for use in policymaking?

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### **Partnership Objective 3**

+/+ Coursework development was an area of strength for the program. Continuity of faculty teaching and developing student interest in the courses and the new master's degree program is critical going forward.

### **Partnership Objective 4**

+/- Outreach results were mixed. Results were very strong and positive per NGO beneficiaries. The NGO's evaluators spoke to testified unanimously about the value and importance of the CGLS to their work and their missions. There was some internal tension about outreach at YSU. Time was a constraint. Perhaps most importantly, there were differing expectations for the outreach component from program implementers, donors and beneficiaries.

The findings show evidence of a great deal of outreach activity associated with this program. However, it is difficult to tell if this outreach is strategic. This may be the next stage—building strategic coalitions on a few focused initiatives to increase the potential for impact. There is some evidence of outreach to Ministries, but again the next stage may be to work collaboratively with targeted Ministries on a few highly focused initiatives. There is some evidence of outreach to other universities via the higher education network.

Overall, the findings in this area point to the need for 1) a strategic approach to outreach and 2) a strategy for public relations and targeted research dissemination that helps to drive outreach. This type of outreach is not currently part of the organizational culture at YSU and will require stamina to sustain.

### **Program Fidelity**

+/+ Evaluators found that the program did well in this area. Changes to program design were made based on learning and experimentation and strategic departures added value to the program. The development of the gender barometer survey was an example of innovation and program fidelity in that it was a tool created to fit the true needs of the program despite it being outside of the structure of USAID indicators.

This section is divided into two subsections:

3.1 Progress vs Targets and

3.2 Program Fidelity.

### 3.1 Progress vs Targets

*Partnership Objective 1: Enhance knowledge and skills and broaden attitudes related to women's leadership and options for career advancement*

**Progress in improving the perception, awareness and knowledge about women's leadership and gender equality**

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As evidenced by progress on indicators such as:

- > New or revised market relevant courses addressing women's leadership and gender equality

There were thirteen new courses developed addressed women's leadership and gender equity. These courses were largely developed by YSU faculty who went to ASU as scholars in residence. The courses will provide the backbone of the new master's degree program titled "Women, Leadership and Development." Getting the content from these core courses institutionalized in the master's program and thereby disseminated to YSU students will be critical to growing a cohort of individuals with a common theoretical and practical framework that will begin to systematically improve the knowledge, perception and awareness of women's leadership and gender equality.

#### **Women's Leadership and Gender Equity Courses**

1. Social Construction of Gender
2. Gender and Communication
3. Cultural Communications and Gender Discrimination
4. Women's Leadership in the Globalized Context
5. Gender Psychology
6. Women and Public Administration
7. Language and Gender
8. Religious and Women
9. Feminist Critique of Fairy Tales
10. Psychology of Victim Behavior
11. Gender and Ethical Management
12. Women and Social Change
13. Social Work with Women

More comprehensively, the following passages illustrate the complexity inherent in "women's leadership and gender equality":

"Quite an important step towards awareness-building on the issues of gender equality and women leadership. Helps to tie researchers with policy makers as much as it is possible in Armenia thus trying to build a culture of such cooperation. Thanks to this project many women leaders were able to conduct interesting research, and tried to find ways of overcoming the inequality that is a state of being in our country." (NGO beneficiary)

This passage by a key program implementer further illustrates the complexity of improving perceptions and awareness. The timing of the passage of the gender law (name) and the corresponding backlash against the word “gender” and associated connotations has had direct effects on the Women’s Leadership Program. There have been misperceptions, threats and new stereotypes that have worked against this programs aims to improve knowledge, awareness and perceptions of women’s leadership and gender equality.

“One issue that has been brought up by colleagues at YSU especially in the CGLS ...misperceptions about gender issues and gender equality and in some part of Armenian society and in some part of Armenian leadership. It is quite a pervasive misunderstanding of what gender equality is and what the goals of the project are. Often we were told that the project was aimed explicitly or at least implicitly to promote gay marriage in Armenia. This came as a surprise to me because I just couldn’t quite connect these dots and understand where that perception came from. There are some occasional threats to the Center and the staff. Fortunately it did not lead to any serious incidents but the threat itself is I think a serious incident. They were quite rather isolated but I think that they do reflect certain serious problems of misperceptions. It may have to do with deeper political roots and I think it was at least implicitly an issue of foreign especially American funded project and its “true real goals”-suspicious in some circles of Armenia. That is also something that we’ve had to deal with. I think CGLS has made good efforts to dispel those stereotypes. These kinds of things are often used as political tools. It’s not just a product of misinformation/misunderstanding ...for some political actors its part of their deliberate strategy so it’s not a matter of clarifying things to them—they don’t need those clarifications. (PrI-ASU)

He goes on to say,

“I think it’s generally true for any novel way of thinking, way of approaching and dealing with social issues...eventually those misperceptions will subside and I hope society at large would be more appreciative of this work. I think the notion of gender inequality—people aren’t well aware of these issues, it’s the same in the US...if you take the general public. There are some perceptions but many subtle but serious aspects are simply not visible to the general public.” (PrI-ASU)

Another key program implementer goes deeper along these same lines:

“Basically the headwind that the project has faced of course is a headwind that addresses the underlying presuppositions of the project, namely the importance of building women’s leadership and women’s empowerment and gender equality which are very well developed kind of western values that underscore the importance of women and gender studies in the US higher education curriculum.” (PrI-ASU)

He goes on to highlight how crucial he thinks the results of the Gender Barometer Survey are to the whole area of perceptions and awareness raising. Essentially he is pointing out just how revealing the findings Gender Barometer Survey findings are/should be to the US partners and donors.

“Why the gender barometer survey is so challenging to USAID is that it’s really documenting – what it’s demonstrating is **the resilience of very traditional values that are being upheld by women not necessarily just by men**. I’m thinking of in the rural villages, even women left behind who’ve been obliged to assume all kinds of roles in the absence of their male counterparts who’ve

gone off to Moscow or wherever. And yet despite these kinds of roles that they play their values are really quite traditional and when that then becomes a part of the national culture **it defies this kind of expectation that USAID has that rests at the base of the whole project**-that there is a kind of one size fits all of the role that empowered women are going to make in refashioning modern society. In part the kind of argument of Hilary Clinton and USAID is absolutely right on – that women are, can be the catalysts for international development and modernization of you want to use the old term in much of the Eurasian Islamic perimeter (Eurasian perimeter) but at the same time **what the gender barometer survey is demonstrating is that the countervailing forces are equally strong and authentically national—Armenian**, to a certain degree. And they're embedded in rural Armenia as well as in much of the male population in urban Armenia. Certainly the gender barometer survey is opening that discussion up in ways that at the beginning of the project it never existed. I think that's a very healthy...there are two ways of viewing it...one is that these headwinds that the project has faced from the public scorn of equating gender with homosexuality and all of that craziness...that that's been just a debilitating factor, but on a deeper level I think this is actually a healthy challenge to USAID and to the underlying presuppositions of the project so as to demonstrate that the feigning of a feminist perspective in post-soviet space is obviously going to take a very different course than the way it has developed in the US and we ought to view that as not being exceptional but being what we would expect. What I think was so exciting about what Victor was uncovering (really the Center with all of their interviewees) was that those women who we might perceive to be the most liberated were also strongly upholding those values and so maybe there was even from a western feminist point of view there was a disconnect between their lives lived and their values adhered to... I think that the ability to make that discussion more complicated is really one of the tremendous contributions of the gender barometer survey. (PrI-ASU)

Given this thought-provoking assessment, evaluators followed up and asked about the dimensions of human rights for women and the very real problem of domestic violence. How does/did this program negotiate those areas? The interviewee responded:

“You're absolutely right and that also reinforces the importance of the project from the perspective of USAID. And I think you're right. When, for example, self-anointed male bearers of very not just traditional values but actually very anti civil libertarian values begin to try to impose this by coming into the Center and shouting at staff members; it's really very oppressive and intimidating and dangerous actually. It's the ability of a project like this to complicate our understanding of the contextualization of feminist discourse in Armenia that makes it so valuable.”(PrI-ASU)

HED implementers also recognize the difficulties inherent in improving perceptions and awareness and point out the resurgence in 'traditional' perceptions of women's roles in Armenian society:

“I think there is still a lot of work to be done in making men and women aware of the status of women in Armenia and that women may have strong leadership roles to play outside of the family. I don't think that's being questioned; I think it's being questioned less and less. And so it makes the job of the CGLS harder but also more critical. It seems like overall as a country and their perceptions –from what I've gathered. I'm by no means an expert-**it seems like Armenia is moving in a direction where there's more of a traditional perception of what women's roles**

**have been and should be.** It seems to be two competing visions of the history of Armenia and the Armenian women and her role in society and **the traditional concept seems to be (having a resurgence) right now** especially with the pull towards Russia.” (HED)

A USAID representative continues this recognition of the complexities:

“I think it’s no secret that **even the term gender spurs a very controversial reaction in the Armenian society.** You may have heard that as of very recently every national policy level document is changing the word gender into sex. There is an attempt to create a social understanding that talking about gender is against being Armenian and deteriorates Armenian family values, etc., etc. Having the word gender in the name of the Center –of course that creates challenges and there have been physical threats at the center, not in plural but there was an occasion when somebody came into the center and threatened them saying that they are foreign agents etc., etc. (USAID)

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Both USAID and HED are expressing just how vital this program is at this time:

“I think being a research center they are best positioned to show the academic side of it to show the social side of it and engage in a constructive dialogue explaining what it is, how it should be perceived and how the word itself is being manipulated. So I think yes, the whole situation coincided when there was public outcry etc., etc. but at the same time it’s very good that the project is using the word and should be positioned to engage in the studies to prove them wrong. (USAID)

Finally, USAID emphasizes the human rights aspects and the priorities placed on gender issues at the US Embassy level:

Gender issues are a part of the overall human rights paradigm ...that is at the forefront of the US embassies attention. There is always the annual human rights report. There are regular interactions with political figures etc., etc. At different levels there is communication to promote values of gender equality of women’s empowerment so tying it specifically to the project, taking a stand, I wouldn’t necessarily say so but gender as and women’s empowerment is at the forefront of both USAID’s and the embassies conversations on the political level. (USAID)

Still another perspective surfaces that highlights the difficulty that all this creates for the YSU administration who have to balance traditional, prevailing culture on one hand and new ideas about women and gender equality on the other.

“Professor Markarov is trying to represent the university at large and this is one bit of a very large institution there and dealing with all of the politics in the institution and within the country. From everything we’re hearing back and from the news there’s push back from country at large and within the university. What is this? What are you trying to do? And what does that mean for the future of our country? You’re affecting the minds of our youth and all those types of things. Is this good? Is this bad? Is it both? How will this change the university or how will this change our country.”(Pri-ASU)

Yet another program implementer from ASU speaks compellingly:

“Particularly with bad relations with Turkey and with Azerbaijan and energy dependence on Russia, you know they’re kind of boxed in on many sides. Then you introduce this whole “what is this?” I remember having this whole problem with translation of words like “community” into Russian and what does that mean vs. in this case being gender. What does that mean ethically, morally, identity –all those types of things sexual id, traditional values, relationship with the Armenian apostolic church, also close ties with Russia with Putin pushing very traditional type values religious and otherwise, it makes things difficult. But you keep the dialogue going and you keep ideas out there. From what I’ve heard from Gohar they’ve also had some physical ...I don’t know how far it got but someone coming and trying to at least verbally threaten. Anytime you challenge the way things have been ...how can we make it better for the individual or the nation, the economy all those types of things opening up opportunities, new ideas, people are often afraid of what they don’t know and understand or what changes it might bring and usually its I’m afraid of how its negatively going to affect me, not this will bring opportunities for my sons and daughters and grandchildren and wives and husbands and everybody else.” (PrI-ASU)

This evaluation exposes the complex dynamic that exists today around topics of gender and women’s empowerment.

### *Progress in increasing self-efficacy of females*

The concept of self-efficacy is discussed earlier in this report. While progress toward the four key indicators developed below for increasing self-efficacy is impressive, these results do not tell the whole story.

In 2015, as evidenced by progress on indicators\* such as:

- Female students and mentors participating in mentorships: FY 2015 target was 25 and the actual was 92, hence there was 368% progress to FY 2015 target.
- Female students served by the YSU Career Center: FY 2015 target was 200 and the actual was 221, hence there was 111% progress to FY 2015 target.
- Training seminars offered by the YSU Career Center (as part of the WLP): FY 2015 target was 3 and the actual was 6, hence there was 200% progress to FY 2015 target.
- Site visits and referrals to CGLS website: FY 2015 target was 8,000 and the actual was 11,539, hence there was 144% % progress to FY 2015 target.

\* Data source: ASU-YSU FY2015 Semiannual Progress Report: *October 1, 2014 through March 31, 2015*

Regarding the proportion of females who reported increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of the WLP/Armenia program, the FY 2015 target was 30 and the actual was 64, hence there was 213% progress to the FY 2015 target.

To gain a full understanding of self-efficacy in this program evaluators observe that development of a comprehensive tool such as a tailored self-efficacy scale (populated by interviews using a structured questionnaire) would have been optimal. To be effective this would have been implemented at the onset of the program to establish baseline data and again at the close of the program to gather end line data. Such an endeavor was beyond the scope of the Women’s Leadership Program.



Evaluators have identified passages from the data that illuminate self-efficacy. Findings show that the overall climate around gender likely negatively impacted the self-efficacy of Armenian program implementers. This passage reflects ASU partners' recognition of this challenge.

"I know the women in Armenia women weren't as supported as they could have been, even some of their male colleagues (not the administrators like the president) but other male faculty members. But that was the same in the US—a lot of my colleagues didn't support the idea of having women's studies in the US context either. But I couldn't make those kinds of generalizations because I wasn't there on the ground and I really didn't understand the politics. I just know that the institution itself created the Center and was moving forward with it. When I talked to the senior administrators they kind of minimalized the attacks but I know the women felt attacked so it was kind of hard to calibrate it. We talked with the faculty women who came about how it was in the US. And how we handled different things, how you have to support each other, find ways to take care of yourself, etc. That was one of the challenges." (PrI-ASU)

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There were specific instances of self-efficacy that show progress:

"From the program specifically, I got a 'stimulus' and renewed impetus to work, I now work on myself to be a better trainer and I got some outside training using my own funding. Increased responsibilities meant I needed more skills." (PrI-YSU)

This was echoed by a Senior YSU administrator...

"The Career Center developed resources. Career Center staff underwent capacity building and they hired consultants do trainings. Career Center staff now have new leadership prospects and can do something else in their lives." (PrI-YSU)

YSU faculty members articulated a sense of increased self-efficacy resulting from the WLP:

"It was my first time to coordinate research. Taking the process from proposal creation, budgeting, staffing, and fieldwork. Very positive. All of [these techniques] can be used going forward. They trusted me, and I was free to think what is important and how to do things. I learned how to coordinate financial part, how to pay interviewers." (YSU faculty)

"We have some problems, and now, we can talk about them. The most important thing is awareness-raising." (YSU faculty)

"It is the first and still the only *brave initiative* for promoting gender equality and women's leadership in Armenia." (YSU faculty)

Some findings were more mixed:

"I didn't have any previous background in gender and leadership issues therefore, for me everything I learned during the program was new and very important. However, I don't feel that currently I have enough knowledge and skills to continue working in this area. Most probably, I will continue to explore the health-related issues associated with gender inequality and I would like to gain more knowledge and skills in that area." (YSU faculty)

### *CGLS staff and self-efficacy*

The CGLS itself presents a microcosm of the key elements of the Women's Leadership Program...women working to create change and hone their own leadership capacity and self-efficacy. In order to explore this more fully, evaluators took the transcript from the meeting with the three main CGLS staff and extracted phrases that hinted either directly or indirectly at self-efficacy:

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"It created difficulties..."

"It affected our work and reporting..."

"It was not clear from the beginning..."

"We had to wait for months for simple things..."

"They affected the programs progress..."

"Major general concern that gender studies is a Western idea..."

"We were portrayed as perverts..."

"Gender is a curse now and we have been losing ground in a sense..."

"We have faced both irony and hostility..."

"Other Deans and university colleagues are not that supportive..."

"The CGLS is excluded from all university processes..."

"This is a two year project and out status is not clear. We don't know what will happen".

"We were forced to do this [develop the new Master's Degree program]..."

"Some people are being aggressive on the Facebook page..."

"Problems organizing conferences. Problems with printing, catering, and the need for some control over the money..."

"Sustainability is the toughest part for all of us..."

"Attracting other grants is difficult..."

"There aren't a lot of opportunities for academic units [to get external funding] there are more opportunities for civil society..."

"There are not a lot of opportunities..."

"After June we do not know what will happen..."

"We will have a place [for the CGLS] but it will be on a volunteer basis..."

"Too many things. /too intense..."

"We are worried about our own credibility...we don't have time to implement whatever we are told to implement when it's not necessarily the best course of action..."

While the overall interview was more balanced and nuanced than these extracts portray, we were struck nonetheless by the overall sense we got from this discussion. We did not come away with a sense of stability, support and optimism. Recognizing that the last months of the program have been very busy

and stressful with all that needs to happen to close the formal Women's Leadership Program, we decided that we needed to create and administer an abbreviated self-efficacy tool to capture some of the effects of the program on self-efficacy more directly. (See Methodology Section for a description of the tool).

Findings are organized around the key questions we posed to Center staff. Responses are included here in their entirety: 59

**1. Do you feel that your work on the WLP increased (or decreased) your personal sense of confidence? Please describe.**

"Definitely, **it increased**. First of all in personal sense it was an honor for me to work with a professional and a unique representative of gender studies in Armenia, Gohar Shahnazaryan. Working with her and with my colleague Sinara Navoyan in this project was not only a well-planned policy implementation for Armenia, but also a great opportunity to unite people from the research field."

"It **increased my sense of confidence**, because it gave me more opportunities to work on women/gender issues in Armenia, and implement projects that I feel are important for Armenian society. At the same time, during the processes **I have had experienced a lot of frustration and disappointments**, because of all the problems and challenges, ironic and in some ways disrespectful attitudes toward the work of CGLS, and women's rights issues in general (unfortunately, even from people who were involved in the project in one way or another). **It decreased my self-confidence a lot of times, and it took a lot of energy and courage from me to continue.**"

"My involvement in this program **increased my personal sense of confidence**, as I have been one of those who has her input of establishment of YSU Center for Gender and Leadership Studies. During these two years **I gained new knowledge and capacities to overcome the problems effectively.**"

**1. Do you feel that your work on the WLP has helped to develop your own leadership potential? Please describe.**

"I would say yes. Although working at YSU is a **very big struggle in sense of deep bureaucracy of a state body kills the creativity in you** but in this case, work in such field like gender equality and women's leadership keeps the **balance**. Also, I don't exactly understand why the leadership part has been included in this project, because the Center's main focus was research. So artificial inclusion of leadership part in it made the work of me and my colleagues very much complicated. And of course, during the outreach activities other people were also surprised by learning about leadership part. (I don't [know] why exactly.)"

"Yes, I **developed my leadership** skills, managerial skills, PR and communication skills. The program gave me very good opportunity to develop my leadership capacities."

"I coordinated two surveys on "Gender attitudes of YSU students". I have been involved in the Gender Barometer Survey as a project manager. This type of work *helped me develop my own leadership skills.*"

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**2. Do you feel you've had personal success in meeting challenges of implementing a complex program like the WLP? Please describe.**

"This question must not be in this questionnaire, in my opinion, because as you all know already we live in a period now when the gender and studying of *gender issues are constantly rejected* from the everyday agenda. Without asking I think it's evident that this is kind of a *life struggle* for all of us to be involved in this processes."

"Yes, I think I was overcoming all challenges quite successfully, but unfortunately mostly alone with CGLS staff. There was no real support from others."

"*It is really difficult to handle the problems* at YSU, because I think we waste a lot of time working in such kind of bureaucratic system, but *I have translated cultural and educational capital into social and symbolic capital while solving a lot of administrative problems.* I think it is success that I have an opportunity to *fulfill my potential* both as a researcher and a program assistant at CGLS."

**3. As part of this program, have you seen successes (by others) that have influenced your own sense of possibility with work on gender equality and women's empowerment?**

**Please describe. Name people and their connection to the program.**

"Of course there are people who influenced my professional view of gender issues and gender studies. As I mentioned work with Gohar Shahnazaryan, director of the Center was not only a pleasure but also an enormously great opportunity to study all the gender-related issues both from the academic and practice perspective. In my opinion during our work as part of WLP project we influenced each other in many ways, but most of all the important thing for me personally was the way we were working and *encouraging each other*, three of us day by day because of many problems we were facing during the work."

"No."

"The readiness and professionalism of staff (Gohar Shahnazaryan, Siran Hovhannisyan, Ani Manukyan) of YSU Center for Gender and Leadership Studies help both center and me to have success with work on gender equality and women's empowerment.

**4. Have there been specific individuals (connected to this program in some way) who have been especially important in supporting your work and expressing faith in what you are trying to accomplish? Please describe. Name people and their connection to the program.**

"First of all I would like to mention the people I was working with directly. Gohar and Sinara were the people I would be happy to cooperate with in all my life. Then, I would like to mention a fellow of small grants program, Anna Voskanyan, with whom I was involved in her project on sex-selective abortions in Armenia as way of gender-discrimination against women."

“Lara Aharonian- co-founder of Women’s Resource Center, Maro Matossian- Director of Women’s Support Center, and Artur Atanesyan- Head of the Department of Applied Sociology at YSU. Also more people from NGOs community, higher education network.”

“The Director of YSU Center for Gender and Leadership Studies is the most important person supporting me to success both as a researcher and as a program assistant at CGLS.”

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**5. In what other ways has this program changed you? Has it changed how you think about your strengths and weaknesses? Please describe.**

“I think I covered both professional and personal influences in me.”

“Yes, it gave me better understanding of my own capacities.”

“I hope now I am more competent to deal effectively with the real world than before and it is **easier to handle the typical problems that are inevitable** while working in the field on gender equality and women’s empowerment.”

**6. Has your belief in your own capability to bring about positive change with this program changed over the course of this program? Please describe.**

“Yes, and again yes. As a person who is not just working in this area but is highly involved with the processes related gender equality in Armenia and cares about women’s situation and gender equality **I see the development in my capabilities.**”

“Yes, because I saw where are gaps and challenges and how it is possible to address them.”

“When starting to implement this program **I didn’t think we will have to struggle every day.** We have hard time working in such kind of social situation, where we have problem even with using the word of “gender” in Armenian society. In such kind of situation, I think it is very important that there is CGLS that provides an academic platform for discussing gender issues. My everyday struggling shows that I can do much more than I think, therefore my own capability to bring about positive change have increased with this program.”

Evaluators see these findings as mixed. While there are sparks of self-efficacy; these are moderated sometimes within the same sentence. We believe the findings of this mini self-efficacy study indicate a pervasive limiting impact on self-efficacy due to institutional issues and the current social/political context in Armenia, both of which took a toll.

*Food for Thought: Men as Directors of Women’s Leadership Programs*

It initially struck evaluators as intriguing that the Directors for the Women’s Leadership Program from both the both the ASU and YSU teams were men. We discussed this with program participants and upon further reflection, we wonder if this was a factor that impacted self-efficacy of the female program implementers.

“I think in a sense, my role, my being a man, directing that project, kind of helped. It had some impact—at least informally that people would notice that fact —and I think it was actually quite this well received I had some concerns but I don’t think it worked against our project, it actually

helped, having a man being in charge of it at least on the ASU part.” [Interviewer: “What was your concern?”] “That people would find it strange that a man is in charge of a women’s focused project and also ***I didn’t want this to be perceived as another quite typical unfortunately Armenian situation where men are in charge and women are there to implement men’s orders and men’s directives.*** That’s something that I worked hard to avoid and especially as the project progressed I made sure that more and more decision-making especially strategic decision-making 62 was happening at YSU and CGLS. I would encourage Gohar to make those decisions and those choices and assert herself and the Center as the truly independent agent of change.” (Pri-ASU)

“Well, you know those are the partnership directors but Gohar does play a key role as the Director for the CGLS and that is the anchor. I, I...you know Mary Margaret Fonow was supposed to play a stronger role, as a co-partnership director. At the end of the day her role is fairly strong but more behind the scenes in that she’s been involved in designing the professional development for the semester residencies. She’s been involved in some of the discussions to potentially create a joint master’s program but she’s not been that up front and center. However having said that I feel like Victor does come with his sociological background with a lot of understanding of some of the issues and Dr. Markarov has been placed so strategically in terms of getting the resources and support from YSU; that’s been a blessing. So at the end of the day, you ***know it would be great if everybody were women but that’s just not how the programs function*** and we do have Gohar who is really strategically you know making decisions; the CGLS is the anchor and she is really running the show through the CGLS. I do think that she’s providing a level of leadership that’s critical.” (HED)

“You know, it’s funny I hadn’t even thought of that [having male program directors on both sides] until you mentioned it right now. On the one hand I think that it’s great that males were so interested in this project and promoting it. ***On the other hand, I think that perhaps having two males working to drive this program that maybe that perhaps contributed to some of the difficulties in envisioning what a broader or maybe mid-term and impact changes would look like in a gender equality program.*** Perhaps maybe more females needed to be involved in that discussion or even younger males. I think sometimes not only is it about males or females but also about bringing in diverse age groups as well.” (HED)

*Partnership Objective 2: Strengthen the capacity of Yerevan State University to make research-based recommendations, with emphasis on putting practice into national gender policy.*

The following indicators were identified under this objective:

- > Small grant applications focused on gender and women’s issues
- > Workshops and number of workshop participants
- > Public policy recommendations (news releases, memos to public policy makers, formal meetings with ministry representatives, etc.)
- > ASU-YSU joint development of research projects

Although as of 6/11/2015 final progress toward FY2015 targets for these indicators was not available in the ASU-YSU FY2015 Semiannual Progress Report, nevertheless, the progress toward these indicators was evident and the findings help to tell a more complete story. The findings show that the program made great strides in increasing the capacity YSU and CGLS to do applied research and make research-based recommendations. A future step will be putting research recommendations into practice via national gender policy.

We see optimism about the increased research capacity:

“Probably some of the projects will be more impactful than others- now we have 28 small research projects plus the Gender Barometer survey and I’ve been monitoring all of them to extent physically possible. Some are better than others, I must confess. In general, they are of quite good quality especially considering the relatively minor investment (projects were up to \$5000) and so they were focused and covered relatively small area, many of them produced exciting results that can have a lot of demand and a lot of use.” (PrI-ASU)

“We have the small grant projects and the conference next month, which will showcase the results of those papers. It will be a two-day conference. We will be disseminating them quite widely and having them as academic products. There is a lot of interest in those products judging by inquiries, requests, downloads, etc. They are the best illustrations, the best proof of what we are and what we stand for.” (PrI-ASU)

There was also a common theme regarding how long it takes for applied research to create change:

“Applied research aims at producing real change. Just think about three years is a very short period of time to effect real change even at the level of legislation not to mention real change in society. And we’re not really even talking about three years; some time is spent setting up and starting the project... I think it’s all going to happen hopefully in the near future. CGLS will be using the research results as parts of public awareness campaign, and to influence legislation.” (PrI-ASU)

“We’re hoping that the results of the gender barometer survey will be very impactful. They have distributed some preliminary results but they are finalizing a more detailed report should be available this month. Those things will undoubtedly have an impact, but when? And how? It’s hard to tell and it’s obviously going to happen mainly after the end of the project.” (PrI-ASU)

There was concern expressed about whether YSU has a ***culture*** that will be able to sustain entrepreneurship:

“The small grants project was an effort to link the CGLS with that kind of research activity—so that those who were receiving those funds knew they were linked to the CGLS. Ideally that kind of thing will continue but ***it is going to require that kind of entrepreneurship that doesn’t exist at YSU.*** Lest we be too pessimistic about the CGLS being able to develop that entrepreneurial research profile we have to realize that they are being asked to do something that the university as a whole has not developed the culture to sustain.” (PrI-ASU)

There was evidence of HED and USAID recognizing the value of applied research and the strength derived from institutionalizing this research in the CGLS within the university. There was a recognition of

the development of “sustainable skills” and the value of researchers looking through a “gender prism” going forward.

“One of the strengths of the partnership is the emphasis they place on conducting applied research, so research that would kind of inform the development of women’s leadership programs. And I think that that in itself is unique because it was strengthening the higher education institutions to go on and do more work later so it really set up a solid foundation from a very traditional higher education perspective. A lot of times our partnerships tend to just dive into doing the development work without actually recognizing that they have to do the **work at the institution first**. In particular it goes back to my last comment about how we measure some of the results of these programs. USAID will provide standard indicators for all of its programs so all of the gender equality and empowerment programs have a set of 10 indicators that any project that USAID funds working on gender equality and empowerment should use to measure results. We know that that doesn’t really work—contexts are different everywhere around the world—they are different in different organizations, they are different in different households and homes on a really micro-level. And so one of the things that this partnership did was they really thought out different way of measuring this perceptions of equality and I know that Victor shared some of that research here [gender barometer survey] but that the individuals at YSU have also been sharing and doing presentations on their research projects. I think that’s actually just really valuable in terms of kind of educating USAID in how these programs actually operate in reality.” (HED)

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“I think the type of research the project helped to produce engaging different researchers with the small grants program—that was also something I consider as an accomplishment because it helped look at gender issues in Armenian context from innovative angles, areas that were not much talked about. And besides that the research skills and the research angles I think the skills the small grants recipients learned as they were doing the gender specific research—that’s a **sustainable skill** acquired and going forward if the click happens in their minds...there is always the **gender prism** that they look at things going forward. You can’t generalize or measure the entire situation but if individual changes happen in educators and those are people who are going to be talking to their students...”(USAID)

The findings suggest that it may be premature to expect that this research will make its way into national gender policies in a strategic way. That said, later findings will discuss how NGO’s are using the research produced by the program to substantiate their work in policy advocacy and development.

“Something that they might get published jointly that is published in English and might have an effect in English speaking Europe... how that would make its way back—how this would affect Armenia? Gets into the politics of who’s running our country? Is it the Armenians, or the west? How to get in front of the right eyes—a member of parliament or an advisor to a member of parliament. Sometimes it’s finding the right champion (particularly here in the US) someone who is willing to keep on the bill until its law.” (Pri-ASU)



*Partnership Objective 3: Develop YSU's capacity to deliver coursework that addresses women's leadership and gender equality*

The following indicators were identified under this objective:

- > Course modules newly developed and/or revised
- > New academic certificates and/or degree programs developed on women and gender studies:
  - Master's Degree program was developed
- > Percentage of trained YSU faculty demonstrating improved teaching strategies

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As of 6/11/2015 final progress toward FY2015 targets for newly developed and revised courses and the trained YSU faculty was not available – the data were not included in the ASU-YSU FY2015 Semiannual Progress Report. However, YSU's capacity to deliver coursework is another area of program success as evidenced by the number of relevant courses developed by YSU faculty and their work in building their teaching capacity as part of their scholar-in-residence stints at ASU.

"The ASU-YSU partnership was very important because it gave us an opportunity to learn about gender and leadership issues from professionals of ASU who were much more experienced in that area than the Armenian colleagues." (YSU faculty)

"Within the frames of the project I also managed to translate a course- book and some important articles on gender and women's studies from English into Armenian. I think this was very important since those really important materials will already be available in Armenian and the audience (both university students and general audience) will have much access to the topic. The translated materials are now in editorial process and soon will be ready." (YSU faculty)

There was a high level of optimism about the master's degree program from program implementers:

"It may very well be a hallmark of the program and I have no doubt that the candidates who would graduate from this program would be employable. The reason I say that -it's the kind of training that would come out of a program like this including good survey research skills, the ability to work with public policy and then the sensitivity to women's empowerment and gender issues that make these people most employable at international agencies and in the global marketplace. I could envision the graduates of this program becoming very successful not only as leaders of NGOs but also as important staff people at international agencies. That vision I think is captured by people like Gohar but they are a bit daunted at marshaling this through a bureaucratic university. I mean come on, it's like we face that at ASU too. The bureaucratic challenges are fairly substantial and they're had to work their way through it but I think it's got a robust future actually. I think the university is going to provide a healthy scholarship support, too. I'm much more optimistic than I was a month ago about this." (PrI-ASU)

"One intent [with the master's program] is to attract the NGO sector—emphasis on gender and also on leadership skills and leadership in the NGO sector. We also have an idea to establish a

certificate program in nonprofit management, including courses with gender component. This is a real need and we were going to do it anyway.” (PrI-YSU)

“In the Masters component, in debating this strategy with our colleagues at YSU; it’s an ambitious undertaking but we thought that we need to think big, to think bold. Despite the potential challenges being the novelty, novel and new and revolutionary almost in this context.” (PrI-ASU)

NGO beneficiaries also expressed optimism about the new master’s degree program:

“The new gender master’s degree opening is wonderful. At the beginning it may have few students. They [CGLS] need better publicizing--social networks and emails. They should present at other universities so attract others...need to target better. Our (Society without Violence) volunteers are interested, but they are in school as undergrads and so not ready for master’s degrees yet. One difficulty is that there is not much funding for gender and women’s empowerment. Women’s rights are very underfunded. Given the problem of no funding. You can be a well-trained gender specialist in Armenia and not be able to find good level of employment.” (NGO beneficiary)

It is clear that the curricular collateral developed during this program is a source of pride and accomplishment for the program. What remains to be seen is the level of student demand in the master’s program and the sustained nature of enrollments.

The master’s degree was always a possibility. The partners decided that pursuing a certificate would be the best course of action, but it was the rector’s decision that a master’s degree was what YSU wanted after visiting ASU.

#### *Partnership Objective 4: Promote women’s leadership and gender equality through extension/outreach efforts at Yerevan State University*

As evidenced by indicators such as:

- > Increase in community members using CGLS outreach services: FY 2015 target was 50 and the actual was 111, hence 222% progress to FY 2015 target
- > Consultations provided to NGO’s on women’s leadership: FY 2015 target was 16 and the actual was 22, hence 138% progress to FY 2015 target
- > Participating higher education institutions in the network:  
FY 2015 target was 3 and the actual was 4, hence 133% progress to FY 2015 target

\*Data source: ASU-YSU FY2015 Semiannual Progress Report: *October 1, 2014 through March 31, 2015*

#### ***Progress in Yerevan State University and Center for Gender and Leadership Studies outreach efforts***

CGLS have participated in several civil society coalitions and networks and partnered around gender equality issues with other educational institutions – major state and private universities in Yerevan and in the regions of Armenia.

Evaluators interviewed a number of key NGO beneficiaries and found that their support for the work of the CGLS was unanimously positive. NGO beneficiaries highlighted these benefits:

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- Objective research and fact finding by CGLS
- Use of CGLS research findings and evidence as support for policy changes being promoted by NGOs
- Direct contact between NGO's and researchers
- Place for like-minded people to share. In the words of one NGO Director, "Women's rights defenders feel isolated and having partnership [with CGLS] is a great help, morally."

Following is a robust testimony from NGO beneficiaries:

"NGO support for importance of bringing topic of gender to academic level is important. Moving beyond just NGO's. Moving beyond the just emotional to a more objective data analysis." (NGO beneficiary)

"PINK Armenia supports academic research and benefits from this research and fact-finding [by CGLS]. Research is important for NGO's like PINK Armenia for advocacy. It is hard for all civil society to negotiate and advocate with the State. Extremist people went to derail the Center. In 2012-13 there were a lot of attacks to NGO's and human rights defenders and lgbt issues. We are trying to strengthen our capacity and the Center helps us with that."(NGO beneficiary)

"The Society without Violence feels that the Center is very important step for promoting gender equality in Armenia from an academic viewpoint. NGOs are doing advocacy work but research – the academic part was very weak, it brings an academic perspective. Taking into account the anti-gender [campaign] risks and insecurity, establishment and maintenance of Center is import especially since adoption of gender law after which the anti-gender movement came to Armenia. We thought the center would be negatively affected, being in the main famous university in the main bldg. The general operation of the Center is very good but it needs development. The Center is especially important in terms of youth empowerment. I am surprised that it wasn't not very much attacked by extremists groups. Our organization (Society without Violence) was directly attacked as were others. The ultra-nationalist groups initiated a physical attack. They came with their own media- TV channels, reporting that they want to destroy the pupils that they are turning kids into pedophiles and homosexuals. Annual meetings organized and researchers presenting their works was another good space for like-minded people to come and share."(NGO beneficiary)

"The Women's Resource Center uses a lot of the [Center] research findings and evidence as support for policy changes. When we do awareness raising we use a lot of the findings we can get from the website on line. We went to the presentations. We have direct contact now with researchers. We got to know two-three women that we included in our meetings later on and until today we meet with them. In Armenia now we are facing a huge backward movement and we need to have stronger strategies to counter the movement that is very much supported by the State. The Center is helping us diversify our support." (NGO beneficiary)

“There is now a space in the biggest university and they used it for getting young people involved. Access [to the university] can be difficult, now in this case we have a reliable partner [navigating] the university bureaucracy. The Society without Violence uses the Center space a couple of times per year. We also go to the presentations of research. We share a joint agenda.” (NGO beneficiary)

The Center is helping us [Women’s Support Center] with our awareness raising (people who work in the sphere), new audience for us. Last year I had a presentation at the Center. It’s a safe place for us to be able to talk about these issues. I will tell you about an interesting aspect of my lecture—the campaign leaders against gender were there disturbing and provoking, including one of the leaders of the pan Armenian Parental Committee. You know there is now this panic about the word gender. In one sense all this ruckus was good—I could stand up and publically refute their claims and ask them to sit down and listen and learn something! This Campaign has taken us 10 steps back, we have to go back to explaining the word gender. The [WLP] program has been a refreshing place for us to be able to speak and hear other interesting aspects from guest lecturers meet new people get new materials, they announce among their beneficiaries at the Center. Women’s rights defenders feel isolated and having partnership [with CGLS] is a great help, morally. (NGO beneficiary)

Regarding illustrative NGO requests for support from CGLS:

“The space and the links with students [are important]. They can publicize about our organization and other organizations in the field. Publicity about volunteering and internship opportunities—the Center is close to students and can send them to organizations in the field. We may do things together with the Center on the university level. The Center writes and disseminates information for the Society without Violence.” (NGO beneficiary)

While NGO support provides a strong endorsement of the value of outreach, findings outside of the NGO sector were more mixed. A YSU administrator indicated some internal tension within the university when he expressed concern about the concept of YSU doing outreach:

“The Center did a great job in reaching local NGOs, making women/gender issues visible in Armenian society. Even though, I am **sure such Center at YSU should be a pure research Center, and not duplicate activities and work of NGOs**--outreach and work with citizens and communities is a work of NGOs, not scientific and research center of Yerevan State University. No Center at YSU does such active outreach, educational and research work at the same time.” (Pri-YSU)

A conversation with an ASU program implementer illustrates strong evidence of evolving expectations and realizations concerning the outreach component of the program:

“When we began the project I had a different vision of what the outreach would be. I think my vision may not have been realistic and it may have been...given that the project was entirely within the university (and that was intentional-that it was really a partnership project) I think we faced some of the limits on that. My initial thinking was that the CGLS as it emerged could also become a point of departure for introducing women and gender studies into curriculum beyond YSU at other universities both in Yerevan and in the regions and that their allies in that effort could be also regional NGO and Yerevan NGOs and I think that what we uncovered is that first of

all that they were so burdened with other tasks at the center that the idea of such an ambitious sort of effort (or even the effort within YSU to add to create a women's faculty association) became subordinated to other priorities. The limited staff resources that were being put into the CGLS didn't make it possible to have such an ambitious outreach project...Moreover I don't think that from the point of view of Makarov who was trying to defend this project with the rector ...***what's the value added for YSU to be trucking this project out to other universities. They're viewing it institutionally and of course they had every right to view it institutionally because that's how most of the project indicators and the original framing of the RFP was written.***

Interviewer: As I read the RFP there were no letters of support or other indications of buy-in from other universities at the inception of the proposal.

"Exactly. And there was no incentive of YSU ...in otherwise if Gohar really killed herself to build a tie with other universities, what would be the legacy of that for YSU? So I think that my original much broader vision was unrealistic, given the ***institutional grounding of the project.***" (PrI-ASU)

Another ASU program implementer expressed a different concern and gave perspective on the time pressures on faculty who have obligations for teaching and research making it difficult to also create time for outreach. She reflects that this is a problem in US universities and also at YSU.

"Some of the outreach activities might have been more ...In the beginning, there was a notion that these things would be deliverable to more rural universities and the NGOs and outside organizations. They did set up a career center somebody else will have to talk about what they've done with that. Outreach activities are hard for the same reason they are hard in both places [Arizona and Armenia] because there is a lot asked of faculty and asking them to also be involved in the community is pushing the envelope when you can only spread selves so thin especially at these large research universities. And I think the same thing is true there—where their teaching load is even bigger for Armenian faculty and the wages are low. So there's that time constraint—***asking people to do too much.***" (PrI-ASU)

Finally, the agency/donor perspective brings valuable critique on the topic of outreach. Concern was expressed about the program not bringing enough "other people" into the program beyond the "usual suspects". It was noted, for example, that male participation in outreach events may not have been cultivated enough.

"In terms of the impacts, the expansion of the effects beyond the institution, beyond the group of 'usual suspects', the typical NGOs that are involved in these types of projects. It would have been great if they had pushed the agenda a little bit further." (HED)

"The challenges of doing this work and moving the discussions beyond the walls of the YSU campus--those are really difficult things but I think that the partnership was a bit weaker in involving other stakeholders. ***A lot of times in women's leadership projects often tend to just engage other women's associations or other organizations working on women's leadership.*** In working to address some of these other social and cultural hurdles you have to engage 'other people' in that conversation. And so I think that that is definitely one thing that the partnership could have done a bit more of and again, I am not involved in the day to day activities and not as familiar with the intimate details so it may be something that was happening but was just really

challenging. By ‘other people’ ...a lot of what I’ve seen like from the photos a lot of female participation in events. One of the things we talked about at the beginning of this partnership was really importance of including both males and females in events and specifically doing targeted outreach to males and I’m not so sure that that necessarily happened.” (HED)

The USAID mission highlighted the need for the CGLS to more strategically and professionally communicate their research products so that they achieve their highest purpose:

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“I saw that the center was lacking some (could benefit from) better outreach and communication. My initial piece was to link the center’s personnel and PR personnel with our development and outreach coordinator Connecting the center with our communication person was an attempt to help them and equip them with the tools to better communicate especially relating to their research products because there was a lot of knowledge accumulated, a lot of research done but it’s one thing to know that its posted somewhere and say “we have this” and it’s another to use this body of knowledge and make policy recommendations and to target specific groups with specific messages coming out of this research. So I think that’s still in the making” (USAID)

Several respondents commented on the Higher Education Network as another outreach vehicle and offered reasons for why this group had trouble coalescing:

“There are individual professors [from other Armenian universities] who create a Higher Education Network ...a group of faculty doing gender work. For them the gender focus is not very welcome either so this provides a sort of support network. Their courses are not very sustainable either [meaning they might not have long-term support for teaching gender-related courses]. They come to YSU at times for conferences, etc.” (PrI-ASU)

“Well I think under the 4<sup>th</sup> objective they have struggled to set up this Higher Education Network outside of Yerevan. Some of the other public universities are hesitant to engage with anything dealing with gender and they’ve had a hard time kind of selling it. I think YSU’s leadership has tried to create some support outside of Yerevan but it’s really hard in this climate for them.” (HED)

“The Center has been successful in networking with NGOs and working with the higher education ‘network’. The Center went to almost all ministries and offered their help of the Center. The Center shares an agenda and value base with the NGOs.” (PrI-YSU)

The findings are not clear about just how active this group it—it appears to be mainly a support group at this initial stage. That said, there is great potential for a group such as this creating awareness and change around gender equality.

### 3.2 Program Fidelity

Implementation fidelity is the “degree to which programs are implemented as intended by the program developers.” It has been demonstrated that the fidelity with which an intervention is implemented affects how well it succeeds. In the absence of a formal tool to measure fidelity over time, evaluators overall found a reasonable level of program fidelity. The WLP had no framework designed for specifically monitoring implementation fidelity such as a Fidelity of Implementation Rating System (FIRS).

The WLP struck an appropriate balance between adhering strictly to program fidelity and adapting when necessary to accommodate the local context and varied evolutions within the program. For example, there were shifts that added value (or will add value) to the program. In recognizing that the distances between Arizona and Armenia put limitations on program participants, adaptations were proposed:

“The [ASU] women’s studies faculty wanted to do more things for the project than they were able to do because of other obligations...and the time difference and the travel made it hard for our faculty to take the time out from their semester to get there. Logistically it just couldn’t be worked out. That’s why we came up with the idea of making video modules. Some of the [ASU] faculty wanted to continue to make meaningful connections if we can figure out how to handle this given the differences and distance. It’s possible to do shorter stints. There are ways we could do exchanges based on contact hours that would cover a shorter timeframe.” (ASU faculty) 71

In another example, a HED representative noted that the creation of the gender barometer survey was an important adaptation that was created in recognition that USAID’s indicators were not necessarily relevant for the Armenian context:

“I know that one of the criteria/categories that we look at is the program fidelity—the extent to which the interventions adhere to normal, commonly accepted protocols or design elements found elsewhere. I think that one of the things that the partnership did and particularly in thinking how we measure changing perceptions of equality and self-efficacy. I think that one of the strengths, again because they were so research heavy, they recognized that the USAID indicators provided to measure these changes weren’t necessarily relevant for the context of Armenia. So measuring how effective the program was in terms of achieving more equality amongst and self-efficacy-measures was probably going to be difficult. And I know that they developed this other survey [gender barometer survey] to overcome some of those challenges. So I think that that is one really innovative thing that this partnership has done.” (HED)

“USAID will provide standard indicators for all of its programs so all of the gender equality and empowerment programs have a set of 10 indicators that any project that USAID funds working on gender equality and empowerment should use to measure results. We know that that doesn’t really work—contexts are different everywhere around the world—they are different in different organizations, they are different in different households and homes on a really micro-level. And so one of the things that this partnership did was they really thought out different way of measuring this perceptions of equality and I know that Victor shared some of that research here [gender barometer survey]” (HED)

Higher levels of fidelity are achieved when those responsible for delivering an intervention are enthusiastic about it. The organization more broadly may also influence the response of those delivering a new intervention (Schneider, 1998).

Regarding implementing a master’s program, CGLS staff said “we were forced to do this, we have a distance learning program and would rather have used that to offer a one year certificate program rather than developing a master’s program.” (PrI-YSU)

Implementers may waiver in their commitment to one aspect or another of the program. It is important to listen to these voices and understand what's behind them. Evaluators found that while such examples were few, they are important to note.

The mentorship program has a successful start. Then a key partner ended their involvement and it's not clear that program implementers were able to re-design and re-imagine the mentorship program without that key support. It could be said that this was a breach of program fidelity.

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Mentorship program: The idea was to use the US embassy model on mentorship—a successful well known classical mentorship program. They modified it, 1:1 didn't work. Instead they have 37 students and a mentor would come and talk about her career, they had a huge network of women and now the EDMC stopped. Now the Center is inviting people in as mentors but they are limited in choices. The EDMC stopped (Entrepreneurship, Development, Marketing, Competitiveness) participating. And it was their extensive network that made the activity successful.

Lastly, evaluators want to draw attention to another area that likely influenced the program fidelity of the WLP. In tandem with the launch and early implementation of the WLP, USAID as an organization was redefining its standard indicators, reissuing its education strategy and revising its results framework protocols. This, coupled with difficulties HED had in articulating and translating these shifting targets may well have influenced overall program fidelity:

"I think what was challenging in the partnership in the context of the last three years—was the way in which our staff who work on programs and our staff who work on m & e needed to get in sync with new ways of thinking within USAID on results based management. So while we had built the results framework into each RFA I know that initially it was a struggle to communicate clearly both internally and with USAID because USAID in their own inimitable fashion always sort of mixed things up even after they had given an award so mix things up in the sense of they want to take a new look at a results framework, they want to add new indicators, they want to redefine indicators. And for us, in HED at that period, 3 ½ -4 years ago where USAID was actually changing and redefining its standard indicators. And we were trying to implement a very solid m & e system with on-line reporting and I remember a lot of hair pulling on all parts as we tried to do the various --USAID calls them "pivots" that they put their own staff through and we had to go through them at the same tie. So I know that this was challenging both internally for us as staff and for our partners and for our relationship with our partners. That may affect the view of the whole start-up period for our partners for sure.

A redefinition of standard indicators for USAID is major. USAID's education strategy was reissued in 2011. Under that HED's positions and the parts of the strategy to which our programs respond changed and then they also changed their standard indicators. So those are global changes across all USAID missions, which were sometimes understood and sometimes not understood. There are not many missions that have higher ed as part of their objectives so I think that really was a difficult moment. The reissuance of their education policy and then they reissued (in 2011) their monitoring and evaluation strategy. So we underwent a number of trainings and briefings for "implementers". It was a time for redefinition for HED as a whole and also a time of USAID redefining itself under administrator Shah. Those were larger scale influences or trends to which we were responding that like I say I can imagine that as they were challenging enough for us they certainly were challenging for our partners because you are operationalizing those changes—a



change in indicators in targets a change in your work plan or redefining your work plan in those new parameters.” (HED)

## 4.0. Impact of Intervention

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The following questions guided the data collection under this section:

- What were the outcome results of the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women by this partnership and to what degree are the outcome results attributable to implementation of the project?
- Is there evidence that outcome level results had a wider effect than anticipated, e.g. YSU-private sector partnership?
- In what ways is the increasing awareness and knowledge about women’s leadership and gender issues (among, students and faculty) contributing to the recognition of gender equality by the Armenian society?
- What are some specific examples of change as a result of this program? Change to students, change to faculty, change to partner organizations.
- Have you identified specific shifts in thinking and acting around issues of gender? How does the increasing public awareness of women’s leadership and gender contribute to the recognition of gender equality in the Armenian society?

Below are the findings, descriptions and quotes that we structured according to the following categories of indicators:

4.1, 4.3 Intended results directly attributable to intervention

4.2 Unintended results

4.5 Local ownership

4.6 Regional engagement

4.7 Businesses affected

4.8 Government agencies

### Summary of Findings

4.1, 4.3.

-/+<sup>14</sup> As pointed out by a program implementer, **on the one hand**, two years was too short, it was to be a three year project. This opinion illustrates a disconnect between sponsoring agencies and program implementers in terms of the perceptions around adequate, useful baseline information. On the other hand, the same person mentioned that it is difficult to assess the exact impact of the program as there

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<sup>14</sup> Key: This general scoring system (++ positive, +/- mixed but more positive than negative, -/+ mixed (more negative than positive), and -- negative) reflects evaluators’ subjective opinion on the processes and/or outcomes described. This can also be interpreted as: excellent (+/+), good (+/-), fair (-/+), and poor (-/-).

were other activities and this was not a controlled environment: “it’s very difficult to say if we observed something that was caused by the program”.

In view of these important caveats, evaluators nonetheless found evidence of:

+/+ Strong and positive impacts perceived by program implementers, NGO beneficiaries and YSU faculty. There is evidence that capacity building around research, critical thinking, understanding of gender concepts, discursive discourse, social movements and leadership has happened. 74

+/+ Internal to the group of program implementers and beneficiaries (as well as YSU faculty who have been closely linked to the program) there is a sense of elevated awareness about the importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment. This has a positive influence on the sense of efficacy of implementers and beneficiaries. While the work has been difficult, there is a palpable sense that the work is *important* to be doing, perhaps even more so as a result of the societal trend toward traditional roles for women. Collective-efficacy is evident around the importance of gender equity work. There is a sense of pride that the CGLS was created and that it is housed within an important Armenian university.

-/+The impact on students will lag a bit and be realized more fully once the master’s program has launched and more faculty teach courses outside of the master’s program.

4.2.

+/- There are signs of exciting beginnings of the development of a culture of working across disciplinary lines and the development of new courses using new sources and methodologies.

4.5.

+/-Strong local ownership of the WLP was evident but mixed.

4.6.

+/- Regional engagement was limited with the exception of the Gender Barometer Survey. It can be surmised that the Gender Barometer Survey raised awareness about gender equality and women’s empowerment to an extent with the more that 2000 people interviewed.

4.7, 4.8.

-/- Businesses were not strongly involved and government connections are in the initial phases.

### *Change-influencing public awareness and shifts in perceptions*

There were some very specific, interesting findings resulting from particular research studies whereby questions posed by researchers were raising awareness among citizens about important issues—women as heads of immigrant households and problems facing elderly women in rural areas. This is an example of opening up the learning community via outreach to ordinary people with ordinary problems—the essence of applied research.

This section begins with some general findings about the long-term nature of properly assessing impact:

“The establishment of the center itself is a huge accomplishment. I think we’re all really hopeful that this center will continue to grow and expand its reach. The research projects and the

involvement of students and young faculty. The exposure to that kind of work has been phenomenal. These partnerships take so long to get going and all of this stuff has to happen as a precursor to long-term impacts.” (HED)

“It is difficult to attribute things to the Center/WLP program because there was no pre-survey done and hence no baseline data, no ability to compare then and now. Two years was too short it was to be a three year project. Given the cultural sensitivity of this project very little impact can be expected in two years.” (Pri-YSU) 75

“At USAID we are very cautious about using the word impact because especially recently. This was not a controlled environment- it’s very difficult to say if we observed something that was caused by the program. That set aside maybe we won’t see this by the end of June, by the end of the project but if the master’s program kicks off and stays there that I would consider a clear impact.” (USAID)

## **Outcome-level Results**

### **4.1, 4.3 Intended Results Directly Attributable to the Intervention**

The next set of findings speaks to the impact of the intervention from the perspective of program implementers, NGO beneficiaries, and YSU faculty and students.

#### *Impacts of program as seen by program implementers*

“YSU [now] has this Center for Gender and Leadership Studies. This is very important. It is important that it is in the major Armenian university. We have managed to develop research capacities. The Center promoted the work of 28 researchers—there are 28 gender related (policy research), --good data. We have resources (books and online access to ASU library) - People don’t use it even though we have publicized it. In two years a lot has been translated into Armenian. This is important because one of the major general concerns is that gender studies is a western idea and we have no local expertise on that, that’s why she thinks that the translations are helpful to bring it [concepts] to Armenia. (YSU-Pri)

“We have the small grant projects and the conference next month, which will showcase the results of those papers. It will be a two-day conference. We will be disseminating them quite widely and having them as academic products. There is a lot of interest in those products judging by inquiries, requests, downloads, etc. They are the best illustrations, the best proof of what we are and what we stand for.” (Pri-YSU)

#### *Impacts of the program as seen by NGO beneficiaries*

“Small grants brought the understanding of the diversity of gender problems and relevance of the partnership with ASU. It helped to raise awareness and interest on the gender issues among academic society” (NGO beneficiary)

“The project made an opportunity to analyze and recognize the specific features of gender inequality in everyday life level of the different social surroundings of Armenian society and to represent recommendations for the policy makers and also for the civil society organizations, particularly for the NGO-s of the sphere of women rights and gender issues.” (NGO beneficiary)

“An important impact is academic discourse on gender issues. This can only happen in a university with such a specialized center. It makes important links between the academic sector and the NGO sector. Not many NGO’s can do research and the center brings research to NGO’s.” (NGO beneficiary)

### *Impacts of the program on YSU faculty*

“It was my first time to coordinate research. Taking the process from proposal creation, budgeting, staffing, and fieldwork. Very positive. All of [these techniques] can be used going forward. They trusted me, and I was free to think what is important and how to do things. I learned how to coordinate financial part, how to pay interviewers.” (YSU faculty)

“My research project is focused on how the gender discourse has recently evolved and how it impacted the public perception and practices. It examines how the gender discourse has been produced and is further reproduced, who are the main actors in the field, which discursive positions they take, which gender categories are in the loop of the debates. My project is still at half way (to concluded by the end of May 2015), but I can already mention that talking about gender in focus groups and interviews not only provides data to the researcher. It positively contributes to the better understanding of the gender concepts and most importantly, it initiates discussions and debates among people.” (YSU faculty)

“I am currently doing a research project focused on the discourse analysis and I would love to see how this program impacts the (re-)construction of the gender discourse. I would like to see the program going out of the academic wall and becoming a little more public.” (YSU faculty)

“They have many multi-directional activities - trainings, master classes with prominent women, students from other faculties were coming, presentations every week, so the impact at the level of YSU is obvious.” (YSU faculty)

### *Impacts of the program on YSU students*

“The Career Center has organized a lot of trainings—many that they already did but with this project they were able to strengthen them. We have a lot of workshops and students are coming. We have 3-4 courses that professors started to teach since September and this is the only way we reach the students, currently.” (Pri-YSU)

Following is a powerful articulation of how one YSU faculty member is seeing the benefits of the program transfer to her students:

“In 2013 I was a visiting scholar in ASU where I designed 5 syllabi on gender issues and gender and women’s studies, two of which I am teaching right now at university. I can see how my MA students change themselves after each class. They are becoming more and more aware of the

gender issues in society and social institutions, they are re-thinking issues that they haven't considered them before, and since most of my students are females they do understand the importance of headship on terms of enjoying equal rights with other society members. All of them carry out some mini-research as part of their studies and I am truly happy to see how enthusiastic they are about their work. As it is said if you want to see a change in the world be the change you want to see; I try to do my best to see that change in my students, if I succeed, and I will, I am sure, then I can claim that we already have seeds that will help us to have wider and bigger changes later since they are going to be part of society and hopefully, an active, important and policy-making part. (YSU faculty)

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"I also got a small-grant and carried out joint-research with my colleague. The issues we observed in research (Gendered violence and power in Armenian soap operas) seemed to be an important topic to discuss and speak about in our society. We had a very successful presentation at the university then we had some interviews where we expressed our concerns. Now some of my students continue doing such research in terms of Gendered messages in Armenian media and they also intend to write some articles on it." (YSU faculty)

"Academic discourse on gender issues is important and the link between academic discourse and that of NGOs the data was made available, they helped us to connect with US universities. For students it was important. My female students came to the events, learned their rights. Empowered, they went to their communities and shared their knowledge." (YSU faculty)

"The partnership is really strong but programs, projects and events coverage and also announcements should be assessable to all university students to have a broader impact."

### *Broader impacts/change-influencing public awareness and shifts in perceptions*

There was some interesting evidence of researchers noticing the impact of asking research questions and the resulting shifts in thinking:

"Regarding migrant and non-migrant household research. They [families] are starting to realize and analyze their situations based on the questions being asked by researchers. How can a family function without men for 9 months?" (YSU faculty)

"Problems of elderly women are similar to men. However, elderly men are taken care of by their wives, but not the reverse. So elderly women are more vulnerable. To motivate women to participate in in depth interviews-they started using sweets. For one woman it was the only thing she would eat for that day. Women cannot live alone in rural areas. Women may get a pension but use it for their children and not on themselves." (YSU faculty)

"This program was at least able to raise this issue. At least there is some awareness. The center has done a lot of things: The university and students know about the center including students from other faculties. In the university there is a very obvious knowledge about the Center. At some of the events of the Center, some Ministry members were present; there was a big discussion about women in army in Armenia."

## 4.2 Unintended Results

Two central results-producing elements of the WLP were not part of the original program design—the Gender Barometer Survey and the master’s degree in Women, Leadership and Development.

“The new instrument [Gender Barometer Survey] was developed and tested to provide the monitoring and measurement of the gender attitude among society.” (NGO beneficiary)

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“I think what has come out of it [the Gender Barometer Survey research] has been one of those unexpected positives—where they have been able to instill some new research capability at Yerevan state that mobilized the faculty and students to go out and do this research very widely—out in communities and villages not just in Yerevan. I found to be very exciting. I think it was not one of the expected outcomes of this partnership. The partnership outcomes were designed to become more institutional in their levels of activity. I think that there was a certain level of excitement that this generated among students and professors that I was very happy to see. And that kind of capacity doesn’t go away because you’ve engaged more than just a small circle—you’ve gotten more buy-in and that’s a good thing.” (HED)

“Well the gender barometer wasn’t envisioned with the initial program and it has the potential to really help anchor the CGLS, so I’m hopeful that it won’t just be a one-time thing and that they’ll be able to find the support to maintain it.” (HED)

“Regarding the development of a new master’s program, there are not a lot of students graduating with a BS this year. There are 4-5 masters programs for 10 students graduating in sociology. Center staff said “we were forced to do this”. We have a distance learning program and would rather have used that to offer a 1 year certificate program rather than developing master’s program. We changed the name of the master’s program to Women, leadership and development in order to be more appealing. On the positive side, we created an unintended network—via connections with the ASU school of social transformation.” (PrI-YSU)

“Something unexpected? The development of the master’s course was unexpected. Some majors i.e. philology became interested in gender, and raised the quality of proposals that were developed. Another unintended benefit was that the Career Center developed resources and Career Center staff underwent capacity building. Career Center staff now has new leadership prospects and can do something else in their lives.” (PrI-YSU)

### **Expansive Effects**

## 4.5 Local Ownership

Evaluators found a high degree of local ownership for the WLP, in a general sense. Only upon close examination did we uncover complexities in this area. The true test of local ownership will happen when the initial program has closed and YSU actually “owns” the program and all related collateral. The following findings illustrate these complexities:

“The Rector as quite supportive but other Deans and university colleagues are not that supportive (i.e. the Dean of International Affairs, not a lot of support). (Pri-YSU)

“He believes that the Center has provided institutionalization of the gender activities—it is a HUB for Armenia, and can become a regional gender hub.” (Pri-YSU)

The center worries about their own credibility...”We don’t have time to come implementing whatever we are told to implement when it’s not necessarily the best course of action.” (Pri-YSU) 79

“Other departments [beyond the Sociology Department] say, “How do we benefit and why should we help you”? We don’t want your course to be taught here. There are hard feelings about who got chosen to go to ASU.” (Pri-YSU)

“Center staff said, courses are going to be withdrawn for different reasons. Some faculty said we just don’t have a place for the course. They went to ASU, developed the course and later decided they didn’t have a place for it. Center staff were told, what do I have from this program, why should I help you? If I am facing this reality, where can I teach this course? (Pri-YSU)

This YSU program implementer – the Dean of the Department of Sociology reveals his lack of ownership and his eventual support of the program:

“I was not involved in any planning of the program. On later stages it has been decided that Faculty of Sociology will be hosting MA program on Women, Leadership and Development. I, as a Dean of Faculty gave a positive feedback and a decision to open MA program at our faculty.”

Later in the interview...

“It would have been better to plan with Sociology Faculty from the very beginning that MA program is going to be implemented at our Faculty. We were not aware about that until September 2014 when Rector made that decision.” (Pri-YSU)

Still later, the same person expresses support:

“Gender studies is a new field and it is very important for YSU to have such a program from the context of internationalization” (Pri-YSU)

Arizona partners helped Armenian counterparts to “own” the administration of the WLP:

“YSU learned about managing administrative costs. Account for things needed to run the programs. Learned to craft budgets...I stressed importance of operating within the confines of YSU and YSU gaining the capacity. At the end they did. They now have the tools and hopefully they realize they have the tools. A: Step one: change way of thinking (achieved). Step two: develop systems (formalizing policies and procedures). I would hear rumblings out of Gohar... my answer would be you need to work thru YSU and within the confines of YSU because once ASU is out of the picture....” (Pri-ASU)

“The university [YSU] is both conservative and liberal. It’s hard to develop new programs fast. Interdisciplinary is *in* and the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies provides this.” (Pri-YSU)

## 4.6 Regional Engagement

There was a definite urban (Yerevan)—rural aspect to this program. Much of the implementation was focused on and in Yerevan. The Gender Barometer Survey was the main exception which covered the entire country.

“A second possible problem—culture in Yerevan more modern and more traditional societies are outside [in the regions]. This is problematic not only for general development but also for personal development. ***We live in an ivory tower [YSU]*** and are limited in communication with rest of society.” (PrI-YSU)

‘I would have liked to see more impact outside of Yerevan; that has been a major challenge for the program, you know in the future it would be good to see more focus in that area—in the regions.’ (HED)

“Bringing women and men in from the regions—maybe break down some of the barriers within the country between us and them. ***The world doesn’t revolve around NYC or Yerevan.*** Understanding that solutions for the big city don’t necessarily work out in the regions where resources may be less and the education level is different.” (PrI-ASU)

“Training on gender gaps in general and how countries overcome, as well as continuation on supporting research in the same area would be greatly helpful. It would be very important if the activities of the center could reach to other cities as well, Gyumri for example, where we are based. One way to collaborate would be creating stronger partnership in local organizations who could serve as focal points. We would be willing to be a focal point for the center in Gyumri.” (NGO beneficiary)

## 4.7 Businesses affected

The findings do not show the connection of the WLP/CGLS to the Armenian business sector to be well-developed. The exception being that the YSU Career Center worked with local businesses:

“Now they do seminars, joint trainings and roundtables with other entities (i.e. Gaza a Swiss organization, a cell phone company) looking to recruit students for employment). The HR managers come from these companies and tell what they looking for in terms of employees and discuss the recruiting process, all of which gives students an advantage when they go to apply for positions.” (PrI-YSU)

“The CC would invite women for three-day trainings and they would tell about their lives and at the end they would pick some girls who they felt would be successful and employ them in their [businesses and] organizations.” (PrI-YSU)

“The Career Center listened closely to the students’ needs. They asked what kind of training students would pay for and then they offered it at YSU, for free. They also worked to bring employers to YSU that were desired by students.” (PrI-YSU)



## 4.8 Government Agencies

The findings show evidence of initial connections with government agencies and ministries. The CGLS visited many of these entities and introduced themselves and the work of the Center but there is no evidence of a strategic agenda developed to connect and cultivate specific government agencies/ministries for specific purposes.

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A key ASU partner described the need for an:

“...entrepreneurial effort to work with international agencies and the government to ferret out the kinds of research projects that will keep it in the public imagination. The continuation of the gender barometer survey is one part of that.” (PrI-YSU)

It should also be noted that just as the CGLS has come under attack by the “anti-gender campaign” (as it is referred to locally by some), so have some government agencies and initiatives.

The Campaign... it is also against the domestic violence law and the concept of juvenile justice.” (YSU Pr-I).

“After 2014 (with the Gender Law) the word gender became controversial. The CGLS is needed more than ever.” (NGO beneficiary).

The campaign is also targeting government agencies, not just the CGLS and women’s NGO’s.

## 5.0. Potential for Program Sustainability

The following questions guided the data collection under this section:

- How did the partners use the results based-management systems to contribute to the outcomes of promoting gender equality and female empowerment?
- How did the partnership make decisions regarding implementation and did decision making processes contribute to efficient program implementation?
- What are the hallmarks (key characteristics) of the partnership between ASU and YSU?
- What have been the main benefits of the program to ASU and YSU?
- In your view, what worked and what did not work in the partnership in terms of planning, communication, coordination, implementation, evaluation?

The findings, descriptions and quotes under this section are structured according to the following categories of indicators:

5.1 Financial resources management

5.2 Non-financial resource planning and management

5.3 Results based management

5.4 Institutionalization

5.5 Stakeholder engagement

*Opposing stakeholders*

5.6 Continued relevance of program design

## Summary of findings

### 5.1.-5.3.

Evaluators spent a substantial amount of time speaking with participants about the obstacles to and opportunities for sustaining and advancing the work that has been started with this program. Our aim was to develop a comprehensive picture of how the program could thrive, post-award. There is no shortage of ideas nor evidence. The section on Recommendations for Sustainability will also address this area.

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-/+<sup>15</sup> Findings show evidence that there is strong agreement about the need for a diverse and strategic fundraising plan that will help secure the future of the CGLS. Less strong is the evidence that such a plan exists.

-/+ Sustainability will require entrepreneurship, marketing savvy, and financial creativity, and determined self-efficacy all of which take time, energy and vision.

### 5.4.

+/- The success of the new master's degree program in leadership and development studies will be a key determinant in sustainability. It appears that there is solid support for this program at YSU.

-/+ Sustainability will be enhanced if the CGLS can position itself as a regional and national hub. This is underway.

+/+ The Gender Barometer Survey may increase the sustainability of the CGLS and evolve into a major vehicle for awareness raising on gender equity and women's empowerment going forward.

### 5.5.

+/- YSU stakeholders will be a major determinant of sustainability. Will YSU administrators be able to be true to their commitments to the CGLS? YSU faculty who went to Arizona as scholars in residence are key champions who will need to engage a wider group of faculty. There is evidence of internal tensions that may affect sustainability.

-/+ There is evidence of declining budgets at the USAID mission. The mission is stretched and there is no specific evidence of a cohesive or strategic plan for future support from the USAID mission.

### 5.6.

+/- Regarding the program design there are four elements will contribute to sustainability: the continuation of the Gender Barometer Survey, the expansion of curriculum development, innovative marketing of the new master's degree program and consideration of a joint degree program. Success will be dependent to an extent on the ability of the CGLS to bring these elements to fruition.

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<sup>15</sup> Key: This general scoring system (++ positive, +/- mixed but more positive than negative, -/+ mixed (more negative than positive), and -- negative) reflects evaluators' subjective opinion on the processes and/or outcomes described. This can also be interpreted as: excellent (+/+), good (+/-), fair (-/+), and poor (-/-).

## 5.1 Financial resources management

Financial sustainability is the cornerstone of this program and the most of the stakeholders' views on the Center's capacity to be there for its beneficiaries in the long term are optimistic. To meet that end, rigorous fundraising and donor cultivation efforts are needed.

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"I'm hopeful that CGLS will be able to sustain itself until such a time that it's able to become more attractive to other donors. The gender barometer and its dissemination should help; it's a major piece of research and so I think that it might make the center more attractive. "It has to be "persistent and pervasive". I think reaching out and raising awareness (if not also funds) has to be "**persistent and pervasive**". Not all your eggs in one basket but finding funding from many sources because you don't know when someone will say, well I don't usually support something like this, but in this case...for whatever reason, whether it's a personal relationship or something in their background, or ... So, you have to ask." (Pri-ASU)

"So then, there's the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies. When I was there in June last year, Dr. Markarov committed maintaining a certain level of staffing. He said maybe to 3-4 or 2-3 it wasn't clear yet. Three felt safe to me from what he said that YSU would support. However I'm not sure about the level of remuneration will be and whether it will be enough to maintain the staff that's been there. Given all that, I think the CGLS has the opportunity to remain. There's a lot of different centers and institutes at YSU, however how strong and robust that will be at the end of the day that really depends on the **centers ability to attract other donors to invest** in their research capacity and also maybe some of their capacity for the seminar series and trainings." (HED)

"My thinking about it might be too straightforward and not as nuanced as it should be but I am primarily concerned about the **financial health of the center**. If any institution has substantial financial support for some time and if that support abruptly ends—it is a major shock. It's not obviously unexpected but we naturally dismiss the future challenges until they become the challenges of the present...I'm not sure how the university will be able to handle it, how the staff will be able to handle it, I understand there will be some considerable reduction in their salaries because the project pays their salaries (supplements their YSU salaries) which makes it quite attractive at least by the Armenian standards and that that will disappear. I'm not sure what will happen to the office space and we know at any university (as we know here at ASU) office space is very valuable and coveted and that's a concern." (Pri-ASU)

"It is also important [for the Center at YSU] to **diversify its investment opportunities**. "We got funding from USAID...the sociology department has been involved... let's submit another proposal to expand this-reach out to other departments to make compelling applications for funding related to gender and women's empowerment." (USAID)

"We've received assurances from YSU (including from the Rector) that the center and staff will be preserved at least at this basic level but I think it is imperative to get additional funding to get from all possible sources. We've been working on that, so far we don't have anything. We are working on talking to USAID and we will meet with them next week in Washington to see if there is some funding possible for the Center at least for some of the activities. Some overhead that could cover the center's salaries. I see this as the biggest challenge. I'm not as concerned about the political

threats as much although I may be underestimating those. But I am mainly worried about the financial sustainability.” (Pri-ASU)

“Within YSU, the Center is there. The Center is there. It ***depends on their ability to hunt for external money*** (limited in Armenia). New actors are in the field=competition. Name recognition of the Center and Gohar is important.” (Pri-YSU)

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The Center’s perspective on Sustainability: “Sustainability is the toughest part for all of us from YSU perspective. The best thing would be to keep this room for us. The salaries are so low it’s not attractive--less than \$100 month. Attracting other grants is difficult. USAID has been specific that they don’t have funding. They are applying for small things. There aren’t a lot of opportunities for academic units—there are more opportunities for civil society. We may apply for Erasmus Plus but this would not fund the Center itself. At the beginning we didn’t realize that obtaining grants would be up to them. There are not a lot of opportunities. After June they don’t know what will happen. Alexander will have more information. Until June when the formal program is over, the Center staff expects to be busy but after that we will be freer to work on next steps, grants, etc. We will have a place but it will be volunteer basis. We see the master’s program as sustainable, but in need of students to enroll. Regarding the partnership with ASU, we have had ongoing conversations but not a lot of choices. They [ASU] know the situation here. They are thinking about funding opportunities such as diaspora funding sources (but they don’t have big funding for university programs). So far ASU hasn’t suggested anything specific. There have been four changes of the USAID contact person for this (program so no continuity. USAID says they are closing down other program areas and funds are limited.” (Pri-YSU)

### 5.1 Non-financial resource planning and management

In the findings around the need for the CGLS to become financially stable could not be more clear nor compelling. Clearly this is a critical factor for sustainability. Just as important, however, is all that needs to happen in terms of non-financial planning and management and this includes continued moral support. The findings illustrate various perceptions about the best path forward for sustaining the work that has begun. Following is the perspective of key ASU implementers:

“There are two pillars on which it [sustainability] must rest, it seems to me. One is the pillar of research and the other is the curricular pillar. The curricular pillar is the master’s degree program and the sustainability of this project in that sense is going to be based on the ability to maintain and develop that curriculum. And I include in that the kind of survey research methodology and other kinds of skills that will make possible the second pillar. And that is the continuing robust research program. Let me give you an example of this. ASU is the largest university in the country and its President has established this lingo of “the new American university”. Which has certain design imperatives and part of this is of course, global engagement, intellectual fusion and the elimination of departments and creating interdisciplinary schools, etc. At the core of it is this notion of the University as an entrepreneurial institution. And while we make a lot of fun of that occasionally the truth of it is that this university has increased its research grant and contract portfolio by 20% each year for the last five years. One of the things we really need to do to sustain a project like this is to

create within the CGLS that same kind of entrepreneurship when it comes to research grants and contracts because that will sustain the center along with its curriculum” (PrI-ASU)

“To some degree it is connected to the master’s degree program but it’s not the only thing that will make the center viable and sustainable. I think there are other activities they have been engaged in and that we have been promoting in the applied research area, for instance. That we hope they will build upon. We realize there are a lot of challenges ahead no matter what you do—you just have to confront them and find solutions to them. I feel that there is enough enthusiasm on the part of Center staff, there is considerable support from the university and they have built enough momentum and enough expertise to keep doing things and expanding them.” (PrI-ASU)

HED recognizes the value of YSU leadership and their vital role in sustainability:

“Another element I really believe has been Dr. Markarov’s involvement, he’s been able to provide the leadership and administrative support to make things that otherwise may not have been possible, happen such as the master’s program. I feel like there’s definitely a high level of support from YSU from the Rector’s involvement and supporting of the Center and the activities in spite of the environment right now for gender in Armenia.” (HED)

HED also underscores the importance of the partnership between YSU and ASU

“There’s many ways to look at sustainability. For instance we have a master’s program that’s going to be launched and regardless at the end of the day as long as that program is running that’s going to be an element of sustainability. Then you have a look at sustainability about how is ASU involved with YSU. ***Does the partnership continue?*** Are they working together to develop each other’s capacities? How formal is that? And it seems like there’s a strong potential for ASU to continue to engage YSU particularly if they start developing this joint degree programming which is part of this new university strategic objective of ASU...so I see that there’s potential there. However it’s not guaranteed---it’s between them and once our funding is over, we’ll see how that comes out. It does seem like there’s a strong interest by the departments and the administrators to maintain that. I know YSU remains interested.” (HED)

The issue of the sustainable financial management of the Center rests to a great extent on hiring (or somehow collaborating with) someone with a strong record of attracting external funding in the gender arena within the higher education context. This is both a financial and non-financial issue:

***“There is no staff person for that [fundraising and grant writing for the CGLS], and I think it is very important to have someone who will do fundraising for the Center.”***(PrI-YSU)

Another key aspect of sustainability is the longevity of the relationship between the partners, ASU and YSU.

“Preexisting ties and good will: further deepened the program Victor’s involvement ensured that this good will that was deepened. I anticipate some sustainability that might not otherwise have been there if those prior ties weren’t there.” (PrI-ASU)

“I’ve been super impressed with how well it all went to tell you the truth. A big part is Victor’s commitment as an Armenian with preexisting ties to the region, the people, and the university. He really kept it together.” (PrI-ASU)

“Personal commitments and personal devotion. Victor is Armenian. Professional plus personal ASU and YSU have been working since 2002, for more than a decade.” (PrI-YSU)

All of this is promising for future collaborations with ASU and the partnership learning can also be used to find and cultivate other strategic partners (other universities, etc.) to help creatively advance the mission of the CGLS.

### 5.3 Results based management

The evaluation showed that results based management was not that easy to learn and implement at the outset of the program. That said, in terms of sustainability, it is essential to give attention to longer term planning and impact questions, going forward. YSU (and ASU to the extent that they are involved) will need to work to determine what the main objectives and desired outcomes will be now that the formal program is ending and a new chapter is beginning. Other donors will have unique systems for tracking and managing results and YSU will need to use their new-found capacity and adapt to meet the needs of these other funders, be they government agencies, private foundations, etc.

### 5.4 Institutionalization

As a result of the project, CGLS was established, institutionalized and integrated into YSU Department of Sociology. It can now undertake a substantial role in promoting women’s leadership and the principles of gender equality both at the national and regional levels. Findings speak to the potential role of the Center both regionally and nationally:

#### *The role of the Center at the national level*

“Ideally we would like to see the center activity be **more impactful at the national level**. (I have a rural bias myself). I think we disproportionally focus investing in urban institutions. But there’s only so much that you can accomplish in three years. I hope that eventually the center will develop partnerships with units outside of Yerevan and **become a hub or a network** of similar units across Armenia. We would be more than happy to work with our Armenian colleagues on that but this would be beyond the project life and will require additional funding and we will continue to talk about different strategies for securing that kind of funding.”(PrI-ASU)

“Do future conferences at same time as when other events are happening [to increase the draw]. All international NGO’s that have a gender aspect (the Center knows those people)--that is the future for the Center. The **outreach is the key** part. To stay alive more connections with international donors are needed.” (PrI-YSU)

## Expanding the Center's efforts regionally

Findings spoke to the great potential for the WLP and the CGLS to have a broader influence within other countries in the region:

"I think sharing experience of the gender policy development and implementation would be important and useful, particularly experience of the countries having the same background as Armenia (post-soviet with low economic development and problems with rule of law." (YSU faculty member perspective)

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"If it takes hold in Armenia, it can play an important regional role. **Armenia can be a beacon of light in the region.** They can outreach by publishing in journals, participating in professional meetings in the region and networking electronically." (USAID)

"To enhance sustainability, I encourage the Center to develop cooperation with Georgia, more strong relations with other countries, (Iran won't work), so it's Georgian institutions to be targeted: Iliam University and Tbilisi State University." (PrI-YSU)

## 5.5 Stakeholder Engagement

The involvement of the project stakeholders and beneficiaries is key to success. The findings show several key groupings of stakeholders who can be instrumental to the sustainability of the work of the CGLS. These are: Yerevan State University (administrators, alumni and faculty), Yerevan State University, Men and Boys, and USAID. Each will be briefly discussed:

### Yerevan State University

Perhaps the single most important stakeholder for the CGLS is Yerevan State University itself. YSU's institutional commitment to the CGLS will directly impact the sustainability of the CGLS:

"It's going to take institutional commitment. Which I think is there. If they can generate the student base it will be sustainable. You can't ask them to sustain that center on the basis of grants. It will also take institutional commitment. Some of the capacity is there with the six women who came to ASU for the semester. That's a good foundation to build the curriculum and get it mainstreamed. And they're already employed there." (PrI-ASU)

Sustainability needs to be planned. However, when asked about the strategic plan for the CGLS, the YSU management said,

"I don't know about any specific plan, but **overall the sustainability issue with any centers at YSU is quite problematic.**" (PrI-YSU)

"Gender studies is a new field and it is very important for YSU to have such program from the context of internationalization." (PrI-YSU)

Evaluators asked a key YSU administration representative directly how the university intended to support the CGLS once the program funding ended and the ASU-YSU partnership became less active. The following list was the response to our inquiry

1. “Make international contacts for the center
2. Existing funding opportunities. Partnership with Save the Children and applying to the Erasmus Plus program
3. Provide possibility for visiting professors to teach at MS program
4. General support with course development/redesign
5. Host interns and find placement for students in international organizations in Armenia and bring together with Save the Children.<sup>88</sup>
6. Possible development of joint and double degrees with existing partners, but language of instruction is Armenian at YSU.
7. You are responsible for someone who you ‘tamed’ –a moral responsibility exists to support the Center.
8. Communication between Center and top university management
9. ASU and USAID are still in place i.e. matching funds for the Master’s program from Melikian Center.
10. Melikian Center is another asset for YSU in general and also the Center” (Pri-YSU)

This stated support for the CGLS from the YSU International Cooperation Office is evidence of intent to support the Center going forward.

### *Yerevan State University Alumni*

There were findings that illuminated the value and potential of working to cultivate YSU alumni:

“All our universities have alumni and some are success in starting their own businesses and in the US they are cultivated for connections to employment, and financial donations, etc. In the developing countries it’s a bit different, but YSU may want to, an outreach look at some of their alumni and see where they are—they may be interested in furthering equality in the organizations they are head of or helping YSU with its work in this area. In some ways, it’s about planting a seed.” (USAID)

“Alumni are a major asset for any university. In Armenia there is a formal [alumni] union but they use YSU resources more than they bring. They want to work with people who exist in the market, not with alumni. It takes time to educate different groups in and out of university.” (Pri-YSU)

“‘Success’ = at least 1-2 years of graduates of the Master’s program—meaningfully employed, and these alumni (running businesses and in good jobs) would then reinvest in the program and be a source of ‘feet on the ground’. Their skills and abilities would then be recycled and reinvented to enlarge the base and interweave into society. This = tangible and meaningful success. I also feel that it will be important to have graduates who stay in Armenia and help build here—not use it as a jump off to overseas. They should find their place in Armenian society, get employed here.” (Pri-YSU)

### *Yerevan State University Faculty*

The findings showed that YSU faculty have specific requests for support from the CGLS which is evidence of a mutual relationship and an indicator of sustainability:

“I would like professional literature on social and gender policy and gender policy analyses.”



“I would like to see the Center as a think tank, doing analytical work and publications in a wide range of fields and thematic directions, cooperates with other think tanks and does advocacy at the national level.”

“I would like training on gender gaps in general and how countries overcome, as well as continuation on supporting research in the same area would be greatly helpful.”

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“Conducting presentations—they are really very important, interesting and influential. Would be nice to have an access or to have an opportunity to get acquainted with the researches, reports done not only in Armenia but internationally.

### *Men and Boys*

The findings do not show a strategic effort to engage men and boys in programming or initiatives. The challenge is for the CGLS to contemplate involving men and boys as change agents/allies in order to increase the sustainability of the program. Early on in the program a key ASU implementer emphasized, “Of course, you can’t really change women’s lives unless you change men, so this partnership will also be about working with men—raising awareness about gender equality and getting leaders in education and NGOs on board intellectually, psychologically and culturally about the benefits of working on women’s leadership and advancement issues.” (Roen, 2013). While there is logic in working initially with women, there is also a need to be strategic in cultivating male champions and to be inclusive in an active way...reaching out to men as allies.

“The idea was always to... only way to really **mainstream gender issues** is to make it interesting and relevant to men. Research grants had some involvement with men, some of the projects focused on gender relations rather than just narrowly focusing on women and women’s issues. I can’t think of any activity that was explicitly targeting men or men only. **We’ve tried to involve them but most of the audience and participants are women.** I would agree that this is a big challenge to break this perception about this being about “women’s issues” that women have to take care of or deal with.”(PrI-ASU)

“In the design it was meant to be gender inclusive. I hope that that’s reflected in the activities. I know some of the researchers are male. Most of the activities are **meant to be gender inclusive**; even in the career center training they’ve included gender concepts in there but really it’s both males and females included in the training. Making champions out of males...I’m not sure that that was necessarily seen...I think that the idea is that gender is a societal construct and so both men and women need to be engaged in the process. So, yeah, I guess it might be helpful to have champions...maybe they could have some seminar series on that, I don’t know. I try to leave the content of the seminar series to the CGLS and ASU and YSU.” (HED)

“By ‘other people’ ...a lot of what I’ve seen like from the photos a lot of female participation in events. One of the things we talked about at the beginning of this partnership was really importance of including both males and females in events and specifically doing **targeted outreach to males** and I’m not so sure that that necessarily happened. I also understand that from a strategy [perspective] that perhaps the route to getting the ball rolling was maybe starting with females who are interested in this work. I think that where this partnership really fell short in my opinion...the partnership viewed this as a traditional higher education exchange that exchanged faculty and students but not

necessarily as a development project that they were managing. And I think that if the two institutions had thought more about the bigger social objectives that they wanted to see as a result of their research, it may have led them to some other strategies to engage more males throughout the project.” (HED)

“I think it’s a good thing to do and my observation is young men (professors and deans, etc.)-- if they self-select, grab them and keep them engaged. They can often carry the message that women can’t. I’ve seen that.” (USAID) 30

### *Support for Sustainability from USAID*

Evaluators asked USAID and HED representatives directly about their visions for the sustainability of the WLP/Armenia. There was general recognition of the declining nature of budgets and the constraints inherent with the geographic position of Armenia. Evaluators did not get a strong sense of a cohesive or strategic plan for future support and involvement of the USAID mission in the WLP/Armenia. There was a recognition that the funding and support have been provided and that now it is largely up to the local institution (YSU) to take the initiative for implementation over the long-term. Also, with the impending dissolution of HED, this group will not be able to play a stabilizing intermediary role going forward.

“The mission [USAID-Armenia] there is very small and very stretched. They don’t have the resources that some other missions have to put into programming. So that is certainly a challenge. USAID counts on their field missions that work under the ambassador to really be plugged into initiatives of the government and priorities of the government and places and sensitivities and the spaces in which the two governments can cooperate that’s particularly tricky in Armenia because you have Turkey on one side with a closed border, Iran on one side with a closed border. You’ve got Georgia as your only friend. Georgia, oh my, that’s politically, economically, socially...finding the good space for collaboration there is a big challenge.” (HED)

“Well, with USAID Forward they do have some HICD grants. I’m not sure if the office of gender empowerment might have that type of organizational support. They might be interested in the gender barometer survey and its applicability to other countries and they might be willing to provide some modest support for it.” (HED)

“Currently we have a local solutions initiative which is a unit within the mission working with local institutions mainly NGOs and that is not limited to our current local partners so it goes beyond and its aim is to support local organizations to look at possibilities for becoming more sustainable and to stand on their own feet. As part of that initiative there is room for further engaging with the center [CGLS], and looking at possibilities of how they can fundraise and look at future possibilities. Our budgets are tremendously declining and it’s a downward movement and from where we stand it’s not going to change. I don’t think there is going to be any continuation in terms of funding. The whole model of the Center associated with the university and the sociology department that is a token of sustainability that the faculty itself will help the center to continue but there needs to be demand for the master’s program, to be frank. The brokerage role talking to other international organizations and really sitting down with the Center to see what they can do better that is a role that we can take post award.” (USAID)

Regarding the status of the USAID-Armenia mission: “I don’t know what effect the closure would have except that if it remained open and we maintained the champions within [USAID] who saw the center as USAID’s legacy than that would really strengthen the chances that the CGLS would remain strong. I don’t want the CGLS to just be seen as kind of an American transplant that once USAID’s gone it’s no longer of strategic interest to YSU. It should be part of YSU’s mission in terms of sustaining research and promoting men’s and women’s empowerment equally.” (HED)

## 5.6 Continued relevance of program design

The program design continues to be relevant. The findings illustrate that: 1) the establishment of the CGLS, 2) strategic outreach to NGO’s, government ministries, regional universities, etc., 3) the capacity building of YSU faculty and administrative units, and 4) the development of an applied research culture around topics of gender equity and women’s empowerment are all critical program design components that should continue going forward. That said the original design is evolving naturally into new strategic directions that indicate a natural progression of the program and the work of the CGLS. There are four elements that will contribute to sustainability and hence warrant discussion: the continuation of the Gender Barometer Survey, the expansion of curriculum development, innovative marketing of the new master’s degree program and consideration of a joint degree program. Key findings follow:

### *Continuation of the Gender Barometer Survey*

The finding show strong support for the Gender Barometer Survey. There is interest in potential for using this tool in other parts of the world.

“After all the importance of a survey like this [Gender Barometer Survey] is that it not be just a snapshot but that it be able to measure change over time. It stands to reason that if you’ve got something as good as this, **USAID or other agencies might want to repeat it at regular intervals.** The CGLS needs to take ownership of that and they need to do that in a whole series of other ways in which they could become subcontractors or prime contractors on research that involves public policy or in this case survey research. I think Victor has helped to work with them in developing tools that can help them maintain that sort of research profile.” (Pri-ASU)

“I have some hopes that the gender barometer survey could become a **regular periodic survey that monitors changes in gender attitudes and reflect current issues related to gender and the quality of women’s position in society.** So we’re thinking about looking for funds to support those surveys in the future.” (Pri-ASU)

“When you can show you’re serious about some of this research such as the gender barometer survey, ...it sounds like that’s going to be a great deliverable or product that will hopefully be re-done on a regular basis, and **maybe lead to other national surveys.** The better you understand yourself and in this case your nation, the better policies they can at least try to implement.” (Pri-ASU)

“The gender barometer survey was the first attempt for a study of that scale done specifically focusing on gender and if this is something that other research institutions (other peer institutions) approve of and recognize and give the credibility--there is high probability for other international

organizations buying into this research to create some **longitudinal understanding to how the findings play out**. So maybe there will be further interest. Maybe some organizations that do annual studies could be collaborating with them to use some of the questions to track these trends and there is already some movement to disseminating this good practice to HED programs. It may be premature to say it but I think that there is interest in USAID Washington to promote transferring this between other missions and other projects as a best practice so that they can learn<sup>92</sup> from the barometer and maybe adapt it to their home country context. So that again is going to be a great achievement.” (USAID)

“This gender barometer survey for the country was developed which I thought was very interesting. I am very interested in using the barometer perhaps in the other WLP countries as well. The context is different but it could be adapted. We shared [the results of the gender barometer survey] with the gender development office in USAID at the highest level and have starting sharing with the other WLP partners. This one [the Armenia program] was really strategic in a sense that the gender barometer is an **outreach to the whole country**. What I was fascinated by with the gender barometer is that they have done something on a national level, it’s a baseline and if they can continue it with the university and the community, **it can help sensitize a lot of people. The vision is a long term one.**” (USAID)

### *Curriculum development*

The findings show support for infusing gender components into a growing number of departments at YSU, to “cover broader ground.”

“The key is getting the courses in the curriculum and to **involve as many departments as they can**, offering degrees. At some point there won’t be grant money. The curriculum is the way to sustain it—that’s how we sustained women’s studies in the US, getting it as part of the required curriculum, as electives, building certificates and minors. They need to do some work with undergraduates; I know they are afraid that undergraduates won’t be interested but I bet they will be. It’s **the curriculum that will be the backbone of sustainability.**”(PrI-ASU)

One staff person said her “pet peeve” with the program is that she feels that in addition to having the master’s program, they need to be going into the technical fields (math, science, computing) and support girls there. Girls need more resources, encouragement, mentoring, mental and emotional support as they study in a male world...**the Center needs to “cover broader ground”**. (PrI-YSU)

We discussed the international movement for STEM funding and support and DPD (difference, power and discrimination) models and concept of infusing technical degrees with some curriculum that deals with gender angle.

### *Innovative marketing of the master’s degree program*

There were some excellent findings that illuminated the need for an innovative strategy to market the master’s degree program:

“It’s not just the fashioning of the master’s degree, *it’s the culture of the degree* (beyond the courses) has to be developed and the center is going to be vital to do that. That will help with both recruitment and also the outreach to potential employers.” (PrI-ASU)

“One intent [with the master’s program] is to attract the NGO sector—emphasis on gender and also on leadership skills and leadership in the NGO sector. We also have an idea to establish a certificate program in nonprofit management, including courses with gender component. This is a real need and we were going to do it anyway.” (PrI-YSU)

“We discussed this a lot. It’s a potentially marketable and attractive degree. It’s a certain niche-- it can’t be a big degree with a lot of students but it can be a viable degree with considerable demand in the different sectors of society. We think of it very broadly. We package it not just as a degree focused on “women’s issues” it’s more a program of gender and development. Ideally you could think of expanding it originally and if there is some external source of funding. We are also talking about applying for additional support and to attract people from outside the region. We’re also talking about developing some joint curricula and maybe even a joint degree, which would be again quite attractive for Armenian applicants and other regional applicants. This is again a longer term plan, thinking.”

“How do you promote a master’s degree specifically and also its general advantages (critical thinking, better writers, communicators, working with NGOs, working with the outreach, they may have families that come from the regions, methodologies) [*The point above is how to make the new Master’s program attractive, and how to broaden and leverage the interest of students by ‘selling’ other benefits as listed above*]” (PrI-ASU)

“In the marketplace I think mostly it would be with the NGO sector and some international organizations but the field is not big and those organizations that are there already have their specialists well-trained so entering that sector is going to be hard but having the academic background I think they’ll be *marketable in the NGO sector*. At the initial stages, most of the students will be from the NGO sector as that would be continuing education for them rather than recent graduates. That’s my sense.”(USAID)

“I think that the degree could be very interesting to a lot of NGOs as you know the NGO sector is large in Armenia and a lot of them are looking for gender experts and I think this program will play naturally to that professional need. I don’t know if there it’ll ever be a large program but I do think that there’s a niche for it. Hopefully over this next year they’ll have enough enrollees to sustain it and if ASU is able to develop a joint degree that will probably give them the cash it needs to be sustained. If not...the degree...it seems like it could last but really having ASU involved in it as a partner ...I think that that might give it more legs and depth for it to be sustained because a lot of students will want to have a degree that has ASU on it.” (HED)

“The new gender master’s degree opening is wonderful. At the beginning it may have few students. They [CGLS] need better publicizing--social networks and emails. They should present at other universities so attract others...need to target better. Our (Society without Violence) volunteers are interested, but they are in school as undergrads and so not ready for master’s degrees yet. One difficulty is that there is not much funding for gender and women’s empowerment. Women’s rights

are very underfunded. Given the problem of no funding. You can be a well-trained gender specialist in Armenia and not be able to find good level of employment.” (NGO beneficiary)

The sustainability and success of the master’s degree program relies on the ability to develop a pipeline of students. The findings show concern about this:

“There are only 8-10 students graduating with their bachelors at YSU this year.” (PrI-YSU)

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Regarding the MS program: not only are there no students, we need another year to promote the center and attract students. (PrI-YSU)

“It sounds like that [the small graduating cohort] has been a challenge to every university and every institute of tertiary education. A delay of a year affects everyone’s enrollment--it’s a one-year anomaly.” (PrI-ASU)

### *Concept of developing a joint degree*

While the findings show interest in the potential of a joint degree program between ASU and YSU, it is moderated by a realization of the considerable time, financial resources and human capital that would be needed to make it happen:

“That [idea of developing a joint degree] came from the YSU side-something they were quite interested in developing. It’s a **multi-stage and complex process** on our end [ASU] end. It involves some institutional mechanisms and financial aspects, which are important. YSU thought that would make the program very attractive. At this current time this is not designed as such-this is in the future plans.”

“But our university [ASU] leadership is very proactive, very innovative I would say and they are inclined to take bold and novel ideas. It’s **not impossible; it just will take time to develop.**”

“Development and implementation of joint degree with ASU would have been very helpful and would have contributed to the financial sustainability of CGLS a lot.”

“The problem for ASU is that the women and gender studies at ASU is only now setting up its own master’s degree program (it has a PhD program). It has been rather **difficult to say we would offer a joint degree when we don’t even offer one ourselves.** The ASU program is in its infancy. And so it was a mismatch in some ways. Because the issue of joint degrees is **so complex and so potentially interesting**—that would be an area for the Melikian Center to explore in trying to be the catalyst for using this as a case study on the development of joint degrees. That would be another a big opportunity for sustainability.” (PrI-ASU)



The Women’s Leadership Program/Armenia has done an admirable job of establishing building blocks and crucial infrastructure in the areas of research capacity development and curriculum development for gender equality and women’s empowerment. That said, intensive work remains to be done to: 1) Ensure the financial future of the Center for Leadership and Gender Studies, 2) Create a dynamic strategic plan that will help draw in key long-term partners, 3) Ensure that the CGLS remains a priority of YSU and ensure that YSU leadership recognizes the value and potential of the CGLS to the university and to society at large, 4) Craft a public relations and communication strategy that will support each of the areas above.

These areas are discussed in the form of recommendations below:

### Core recommendations<sup>16</sup>

- 1. Research is a cornerstone for the sustainability of the CGLS. Evaluators recommend that the CGLS continue to leverage the momentum created around the gender equity/women’s empowerment research agenda.**
  - **Continue Small Grants Competition.** Secure funding sources to enable the small grants competition to continue. This continuity will help validate and propel the applied research by YSU faculty and their partners.
  - **Turn the Gender Barometer Survey into a “capstone activity” of the CGLS.** Put effort into identifying a funding source (and perhaps a key institutional partner) along with a schedule for review and improvement of the survey tool as needed. The CGLS should champion periodic reimplementations of the survey. Forge partnerships with key Ministries and policy makers to use the results of the Gender Barometer Survey. Encourage YSU faculty to engage with the results of the survey and use them as a catalyst to encourage their research imaginations. The Gender Barometer Survey has the potential to become a “regular periodic survey that monitors changes in gender attitudes and reflect current issues related to gender and the quality of women’s position in society” as one program implementer aptly put it.
  - **Sustain capacity building efforts in the area of research methodology.** Develop/continue programming to bring gender specialists and researchers who work with a variety of research traditions to YSU to expand thinking and infuse faculty with both time honored and state-of-the-art methodologies such as action research, phenomenology, situational analysis, etc. These skills can feed directly to the curriculum of the master’s degree.
- 2. Curriculum is a cornerstone for the sustainability of the CGLS. Evaluators recommend that CGLS leverage the momentum created around the new Master’s Degree program and design new initiatives for infusing gender equity and women’s empowerment into the YSU curriculum.**
  - **Build the Master’s degree program in Women, Leadership and Development.**

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<sup>16</sup> **Note:** It is implied that the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies is the key implementing hub for gender equality and women’s empowerment in the Armenian higher education context.

The success of the master's program depends on student enrollment and the dedication and tenacity of the YSU faculty who make up the program. The comradery that this group of faculty does/does not create will be a critical determinant of the success of the program. In tandem with the courses offered, there needs to be an accompanying "culture" of the degree, as one interviewee aptly put it. A related determinant will be the ability of the CGLS and program faculty to craft a compelling and targeted *niche*—in short an effective strategy for program marketing. Scholarships offered by YSU can be a pivotal form of support. Word of mouth from the first cohort of students will be important. Since graduating undergraduates are in short supply, target this first year strongly to the NGO sector—appeal directly and widely. Offer low-cost incentives (membership in the "founding" cohort, membership in CGLS, entry into a new international network, etc.). Use tools such as video, social media, speakers—in short, go out and recruit.

- **Carefully Consider Joint Degree Program with ASU.**

Understand both the opportunities and the potential obstacles inherent in development of a joint degree program. ASU recently started what would be their counterpart master's program in women's studies. While this may not be a direct impediment—it may be that faculty and administrators will be busy with the launch of their program and not as ready to initiate an international joint degree at this time. Developing joint degrees can be done but also can be daunting. It takes a tireless champion from both institutions to create a successful joint degree program. It can be difficult to mesh separate educational systems and this can get very time consuming. Time can be saved by identifying successful models and learning directly from people who have created international joint degree programs.

- **Create additional opportunities to infuse gender components into other disciplines at YSU.**

For example, supporting female students in technical fields of math science, computing, etc., as one interviewee said, "covering broader ground" is worth considering. Specific funding sources can be identified that aim to support women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields.

### **3. Financial security is cornerstone for the sustainability of the CGLS.**

- **The CGLS needs a high-level fundraising plan.**

Developing a focused and diversified strategy for fundraising and grant-writing takes commitment and skill. The issue of the sustainable financial management of the Center rests to a great extent on hiring (or somehow collaborating with) someone with a strong record of attracting external funding in the gender arena within the higher education context. Numerous potential funding sources were mentioned over the course of this evaluation. Among them: EU, UN, Armenian diaspora, USAID/Armenia, USAID/DC, individuals-domestic donors, individuals-international donors, US Department of State, Open Society Foundation, Women's Global Empowerment Fund, Global Fund for Women, and crowdsource funding.



**4. The Center for Gender and Leadership needs to continue to develop ownership, agency, leadership capacity, an entrepreneurial culture, and a footprint that spans nationally, regionally and internationally.**

Evaluators recommend that a plan be created *specifically to support the continued development* of the Director of the CGLS (and her team). Some elements of this plan could be: mentoring/coaching, training (fundraising, grant writing, leadership development, etc.).

Consider forming a small tight-knit group of advisors to help give the Center moral and other crucial support. The danger of a competent, charismatic leader is that others may not realize that this person is also in need of key support and professional development. There is a real danger of burnout and overwhelm without some deliberate supportive mechanisms, particularly during this first transition year. *The Center Director needs an overall strategic plan to guide the work of the center*—a document that will help leverage support from key partners. At this stage, it is as important to decide what not to do as it is to decide what to do. Trying to do “everything, everywhere for everyone” can lead to organizational paralysis.

**5. YSU institutional leadership, commitment and support is crucial.**

The sustainability question for the YSU leadership is, “do they have the courage to continue to deal with competing constituencies and become an agent for change? The viability of the CGLS hinges to a great extent on this question and the day-to-day actions, commitment and leadership of YSU’s administrators—the President, the Rector and most immediately, the Deputy Vice Rector/Head of International Cooperation Office. Does the Deputy Vice Rector have the support *he* needs to make and sustain institutional change and to build legitimacy both internally and externally for gender equality and women’s empowerment? Is there the capacity for a true and long-term working partnership with the CGLS?

**6. Develop sustained and strategic partnerships<sup>17</sup> and a corresponding public relations and communication strategy.**

While this is self-explanatory, it takes commitment and skill to develop a focused strategy for networking and communication. Again, the temptation of doing “everything, everywhere for everyone” should be resisted in favor of a more strategic approach to partnerships. As part of their strategic plan/agenda, Center staff should work to *envision* the role of the Center regionally and nationally and make careful decisions about which partnerships to cultivate and how to best steward those relationships.

**7. Engage men and boys as change agents and allies.**

There are excellent resources available with best practices for engaging men and boys in gender equity and women’s empowerment work. For example, the OSCE publication, *MENDING INEQUALITIES Men and Gender in the OSCE Region*, has an extensive resources in its Annex. Have a student intern do some initial research for the CGLS. The challenge is for the CGLS to contemplate involving men and boys as change agents/allies.

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<sup>17</sup> Key potential partners include: ASU, USAID/Armenia, USAID/DC, higher education network, NGO community, government and ministries, and international donors.

### Additional recommendations for sustainability:

1. Given the tremendous talent pool available within the full program team we recommend (for future programs) that sustainability planning involve the full team. For example, we recommend for future programs *facilitated sessions* which lead to a *concrete fundraising plan* for key implementing entities like the CGLS. Optimally other sources of funding should have overlapped the USG funding to ensure financial sustainability. We recommend that this be built into the program design so that the day the USG funding ends, other donors and sources of revenue will begin. We recommend that a) a person with a successful portfolio of fundraising experience be hired, b) current staff be trained in proposal identification, development and creative fundraising from foundations, business, individuals and governments, or c) both. The creation of this fundraising strategy should be part of the program design—an actual product of the program.
2. We recommend that the CGLS closely analyze where successful women’s leadership centers and institutes get their funding to stimulate ideas for fundraising.
3. Collectively (full program team) should work to capitalize on the success of the Gender Barometer Survey. Again, a firm plan should be in place for how to use the existing survey results and how to partner with key entities to scale up and institutionalize the effort going forward. This should be part of the program design—an actual product.
4. Similarly, we recommend that the full program team collectively develop a marketing plan for both the CGLS and specifically for the new master’s program. Utilize the combined wisdom of the ASU, HED partners. This should be part of the program design—an actual product.
5. We recommend that future women’s leadership programs require a component that substantively engages men and boys.
6. Consider YSU alumni and the future alumni of the Women, Leadership and Development master’s program as potential donors. Be aware of opportunities and contemplate the cycle of students moving through the university and out into positions of influence. Much exists in the literature about the stewardship role that can be taken by university leaders and excellent trainings and webinars exist on alumni cultivation as well.



This section provides some final conclusions and lessons learned that while specific to this program also have broad application to other women’s leadership programs and to the context of higher education for development. The Women’s Leadership Program/Armenia has contributed a great deal to the arena of gender inequality and women’s empowerment in Armenia. Many seeds have been planted. Important building blocks have been developed in research infrastructure, curricular innovation and institutional capacity building. If the connection between principals of Arizona State University and Yerevan State University continues to prosper, this working partnership has the potential to become truly “transformational”. The unique blend of personal and professional ties and the long-term trust and respect that has been forged is exceptional. That said, taking the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies to the next level will take a great deal of determination, creativity and strategic thinking. The Center will need to fully leverage the start that has been made to engage a whole host of new partners as it gains ownership and prominence in Armenia and beyond.

### Lessons Learned: Efficiency of management processes and systems:

1. Navigating differences in educational systems between partner universities in different countries can be difficult and time consuming. It is also a natural part of the capacity-building process and hence is worthwhile to spend time on. Consider developing a screening tool or checklist of basic university infrastructure and administrative policies that will have a bearing on the running of the program. Have this be part of the initial RFP process. This will give program implementers a sense of potential compatibility issues from the outset. It will also give donors a realistic idea about how much start-up time may be needed. Institutional capacity building is an important part of international development programming and it may be worthwhile to build in time for it from the outset of the program.
2. A commitment to monthly team phone calls increase overall transparency and allow for more rapid problem-solving and teambuilding throughout the life of a program.
3. The USAID/HED results framework can be intimidating even to higher education professionals familiar with elaborate reporting schemes. Continuous efforts should be made to clarify and demystify internal processes. Evaluators recommend that local implementers at YSU create a reporting, monitoring and evaluation system that draws from program learning and donor requirements but that is adapted to suit their needs going forward.
4. High staff turnover can leave gaps in institutional memory which can have an impact on program continuity and stability. While this is unavoidable in many instances, consider assigning Foreign Service nationals as long-term mentors for key programs such as WLP/Armenia to provide stability.

### Lessons Learned: Relevance of program design:

1. The influence of the current cultural context on program implementation cannot be underestimated. Even if donors were to develop some sort of “readiness” scale to determine how prepared a particular location is for gender equality/women’s empowerment development

and interventions, conditions can shift in the midst of a program, as happened in Armenia with the passage of the controversial “Gender Law” and subsequent societal debate.

2. It is in the hands of YSU to provide the leadership that will make gender equity and women’s empowerment relevant going forward. YSU will need to provide institutional support which will legitimize teaching, research and outreach on issues of concern to women and families of Armenia.
3. Now that the US government funding has concluded, the WLP and the work of the CGLS has the opportunity to become ‘uniquely Armenian’—not a Western set of ideas, and not a US government set of ideas.
4. Evaluators recommend that the CGLS become strategic in the use of key technologies. Identify gaps and weaknesses. Consider things like: arranging for live-streaming of gender conferences and other key events, hosting on-line discussion forums, creating targeted communities of practice, posting videos, photos, blogs, using skype and other tools to lead proposal development teams, and offering gender courses via distance education. Make use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube as these platforms suit your strategic needs. Again, student interns with tech savvy might be able to assist.

“There must be a better way to use technology, but I’m 65 and so I’m not as hip about that. We should be using technology more and maybe that’s one of the next phases of it”. (Pri-ASU)

“One challenge is that the [ASU] women’s studies faculty wanted to do more things for the project than they were able to do because of other obligations...and the time difference and the travel made it hard for our faculty to take the time out from their semester to get there. Logistically it just couldn’t be worked out. That’s why we came up with the idea of making video modules. Some of the [ASU] faculty wanted to continue to make meaningful connections if we can figure out how to handle this given the differences and distance. It’s possible to do shorter stints. There are ways we could do exchanges based on contact hours that would cover a shorter timeframe.” (Pri-ASU)

5. Consider the value and potential of engaging youth in outreach efforts.
 

“Different social groups in Armenia live according the rules and norms of patriarchal society. The most problematic thing is that the one of the groups reproducing the patriarchal norms and values is youth. It makes a real obstacle not only for the promotion of humanistic values but also for modernization and democratization and in general for development of our society.” (Pri-YSU)

### Lessons Learned: Effectiveness of program implementation:

1. It is critical that program implementers remain focused on creating a concrete suite of deliverables that will eventually create long-term change. The WLP/Armenia implementers (despite varies administrative issues and a complex cultural context) were able to maintain this focus and create: new courses on gender equity and women’s empowerment, a master’s degree program on women, leadership and development, capacity in applied research and a Gender Barometer Survey.

2. The applied research activity will take time to mature. Evaluators believe that it may be premature to expect that research products be packaged and ready for public relations/advocacy purposes. It may well be that this first flush of research results are not the products that are relevant to infuse into national gender policies. For some researchers, this was their first attempt at applied research. It will take time to fully develop a robust research *culture* and a culture of research advocacy.
3. While there is some value in outreach for the sake of outreach (general awareness-raising), with limited time and funds, having a strategic outreach plan will be important. It is important to clarify what is meant by outreach so that YSU stakeholders are in agreement. If the university does not have a culture of and a history of commitment to outreach, it makes it more difficult to get necessary support and traction for these activities.
4. Evaluators asked if anyone from the YSU Career Center went to ASU as part of the WLP and found that no one from the Career Center went to ASU and no one came to YSU from ASU's counterpart Career Office. We suggest a virtual introduction be made between the two counterpart offices. Find someone interested in international work at the ASU career services office and connect them with YSU to share ideas and resources—a sort of mentoring from afar. Find additional ways to continue to support the professionalization of the YSU career services office.
5. Evaluators found no evidence of the WLP providing access for people with disabilities. Program implementers shared an example whereby a woman who had been a recipient of a research grant was unable to attend one of the conferences and present her work because she was in a wheelchair and could not access the conference venue at YSU. This is regrettable and issues of access should be considered in future programs.

#### Lessons Learned: Impact of program intervention:

1. It is important to identify and grow pockets of self-efficacy and collective-efficacy as programs evolve. Just the act of creating the CGLS within a major Armenian university sends a strong positive signal about the importance of gender equity and women's empowerment. Evaluators found evidence of pride in the creation of the CGLS and a sense of legitimacy and solidarity.
2. Actual impact comes only after substantial groundwork is laid. For example, impacts to students (key beneficiaries) are still to be determined, once the new master's program is in full enrollment mode and the overall culture at YSU becomes more familiar with gender equity and women's empowerment themes and activities.
3. The true test of local ownership will be one year post USG funding. At that time it will be important to see what the CGLS has achieved on major metrics it has developed for itself.
4. Broad public awareness and shifts in perceptions are subjective to a large degree and in the case of this program will be seen over the long-term. The Gender Barometer Survey can be a key instrument in tracking these shifts over time.

## Appendices



### Appendix A: Stakeholder Interviews

Victor Agadjanian	ASU*note all ASU participants were interviewed via skype call.
Stephen Batalden	ASU
David Brokaw	ASU
Philip Carrano	ASU
Mary Margaret Fonow	ASU
Anahit (Anush) Khachatryan	USAID/Armenia
Gary Bittner	USAID
Alexander Markarov	YSU
Gohar Shahnazaryan (Director)	YSU-Center for Gender and Leadership Studies
Siran Hovhannisyan (Outreach and PR Coordinator)	YSU-Center for Gender and Leadership Studies
Sinara Navoyan (Program Assistant)	YSU-Center for Gender and Leadership Studies
Jeannie Veytsman	YSU-Int'l Cooperation Office
Mariam Yeghyan	YSU-Int'l Cooperation Office
Armine Hajatyan,	YSU Career Services Office
Arthur Mrktchyan *written submission-only interview not done live.	YSU, Dean, Faculty of Sociology
Participants of the Joint ASU-YSU faculty research projects on women's leadership and gender equality: Aghasi Tadevosyan Evigine Vardanyan Sinar Navoyan Karine Markosyan Karine Mrktchyan	YSU, group discussion
Nvard Margaryan	President, PINK Armenia (NGO)
Anna Nikoghosyan	Executive Director, Society Without Violence (NGO)
Perchuhy Kazhoyan	Outreach Coordinator, Women's Support Center (NGO)
Lara Aharonian	Co-Director, Women's Resource Center (NGO)
Marilyn Crane	HED
Jessica Bagdonis	HED
Jeanne-Marie Duval	HED

**Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Armenia**  
**A Partnership between Yerevan State University and Arizona State University**

**DATE:**

**Interviewee(s) and Position**

**Interviewers**

Interviewers introduce themselves and provide background information.

- We appreciate your talking with us about your experiences and insights related to your university’s participation in the Women’s Leadership Program funded by USAID and managed by Higher Education for Development.
- We are interested in learning from your experience in order to improve future university partnership programs. Thank you.

Note to Interviewer: Some questions may not apply to a particular interviewee. Be sensitive to this; amend or skip questions as needed. Also, there is some intentional duplication in questions (similar things being asked slightly differently). Be attentive to this while interviewing and move on if the information has been adequately covered.

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**GENERAL**

What was your personal role in planning and implementing the Women’s Leadership Program?

## Efficiency of Management Processes and Systems

**Guiding Question (GQ) 1.** How did the partners use the results based-management systems to contribute to the outcomes of promoting gender equality and female empowerment?

**Guiding Question (GQ) 2.** How did the partnership make decisions regarding implementation and did decision making processes contribute to efficient program implementation? 104

### Specific Questions

1. Can you give us your sense of the overall partnership between Yerevan State University and Arizona State University?
2. What are the hallmarks (key characteristics) of the partnership between ASU and YSU?
3. What have been the main benefits of the program to Arizona State University (or Yerevan State University, depending on who is being interviewed)?
4. In your view, what worked and what did not work in the partnership:
  - Planning
  - Communication (does the partnership/center have a communications strategy?)
  - Coordination
  - Implementation
  - Evaluation
5. How would you characterize the communication between ASU and YSU on this program?
6. How would you characterize the communication between HED and ASU (or YSU) on this program?

## Relevance of Program Design

**Guiding Question (GQ) 1.** To what extent were the program activities and interventions adapted for the local context to contribute to the outcomes of promoting gender equality and female empowerment?

**Guiding Question (GQ) 2.** Did program design consistently link activities and outputs logically to program outcomes and objectives?

### Specific Questions

1. Can you comment on the relevance of this program? How useful do you feel your involvement in the program has been?
2. In your view what have been the main contextual obstacles/challenges affecting implementation of this program? By contextual, we are referring to broader forces beyond the ability of partners to control (cultural, political, economic, etc.)



3. Please comment on the intended/unintended benefits and challenges you have encountered with this program.
4. How is the public relations aspect of the program going? Are program outreach gaining relevance and traction with parts of the Armenian public?

## Effectiveness of Program Implementation

**Guiding Question (GQ) 1.** To what extent have the intended outputs and outcomes of promoting gender equality and female empowerment been achieved or are likely to be achieved and how were the results effected by program fidelity?

### Specific Questions

1. Has the Women's Leadership Program/Armenia (hereafter WLP) *enhanced* students' *knowledge and skills* and broadened attitudes related to women's leadership and career advancement? (Give specific examples)
2. Has the WLP *strengthened the capacity* of Yerevan State University to make research-based recommendations, with an emphasis on putting into practice national gender policy? (specific examples)
3. Has Yerevan State University's *capacity to deliver* coursework that addresses women's leadership and gender equity been developed? (specific examples)
4. Have extension/outreach efforts at Yerevan State University *promoted women's leadership and gender equality*? (EQ4)
5. Can you describe the success of the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies in outreach to a) community groups, b) NGO's, and c) local citizens?

## Impact of Program Intervention

**Guiding Question (GQ) 1.** What were the outcome results of the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women by this partnership and to what degree are the outcome results attributable to implementation of the project?

**Guiding Question (GQ) 2.** Is there evidence that outcome level results had a wider effect than anticipated, e.g. YSU-private sector partnership?

### Specific Questions

1. In what ways is the increasing awareness and knowledge about women's leadership and gender issues (among, students and faculty) contributing to the recognition of gender equality by the Armenian society?
2. What are some specific examples of change as a result of this program? Change to students, change to faculty, change to partner organizations.
3. Have you identified specific shifts in thinking and acting around issues of gender? How does the increasing public awareness of women's leadership and gender contribute to the recognition of gender equality in the Armenian society?

## Potential for Program Sustainability

**Guiding Question (GQ) 1.** To what extent are the program effects (development results and/or host-country and U.S. higher education partnership) likely to continue over time after funding has ceased? 106

**Guiding Question (GQ) 2.** What aspects of the program have the best chance of continuing and what would be the major factors that would influence these lasting effects?

### Specific Questions

1. What are the main obstacles to sustaining and advancing the work that has been started with this program?
2. Has the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies attracted funding from other donors? Is there a plan for fundraising/grant writing? Is there a staff person designated for this?
3. What is the plan for budgeting of the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies going forward?
4. Does the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies have a strategic plan? What about an assessment and evaluation plan, post-award?
5. How does the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies fit into YSU's internationalization priorities?
6. Did any aspect of the WLP deal with disability rights? Is the Center itself accessible? Were there any special efforts made to reach out to women with disabilities or NGO's that represent these issues?
7. Does the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies have a communications strategy? Can you tell us about the main components? How is the public relations aspect of the program going? (clarity of objectives and message)

### Closing Questions

1. If you could suggest the top two things the Center for Women and Gender Studies should pursue going forward, what would they be?
2. What are the top two "lessons learned" from this program, from your perspective?
4. Do you have anything further that you would like to contribute?

## Appendix C: Trends in Partnership Implementation

In performing the desk review, evaluators identified several broad trends in implementation of the partnership that in turn informed the methodology and served as an investigative framework. These trends are described below.

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### **Practice of Networking**

The first trend deals with how a “practice of strategic networking” is evolving within the program. In working with Armenian NGO’s, the stated intent for outreach was that it be “broadly based, both regionally and thematically”. How has the work with stakeholder NGOs (Women’s Resource Center, Coalition Against Violence, TRUST (The Social Work and Sociological Resource Center, etc.) evolved? Has there been involvement from the YSU branch campus at Idjevan? Has there been involvement from Vanadzor State Pedagogical University? Yerevan State Linguistic University? American University of Armenia? Is the Center for Gender and Leadership Studied evolving into being a hub for networking on strategic issues related to gender equality and women’s empowerment? It is apparent from the desk review that some of this is happening; the evaluators will investigate the extent of progress in this area.

### **Practice of Sustainability**

The second important trend deals with how a “practice of sustainability” is evolving within the program. How are strategic approaches being actively developed to ensure sustainability of efforts going forward? Of critical concern is the sustainability of the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies. Does the Center have a plan for the evolution of its internal leadership? If the center loses its current director for any reason, is there a solid leadership succession plan? How is the institutional history that has been collected over the past three years being captured and preserved for future leaders?

Is there a transparent and detailed strategy for fundraising for the Center? What outside funding and donor support has the Center raised to date? Is the Center and/or individual YSU researchers receiving funding from agencies such as: Eurasia Foundation, Open Society Institute (Soros Fund), DFID, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, UNDP, various US government agencies and US-based organizations such as the American Association of University Women and the Armenian government?

The long-term support of the YSU administration is another critical area for concern. How can we characterize the engagement of Yerevan State University? What is the commitment of funding support from YSU to the Center for the first year post-USAID funding (beginning July 2015)? How embedded is the Center into the fabric of the university? Is the Center a vital component of the YSU international agenda and internationalization strategy? Is the Center perceived as indispensable to the mission of the university? Given inevitable resource constraints and competition within the university system for scarce resources and niche, what is the realistic outlook for the Center?

Further, what are the key supporting strategic structures? For example, what has been the role of the Project Advisory Board (independent advisory body for CGLS oversight)? Does the board include representatives from universities beyond YSU? Was a Faculty Women’s Association formed at YSU? Was an equivalent to the American Association of University Women (AAUW) (NGO with leadership and policy orientation) formed? Has the Center forged a strong and dynamic partnership with the YSU Career Services Office? Has reinforced programming at the YSU Career Services Office led to advancing women’s placement in both the public and private sector?

Lastly, are there formal and specific plans for the YSU CGLS and Arizona State University to continue to collaborate once the USAID program has concluded? Is maintaining this partnership part of the sustainability plan for the Center?

### **Practice of Change**

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The third important trend regards the evolution of a “practice of change”. For example, how has the Center (and the larger WLP/Armenia) worked to counter the 2013 anti-gender campaign? Is there a communication plan or strategy that has been implemented? How is the Center handling public relations work with the media regarding this issue? Is the Center working with key NGOs to unify, consolidate and strengthen messaging? Are there ongoing negative impacts on CGLS activities as a result of the anti-gender campaign? As stated by Victor Agadjanian, U.S. co-partnership director, “It’s very important to realize it (gender equity) is a really sensitive issue in Armenia. No one is opposed to women’s rights in principle, at least explicitly, however, some people find that promoting gender equity is not necessary, should not be prioritized, or even that it undermines Armenian families and the traditional roles that women hold in that society.” Is there evidence of shifts in public perception regarding gender equality and women’s empowerment? Are there supportive agents of change surfacing from varied sectors of society?

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